

# Jammu & Kashmir Digest

A Review of Developments in J&K



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# Tourism Reclaims Kashmir with Hope & Hospitality

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is fast emerging as a vibrant tourism hub with renewed focus from both the Union Territory administration and the Central Government. In a significant address at the **Tourism Secretaries' Meet of Union Territories in Srinagar**, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha emphasised the administration's commitment to transform **nine emerging destinations into international tourism hotspots**. The initiative aims to generate **direct employment for at least 5 lakh people** in the first year under the SPREAD (Strategic Promotion and Revamping of Emerging Alternate Destinations) program. Sinha hailed this **tourism revival as a "befitting reply to terrorism"** and credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for steering J&K toward peace and progress.

Sinha also highlighted the *success* of the **G20 Tourism Working Group meeting in J&K**, calling it a defining moment that helped solidify the region's global tourism brand. "We have strengthened traditional circuits and expanded tourism's horizon," he stated, noting that the sector is becoming a vehicle for inclusive growth across the Union Territory. Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who also attended the meet, acknowledged the pain of the **April 22 Pahalgam terror attack**, calling it an "*Amavas ki kali raat*", but urged the nation to focus on resilience and unity in moving forward.

Adding to the optimistic tone, Omar Abdullah, speaking from the Tourism Fair in West Bengal, noted that tourism in J&K is clearly rebounding. He pointed to the ongoing **Amarnath Yatra** and *increasing tourist inflow* as signs of revival. "A good number of devotees are visiting the shrine via both routes, and they are happy with the situation," Omar said, urging more people from West Bengal and beyond to visit the region. Commissioner Secretary Tourism Yasha Mudgal also confirmed that the sector is regaining momentum and is on track to meet last year's tourism figures.

Despite the tragic backdrop of recent violence, the Amarnath Yatra is progressing with strong participation. **Over 1.28 lakh pilgrims** have already completed the sacred journey, which began on July 3 and will conclude on August 9. Amid tightened security, with over 180 CAPF companies deployed, locals continue to extend warm hospitality. In one heartening example, *residents of Srinagar offered refreshments to pilgrims* near Nuner village. These gestures, along with improved infrastructure and strategic promotion, underline Kashmir's journey from conflict to cultural resurgence. – [Hindustan Times](#), [DD News](#), [Greater Kashmir](#)

# Bhal-Padri: A Hidden Meadow Joins J&K's Tourism Map

**T**he breath-taking alpine meadow of **Bhal-Padri**, nestled at *11,000 feet* in Doda's Chenab Valley, is finally set to step into the tourism spotlight with its **first-ever tourism festival on 20 July, 2025**. Once known only to nomadic shepherds, this lush, high-altitude haven will welcome visitors for the first time, marking a new era in Jammu and Kashmir's drive toward sustainable and inclusive tourism. The event promises a rich blend of *tribal music, dance, handicrafts, herbal product displays, and eco-adventures like trekking and star camping*—all set against the unspoiled backdrop of Himalayan wildflowers and meadows.

This transformation was made possible with the completion of a crucial road network, bringing this once-remote meadow within reach of broader tourism circuits. The initiative reflects the government's broader strategy **to promote offbeat, high-altitude destinations** while prioritising **eco-tourism, local engagement, and environmental conservation**. According to officials, *Bhal-Padri represents* “unspoiled Himalayan scenery” and untouched tribal heritage, making it an ideal symbol of balanced tourism—where natural beauty and traditional lifestyles coexist.

As tourism infrastructure takes root, *locals like Ghulam Nabi* from Bhaderwah see new economic opportunities blooming alongside the wildflowers. “Our grandparents came here only to graze cattle. Now, we’re talking about **homestays, guides, and eco-tourism businesses**,” he said, reflecting the community’s cautious optimism. To ensure sustainable development, the government is enforcing strict **environmental safeguards, including visitor caps, waste regulations, and local participation in tourism planning**. Officials warn that “the charm of Bhal-Padri lies in its unspoiled nature, and we don’t want that to change.”

The *Bhal-Padri Tourism Festival* is more than just a celebration—it's a bold step toward redefining tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. By focusing on **responsible travel, indigenous culture, and ecological preservation**, the region aims to set a benchmark for future tourism models in the Himalayas. As visitors arrive to experience its pristine landscapes and tribal hospitality, Bhal-Padri is poised to become a new icon of eco-conscious exploration—where progress doesn't come at the cost of nature. – [\*Travel and Tour World\*](#)

## ₹4,224 Cr Boost to J&K's Rural Connectivity

**I**n a major push for rural infrastructure, the **Union Ministry of Rural Development** has **sanctioned ₹4,224 crore under PMGSY Phase 4** for the construction of **316 roads across 19 districts** of Jammu and Kashmir, covering a total length of **1,781 kilometres**. The initiative is part of a broader effort to connect remote and roadless villages, providing vital links to markets, schools, and healthcare facilities. **Rajouri**, which will see **41 roads** built at a cost of **₹588.12 crore**, spanning areas like Manjakot, Darhal, Kalakot, and Budhal.

**Poonch**, with **40 roads** sanctioned for **₹484.92 crore**, will be reaching locales like Buffleaz, Surankot, and Mendhar. **Doda** has received budget allocation of **₹661 crore** for **31 roads**, connecting regions such as Chirala, Bhaderwah, and Changa. Other notable allocations include **Reasi (21 roads, ₹400.53 crore)** and **Udhampur (20 roads, ₹304.18 crore)**.

Several districts in the Kashmir Valley will also benefit, including **Kupwara (₹89.68 crore for 14 roads)**, **Budgam (₹88.45 crore for 14 roads)**, Baramulla, Pulwama, Kulgam, and Anantnag. Even districts like Bandipora and Ganderbal, which often receive limited funding, will see new connectivity projects. Although **Jammu district** sees a smaller count with just **6 roads**, it still gets **₹84.31 crore**, showing strategic importance in project selection.

This massive infrastructure boost follows a detailed assessment by central teams after the J&K government submitted reports on roadless villages. With approvals in place, the Public Works Department (PWD) has initiated the tendering process, fast-tracking project implementation. The roads are expected to transform lives in remote rural pockets, enhancing mobility, boosting local economies, and making critical services more accessible—marking a decisive step towards *inclusive development in Jammu and Kashmir*. – [Kashmir Life](#)

## Jammu's Rajat Charak Makes Wushu History

**I**n a ground-breaking victory, **Rajat Charak**, a *21-year-old* from **Bishnah, Jammu**, has etched his name in the annals of Indian sports by securing the **first-ever gold medal for India** at the **Asia Cup Wushu Championship**, held in *Jilin*, from *2-7 July, 2025*. His historic win came in a gripping final bout against a formidable opponent from Kazakhstan, making him not only a national pride but also a rising star in the international Wushu arena.

Charak was part of a **16-member Indian Wushu team**, which put on an outstanding performance overall, winning **three gold, three silver, and five bronze medals**. Among the loudest voices of praise was Dronacharya Awardee Kuldeep Handoo, who hailed Rajat's achievement as groundbreaking. "Rajat has immense potential... I hope he brings gold at the Olympics and World Championship too," said Handoo, reflecting the nation's growing hopes from the young athlete.

In addition to his Asia Cup triumph, **Rajat had previously won silver at the 2024 Asian Championship** in Macau, which earned him a place at this prestigious continental event. Charak is also a proud member of the **Indian Army**, balancing duty with athletic excellence—an inspiration for many aspiring sportspersons across the country.

Upon returning to India, the medal-winning Wushu squad received a hero's welcome at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, hosted by the Wushu Association of India. Rajat's golden feat not only marks a personal victory but also sets a powerful precedent for India's growing stature in martial arts on the global stage. – [Hindustan Times](#)