



'2011 best tourism season for Kashmir so far' 13 lakh tourists visit valley this year: Dir Tourism

FAYAZ PEER

After three consecutive summers of strife, the Kashmir valley witnessed a tremendous surge in the number of tourists in 2011. According to the officials of J&K Tourism department, 2011 has been the best year for the Kashmir tourism industry since 1989, when political unrest broke out in the valley.

Director Tourism Farooq Shah told *The Echo* that as many as 13 lakh tourists flocked to Kashmir during the year. "Among 13 lakh tourists who visited the valley, 6.5 lakh tourists were Amaranth pilgrims alone," said Shah.

President Travel Agents' Association of Kashmir (TAAK), Rouf A Tramboob said the year remained excellent for Kashmir tourism, "as we crossed the landmark number of one billion tourists." Majority of the tourists, he said, were domestic, while some foreign tourists belonged to the south-east Asian nations. The peaceful summer in 2011 is seen as the major factor responsible for attracting a huge number of tourists to the valley. "Conducive atmosphere in the valley forced the pilgrims to stay here for some more time after completing their pilgrimage," said Shah.

Pertinently, the tourism industry in Kashmir had suffered a huge setback on account of the summer unrest for three consecutive years in 2008-10. The turbulent situations had given a severe blow to various sectors directly or indirectly related to tourism. The rise in tourist influx in 2011 returned the smiles to the faces of the people, who are heavily dependent upon the tourism industry. Everyone from hoteliers and houseboat owners to boat riders, taxi operators, horse riders and handicraft products sellers could finally heave a sigh of relief. The number of flights to Srinagar doubled in the last few months, while airfare to and from Srinagar also went up. Long traffic snarls could be witnessed everyday on the Boulevard Road. The hotels and houseboats amidst Dal Lake were frequently packed to the brim.

Ghulam Hassan Bhat, a *Shikara* owner in the world famous Dal Lake said he had made good earnings after a prolonged spell of tourist drought in the valley. "Our bread and butter is solely dependent upon the tourists influx. The 2010



Domestic tourists enjoying scenic beauty of nature at Nishat Garden in Srinagar during summer this year.

SHOWKAT SHAFI/IUST

mass uprising that claimed over 120 lives had a direct bearing on our income as well. But thank God this year tourists returned to the valley," Bhat said. Mushtaq Ahmad, a hotelier, said they had never witnessed so many tourists before. "Even during pre-militancy years, the valley would receive a maximum of seven lakh tourists. So this year we have received a record number of tourists," he said. The tourism players believe that if the situation in Kashmir continues to be conducive, the forthcoming years shall see even more number of tourists visiting the valley.

"We are optimistic about the inflow of the foreign tourists as well to the valley, if it witnesses the same peaceful atmosphere in 2012 too," said Tramboob.

TAAK president said they had been trying their best for long to revive and promote tourism in Kashmir. From comfortable travel to luxury hotels, we provide every facility to the tourists. We also provide them the guide facility, so that they don't face any sort of inconvenience during

their stay," he said.

Tour operators, he said, for past many years had been visiting outside the state for promoting Kashmir tourism by way of participating in travel marts, trade fairs, road shows and so on.

Shah said the Tourism department was giving a face-lift to the new tourist destinations, like Aharbal, Daksum, Sinthan and others, "so that all facilities are available for tourists on these spots." He added that the department was also promoting adventure sports and eco-tourism in the valley "so as to attract adventure lovers in large numbers to the valley."

Talking to this reporter, many tourists expressed delight over their stay in Kashmir. "We are very grateful to our hosts for making our stay memorable," said Nitin Wadekar of Maharashtra.

Another tourist, Joseph Smith said he had been planning for last four years to visit Kashmir and enjoy its beauty. "This year I made it and I am very happy about it." *Echo*

IUST holds maiden student union polls

ECHO MONITORING DESK

The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on December 9 became the first university in Kashmir in past two decades to hold and provide logistics for students' union elections on the campus. The step is believed to be of profound significance for student activism in the valley that was banned in early 1990s.

Hundreds of university students participated in the day-long polls. B.Tech seventh semester student, Sarmad Mehraj, won the topmost presidential post by bagging 146 votes of total 623 votes cast. He, however, faced a tough competition from Wasim Sarwar, an MBA student, who bagged 143 votes.

Mir Annayatullah, a Business Administration student, won the general secretary post. For vice-president's post, Imran Bin Gani was chosen unopposed.

It was jubilation galore at the varsity when the results were announced. "We congratulate the university authorities for holding student union polls at a time when student unionism is banned in other educational institutions," said Zahid, an IUST student.

Sabaa, another student, said she was feeling proud to be a part of the history. "We are grateful to the

university administration for providing us with an opportunity to raise and get our genuine issues addressed," she said.



A student casting vote to elect university students' union on December 9, 2011.

NAYEEM SHOWKAT KHAN/IUST

Pertinently, the IUST authorities had formed a seven-member committee to look after the elections and formulate a strict constitution for the students' union. The committee also provided all logistic support for the free and fair elections. The authorities maintained that the students' union shall deal with only students' welfare and had no intervention of any political party. "The elections were allowed in the varsity to help the students solve their problems their own way. But we won't let any outside influ-

ence to take any undue advantage of the students' union," said Prof AR Trag, Vice-Chancellor, IUST. He added that the decision to allow

students union came after the assessment that it will be beneficial for the academics.

Echoing the VC's words, IUST Registrar, Prof Muhammad Amin Masoodi said the issues pertaining to students' welfare only shall be raised with the students' union.

Students contesting the elections had been busy campaigning class-to-class. Even online campaign pages were created by the contestants on social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter.

In his election manifesto, Sarmad had pitched for issues like infrastructure, hostel facilities and university timing. He said the move shall inspire other universities as well to provide students a platform for expressing their concerns. "The students union will try and help the varsity to function better and improve overall education system," he said. To mention, students' unionism was banned more than two decades back, when political unrest broke out in the valley. Later in Kashmir University a students' body, Kashmir University Students Union (KUSU), was formed in 2008, however without the requisite permission from the university authorities. KUSU was sealed by the authorities in July 2009. Besides, student activities at the Sri Pratap College and Amar Singh College in Srinagar are barred for decades.

The establishment of the IUST students' union has been widely hailed in the valley. People from various sections of the society termed the election as "bold step" on part of the university. President People's Democratic Party, Mehbooba Muf-ti said IUST had set a shining example of democratization of the campus activity and "the state must take a cue from it to revive student unions in other educational institutions as well." *Echo*

Need for effective implementation of Int'l Humanitarian Law: Experts

JAVAID LONE

Emphasizing the need for respect and effective implementation of the International Humanitarian Law, experts at a seminar said the law has been violated "beyond acceptable limits" by some Western nations.

They were speaking at a one-day workshop on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), organized by the department of Journalism, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), in collaboration with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IUST on November 4.

Speaking on the occasion, Registrar IUST, Prof Muhammad Amin Masoodi, said at times

even bio-chemical weapons were used by some countries during armed conflicts, "which is a gross-violation and misuse of the law."

He also expressed concern over the treatment of prisoners in the infamous Guantanamo Bay prison camp and concentration camps in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Team leader ICRC, J&K, Daniel O' Malley, gave a detailed insight into the activities of ICRC world-over. "The ICRC, since its foundation, as an independent and neutral organization, has played a humanitarian role in most of the conflict situations world-over," he said. Stating that ICRC is working on the basic principle to minimize the effects of the war on the civilians, Daniel said ICRC first enters into the conflict zone, analyses the situation

and then starts the preventive work.

Daniel added that Kashmir was a complicated region and all together a different case for ICRC to work in.

Arshid Amin Khan, Communication Cooperation Officer, ICRC, Srinagar gave a detailed presentation on the IHL. "The aim of IHL is to limit the effects of the armed conflicts and to protect those, who are not or no longer taking part in the hostilities," Khan said. IHL, he said, is meant for safeguarding the fundamental human rights and peace building.

Two documentary films by ICRC 'Panorma 08' and 'Detention Activities' were also screened on the occasion. Besides Monisa Qadri, incharge of the department, all the Journalism faculty members were present on the occasion. *Echo*

Breaking Gender Stereotypes

Girls now opt for careers in technology

SYED RUFaida JAN

Breaking the taboo of remaining confined to streams like Arts and Social Science, girls in Kashmir are now leaving their mark in the field of technology as well. At Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), a good number of girls have opted for careers in technology courses that once used to be identified as “masculine” subjects.

Every year there is a soar in girls’ participation in what used to be believed as male-dominated courses, such as B.Tech Electronics and Communication, Civil Engineering, Computer Science Engineering and Food Technology.

“Of course the number of girls opting for technology subjects is increasing rapidly. So we need to change the notion that girls possess less potential than boys,” opines Prof M A Malik, incharge, B. Tech Civil Engineering, IUST.

Earlier girls would restrict their career to a few courses, like Education and Nursing. Now with the trend changing, they can be seen working in numerous fields.

“A few years back, girls were believed to be sluggish and inferior to boys. But with their zeal and hard work, they have proved the notion wrong,” deems Syed Irtiqa, Assistant Professor, B.Tech Electronics and Communication, IUST. “Girls possess a lot of potential and dynamism, so they need not restrict themselves to academic courses,” she adds.

Parents are believed to have played an important role in changing the obsolete notions. Awareness and modernization have had a major



Food Technology students performing laboratory experiments.

SHOWKAT SHAFI/IUST

contribution in this regard.

“Many parents support their daughters for making their careers in technology. Their vision has broadened over the years, which should be seen as a positive change,” says a sociologist at University of Kashmir.

Employment opportunity is seen as another reason for the change. In Kashmir, nowadays employed girls are frequently preferred for marriages over non-working girls. And it is believed that technological courses offer more employment opportunities than others.

While interacting with this reporter, the girls seemed to be enthusiastic about making their

career in the field of technology. “This is the era of technology and to learn technology is the need of the hour,” believes Fiza Qadri, B. Tech E&C student.

Lubna Bashir, a Civil Engineering student, believes that girls are capable enough to work at par with men. “We have already proved ourselves. And many a time we have performed better than boys,” she says.

No doubt the trend is changing, but there is still a lot more to do. Apart from giving women access to information and resources, they should be provided with chance to take important decisions as well. *✍️*

Int’l Spiritual Studies Centre opens at IUST

NAYEEM SHOWKAT KHAN

With an aim to promote spiritual teachings and ethical values, the Islamic University of Science and Technology has opened an International Centre for Spiritual Studies (ICSS). The first of its kind in the world, ICSS is an academic and research oriented centre with a mandate of working on spiritual issues.

The ICSS aims at exposing the university students to various dimensions of spiritual manifestations.

“The centre will help acquaint the students with the traits of patience, tolerance, brotherhood, respect for all and togetherness, which will certainly make them distinct from other individuals,” said Dr Iqbal Qureshi, incharge ICSS and Assistant Registrar Admissions, IUST.

He added that the ICSS emphasized the importance of moral and spiritual values amongst students to help them have contentment in their lives. “Teaching moral and spiritual values is our top priority, for it helps to bring people together—be it at their homes or in social and economic

spheres,” he said, and added that it was a must to inculcate moral values in students, “which will persist and influence their lives afterwards.”

ICSS, he said, also endeavors to pursue quality research to unearth the contribution of Saints, Sufis and Sages towards turning “the conflicting world into a heavenly abode, full of tranquility, love and patience.”

The centre is envisaged with multidimensional scope of activities that have the potential of introducing IUST to various prestigious institutions world-over. “ICSS can

not only strengthen the legacy of ancestors, but also become the hub of intellectual growth in this region in order to emerge as a coherent representative of spiritual enlightenment,” said Dr Qureshi.

He further said that the varsity was seriously considering making ‘Moral and Spiritual Studies’ a compulsory and non-credit course for all its students. “Infact, we have already framed syllabus for the course. To start with, we shall have a zero period, which shall be attended by the interested students from all the departments,” he said. *✍️*

CAMPUS TALENT

NAAZ: Making IUST proud

AAMIR ASHRAF GUJRI

*"Kashmir Mein Bohat
Talent Hai;
Kashmiri Logon Ko Apne Aap
Par Naaz Hona Chahiye."*

These words of a Delhi-based musician inspired a group of young Kashmiri boys to name their music band *Naaz*. Perhaps the word *Naaz*, meaning pride in Urdu, was enough to encourage them to make music their career.

Hailing from different areas of Kashmir, the seven boys, passionate about music, met at different stages of life. Some met at school, others at a higher secondary school and the rest at Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora. Finally a band of singers and instrumentalists was formed.

The band comprises of Asrar Farooqi (band manager), Ahrar Wani (vocalist), Nawab Hussain (lead guitarist), Mustansar Khan (violinist), Umar Majid (rhythm guitarist), Abid Lone (drummer) and Arshan Qazi (keyboard maintainer). Five of the boys are currently pursuing B.Tech from IUST,



which is also a meeting place for all members of the band.

It was their childhood dream to be musicians. "In order to realize this dream, we would save each penny from our pocket money to buy musical instruments for our band, which included guitar, piano, keyboard and others that cost us about Rs one lakh," said Nawab Hussain.

The group has learnt playing musical instruments mostly by themselves, with some help from

a friend Irfan, whom they regard as their teacher.

The boys do not just sing but also compose songs. The band has so far released two songs 'Yadein' and 'Tere Bina' and is currently working on two more songs.

Naaz has already performed live on various occasions. The group performed on the theme 'drug addiction' at a concert at SKICC, Srinagar, on June 18, 2011. On the occasion, they sang a Hindi song 'Nashaa' for which they were

highly appreciated.

Recently the band performed in the intra-university youth festival *Sonzal 2011* at University of Kashmir. "Besides, we have entertained people at Café Coffee Day, Hotel Vivanta, Lovely Professional University and many other venues," said Asrar Farooqi.

To mention, the band is officially registered with ReverbNation, a website that focuses on the independent music industry. *Echo*

2-day job fair held at IUST

AABID SULTAN

To help Kashmiri youth avail various job opportunities, a two-day job fair was held at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on November 14-15.

The fair was organized by Counselling and Placement Cell, IUST, in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), J&K State Council.

Vice Chancellor IUST, Prof A R Trag, inaugurated the event and commended the efforts of CII and various companies present on the occasion. "It is a matter of pride for the varsity to act as a forum for providing new job opportunities



Representatives of multi-national companies interacting with IUST students at job fair held at varsity on November 15, 2011.
AABID SULTAN/IUST

to the youth," the VC said.

Talking to *The Echo*, Coordinator, Counselling and Placement

Cell, Sehar Iqbal, said 80 students were shortlisted for the Human Resource interviews.

Head CII Kashmir Zone, Kurshid Dar, said they were looking forward to get 60 to 65 skilled and energetic aspirants recruited. "It is basically a recruitment drive and an initiative to attract more and more companies to Kashmir," he said. Several multinational companies like KPMG, Dr Lal Path Labs, Institute for Finance, Banking and Insurance, Aries Agro Ltd, Earth Infrastructure Limited and DFCPL attended the fair.

Nearly 400 enrolled and alumni students from IUST, University of Kashmir and allied colleges participated in the event. The aspirants had to first qualify a written test, then group discussion and were finally shortlisted in the interviews conducted by various companies. *Echo*



FAYAZ PEER/JUST

Shikargah emerging as potential tourist spot

JAVAID LONE

If you want to truly discover the nature and witness the most serene view of pine trees, come to Shikargah. Situated at a distance of three kilometers away from Tral in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, this undisturbed beauty was thrown open for the visitors in July 2011 after a gap of almost 21 years.

"Thank God this breathtaking beautiful destination is again, formally, accessible to the masses," exclaims Manzoor Ahmad, a native of Shikargah village.

Shikargah and its adjoining areas are said to have been hit highly by the armed conflict, hence were closed for as long as two decades. "Even the main road leading to this place was closed for the vehicular traffic near Tral," says Manzoor.

Shikargah literally means hunting place. Lying amid dense forests, Shikargah is looked after by the State Wildlife Department. In its efforts to preserve the endangered Kashmiri stag, a subspecies of red deer, popularly known as *Hangul*, from extinction, the state government has established the *Hangul* Rehabilitation Centre in the area.

"We are very serious about preserving the endangered animals, especially *Hangul*. And this breeding centre can be seen as a step in that direction," says a Wildlife department official.

However, soon after the formal inauguration of the breeding centre by the Minister of Forest, Environment and Ecology, Mian Altaf Ahmad, a four-month-old deer kept inside the centre was killed by a leopard. The deer was earlier shifted from Dachigam Wildlife Sanctuary for the inauguration ceremony of the park.

Shikargah used to be a favorite hunting ground of Maharaja Hari Singh, the last Dogra ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. He had built two bungalows at this scenic place. According to the locals, they housed numerous valuable assets, including carpets and wood carving and paper maché items. However, on the onset of armed rebellion in the state, the twin bungalows were gutted in a mysterious fire. The dilapidated plinth of the erstwhile structures is self explanatory of the fact. "Nobody knows what happened to the valuable assets in the bungalows," says an elderly man in late 70s.

Shikargah is now emerging as

an attractive tourist spot. This 'bountiful beauty' has always attracted the local schools of Tral and its adjoining areas. May to August is said to be the best time to visit Shikargah. "Almost on every day from June to September, we find students of local schools in large numbers visiting here for excursion," says Jarnail Singh, an orchardist.

Students find Shikargah a preferred place for picnics. "I like to visit the places with no hustle and bustle at all. The calmness of nature, the chirping of birds, the pristine spring waters and the shades of bushes have always attracted me and I find them all at Shikargah," shares Zubair Ahmad, a class eight student of Government Middle School, Tral.

Zubair, like many other visitors, wants to see this place developed. "I believe it is much better than Gulmarg, and has the potential to beat any tourist destination in the world, provided authorities pay some attention towards it," says visibly annoyed Zubair.

In order to make this location more attractive for the visitors, some school children want other wild animals too in the park. "Why only *Hangul*? The authorities must

provide a safe habitat to animals like bear and tiger as well, so that our wildlife is preserved for the coming generations," says Zainab, a student on excursion with her school.

Even as Shikargah has the potential to emerge as a world-class tourist destination, it lacks most of the basic infrastructure. There are not even washrooms and parking lots to cater the rush. "To make this place more attractive, government must create the best tourist infrastructure over here," says Muhammad Sulaiman, a resident of Pinglish. Sulaiman further adds that there is an immediate need of widening the road connecting Shikargah with Tral. "This road being narrow, at times it becomes difficult for the vehicles coming from the opposite directions to pass by," laments Sulaiman.

Time has now come for Shikargah to be developed as a full-fledged wildlife park on the lines of Dachigam Wildlife Park, keeping in view its location, terrain and geography. Besides, eco-friendly tourism needs to be promoted in the area. Such steps will not only prove useful for the ecological balance, but will also boost tourism-related activities in the area. *Etjho*



Around the Campus

SBS HOLDS SEMINAR ON YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In an endeavor to highlight the need for entrepreneurship in Kashmir, the School of Business Studies organized a one-day seminar 'Youth Entrepreneurship: The Initiative' on November 2 at university auditorium.

The seminar was attended by entrepreneurs from various business establishments, who emphasized the need for entrepreneurship in growing economies. Director Kashmir Sunilk Industries, Sheikh Imran, said the J&K economy would grow only after need-based industries would be set-up in the valley. "We also need to focus on value-addition of our local products to get the good revenue," he said.

Vice Chancellor, IUST, Prof A R Trag, said horticulture, dairy and handicrafts sectors had a huge potential for entrepreneurship projects. He added that the valley faced acute food-grain shortage every year, "so there is a good scope for young entrepreneurs to enter this sector."

IUST CELEBRATES NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY

To mark the birth anniversary of first Education Minister of independent India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Islamic University of Science and Technology celebrated the 'National Education Day' on November 14.

On the occasion, professors from various departments of the varsity spoke on the 'Life and Work' of Maulana Azad. Speakers threw light on his contribution towards Indian education system and literature, and his role in freedom struggle. Later students participated in a symposium and were awarded certificates.

HELP POOR ORGANIZES SEMINAR

In order to draw people's attention towards the plight of deprived people in Kashmir, the Help Poor Voluntary Trust organized a one-day seminar 'Help Us to Save Lives' on November 18. The members of the trust highlighted various issues faced by poor sections of the society.

President of the trust, Farooq Ahmad Bhat, enlightened the students about various means for the welfare of poor people. "We need to reach out to the poor and needy people in villages and towns to provide them help of all sorts and thus fulfill our social responsibility," he said. He also thanked IUST students for being sensitive towards the issue.

Some other members of the trust, Abdul Raheem Bhat, Fayaz Ahmad Mir, Sheikh Muhammad Amin and Umar Nissar, were also present on the occasion.

IUST STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN VIRSA

A group of 35 IUST students participated in VIRSA—one of the biggest youth festivals of Association of Indian Universities (AIU)—at Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar Punjab. The five-day festival was participated by 26 Indian universities on November 22-26. The students participated in various cultural and other competitions. Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar was declared as the winner of AIU's 27th Inter-University Zonal Youth Festival.

The IUST students were accompanied by two faculty members, Dr Afroz Bisati, Assistant Professor, Islamic Studies and Nowsheen Nabi, Assistant Professor, English department. "It was a great experience for the university to participate in such a huge event. The purpose was to elicit the hidden talent of our students," said Dr Bisati.

A Journalism student, Is'haq Bhat, said, "It felt great to know and interact with the students of the other universities. We are looking forward to participate in more of such events."

JOURNALISM STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN FILM MAKING WORKSHOP

Third semester Journalism students participated in a two-day film-making workshop on Climate Change by noted filmmaker Nitin Das on November 28-29, organized by Climate Change Forum, British Council at University of Kashmir. The workshop was attended by 26 participants from various institutions of the valley and from the civil society, which included four students from the department of Journalism, namely Umar Khalid, Umer Wani, Sabaa Malik and Fayaz Ahmad.

The event included screening of documentaries on 'Climate Change Challenge: Adapting Cities, Conserving Water Resources.' A panel discussion presided over by Prof Talat Ahmad, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, was held after the screening of the documentaries, during which the panelists discussed various facets of the issues highlighted in the films.

To mention, the workshop was a part of the two-day event 'Climate Change Challenges.' Meanwhile, a poster competition and an exhibition were also held on the theme of environment on the sidelines of the event.

IUST PAYS TRIBUTE TO HAZRAT IMAM HUSSAIN

To commemorate the sacrifice made by Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and his 72 companions, who attained martyrdom on 10th of Muharram in 61st Hijra year, the department of Arabic organized a one-day seminar at university auditorium on December 2.

The seminar titled 'Imam Hussain (AS)—The Paragon of Virtue and Peace' was presided over by Prof Muhammad Amin Masoodi, Registrar IUST, whereas Prof K K S Jamal, Dean Students Welfare, IUST, was the chief guest on the occasion.

In his presidential address, Prof Masoodi threw light on the battle of Karbala and said the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) was a struggle between truth and falsehood.

Among other speakers were Prof W A Alvi, Chief Librarian, Dr Iqbal Qureshi, Assistant Registrar Admissions and Prof Abdul Majeed Andrabi, Assistant Professor, Arabic department. On the occasion, students from various departments also talked about the teachings and martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS).

HDFC BANK VICE PREZ DELIVERS GUEST LECTURE

Sales market has the potential of making the individual an entrepreneur without any financial risk and one has enough autonomy to be the boss of him or herself. This was stated by Zubair Iqbal, Vice President, HDFC Bank Ltd, while delivering a guest lecture on 'Sales as Career Option' on December 2. The session was organized by School of Business Studies for MBA and BBA students.

While emphasizing the need for developing creativity and adoption of changes in the market, he said, "You can achieve heights with your creativity and your performance decides your promotion."

Some other guests, who interacted with students on the occasion, were Showkat Nahvi, Deputy Vice President, HDFC Bank and Adil Nisar, Branch Manager, HDFC Bank Pulwama.

PLACEMENT CELL HOSTS

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Keeping in view the inception of new internship session, Counselling and Placement Cell organized a personality development programme for the university students at auditorium on December 7.

A delegation from the Indian Institute of Planning and Management (IIPM), New Delhi, provided training to students on personality development and interview preparation.

The IIPM team was headed by Mehul Ravi, Senior Manager, IIPM. Ravi stressed on the importance of communication skills, positive attitude and confidence for grooming and presentation of personality. Besides students, the session was also attended by the IUST staffers.

Compiled by AABID SULTAN and
NAYEEM SHOWKAT KHAN

'My hard work paid off'

Indian cricketer and Jharkhand Ranji captain Saurabh Sunil Tiwary recently visited Kashmir to represent his home team in Ranji Trophy Plate League. The 22-year-old left-handed middle order batsman shares his cricketing experiences in an exclusive interview with The Echo reporter **Is'haq Bhat**.

YOU HAVE PLAYED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN KASHMIR. HOW DID YOU FEEL?

It was a great experience. I was really very excited, since it was my dream to visit Kashmir. There is a famous saying that if there is a heaven on earth, it is Kashmir. I especially loved the weather conditions over here; they are perfect for cricket.

HOW WAS IT LIKE PLAYING AT SHER-I-KASHMIR CRICKET STADIUM?

It was awesome. The stadium has got the world-class wicket and a green out-field, surrounded by natural beauty. But yes, there are still so many things to be done to meet the demands of cricket in modern times.

WHAT ABOUT THE CROWD?

The crowd was again awesome besides being encouraging and enthusiastic as well. Even when I reached Kashmir, I was received by an overwhelming crowd. I must say that Kashmiri people are very passionate about cricket. Even though the match between Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir was called off due to rain, this did not reduce the level of enthusiasm in the spectators.

YOU HAVE BEEN A PART OF TEAM INDIA, IPL MUMBAI INDIANS AND JHARKHAND RANJI TEAM. DO YOU FEEL ANY DIFFERENCE?

Ofcourse, these are three different levels of the cricketing world. The main difference lies in the standard and the level of competition. As one moves ahead in career, he constantly needs to improve and prove his caliber to sustain.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CRICKETING CAREER?

Well, I was barely 11 when I represented Jharkhand at Under-14 level. Later, however, I was dropped consistently for next two years. But I did not lose hope and continued to look for an opportunity. My struggle and hard work paid off and I was selected for Under-17 state team. I made my debut in first-class cricket on December 1, 2006. I also got an opportunity to play for India Under-19 team and win the Under-19 Cricket World Cup in 2008. My biggest dream came true on



Saurabh Sunil Tiwary

October 20, 2010, when I made my debut in one-day international cricket against Australia in Visakhapatnam. Though I am not currently a part of Team India squad, I am working very hard for it. I am hopeful to get selected for Team India in the forthcoming season and serve my nation once again (*Smiles*).

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE FOR UPCOMING CRICKETERS?

As a cricketer, my message to them is that they should work hard and move ahead with a positive approach. They should not be worried about results. Rather they should focus on their performance. Let me tell you, consistency is very important for a cricketer to sustain in the field. No doubt there are always ups and downs in the world, but a cricketer should never lose his self-confidence. *Etjo*

○ The Echo should have an e-paper as well, so that a lot more people can have access to the newspaper.

**Um Roommana Sulaiman,
Student, department of Journalism**

○ The university library should be equipped with more books and useful material.

**Danish Nabi, Student,
Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies**

○ There must be some newspapers and journals to read in the reading room of the boys' hostel, which it is lacking at present.

**Nayeem Showkat Khan, Student,
department of Journalism**

○ A spacious auditorium must be available



in the university for organizing events.

**Tabeen Shah, Student, B.Tech
Electronics and Communication**

○ There should be more than two counters available for depositing fees.

**Asma Andrabi, Student, B.Tech Civil
Engineering**

○ Winter vacations must be there for all the staffers of the varsity, including those of the administration block.

**Moazam Qadri, Networking
Engineer, IT department**

**As told to SABAA MALIK
Readers can send their suggestions and
remarks to echo.iust@gmail.com**

Weaving Treasures

The handmade carpets of Kashmir are famous throughout the world for their designs and softness. The craft of carpet weaving in Kashmir is believed to have been acquired from Persia. The designs on the Kashmiri carpets are mostly local variations of Persian themes. The most special quality of Kashmiri carpets is that they are always knotted and not tufted. The knotting of the carpets determines their durability as well as value. The more knots per square inch, the higher is the carpet's price. Though quite expensive, Kashmiri carpets are undeniably a lifetime investment. **PHOTOS BY SHOWKAT SHAFI**

