



Ropeway Project to Vaishno Devi Shrine | Jammu & Kashmir | 19 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, a **shutdown was observed in Katra** to oppose a ropeway that **will connect Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat**, along the 12-kilometre steep track of the [Vaishno Devi shrine](#), in the Jammu region.

Key Points

- **Protest Against Ropeway Project:**
 - **The Vaishno Devi Trek Mazdoor Union**, voiced opposition to the **ropeway project**, stating it threatens the livelihood of over 60,000 families, including hoteliers, shopkeepers, pony operators, laborers, and transporters.
 - The **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti** called for a shutdown in Katra, which disrupted business in the local market.
 - **Withdrawal of Shutdown Call:**
 - The Samiti withdrew the shutdown after receiving fresh assurances from local authorities.
 - The Deputy Commissioner requested five days to analyze their demands, according to Samiti members.
- **Shrine Board Meeting Chaired by Lieutenant Governor:**
 - J&K [Lieutenant Governor](#) chaired the **73rd Meeting of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board at Raj Bhawan**.
 - The Lieutenant Governor inaugurated new **pilgrim-centric facilities** and **laid the foundation stone for a new exit track** aimed at decongesting the Bhawan area.
- **Board's Decisions and Future Plans:**
 - The **Shrine Board conducted** a comprehensive review of its previous decisions but did not issue a specific statement on the ongoing protests in Katra.
 - The Lieutenant Governor emphasized improving transparency and efficiency to enhance the pilgrim experience.
- **MoU to Address Landslides:**
 - The Board approved a tripartite **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the [Geological Survey of India \(GSI\)](#) and [THDC India Limited \(THDCIL\)](#).
 - The MoU **aims to identify and treat slopes vulnerable to landslides and rockfalls** along the Yatra route between Adhkuwari and Bhawan.

Vaishno Devi Temple

- The temple is **located at 5,200 feet in the Trikuta mountains**, sees over one crore visitors annually, with a **12 km trek from Katra**.
 - **Key Landmarks:** Darshani Deodhi, Banganga, Chara Paduka, Indraprastha, Adhkuari, Garbha Joon, Himkoti, Haathi Matha, Sanji Chhat Bhavan, Sher ka Panja and Bhairon Mandir.
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Migratory Birds in Hokersar Wetland | Jammu & Kashmir | 19 Dec 2024

Why in News?

The [Hokersar wetland](#) in Srinagar has transformed into a **haven for numerous migratory birds**, drawing the attention of locals and [tourists](#) alike.

Key Points

- **Winter Arrival of Migratory Birds:**
 - Many **migratory birds from foreign countries flock to Hokersar wetland** during winter, making it a popular destination.
 - The wetland serves as a **crucial stopover** along the Central Asian Flyway, **providing food, shelter, and breeding grounds** for avian travelers.
- **Ideal Habitat for Birds:**
 - Hokersar's rich flora and diverse water bodies make it a perfect refuge for species like the [Siberian crane](#), [bar-headed goose](#), and various ducks.
- **Conservation Efforts:**
 - Local authorities and conservation groups are working to **protect Hokersar from threats like pollution and encroachment**.
 - Initiatives such as habitat restoration and proactive water management are vital to maintaining the wetland's ecological health.
 - The [Forest Protection Force](#) has been deployed to ensure the safety of the birds and prevent [poaching](#).

Hokersar Wetland

- **Location:**
 - The Hokersar wetland, a [Ramsar site](#), is situated in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It is **also known as the 'Queen Wetland of Kashmir'**.
- **Geographic Setting:**
 - It is a natural, perennial **wetland that is part of the Jhelum basin** and is located in the **northwest Himalayan biogeographic province of Kashmir**, at the foot of the snow-draped [Pir Panjal range](#).
- **Water Source:**
 - The wetland receives water from the [Doodhganga River](#), a tributary of the [Jhelum](#).
- **Flora and Fauna:**
 - It is **home to the last remaining reedbeds of Kashmir** and serves as a **critical pathway for 68 waterfowl species**.
 - These birds, **migrating from regions like Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Europe**, include species such as the **little cormorant**, [common shelduck](#), large egret, and **great crested grebe**.
 - The wetland is **vital for local biodiversity**, offering food sources, spawning grounds, and nurseries for fish, along with breeding habitats for various species.