

Shat Chandi Maha Yagya Commences at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine amid Spiritual Fervour

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 11

The nine-day Shat Chandi Maha Yagya commenced at the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi on Sunday, marking the beginning of Shardiya Navratras amid religious fervour and spiritual devotion.

Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; other senior officers and staff of the Shrine Board, besides pilgrims were present on the occasion.

The sacred Yagya, organised by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) for universal peace, prosperity, harmony and the well-being of humanity, commenced with traditional Vedic rituals and chanting of sacred hymns at the Yagyashala situated at the Holy Shrine.

The religious ceremony will continue throughout the nine-day Navratra festival and culminate with Purnahuti on Mahanavami. Devotees can witness the proceedings live on Shradha MH One channel daily from 12:00 Noon to 2:00 PM throughout the Navratras.

As per directions of the Hon'ble Chairman SMVDSB (Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Jammu & Kashmir UT), several inclusive and facilitative measures have been implemented to enhance the pilgrimage experience. These included



complimentary pony and battery car services for differently-abled devotees, priority access to darshan at the sanctum sanctorum and the establishment of dedicated help desks at key locations to assist pilgrims at large. Besides, comprehensive arrangements have been put in place to ensure a safe, smooth and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage experience for devotees arriving from different parts of the country and abroad.

The Shrine Board has consistently emphasised the importance of strengthening pilgrim-centric infrastructure, improving essential amenities and ensuring that every devotee visiting the Holy Shrine receives a comfortable and hassle-free pilgrimage experience. Additionally, the Shrine Board has under-

taken extensive preparations covering accommodation, sanitation, drinking water, medical assistance, security, crowd management and other essential services along the pilgrimage track and at the Holy Shrine. The Shrine Board has also strengthened medical services and emergency response teams stationed at strategic points to provide timely assistance to pilgrims. To facilitate the smooth movement of devotees, adequate arrangements have been made for registration, queue management, accommodation and transportation services. The Bhawan, Atka and surrounding areas have been adorned with indigenous and exotic fruits and flowers, elaborate reception gates and decorative pandals. The entire

Bhawan complex has been illuminated with vibrant façade lighting, offering a visually captivating experience for pilgrims.

As in previous years, devotional performances including Bhajans and Bhaints by renowned artists are being held during the morning and evening Atka Aarti, adding to the spiritual fervor of the celebrations.

During his visit, the CEO, Shrine Board interacted with pilgrims to assess the arrangements and expressed satisfaction with the facilities being provided at both Bhawan and Katra.

The auspicious occasion witnessed an overwhelming response from devotees, with 47,346 pilgrims paying obeisance at the Holy Shrine on the first day of the festival.

Bukhari seeks compensation for hailstorm-hit farmers, orchardists

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Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Friday expressed deep concern over the extensive damage caused to crops and orchards by the recent hailstorm. He also expressed grief over a fire incident in Sempora, Sopore, where an apple storage shed was gutted, causing massive losses to the stored produce. He urged the authorities to assess the losses promptly and ensure adequate com-

ensation and timely assistance for the affected farmers and orchardists.

In his statement, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, "I am saddened to learn that the devastating hailstorm on Thursday has caused extensive damage to standing crops and orchards in several villages across North and South Kashmir, particularly in parts of Sopore and Shopian."

He further said, "The damage to apple crops is especially heartbreaking, as it comes just weeks be-

fore the peak harvesting season, when orchardists were preparing to reap the rewards of their hard work."

Apni Party President also expressed deep sorrow over the fire incident in Sempora, Sopore, where an apple storage shed containing harvested produce was gutted, resulting in substantial financial losses for the affected fruit grower. "Equally distressing is the fire incident in Sempora, Sopore, where a major apple storage shed filled with harvested produce was gut-

ted following a short circuit in a power transformer amid rain and gusty winds. The incident has caused huge financial losses to the affected fruit grower," he said.

Calling for immediate relief, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, "I urge the authorities to assess the losses without delay and provide adequate compensation to the affected farmers and orchardists. They must receive timely assistance to recover from these losses and safeguard their livelihoods."

IIM Jammu Concludes Mid-Career Leadership Development Programme for SAIL Officials

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The Indian Institute of Management Jammu concluded the Mid-Career Leadership Development Programme (Batch V) for officials of the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), held from October 5 to 9, 2026, at IIM Jammu. The valedictory session was presided over by Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean, Faculty and Research, IIM Jammu, in the presence of Dr. Ramswarup Bhaskar, Programme Director, and Dr. Ashish Kumar, Co-Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy, IIM Jammu. The training program consisted of 48 participants

Prof. Jabir Ali, Programme Chair and Dean, Faculty and Research, IIM Jammu, presented the programme summary report, highlighting its key aspects and learning outcomes. Emphasizing the importance of translating learning into action, he noted that the conclusion of the



programme was not the end of the learning journey but its beginning, encouraging participants to apply the knowledge and insights gained during the programme in their professional roles.

Dr. Ashish Kumar, Co-Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy, IIM Jammu, provided an overview of the Institute's Executive Education initiatives and highlighted its commitment to continuous

learning and professional development. He encouraged the participants to apply their learnings in their respective roles and wished them success in their future endeavours.

The participants shared their reflections on the programme, highlighting their experiences and key takeaways from the training. The session concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Ramswarup Bhaskar, Programme Di-

rector, who acknowledged the contributions of all those involved in the conduct of the programme.

Through programmes such as the Mid-Career Leadership Development Programme, IIM Jammu continues to strengthen its engagement with public sector organisations and contribute to leadership development, managerial effectiveness, and capacity building among working professionals.

Samba District Athletics Championship Concludes

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The Samba District Athletics Championship was successfully organised at Sports Stadium, Smailpur, by the District Samba Athletics Association under the aegis of the J&K Amateur Athletics Association. A total of 110 athletes participated in the championship.

International Coach and Technical Official Sh. Nirmal Singh graced the occasion as Chief Guest, while Sh. Gautam Raj, General Secretary, Samba Athletics Association, was the Guest of Honour.

In the Under-14 Boys category, Divansh won gold, Sahil silver and Suryaveer bronze in Triathlon A. In Triathlon



B, Sarfraz secured gold, Divyansh silver and Ayan bronze. In Triathlon C, Arun won gold, Om Prakash silver and Vipul bronze. In the Under-14 Girls category, Aarika won gold and Gunjan silver in Triathlon B.

In the Under-16 Boys category, Anmol won gold

and Adhyan silver in the 60m race. In Shot Put, Utkarsh secured gold, Kanhaiya silver and Adhyan bronze. In Javelin Throw, Adhyan won gold, Kanhaiya silver and Utkarsh bronze.

The championship was conducted by qualified technical officials Mr.

Rakesh Singh, Mr. Sahil Sharma, Mr. Nitin Saini, Mr. Gaurav Singh, Mr. Rahul Charak, Mr. Goldy Singh and Mr. Vishwamittr Bhagat. The event aimed to promote athletics and provide young athletes with a platform to showcase their talent in NIDJAM.

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The Delphic Council of Jammu & Kashmir organised an Interstate Multilingual Kavi Sammelan at Government College for Women (GCW), Parade Ground, Jammu, bringing together eminent poets, writers, artists, cultural personalities and literature enthusiasts on a common platform to celebrate India's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. The programme was graced by Sham Lal Sharma, MLA Jammu North and Former Minister, J&K, as the Chief Guest, while Yudhviri Sethi, MLA Jammu East, presided over the function. Sohail Kazmi, Editor-in-Chief of Daily Taskeen, attended as the Guest of Honour, and Yassir Siddiqui of DAB International LLC FZ was the Special Guest.

Welcoming the distinguished guests and participants, Er. Ashok Singh, President, Delphic Council of J&K, said that the objective of the Kavi Sammelan was not merely to celebrate poetry but to use literature as a bridge connecting people, languages and cultures. He observed that when poets from different linguistic and geographical backgrounds share a common platform, their expressions transcend linguistic barriers, as emotions and human experiences remain universal. Poets from various states and Jammu & Kashmir presented their compositions in multiple languages, creating an atmosphere of literary richness, cultural harmony and mutual appreciation while reflecting



the spirit of "Unity in Diversity."

Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Sham Lal Sharma appreciated the Delphic Council for organising the event and bringing together poets and literary personalities from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. He emphasised that art, literature and poetry are powerful mediums of expression that transcend linguistic barriers, promote mutual understanding and strengthen the bonds of unity and brotherhood. He further highlighted the importance of preserving India's rich cultural heritage and encouraging the younger generation to participate in literary and cultural activities, observing that such initiatives nurture creativity, recognise emerging talent and contribute towards building a harmonious and culturally vibrant society.

Presiding over the function, Yudhviri Sethi, MLA Jammu East, appreciated the Council for providing a common platform for poets, writers and literary personalities from different

states and linguistic backgrounds. He emphasised that literature, poetry and cultural expressions play a vital role in strengthening social harmony, promoting mutual understanding and fostering unity among people. Highlighting the importance of preserving India's literary traditions and encouraging cultural exchange, he stressed the need to engage young people in art and literature to nurture creativity and appreciation for the country's diverse heritage. Sohail Kazmi highlighted the role of literature and the media in strengthening social harmony and preserving cultural values, while Yassir Siddiqui appreciated the Council's initiatives connecting culture, creativity and the younger generation.

Speaking about the Council's achievements, Er. Ashok Singh said that the Delphic Council of J&K has consistently worked to promote music, performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, folk traditions and cultural heritage. He referred to initiatives such as Virasat-e-Jammu & Kashmir,

comprising 36 episodes, alongside literary programmes, cultural events and youth-oriented activities that have provided opportunities for established artists and emerging talents to showcase their creativity.

He added that the Council remains committed to reaching talented individuals in rural and remote areas and providing them with opportunities at regional, national and international platforms.

Emphasising the connection between culture and social responsibility, Er. Singh said that the Council aims to channel the energy of young people into constructive and creative pursuits. "We want our youth to have art in their hands, creativity in their minds and hope in their hearts. Our message is simple—Say No to Drugs and Yes to Life," he said. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks to the distinguished guests, participating poets, artists, Council members, media representatives and all those who contributed to the event's success.

DSST to organise 12th Chhari Mubarak Yatra of Maa Vankhandi on Oct 16

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Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust, continuing its annual religious tradition, is organizing the 12th Chhari Mubarak Yatra of Maa Vankhandi on Friday, October 16. The sacred procession will commence from Gangyal, Jammu, and proceed towards Shantivan, located in the Mahanpur-Basohli area of District Kathua, where devotees will seek the blessings of Maa Vankhandi.

The sacred shrine of Maa Vankhandi at Shantivan holds immense religious significance and is a centre of deep faith and devotion for devotees. The temple of Sita Mata, situated at the same holy site, also holds special religious and spiritual importance. The annual yatra, organized by Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust, is a significant initiative to preserve and promote the region's rich religious traditions, Sanatan culture, and spiritual heritage.

On this occasion, BJP



Jammu & Kashmir General Secretary and former Deputy Mayor of Jammu, Baldev Singh Billawaria, appealed to devotees and people with religious faith to participate in the sacred Chhari Mubarak Yatra in large numbers, seek the blessings of Maa Vankhandi and Sita Mata, and become part of this auspicious religious occasion.

Billawaria said that religious pilgrimages are a reflection of India's rich

Sanatan culture, spiritual heritage, and social unity. Such events not only connect devotees with their age-old religious traditions but also strengthen the values of mutual harmony, brotherhood, and selfless service in society.

He appreciated the efforts of Dogra Sewa Sambhal Trust for consistently carrying forward this cherished religious tradition, stating that such initiatives play a vital role in preserving the

region's cultural legacy and passing on its spiritual and religious values to future generations.

Billawaria further prayed to Maa Vankhandi for happiness, peace, prosperity, and well-being in the lives of all devotees. He urged the people to participate wholeheartedly in the sacred yatra and contribute to making the religious event a grand, successful, and spiritually fulfilling occasion.