

# LG reviews dev projects, welfare schemes in Baramulla

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**  
BARAMULLA: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday chaired a meeting with District Administration Baramulla and reviewed the progress of development projects and welfare schemes in the district.

The meeting was attended by Safina Baig, DDC Chairperson, Baramulla; Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Heads of various departments and senior officers of Civil and Police administration.

The Lt Governor directed the officials to focus on education, capacity building, healthcare, tourism sector and implementation of Holistic Agriculture Development programme to enhance the urban-rural growth.

Benefits of social welfare schemes must reach the people without any delay, he added.

Greater availability of educational opportunities to all marginalized and weaker sections of society is the key to improve literacy rate and to create a better future for our children. Administration at all level should work in a cohesive manner to ensure that every child has access to



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha chairing a meeting with District Administration Baramulla.

## Effective, transparent, accountable governance our commitment: Sinha

BARAMULLA: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that effective, transparent and accountable governance system is our commitment to generate growth and bring far greater prosperity for people across the Union Territory.

"Empowerment of socially disadvantaged community is a top priority on the agenda of administration and with the focus on overall economic growth we are ensuring that no section of society is left behind," the Lt Governor said while inaugurating and laying foundation stone of various infrastructure projects worth more than Rs 43 Crore at Baramulla.

"Baramulla has undergone a historic transformation over the past few years, with new infrastructure, boost in local economy, reform in agriculture, tourism and trade. Better opportunities for youth, women and farmers have redefined its identity and turned it into a hub of prosperity and strength," the Lt Governor said.

He said the J&K Administration is working round the clock to build social and economic infrastructure for a better tomorrow.

The Lt Governor handed over the land allotment orders to the landless beneficiaries of PMAY-G and sanction letters under various

schemes among the beneficiaries at Dak Bungalow. Sinha laid foundation stone for multiple road projects costing Rs 31.7 crore under NABARD RIDF-XXVIII including Up-gradation of Inner Links at Krankshivan Panzipora & Wagub road; Tarzoo Haritar Ningli Road including Tarzoo Hospital Link road & Allied Links, and Hygam Trumbgund Rangri road including Inner Links Hygam Wetlands Reserve Rakh Hygam.

The projects inaugurated by Lt Governor today are Pavilion/Podium at District Police Line Baramulla; NTPHC Zehanpora; Water Supply Schemes at Migrant Colony Veervan and Transit Accommodation Fatehpura and Renovated Gulmarg Club.

The Lt Governor also released publications of Tourism and Sheep Husbandry Departments.

Safina Baig, DDC Chairperson, Baramulla; Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Heads of various departments and senior officers of Civil and Police administration were present.

quality education, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor directed the District Administration to tap the tourism potential of border areas, wetlands, and places of heritage and religious importance in the district.

He directed the officials to intensify the efforts to uproot the evil of drugs from the society. He said the districts should compete in a healthy manner for beautification of towns and maintaining cleanliness in and around public places and water bodies.

The Lt Governor also reviewed the winter preparedness of the district administration, concerned departments and directed for execution of coordinated action plans for uninterrupted supply of basic amenities during winter.

Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla presented a comprehensive overview of the developmental scenario in the district. She also briefed the Lt Governor on the progress of Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri NHW Expressway and other key projects.

Later, several delegations comprising of PRI representatives; Fruit Growers Association Sopore; PM Package employees and Civil Society members called on the Lt Governor and projected their concerning issues and demands.

Joe Biden lands in Israel



## IGP Jammu Zone holds interactive session with Jammu-based journalists



IGP Jammu Zone, Anand Jain posing with Jammu media fraternity and other officers.

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu Zone, Anand Jain, facilitated an engaging and informative meeting with the Jammu district media community at the Police G.O's Mess, Gulshan Ground, Jammu, earlier on Wednesday.

Members from the realms of print, electronic, and digital media graced the event and took the opportunity to

share their concerns and challenges with IGP Jammu. The media fraternity lauded the noticeable improvements in the Jammu crime landscape.

IGP Jammu attentively listened to the issues raised by the media and assured them of prompt resolutions to their concerns and expressed genuine openness to the suggestions put forth during the interactive session.

The IGP said that he would continue to hold such sessions in future as well so that there is an exchange of ideas from both sides. He stressed upon use of technology in the police functioning so that effective delivery of citizen centric services are made.

DIG, JSK Shakti Pathak and all prominent media persons from print and electronic media participated in the interaction.

# Navratra Festival 2023: A celebration of culture, devotion, blending culture, spirituality, tradition

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**  
KATRA: The Navratra Festival 2023, a magnificent fusion of culture, spirituality, and tradition, has etched a lasting impression in the hearts of all who bore witness to its grandeur. This remarkable event was organised through the collaborative efforts of the Directorate of Tourism Jammu, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Katra, and the Divisional Administration Jammu.

On the fourth day of the Navratra Festival 2023, the vibrant Shobha Yatra took center stage.

Sunaina Sharma Mehta, Joint Director of Tourism, Jammu, graced this colorful procession, weaving together the rich tapestry of Hindu mythology. The streets resounded with spiritual chants as magnificent tableaux paraded, depicting the rich spiritual culture and traditions, leaving onlookers spellbound.

This grand event was attended by a distinguished gathering, including



Jt Director Tourism Jammu, Sunaina Sharma Mehta lighting ceremonial lamp at Katra.

Chairman of the Municipal Committee Katra, Vimal Indu; DDC Member Katra, Nirmala Devi; DDC Member Panthal, Rajinder Mengi; Superintendent of Police Katra, Vipan Chandra; SDM Katra, Deepak Dubey; AD Tourism Katra, Arif Lone; prominent citizens of Katra, and officials from the Department.

The magnetic charm of the festival drew a diverse crowd of tourists who eagerly joined the festivities in large numbers. Their resounding applause testified to the remarkable organization of the

Navratra Festival in Katra. Sunaina Sharma Mehta extended her warmest congratulations to the participants, commending their unwavering devotion to Navratri.

She emphasized the Navratra Festival's significance, stating that Navratra symbolizes the triumph of good over evil and the profound significance of devotion, attracting pilgrims due to the divine presence of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji.

She further added, This year, we've expanded the Navratra festivities beyond Katra to encompass

Jammu, Samba, Udhampur, Kathua, and Bashedi. The Bashedi Ustav will feature Ramleela, Bashedi paintings and exquisite Pashmina shawls, offering a rich cultural experience for all, all while emphasizing the importance of environmental responsibility.

She was deeply moved by the enchanting presentation of Mata Ki Kahani by the renowned Natrang theatre group and while interacting with the artists, she acknowledged their exceptional talents.

Later, she visited the Yog Ashram Complex in Katra, where the All India Devotional Song Competition, a key highlight of the ongoing Navratra Festival, was in full swing. Singers captivated the audience with their soul-stirring devotional songs and bhajans, creating an atmosphere replete with spiritual bliss.

The day was replete with spiritually uplifting events, including a soul-stirring Parbhat Pheri in the early morning and an enchanting Bhagwat Katha in the evening at the sacred Durga Bhawan in Katra. Additionally, the festival featured a captivating

Ramleela performance at Hr. Sec School, Katra, a laser show and Multimedia Exhibition along with culturally rich programs thoughtfully curated by the Central Bureau of Communication. Audiences were enraptured by the soulful renditions of folk songs and mesmerizing dance performances by exceptionally talented artists hailing from Jammu and various parts of India.

Furthermore, a Mata ka Jagran was held at Chichi Mata Mandir in Udhampur.

The Navratra Festival 2023, a nine-day celebration, proudly showcased the rich cultural heritage and traditions of the region. The festivities will culminate on October 23, marked by fervor and enthusiasm at various locations, including Katra, Jammu, Kishtwar and Kathua.

With the active support of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Katra and the Divisional Administration Jammu, the Directorate of Tourism Jammu extends its heartfelt gratitude to all those who played pivotal roles in making this festival an outstanding success. It stands as a true milestone in the celebration of tradition and spirituality.

## One more mile stone achieved by Northern Railway State-of-the-art all-weather glass-ceiling AC train-Vistadome-is ready to ply in Kashmir



■ **MASROOR AHMAD**  
BUDGAM: Marking a significant milestone in the era of development in J&K UT, Kashmir's first Vistadome coach to chug between Budgam to Baramulla stations, will be inaugurated today.

The officials revealed that the 40-seater couch will be inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha or Union Railway Minister while all the necessary arrangements in this regard have been finalized.

The Vistadome coach is a state-of-the-art coach made by Indian Railways, designed to provide passengers with travel comfort as well as an enhanced viewing experience of their surroundings.

"Northern Railways has conducted a successful trail run from Budgam to Baramulla and it was supervised by the higher officials of railways," he said.

The official said this special couch is equipped with extra-large glass windows, LED lights, rotatable seats, and inbuilt GPS-based information system.

"Both visitors and locals will find the trip to be comfortable and enjoyable due to its glass roof, LED lights, rotating seats, and GPS-based info system. This couch will add new features to promote Kashmir tourism," he said.

The officials at Railways revealed that the Vistadome coach has been manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai at an estimated cost of about Rs 4 crore. It is equipped with extra-large glass windows, LED lights, rotatable seats, and inbuilt GPS-based information system.

It will offer a welcome relief to travelers, shielding them from the scorching heat in summers and nail biting cold in winter.

Earlier in March, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had announced the upcoming operation of the country's first indigenous semi-high-speed train on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail route, anticipated to begin by the end of this year. He also mentioned that the Udhampur-Banihal track, connecting Jammu with Srinagar, would be completed by December this year or early next year.

Presently, 19 train services, including seven trains, operate regularly on the Baramulla-Banihal sector in Jammu and Kashmir, serving approximately 30,000 passengers daily, including students and commuters.

Kashmir inaugurated its first train service in 2013, a milestone marked by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway (USBRL) track is a significant project aimed at connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country and falls under the jurisdiction of the Firozpur Railway division of Indian Railways' Northern zone.

Notably, the 359-meter (1,178-foot) tall Chenab Bridge, upon completion, will become the tallest railway bridge in the world.

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The book "The 1998 Jammu Revolt: How Farooq Abdullah saved his government", authored by Prof Hari Om, former Dean of Jammu University's Faculty of Social Sciences and Head of History Department, was released on Wednesday at the Seminar Hall, Department of Computer Sciences, University of Jammu in an impressive function here.

It was attended by university teachers, leading members of Jammu civil society, and students, particularly those who had participated in the agitation and suffered immensely in the process.

The book throws light on the 1998 MBBS/BDS agitation. It was launched by Jammu Joint Students Federation (JJSF) students on February 28, 1998, and supported by Jammu University teachers, all sections of society, and Bar Association Jammu (BAJ), Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and transporters' associations. The agitation continued till May 6.

It was for the first time in the Jammu's political history



Prof Hari Om and other dignitaries releasing a book at Jammu on Wednesday.

that Jammu observed continuous Bandh for twelve day, and witnessed continuous chain hunger strike for 43 days and fast-unto-death for 30 days. It was also for the first time that educational institutions remained closed for 67 days and business establishments for 15 long days and the national highways were blocked. The participation of girl students in the agitation was on an unprecedented scale.

The 1998 agitation could be legitimately termed as the Jammu's crowning triumph, as it had brought the Farooq Abdullah Government to the knees of the people of Jammu province.

Such was the nature and

magnitude of the agitation that the mortally afraid Farooq Abdullah Government had to ignore the bitter Kashmiri opposition and pass bills on Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University and Agriculture University when the agitation was still on. This government would have surely collapsed, had it not passed these two historic bills.

The other demand was admission to the Jammu-based technical and professional institutions as per the admission rules as laid down by the Jammu and Kashmir University's Act of 1969. In other words, the demand was that all the seats available in Jammu province must be made the sole preserve of the

Jammu youth and all the seats available in Kashmir the sole preserve of Kashmiri youth.

The three-member committee set up by the Farooq Abdullah Government and headed by RP Singhal -- of which Late Prof DK Rampal of Jammu University's English Department was also a member -- did concede this demand in January 1999. It remains a matter of grave concern that the government didn't implement the Singhal Committee Report and that it has been gathering dust in the Secretariat ever since then.

The book The 1998 Jammu revolt also throws light on the nature of New

Delhi's Kashmir policy and the essentially negative attitude of certain elements in Jammu towards the needs, compulsions and aspirations of the people of Jammu province. These elements tried their best to puncture and derail the movement, but the determined students and university teachers defeated all their moves.

Those who spoke on the occasion included Prof Hari Om, the author, Advocate Rajinder Jamwal, former JJSF president, Hari Dutt Shishu, former Jammu University Research Scholars Association (JURSA), and Zorawar Singh Jamwal, Chairman, Team Jammu. The programme was anchored by Atul Sudan, JJSF Sr. Vice president, and the vote of thanks was delivered by Pushvinder Singh Manhas, president JJSF.

The 1998 Jammu Revolt was published by a leading publishing concern, Har Anand Publications of which Late Narendra Kumar was the founder. The book is available with Amazon and Sahitya Sangam, Kachi Chowni, Jammu.