

# 556th Parkash Purab of Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj celebrated in Jammu

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** The 556th Parkash Purab (birth anniversary) of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm at Gurudwara Yaadgar Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Chand Nagar, Jammu, under the auspices of the District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (DGPC), Jammu. A large number of Sangat (devotees) gathered to participate in the sacred Samagam, creating an atmosphere of spirituality, peace, and brotherhood.



Devotees visiting Gurudwara Yaadgar Guru Nanak Dev on 556th Parkash Purab.

The event was blessed by the presence of the Ragi Jatha from Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, who recited melodious Gurbani Kirtan. Hajoori Ragi Bhai Gurbej Singh and Bhai Balwinder Singh inspired the congregation with their soulful renditions. Kathawaachak Bhai Surinder Singh Panjokhra Sahib Wale also delivered enlightening Katha on the teachings and divine message of Guru Nanak Dev.

as preached by Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj. The Samagam witnessed participation from many distinguished personalities, including administrative officials and political leaders. Among those present were DIG Shiv Kumar, Congress Party President Tariq Hamid Karra, MLA Vikram Randhawa, and Shri Raman Bhalla Ji. Special messages were received from Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who could not attend the event personally due to the tragic demise of

the mother of Shami Oberoi, Member Rajya Sabha. Messages of greetings and best wishes for the Sangat were also shared by Mehbooba Mufti, and BJP President Sat Sharma, which were conveyed through MLA Vikram Randhawa and Charanjit Singh Khalsa. Several social and religious organizations set up stalls at the venue, distributing religious literature, medicines, and other assistance to the Sangat. The celebration reflected a strong spirit of Sarbat Da Bhala (welfare

of all) and communal harmony. Addressing the gathering, S. Ranjeet Singh Tohra, President of DGPC Jammu, extended heartfelt gratitude to all the devotees for their participation. He appealed to the Sangat to uphold the values of communal harmony, peace, and brotherhood, as taught by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He also encouraged the youth to remain united and work towards Panthic Ekta (unity of the Sikh community). The program was also

graced by Balwinder Singh (Vice President, DGPC Jammu), Surjeet Singh (Secretary), Ranvir Singh (Joint Secretary), Jagpal Singh (Treasurer), Avtar Singh, Harjeet Singh, Gurmeet Singh, and Karan Singh Bali, along with senior members of the DGPC Jammu and other prominent Panthic personalities. The celebration concluded with Ardas and distribution of GurKa langar, spreading the message of equality and universal brotherhood - the eternal teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.



## Kashmir rejects 30 years of bloodshed, misrule by NC, PDP, Congress, chooses Modi's path of peace and prosperity: Khatana

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**BUDGAM:** In a massive election rally organised by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at Budgam Bus Stand, Rajya Sabha MP and BJP Senior Leader Gulam Ali Khatana campaigned for BJP candidate Mohsin Aga ahead of the Budgam by-election, urging the people to support the party's vision of peace, progress, and inclusive development. The rally witnessed a huge turnout of BJP workers, youth, and local residents from across Budgam district.



Addressing the gathering, Khatana said that the people of Kashmir have finally rejected the thirty years of bloodshed, deceit, and misrule by the National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and Congress, and have embraced the vision of peace, prosperity, and development under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "For over three decades, NC, PDP, and Congress kept Kashmir bleeding for their political benefits. They divided people, destroyed the youth's future, and stopped progress. Today, the people of Kashmir have awakened. They want peace, jobs, and development, not bullets and slogans," he said.

National Conference leadership for betraying the trust of Budgam's people. "After the Assembly elections, Omar Abdullah resigned from the Budgam Assembly constituency and left the people to their fate. The same party that asked for people's votes abandoned them soon after victory. This shows how little they care about the welfare of ordinary citizens," he said. He added that people had given their mandate to NC for their betterment, but instead of serving them, the party misled and manipulated the public while doing no real work for their progress. Highlighting the BJP's commitment to empowering youth and ensuring inclusive development, Khatana said that the young generation of Kashmir represents the future and must be supported through education, entrepreneurship, and employment. He appealed to the people of Budgam to support BJP candidate Mohsin Aga in the upcoming by-election and strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Modi.

While speaking at the rally in Budgam, Khatana said that the National Conference is nothing more than a family-run party where oppor-

tunities are confined to a few individuals. "Due to this family interference, the marginalised sections of society never get a fair chance - only family members benefit. NC, PDP, and Congress are all family-based parties that have monopolised power and opportunities. For seventy years, these parties discriminated against the people of Budgam. Only the BJP can bring real development and justice to them," he said, drawing loud applause from the crowd. Khatana further criticised the

ing citizens under the shared emotion of nation-first. "No ideology, however rigid, can stand above the idea of India," he remarked. Gupta urged all educational institutions to proudly participate in the commemoration of Vande Mataram's 150th anniversary and teach students the true meaning of national pride, unity, and inclusivity. Gupta concluded, "Those who divide patriotism on religious lines insult the sacrifices of freedom fighters who gave their lives chanting Vande Mataram. The spirit of Bharat cannot be silenced by such regressive voices".

## Rashtriya Bajrang Dal seeks minority status for Vaishno Devi medical college, protests in Jammu

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** Demanding grant of "minority institution" status to the newly established Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME) to enable reservation of seats for Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir, the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (RBD) on Wednesday protested here against the admission list, alleging that nearly 70 per cent of the seats had been allotted to students from Kashmir.

therefore, no reservation criteria based on religion could be applied. The SMVDIME has been sanctioned 50 MBBS seats this year. The medical college, run by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), began its operations last year in Reasi district and is admitting its first MBBS batch in the academic session 2025-26.

reviewed. "We will not accept that a Shri Mata Vaishno Devi medical institute, built with the donations of Hindus, grants nearly 70 per cent seats to students from Kashmir. This is discrimination against the people of Jammu," Kumar told reporters.

He accused the Shrine Board and the government of the Union Territory of failing to grant the institute minority status on the pattern of Jamia Millia Islamia or Khalsa College, arguing that Hindus are a minority in Jammu and Kashmir. "The government has failed to recognise SMVDIME as a minority Hindu institution. We are unable to secure seats for our own children in a college built with our donations. This is a tragedy," he said.

The RBD warned of protests in Katra if the administration, particularly the Lieutenant Governor, did not intervene immediately. Officials, however, said admissions were made on merit as the institute has not been granted minority status and,

Led by RBD president Rakesh Kumar, scores of activists took out a rally in Jammu and protested what they termed "discrimination against Jammu", claiming that 32 out of 50 MBBS seats had gone to students from Kashmir. Carrying religious flags, the protesters raised slogans against the Shrine Board and warned of launching a wider agitation if the decision was not

up with any concrete tourism development proposal for Jammu, even though the region holds immense historical, cultural, and religious significance. "Why is there still no comprehensive plan for the tourism development of Jammu City? This apathy clearly reflects the discrimina-

tion attitude of the Omar Abdullah government towards the aspirations of the Jammu region," he asserted. The MLA said that while successive governments have focused extensively on promoting tourism in Kashmir, Jammu-which serves as the gateway to the state and hous-

## Yudhvir Sethi slams NC-led Govt for ignoring Jammu region

Questions delay in Heritage city status, tourism development for Jammu

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**NAGROTA:** Senior BJP leader and MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi, launched a sharp attack on the National Conference-led government, accusing it of persistent neglect of the Jammu region in matters of development, tourism, and heritage preservation.



MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi addressing public meeting.

Addressing a gathering in Nagrota Area, Sethi said that despite his repeated pleas in the Assembly, the Jammu city has not yet been declared a Heritage City, which is a long-pending demand of the people. "If the National Conference government is truly concerned about the Jammu Division, then why has Jammu City not been declared a Heritage City despite my repeated requests in the Assembly?" he questioned. Sethi further criticised the government for failing to come

es numerous temples, heritage sites, and cultural landmarks continues to be sidelined. "Jammu deserves equal attention and funding for tourism and infrastructure development. The people of this region have been contributing immensely to the economy and cultural harmony of the Union Territory, yet they continue to face discrimination," Sethi added. Reiterating his commitment to raising Jammu's voice at every platform, Sethi said he would continue to fight for the recognition of Jammu City as a Heritage City and the formulation of a comprehensive tourism development policy for the region. "Jammu's identity, history, and contribution cannot be ignored any longer. It's time the government acts, not just promises," he said.

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## Vande Mataram is soul of Bharat, not a symbol of division: Gaurav

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** BJP J&K spokesperson Gaurav Gupta strongly condemned the recent statement by the Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU) opposing the government's directive to commemorate the 150th anniversary of "Vande Mataram" in educational institutions, terming their objection as unfortunate, misplaced, and disrespectful to the national sentiment. Gupta asserted that Vande Mataram is not merely a song but a sacred expression of India's unity, culture, and freedom struggle, which inspired countless revolutionaries to lay down their lives for



the nation. "Every citizen of India, irrespective of religion, owes respect to the motherland. Singing or celebrating Vande Mataram is not about reli-

gion it is about patriotism," he said. Calling MMU's statement an attempt to politicize patriotism, Gupta said it was deeply disappointing that certain vested interests continue to view national symbols through the prism of religion. "The song glorifies the land that gives us life - our Bharat Mata. It represents gratitude, not worship, and every Indian should feel pride in it," he added. He further stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' emphasizes respect for all faiths while

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## Workshop on "Startups and Skill Dev: Translational Research from Lab to Market" held

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
**JAMMU:** The School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu, in collaboration with the JK Science Technology & Innovation Council (JKSTIC), on Wednesday successfully organized a one-day workshop on "Startups and Skill Development: Translational Research from Lab to Market" here, University Campus.



School of Biotechnology, JU and JKSTIC faculty and students posing for a photograph.

The event brought together scientists, academicians, entrepreneurs to encourage research scholars and students to leverage their scientific research and knowledge into viable startup ventures and market-ready innovations. The workshop was convened by Director School of Biotechnology, Prof. Sanjana Kaul and Additional Director JKSTIC, Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat. Assistant Director JKSTIC Shruti Khanna and Associate Professor School of Biotechnology University of Jammu Dr Ritu Mahajan acted as organising secretaries. The event was inaugurated by Dean Academic Affairs, University of Jammu Prof. J. P. Singh Joorel, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In his address, Prof. Joorel

highlighted the need to integrate research outcomes with the entrepreneurship initiatives to boost innovation - driven growth in the region. He underscored the importance of workshop and stated that the three key pillars of academic and scientific growth are teaching, research and the extension of research through its transformation into field applications. He emphasized that the true value of research is realized when ideas are translated into tangible outcomes. The Guest of Honour, Dean Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Jammu Prof. Yashpal Sharma, delivered an insightful address, encouraging students and researchers to think beyond publications and patents, focusing instead on the real-world applications of their work and pursuing a visionary, goal-oriented career path. Prof. Sharma highlighted that India's true strength lies in research across diverse domains such as agriculture, medical sciences and others, noting that the nation currently ranks fourth globally in terms of economy and with persistence and collaboration across disciplines, is poised to reach the third position soon. Prof. Sharma also noted that the

government has been supporting the startups, contributing significantly to the bioeconomy and promoting translational research and concluded by emphasizing that success in these endeavours requires trusted leadership and personal discipline. Earlier, Prof. Sanjana Kaul, Director School of Biotechnology and Convenor of the workshop, welcomed the dignitaries and the participants. She reaffirmed the vision of Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor of the University and thanked him for encouraging conduct of such events in the Campus. The technical Sessions featured

talks by two eminent invited speakers: In the first technical session Dr. Saurabh Saran, Senior Principal Scientist, Fermentation and Microbial Biotechnology Division, Head, IIM-Technology Business Incubator and OSD Industrial Biotech Parks (UT of J&K) delivered an insightful lecture on "Development of an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to Support Agri-based Startups in J&K," highlighting successful stories of lab-to-market transition and the pivotal role of incubators, such as BioNEST, in nurturing biotechnology startups.

He discussed the key challenges faced by startups, including the lack of innovation and entrepreneurship, limited investment opportunities, and issues related to the ease of doing business. Dr. Saran also emphasized the advantages offered by government initiatives. He also highlighted the facilities available at C.S.I.R. IIM, Jammu for fostering startup culture. The session was chaired by Prof. B. K Bajaj, School of Biotechnology. The second session followed into an immersive and interactive session by Dr. Khalid Masoodi, Associate Professor/Senior Scientist,

Division of Plant Biotechnology, SKUAST-Kashmir, Director Kashmir BioTech Pvt. Ltd, SKIIE, SKUAST Kashmir and also a distinguished alumnus of the School of Biotechnology, JU who shared his entrepreneurial journey and insights into building research - driven biotech enterprises. He spoke about his startup Kashmir BioTech Pvt. Ltd established in September 2022 under the Government of India's Make in India and Self-Reliant India initiatives. The company's flagship product, Magic Food Taxo, is a patented functional food supplement containing an anticancer molecule derived from an underutilized edible plant native to Kashmir. Clinically proven to alleviate prostate cancer, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS), it works by targeting the Androgen Receptor and has shown tumor reduction and improved survival in preclinical models. Other notable products of his venture include Iron Revive Herb (a natural iron supplement), ZincMag Natural (for uric acid management), and Isabgol Psyllium Husk Powder (a fiber supplement). The workshop concluded with

an engaging interaction session where participants discussed challenges and opportunities in translational research and startup ventures followed by a Wrap-up Session by Dr. Nisha Kapoor, Senior Assistant Professor, School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu. The rapporteurs of the technical sessions included Dr. Yashpal Khajuria, Dr. Ankit Mahajan and Dr. Sheetal Anbardar, Assistant professors in the School, who presented gist of the technical sessions of the workshop. The workshop was attended by faculty members from various Life Science departments of the University. Prof. Seema Langer, Prof. Namrata Sharma, Prof. Pankaj Kumar, Dr. Sikander Pal Chaudhary, Dr. Parvinder Kumar, Dr. Amit Gupta, Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Dr. Ripu Daman, Dr. Chimmoy Maharana, Dr. Skarna and Dr. Peerzada Shoaib Hamid from JKSTIC. The event received enthusiastic participation from students, research scholars, and faculty members, reflecting the growing interest in entrepreneurship and innovation within the academic community. Dr. Mehak Gupta conducted the proceedings of the entire event.