

## J&K Bank celebrates Lohri with traditional fervour



Bank's MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee along with staff celebrating Lohri.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
SRINAGAR: Reaffirming its commitment to preserving the region's rich cultural heritage, J&K Bank today celebrated the vibrant festival of Lohri with traditional zeal and festive spirit at its Jammu Zonal Office.

The Bank's MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee led the celebrations in presence of Chief General Manager Sunit Kumar, General Manager Narjay Gupta, General Manager & Divisional Head (Jammu) Ashok Gupta, Zonal Head (Jammu) Aneceta Nehru, DGMS along with senior officers and staff members. Marking the symbolic

essence of Lohri, the dignitaries lit the customary bonfire within the office premises, signifying gratitude for the harvest, hope for prosperity, and the promise of new beginnings. Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "Festivals like Lohri remind us of the

values of gratitude, optimism and togetherness that are deeply rooted in our culture. At J&K Bank, we believe such celebrations strengthen bonds within the organisation and reinforce our shared commitment to progress with cultural sensitivity."

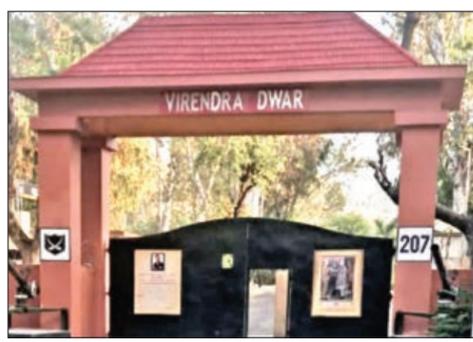
The celebrations were further enriched with traditional Lohri delicacies such as peanuts, popcorn and other festive treats, adding colour and warmth to the occasion.

Pertinently, celebrated on the cusp of winter's end, Lohri marks the sun's northward journey and heralds the onset of longer, warmer days. The event created a joyful and inclusive atmosphere, reinforcing the Bank's ethos of unity and shared celebration of culture among its employees.

## Entry Gate to Sunderbani Cantt named 'Virendra Dwar'

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
SUNDERBANI: In a tribute to valour, leadership and supreme sacrifice, the entry gate of Sunderbani Cantonment has been named 'Virendra Dwar' in honour of Colonel Virendra Kumar Sahi (Retd), the legendary officer and hero of the historic Battle of Laleali during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War.

Colonel Virendra Kumar Sahi, then a Major, played a decisive role in defending the strategically crucial Laleali Post while serving as Company Commander of the 8th Jammu and Kashmir Militia, now known as 8 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAK LI). His unit was entrenched at the heavily fortified main Laleali Post when Pakistani forces launched a massive attack on the night of December 6-7, 1971.



Facing overwhelming enemy strength, Major Sahi displayed exemplary courage and leadership. Ignoring grave personal danger, he moved from position to position under intense fire, motivating his men and directing operations to repel repeated enemy assaults. During fierce hand-to-hand combat, when his Sten gun jammed, Major Sahi

confronted an attacking Pakistani Major and neutralised him with his bayonet, turning the tide of battle.

Under his resolute command, Indian troops successfully repulsed all enemy attacks, forcing Pakistani forces to retreat after suffering heavy losses, leaving behind nearly 70 dead. The defence of Laleali Post stands

as one of the most remarkable actions of the 1971 war.

For his extraordinary gallantry, determination and inspiring leadership, Major Virendra Kumar Sahi was awarded the Vir Chakra, India's third-highest gallantry award. The Battle of Laleali later became a celebrated battle honour of the 8 JAK LI regiment and is studied in Army training institutions as a classic example of meticulously planned and strategically executed combat.

Colonel Sahi later retired from the Indian Army after a distinguished career and continues to be remembered with pride as the 'Hero of the Battle of Laleali.' The naming of Virendra Dwar at Sunderbani Cantt stands as a lasting symbol of the Army's respect and gratitude for his indomitable spirit and service to the nation.

## Eminent Saints, national leaders to grace MahaAbhiyan Avahan MahaYagya

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Youth 4 Panun Kashmir on Tuesday announced that the movement for Panun Kashmir has entered its most decisive and irreversible phase with the launch of "MahaAbhiyan Avahan - Asht Bhairav Jagadamba MahaYagya."

Recalling 36 years of genocide, forced exile, and denial of justice to the indigenous Kashmiri Hindu community, the organisation stated that the struggle has moved from remembrance to determined action aimed at reclaiming homeland, dignity, and sovereign existence.

The organisation described MahaAbhiyan Avahan as a civilizational call that unites spiritual strength with national will. Rahul Kaul, Chairman, Youth 4 Panun Kashmir, said that the invocation of Asht Bhairav and Jagadamba Maa is not merely a ritual but a powerful declaration that the Kashmiri Hindu community is ready to reclaim its land, honour, and future. Vithal Chowdhary, President, said

the movement has reached a stage where spiritual discipline and organised struggle are coming together for a final historical push.

Sunil Raina, Vice President, said that decades of injustice have now transformed into unity and purpose, while Rohit Ravi Bhat, Treasurer, stated that the scale and nationwide participation in MahaAbhiyan Avahan reflect the rise of a strong and determined community. Sahil Pandita,

Coordinator, said the youth see this moment as the bridge between exile and return, and are prepared to take the movement forward. Rajesh Kachroo, Organising Secretary, described the Abhiyan as a well-planned national-level mobilisation rooted in long-term commitment.

Leaders from the genocide survivor camps, including Veer Ji Belove, Raj Nath Dhar, Ashwani Bhat of Jagti Camp, Vijay Kumar Pandita of Nagrota TRT Camp, and Bhushan Lal Bhat of Anand Nagar Bohri, declared that the refugee generation stands united in ensuring that their children inherit a homeland and dignity, not displacement and silence.

Digamber Raina, General Secretary, called upon people across Jammu to participate in the MahaYagya, which will be attended by leading saints, spiritual leaders, and national

organizers to pay homage to the first woman sculptor of Jammu and Kashmir, Gobind Kaur and to preserve her legacy and inspire young artists.

Gokal Dembi recalled his memories related to Gobind Kaur as his student and colleague at Institute of Music & Fine Arts, University of Jammu. He said that Gobind Kaur was a fine artist who carved a niche for herself in the art field, particularly in the field of sculpture.

He informed that the event will be graced by an eminent and powerful assembly of saints, spiritual leaders, and national voices, including Sadguru Dr. Charudutt Pingale, Ramesh Shinde of Sanatan Sanstha and Hindu Janajagriti Samiti, Pramod Mutalik of Sri Ram Sena, Arjun Sampath of Hindu Makkal Katchi, Swami Kumar, Pujanee Sadhi Shivani Durga of Sinha Vahini - International Mahila Aghor Mahamandeshwar, Shri Shri 1008 Jagatguru Durgacharya Kanchan Paramhans Maharaj, Yati Maa Chetanand Saraswati, Mahant of Shiv Shakti Dham, Dasna, Hari Bhakt Parayan Rashtriya Dharmaguru Ramdas Maharaj, Swami Jitendranand Saraswati, Gangadhar Kulkarni of Shiv Sena Karnataka, Kaustav Nag, Spiritual Guru, ShriGuru Rohit Arya, and Raj Shekhawat of Karni Sena, whose presence is expected to add spiritual strength and national significance to the MahaAbhiyan Avahan.

Kewal K Sharma appreciated the initiative taken by organizers to pay homage to the first woman sculptor of Jammu and Kashmir, Gobind Kaur and to preserve her legacy and inspire young artists.

## All India Art Exhibition at Kala Kendra culminates



Dignitaries at the exhibition in Kala Kendra, Jammu.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: All India Art Exhibition organized by Kala Kendra Jammu, in collaboration with J&K Centre for Creative Arts (JKCCA), Jammu in memory of eminent sculptor Gobind Kaur, 1st contemporary woman sculptor of Jammu, culminated on Tuesday.

A valedictory ceremony was conducted on this occasion where veteran artist Gokal Dembi, Pt. Kewal K Sharma, President JKCCA, Dr. Javed Rahi, Secretary Kala Kendra, Senior artist Jang S. Verma, O P Sharma, Director JKCCA and others were present in the ceremony conducted on culmination of the exhibition.

These artists included V S Rahi, N Delhi. (Late) Aanuradha Devi, Samba (J&K); Gobind Kaur; Shivali Jamwal, Rohit Verma, Roma Bahl, Jang S. Verma, O P Sharma, Shakti Kumari, Jasleen Singh, Sumita Gandhi, Surbhi Mahajan (Jammu), Vishal Singh (Ramkot, Kathua) and Rouf Qyasi (Srinagar); Chandana Khan, Hyderabad (AP); Dharminder Sharma and Kulwant Singh Gill, Amritsar (Pb.); Dr. Mamta Singh, Dehradun (UK); Minu Dey, Kolkatta (W. Bengal); Prabhinder Singh Lall, Chandigarh (UT); Pratima Singh, Lucknow (UP); Praveen Pandit, Simla (HP); Raghu Nevre, Nagpur (MR); and Sangita Sharma, Mumbai (Maharashtra).

## Indian Pavilion inaugurated at Heimtextil 2026: Sheikh Ashiq urges J&K Govt to boost Kashmiri handmade carpet exports



Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad, CEPC and others during the inauguration.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
FRANKFURT: In a landmark moment for India's textile industry, Shuchita Kishore, Consulate General of India, Frankfurt, inaugurated the prestigious Indian Pavilion at Heimtextil 2026, the world's largest trade fair for home and contract textiles, alongside Akhilesh Kumar, DDG; Puresh Gurunani, Director, Ministry of Textiles; and Kishan Singh Ghughthyal, Joint Director, National Jute Board.

The event, held from January 13-16 at Messe Frankfurt, draws over 2,600 exhibitors from 60+ countries, showcasing innovations in bed, bath, table linens, upholstery, yarns, and sustainable interior designs under the theme "Lead the Change," with a focus on sustainability, textile circularity, and AI-driven design.

The inauguration, graced by Mukesh Kumar Gombar, Chairman, Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC); Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad, CEPC; Bodh Raj Malhotra, COA, CEPC; and Dr. Smita Nagarkoti, Officiating

Executive Director-cum-Secretary, CEPC, underscores India's leadership in global textile innovation.

Heimtextil 2026 features special collaborations, including with renowned designer Patricia Urquiola, making it an unparalleled platform for networking, bulk orders, and trendsetting.

Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad, CEPC, a prominent voice for Kashmiri handicrafts, appealed the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, said, "These international expos are vital for reviving our rich cultural heritage, where for-

eign buyers once placed bulk orders for Kashmiri handmade carpets," said Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad.

"Today, events like Heimtextil are the lifeline for keeping this ancient art alive. I urge the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Minister of J&K to seize this opportunity: extend support for handmade exporters from Kashmir to participate, visit, and study global markets. This focused push will revive bulk exports, preserve our old culture, and position Kashmiri carpets at the forefront of international demand."

With India's handmade carpets gaining renewed global attention, Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad emphasized that now is the best time for J&K to prioritize international events, enabling exporters to compete in sustainability-driven markets and secure long-term revival.

CEPC promotes the export of Indian handmade carpets, fostering growth for artisans and exporters while preserving cultural legacies.

## BJP celebrates Lohri with traditional fervour at party headquarter



J&K BJP President and MP Sat Sharma along with party leaders celebrating Lohri.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir, celebrated the festival of Lohri with great enthusiasm and traditional fervour at its headquarters in Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, reflecting the rich cultural ethos of the region.

The celebrations were led by J&K BJP President and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Sat Sharma and General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul.

Traditional nuts and sweets were distributed among all those present to mark the occasion. BJP leaders and activists also danced to the tune of traditional drums.

Extending warm Lohri greetings to the people, Sat Sharma said that Lohri is not merely a festival but a celebration of life,

nature, and collective prosperity. He said that Lohri symbolizes our deep-rooted bond with nature and reflects gratitude for a bountiful harvest and the tireless efforts of our farmers. He said that the festival reminds us of the values of togetherness, optimism, and renewal. Praying for peace, harmony, and progress, he prayed for bumper harvests, economic prosperity and lasting peace in Jammu & Kashmir and the entire nation. He also reiterated the party's commitment to peace, strongly condemning terrorism and violence, and prayed for lasting stability and development in Jammu & Kashmir.

Sat Sharma further emphasized that such traditional celebrations strengthen social harmony and keep cultural heritage alive,

especially among the younger generation. Addressing the gathering, Ashok Koul said that Lohri heralds the harvest of winter crops and honours the Sun God for warmth and vitality, coinciding with the auspicious transition of Makar Sankranti. He noted that the festival signifies brotherhood, hope and the anticipation of good fortune with changing seasons. May this festival usher in happiness, positivity and unity among all sections of society, he added.

J&K BJP Vice Presidents Priya Sethi, Rakesh Mahajan and Rekha Mahajan, General Secretaries Sanjita Dogra and Baldev Singh Billawaria, MLAs Yudhvir Sethi, Ch. Vikram Randhawa and Arvind Gupta, senior party leaders Keema Padha, Pawan Sharma, Tilak Gupta, Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Balbir Ram Rattan, Dr. Tahir Choudhary, Rajni Sethi, Zoravar Singh Jamwal, S. Varinderjit Singh, Arun Prabhat, Adv Neha Mahajan, Rakesh Pant, Dharminder Kumar, Ayodhya Gupta, Vinay Gupta, Praduman Singh, Parmod Kapahi, H S Pannu, Vaishno Devi, Dr Makson Tikoo, Gourav Balgotra, Nareish Singh Jasrotia, Ashu Mahajan, Rajnish Jarin, Dil Bahadur Singh Jamwal, Prof Kulbhushan Mohotra, Jaideep Sambyal, Ankush Mahajan, Vikrant Gupta, Navan Sharma, Sanjay Baru, Karan Sat Sharma, Puneet Mahajan, Sanjay Bakshi, and other senior leaders of party were present on occasion.

## Ladakh Tourism Deptt issues SOP for procurement of satellite phones by tour operators

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
LEH: In a landmark initiative to enhance safety, connectivity and operational efficiency in the tourism sector, the Department of Tourism, Union Territory of Ladakh, has issued a detailed circular laying down the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the procurement of satellite phones by private tour operators and other eligible tourism stakeholders for tourism-related activities in the region.

The initiative aims to address communication challenges in Ladakh's remote, high-altitude and difficult terrains, where conventional communication networks are often unreliable or unavailable. The SOP is expected to significantly strengthen emergency response mechanisms and ensure safer travel experiences for tourists and opera-

tors alike. Administrative Secretary, Tourism, Sanjit Rodrigues, stated that the newly issued SOP reflects the Department's strong commitment to promoting safe, responsible and well-regulated tourism in Ladakh. He emphasized that enabling reliable communication facilities, especially in remote areas, is essential for tourism operations while simultaneously ensuring strict adherence to national security protocols.

The SOP lays out a clear, transparent and step-by-step mechanism for the procurement of satellite phones exclusively through BSNL, Leh, which has been designated as the single-window agency for the entire process. BSNL, Leh will be responsible for receiving applications, processing requests and

obtaining all mandatory security clearances from the concerned security and intelligence agencies. By centralising the procedure, the SOP ensures full compliance with national security guidelines while also streamlining administrative processes. This move is expected to significantly reduce delays, paperwork and procedural complexities faced by tourism stakeholders.

The Department noted that the SOP balances operational needs with security considerations, thereby fostering confidence among tour operators while safeguarding sensitive regions. The initiative marks a progressive step towards strengthening Ladakh's tourism infrastructure and reinforcing the region's image as a safe and well-managed destination for domestic and international tourists.

## GGM Science College celebrates Lohri with cultural and Traditional spirit

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: GGM Science College, Jammu celebrated the vibrant festival of Lohri with great enthusiasm and cultural spirit on its campus, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the region. The celebration highlighted the significance of Lohri as a festival symbolising harvest, prosperity, warmth, and communal harmony.

The event was organised in the august presence of the Principal, faculty members, non-teaching staff, and other employees of the college. A traditional Lohri bonfire was ceremonially lit, signifying the end of winter and the ushering in of positivity and hope. In keeping with tradi-

tion, participants offered rewri, peanuts, popcorn, and other customary items into the sacred fire, seeking blessings for peace, prosperity, and collective well-being. Speaking on the occasion, the Principal, Prof. (Dr.)

values, and fostering unity and mutual respect among members of the academic community. He further emphasized that cultural observances help in nurturing a sense of belonging and strengthen interpersonal bonds among staff and students alike.

The Lohri celebration provided a warm and joyful platform for the college fraternity to come together, interact, and share festive cheer beyond academic engagements. The event concluded with the exchange of heartfelt Lohri greetings and a collective message of harmony, happiness, and prosperity for all on this auspicious occasion.

