

# Bhaderwah Winter Carnival 2026 begins, winter tourism gets major boost

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
BHADERWAH: To boost winter tourism and project Bhaderwah as a round-the-year tourist destination, a two-day winter festival titled 'Bhaderwah Winter Carnival 2026' has commenced in Jammu and Kashmir's Bhaderwah. The colourful carnival was inaugurated at the famous tourist destination Guldanda, drawing a huge response from tourists and locals alike.

The scenic tourist destination of Guldanda on the Bhaderwah-Pathankot Highway came alive with colour, culture and celebration as the Bhaderwah Winter Carnival 2026 was inaugurated.

The two-day carnival is being jointly organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department, Bhaderwah Development



Authority, and the District Administration Doda to promote winter tourism in the picturesque Bhaderwah Valley.

DDC Chairman Dhananter Singh Kotwal was the chief guest, while MLA Bhaderwah Dalip Singh Parihar, Dy Director Tourism Pankaj Sassan, Dy Director Publicity Savita Chouhan were the guests of honour. CEO BDA Sanjeev Sharma presided over the function.

SSP Doda Sandeep Mehta, SP Bhaderwah Vinod Sharma, ADC Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutiyal, ARTO Doda Kapil Deol, Tehsildar Kamalpreet Singh, DySP Naveed Shoket Qazi and other senior officials were also present.

The carnival features a range of attractions including snow games, adventure sports, ATV rides, hot air ballooning, ethnic food stalls, art and craft exhibitions, cultural performances, and live musical shows by celebrity singers, including Punjabi singer G Khan. Hundreds of tourists

enjoying the winter season in Bhaderwah, along with a large number of locals thronged Guldanda to be part of the celebrations.

Officials said the initiative aims to showcase Bhaderwah's winter beauty and diversify tourism beyond the summer season, positioning the valley as an emerging winter tourism destination.

According to official figures, nearly 5,000 visitors attended the carnival on the first day, reflecting the growing popularity of Bhaderwah as a winter tourist hotspot.

With grand celebrations, adventure activities and cultural vibrance, the Bhaderwah Winter Carnival 2026 is expected to give a significant boost to tourism and local economy in the region.

# Khatana holds public outreach camp



MP (Rajya Sabha), Ghulam Ali Khatana addressing gathering at Sunderbani.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
SUNDERBANI: Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Ghulam Ali Khatana today convened a Public Outreach Camp at Koteranka, where he interacted with the general public and listened to their grievances.

During the outreach programme, the MP gave a patient hearing to the issues and demands raised by the residents. The MP assured them that their genuine concerns would be taken up with

the concerned departments for prompt and effective redressal. He directed the officers to ensure judicial utilisation of funds and percolation of benefits of government schemes to the intended beneficiaries in a transparent and timely manner.

Responding to the issue of staff shortage in educational institutions, the MP directed the concerned officers to take necessary steps to ensure smooth functioning

of schools and improved academic outcomes.

Officers present on the occasion also responded to the issues raised by the public and apprised them of various government welfare schemes and development initiatives being implemented in the area.

The programme was attended by ADC, Dil Mir; ACD, Auqil Nuvaid; Tehsildar Sahil Shah along with other concerned district and sectoral officers.

# Secretary RDD reviews rural development schemes

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
RAJOURI: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, reviewed the progress and on-ground implementation of key rural development schemes during an extensive tour of Rajouri district.

He conducted block-wise reviews in Sunderbani, Siot, Lamberi, Nowshera, Qila Darhal, Kalakote and Moughla, focusing on major Centrally Sponsored Schemes including MGNREGA, PMAY-G, SBM-G, NRLM, RGSA and IWMP.

The Secretary inspected the BDC building at Siot and the under-construction BDC building at Kalakote, directing concerned officers



Secy, RDD Mohammad Aijaz Asad chairing meeting.

to expedite and complete the remaining works at Kalakote within the stipulated timeframe.

Emphasising sanitation and cleanliness, he directed strengthening of door-to-door waste collection and proper operation and maintenance of SBM-G assets. The district has completed 140 compost pits, 197 soakage pits, 87 community sanitary complexes, 10 segregation sheds and 11 DEWATS units. All

remaining SBM-G works were directed to be completed by February.

Reviewing AIP 2025, the Secretary stressed timely completion of approved works. Under PRI Grants, 1,611 works have been completed against a target of 2,862, with instructions to fast-track the remaining projects.

Under MGNREGA, the district has generated 41 lakh person-days, with an additional 11 lakh person-

# DC, SSP Rajouri review security situation; stress on disaster drills, surveillance & vigilance

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
SUNDERBANI: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, along with Senior Superintendent of Police, Gaurav Sikarwar today reviewed security related matters here at a meeting held in the Video Conference Room of the DC Office Complex.

The DC emphasized the need for conducting regular disaster management drills, including fire and earthquake mock exercises, particularly in major establishments such as health institutions, residential hostels and other establishments. He directed the concerned departments to appoint Chief Security Officers in their respective institutions



to ensure effective coordination and preparedness.

The DC further instructed for a comprehensive security audit of key and vulnerable locations, along with regular staff orientation and sensitization to promptly identify and report any suspicious movement or activity. Banks

were specifically directed to immediately report any unusual or suspicious transactions to the concerned authorities.

He also directed all government institutions to display PCR numbers, DC Office control room numbers and ensure regular orientation of staff regarding security protocols and emergency response mechanisms.

SSP Gaurav Sikarwar stressed the importance of not sharing sensitive or official information with unknown or unverified numbers. He directed for the installation of warning systems or hooters in institutions, timely reporting of suspicious movements and

installation of CCTV cameras at key locations, especially at religious places and tourist spots. He also emphasized the deployment of Village Defence Committee (VDC) members and ex-servicemen at different institutions for strengthening security arrangements.

The meeting was attended by officers from the security and civil departments, including Zila Sainik Welfare Officer; Lead Bank Manager J&K Bank; Medical Superintendent, GMC; Joint Registrar, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) and AEE TLMD-V Siot, Kalakote and Thuddi, among others.

# VMM organises Multi Specialty Free Test Camp

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
KATHUA: Veopar Mandal Mahanpur Sarpanch Sonu Gupta organized a multi specialty Free Medical Test Camp in premises of Veopar Mandal (Kathua). Dr Rajesh Gupta, MBBS, MD (Medicine), Physician specialist Dr. Puneeta Gupta M.D.Medicine, Dr. Neeraj Mahajan, MD Medicine DNB Cardiology and Dr. Shally Kandhari MS Ophthalmology, Eye Surgeon specialist in Sutureless and injection free Cataract Surgery rendered his valuable services for human service.

In this one day free camp, tests were conducted, which included Fibroscan for liver disease screening, Neuropathy test for nerves, Spirometry to assess lungs function, blood tests (HB,



Thyroid, Sugar, Lipid Profile, HBA1C, Uric Acid Etc.) Bones Mineral density, ECG, Free Eye Checkup (Blood pressure, and numerous others. More than 1000 patients registered and they got their tests done satisfactorily.

Sonu Gupta, on this occasion, said that VMM has always been on the fore front to serve the society through different modes and the peo-

# Narayana Hospital performs CI632 Cochlear Implant Surgeries

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
KATRA: In a heart-stirring victory for medicine and humanity, the silence that once surrounded a young child from one of Kashmir's most remote villages has been shattered by the miracle of sound. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (SMVD) Narayana Superspecialty Hospital has achieved a historic milestone, performing one of India's first Cochlear Implant CI632 surgeries using the revolutionary Kanso 3 sound processor. The young patient, identified through the hospital's compassionate outreach and awareness programs, was once a world away from the advanced medical care needed to treat profound hearing loss. Today, that distance has been closed. The surgery was performed by Dr. Rohan Gupta, Senior Consultant ENT and Cochlear Implant



Surgeon, under the expert guidance of the renowned ENT Surgeon Dr. Sunil Kotwal. The surgical team utilized the cutting-edge SMARTNAV navigation system-making SMVD Narayana the only facility in Jammu & Kashmir equipped with such precision technology to ensure this child would finally hear the voices of loved ones.

This breakthrough is more than a medical success; it is the fulfillment of a promise. Dr. M.M. Mathavan, Facility Director, shared that the hospital's ability to deliver such high-end care is rooted in its status as a visionary gift from the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board to the people of Jammu & Kashmir. Functioning on a unique Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, the hospital represents a synergy where the Shrine Board supports the infra-

structure and Narayana Health provides operational management and clinical expertise. Notably, Narayana Health does not charge for this expertise, creating a benevolent ecosystem where the institution is not driven by profit extraction. Instead, the model has become self-sustainable, with all financial surpluses reinvested strictly into the expansion of services and technology. This ethical framework and operational success have positioned the hospital as a case study for healthcare excellence, with other hospitals across the country now studying this model to understand how to balance world-class care with social responsibility.

The emotional weight of this achievement was echoed by Dr. Yashpal Sharma, Executive Director of SMVDIME, who remarked

that this is exactly the hospital envisioned by the Shrine Board and it is reaching milestones every now and then to remain the region's most trusted healthcare provider. For Dr. Rohan Gupta, the day was about the future. He emphasized that early identification of deafness and community awareness can change a child's entire life, while also noting that cochlear implantation is not limited to children alone, but can also significantly benefit adults with severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL). As the child begins long-term rehabilitation with the Ear Health and Habilitation Clinic to ensure optimal hearing and speech development, the hospital celebrates a triumph that proves no village is too remote and no silence is too deep for the gift of healing.

# BJP Samba leads massive VB-GRAM-G rally

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
SAMBA: Jammu and Kashmir BJP President and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Sat Sharma CA, along with General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, MLA Surjit Singh Salathia, and MLA Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, addressed a major public programme organized under the VB-GRAM-G initiative in Samba district.

A massive rally was also led by the BJP as part of the 'Viksit Bharat and G-Ram-G' awareness campaign, urging people to actively participate in the collective mission of making India a developed nation.

J&K BJP Vice-President and District Samba Prabhari



BJP President and MP Sat Sharma along with party workers at Samba.

Rekha Mahajan, Vice-President Rashpal Verma, General Secretary Sanjita Dogra, DDC Chairperson Keshav Dutt Sharma, Secretary Arun Sharma, District President Asha Rani, DDCs Suresh Kumar Phalli, Ramesh Kumar, and other senior leaders and party workers were present.

Addressing the gathering, Sat Sharma delivered a forceful and visionary address, stating that 'Viksit Bharat' represents a clear, decisive and inclusive roadmap to transform India into a developed nation by 2047. He said the vision focuses on comprehensive development through infrastructure expansion, economic reforms, social empowerment and equitable growth for every region and section of society.

Sat Sharma asserted that Jammu and Kashmir, once held back by decades of instability, weak governance and policy neglect, is today witnessing a historic transformation under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Jammu and Kashmir today stands firmly integrated into the national development process and is progressing at par with other states and Union Territories," he said, adding that peace, transparency and targeted governance have created a strong foundation for sustained growth.

He stressed that the coming years are crucial for India's future and that Jammu and Kashmir has a vital role in this national mission. Strengthening Prime Minister Modi's leadership, he said, is essential to accelerate develop-

ment, safeguard peace and ensure long-term prosperity for the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Ashok Koul highlighted the wide-ranging benefits of the Viksit Bharat initiative in Jammu and Kashmir. He said unprecedented progress has been made in road, rail and power infrastructure, health-care, education and digital connectivity in the years following the abrogation of Article 370. Massive investments in highways, tunnels and railway projects, he added, have reduced regional imbalances, improved access to remote and border areas, and opened new avenues for tourism, trade and employment, particularly for youth.

Koul also emphasized the importance of grassroots empowerment under G-Ram-G, stating that the initiative

focuses on participatory development by involving panchayats and local communities in planning and implementation. He said transparency, accountability and people's participation are central to sustainable development.

In his address, Surjit Singh Salathia underlined the role of transparent governance, digital platforms and Direct Benefit Transfer mechanisms in ensuring that welfare schemes reach the intended beneficiaries without leakages. He said initiatives related to housing, health insurance, pensions, rural development and social security have delivered tangible benefits on the ground.

Referring to last year's floods and incessant rains that caused extensive damage in the Jammu region, Salathia said the Centre sanctioned ₹1,430 crore for flood restoration works following sustained efforts by BJP MLAs from the Jammu division. He said the funds will be utilised for repairing damaged roads, bridges, irrigation channels and public utilities, besides strengthening flood-control and disaster-mitigation infrastructure to minimise future losses. He appealed to the people to support the Viksit

# GDC Thannamandi concludes capacity building training course

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
THANNAMANDI: Government Degree College Thannamandi Mission Yuva Team Successfully completed a hybrid mode capacity building programme with the objective of enhancing skills and employability among youth.

The training held under the patronage of Principal of College, Prof. (Dr.) Shamim Ahmed Azad. The programme was facilitated by Dr. Nagina Kousser as the resource person, with the support of Mission Yuva Team, including Prof. Rizwana kousar, Dr. Mohd Ashrif, Dr. Shazia Paswal, Dr. Meenakshi Sharma and Dr. Attiq Ul Rehman.

The Training Programme commenced on January 3, 2026 and concluded.

The course titled under Hybrid training was "Entrepreneurship and Business Management, Technology for Entrepreneurs, Innovation and Design Thinking".

The Target audience was aspiring entrepreneur, early-stage founders and self-employed youth with at least high education. The main objective of this course is to enable mission Yuva aspiring entrepreneurs in J&K to gain practical knowledge, develop an entrepreneurial mindset, use digital tools, innovate, plan, launch and scale viable business ventures.

As per the Batch Initiation Plan, applicants introduced the mission Yuva ecosystem such as Mission Yuva theme, presentation, skill learning hub video, Government schemes video and job opportunities video. For 10- Day course structure enrolls applicants on the Skill India Digital Hub through Aadhaar-based identification and registration. Day-1 include Entrepreneurial Skills, Day-2 include Foundation Skill Program- Advanced Entrepreneurship, Day-03 focus on Digital Skills, Day-04 emphasised on Financial Skills, Day-05 include Leadership and management skills, Day-06 based on Digital Skill, Day-07 stressed on Financial and legal literacy, the main theme of day-08 AI for Entrepreneurship, Day-09 include Advanced Supply Chain Strategies and Day-10 include Cybersecurity. A total of 30 candidates were enrolled in the batch. However, only those who fulfilled the prescribed attendance requirements were declared qualified and awarded certificates. The batch completed successfully as per the guidelines of Mission Yuva.

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