

Shutdown in Katra against ropeway project enters Day-6

STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI/JAMMU: The shutdown in Katra against the proposed Vaishno Devi ropeway project entered its sixth day on Monday, as youth continued a hunger strike demanding the release of several individuals detained by police during the protests.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti called for the shutdown on Wednesday, announcing that all activities would remain suspended during the bandh in Katra, the base camp for Mata Vaishno Devi. Shivani Jamwal, wife of detained Samiti leader Bhupinder Singh, joined the protestors and threatened to commit self-immolation if her husband and others were not released immediately, citing their deteriorating condition in police detention. All shops, restaurants, and business establishments remained closed and traffic was off the roads, for the sixth consecutive day in the holy town following the Samiti's call for the protest.

The bandh has crippled normal life in one of the



busiest towns in the country, as thousands of pilgrims arrive daily to pay obeisance at the cave shrine. The number of devotees visiting the cave shrine has decreased in the wake of the shutdown. "The bandh will continue until the government shelves the ropeway project. It is a battle for survival and dignity, besides ensuring the continuance of the pilgrimage

through Mata's traditional route," the Samiti spokesperson said. He alleged that the government is deliberately worsening the situation by refusing to release the detainees or engage in dialogue with the Samiti. Five youths have been on a hunger strike since Wednesday night, demanding the release of 18 members of the Shri Mata

Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti, who were detained during a protest march against the ropeway project in Katra.

Several protesters, including two Samiti leaders—Bhupinder Singh and Sohan Chand—were among those detained by the police during Wednesday's march.

Bhupinder Singh's wife, Shivani Jamwal said "I will

commit self-immolation if my husband and others are not released by this evening."

She alleged that the detainees' health is deteriorating and added that "They have lost weight and are in a bad state of health."

Criticising political parties for exploiting the issue, she said "They come here to play politics but have failed to secure the release of our loved ones."

Jamwal urged the Lieutenant Governor and administration to intervene and said that some detainees have severe health conditions, making it imperative for the government to release them immediately.

Last month, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board announced plans to install a ropeway to facilitate access to the temple for senior citizens, children, and others who find it challenging to climb the 13-km-long track to the cave shrine.

The proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway project will connect Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat, leading to the cave shrine in Reasi district.

JU organizes awareness workshop under Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat campaign



JU faculty and others at awareness workshop under Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat campaign.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Centre for Women's Studies (CWS), University of Jammu (JU), organized a one-day Awareness Workshop on Monday on the theme: 'Educate Girls, End Child Marriage: A Path of Equality' under Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat campaign initiated by Ministry of Women and Child Development, New Delhi for the Anganwadi Workers and Supervisor at CDPO office, Bishnah, Jammu.

At the outset Dr. Saranjit Kaur, faculty CWS, welcomed the participants and introduced the objectives of the Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat campaign. She expressed gratitude to Anjum, CDPO Bishnah, for hosting the event. The first session of

the workshop was conducted by Prof. Savita Nayyar, Director, Centre for Women's Studies. She emphasized the critical role of education in eradicating child marriage and discussed the legal frameworks, including the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. Prof. Nayyar explained that child marriages involving girls under 18 and boys under 21 are strictly prohibited, with violators facing fines and imprisonment. She supported her discussion with few case studies to provide practical insights.

Earlier Dr. Saranjit Kaur, spoke that this campaign aims to empower daughters by ensuring that they receive education and protection that they

deserve. Further she added that this campaign is not just an event it is a mission to eradicate child marriage and empower every daughter in the nation.

Kunzang Angmo emphasized the importance of creating a progressive and equitable society where every child can fully realize their potential. She also addressed issues like women's health, nutrition, and hygiene, encouraging women to break traditional myths and prioritize their well-being. The participants enthusiastically participated in the workshop and shared their personal experiences as well as raised many queries which were answered to their satisfaction. The formal vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Saranjit Kaur.

Bhawani Youth, Vicky XI secure wins in 13th Police Martyr's NZ T-20



A player receiving Man of the Match.

STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: On the 12th day of the 13th Police Martyr's Memorial North Zone T-20 Cricket Championship 2024-25, two exciting matches were played at the Sports Stadium Kathua. The first match saw Bhawani Youth Academy Delhi beat Sandhu XI Ludhiana by four wickets, while in the second match, Vicky XI Pathankot thrashed KKR XI by just one wicket.

In the morning session, Bhawani Youth Academy Delhi won the toss and opted to bowl first. Sandhu XI Ludhiana managed to score 140 runs for the loss

of 7 wickets in their allotted 20 overs. The standout performers for Sandhu XI were Manish, who top-scored with 40 runs off 26 balls (including 2 boundaries and 2 sixes), and Sachit Sharma, who contributed 29 runs from 18 balls (4 boundaries and 1 six). Chasing the target of 141 runs, Bhawani Youth Academy comfortably reached the target in 19.2 overs, losing 6 wickets. The top scorer for Bhawani Youth Academy was Aditya Bhandari, who made 39 runs off 26 balls, including 3 boundaries and 2 sixes. Prashant Yadav played an all-round role, taking 3 crucial wickets for just 20 runs

in 4 overs and also scoring 23 runs off 10 balls with 3 boundaries. For his brilliant performance, Prashant Yadav was declared Man of the Match as Bhawani Youth Academy won by 4 wickets. In the second match, KKR XI won the toss and chose to bat first, posting a total of 139 runs for the loss of 9 wickets in 20 overs. Abhishek was the top scorer for KKR XI, making 34 runs off 37 balls, with 3 boundaries and 1 six. Sumit also contributed 21 runs from 23 balls, with 2 boundaries and 1 six.

Chasing a target of 140 runs, Vicky XI Pathankot managed to secure a narrow win, reaching 144 runs for the loss of 9 wickets in 20 overs. Kuwar Pathak played a crucial knock, scoring 32 runs off 18 balls, including 6 boundaries. His all-round performance, which included a brilliant bowling spell of 4 overs, taking 5 wickets for just 21 runs, earned him the Man of the Match award. With his outstanding contribution, Vicky XI Pathankot won the match by 1 wicket.

Randhawa visits Rajiv Nagar, urges people to stop dumping waste in Nallah

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader and MLA Bahu Constituency, Vikram Randhawa today conducted an extensive tour of Rajiv Nagar to assess the grievances of the local residents. The primary concern raised by the residents was the persistent issue of a garbage-laden Nallah in the area, which poses a severe threat of overflow during the monsoon season.

During the visit, MLA Randhawa observed the Nallah clogged with garbage and construction waste. Expressing concern over the situation, he questioned the rationale behind residents discarding waste in the Nallah despite the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) vehicles visiting the area daily for garbage collection. "If this continues, the overflowing Nallah will lead to severe flooding during the rainy season," he stated.

Taking immediate action, MLA Randhawa directed the accompanying officials to erect a six-foot fence



MLA Bahu Constituency, Vikram Randhawa inspecting development work.

along the Nallah to prevent residents from throwing garbage and construction debris into it. He emphasized the need for collective responsibility, urging people to dispose of waste through proper channels and support the Administration's cleanliness initiatives.

Randhawa also assured the people of Rajiv Nagar for the construction of a proper drainage system in the area to address waterlogging and sanitation issues. He emphasized that this initiative would improve the overall infrastructure and quality of life for the residents, ensuring better management of

waste and preventing future flooding.

Highlighting the BJP's commitment to sustainable development and cleanliness, Randhawa said, "Clean surroundings are essential for a healthy life. It is the responsibility of every citizen to contribute to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan by ensuring proper waste disposal."

Randhawa reiterated his commitment to addressing public concerns and ensuring development in Bahu Constituency. He appealed to the people to cooperate and refrain from activities that harm the environment, and foster a sense of community responsibility.

Programme on 'Armed Forces Flag Day' organised by NSS SKUAST-J

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Under the guidance of Prof. B.N. Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, and Prof. Sudhakar Dwivedi, Dean Student Welfare, the National Service Scheme (NSS) at SKUAST-J organized a special programme on Armed Forces Flag Day to collect funds for the Armed Forces Welfare Fund. The event commenced with the presentation of a bouquet of flowers to the Chief Guest, Prof. Anil Kumar, Registrar and Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture.

In his address, Prof. Anil Kumar stressed the importance of instilling patriotism among students and highlighted the sacrifices made by the soldiers of the armed forces. He described soldiers as one of the greatest assets of any nation, serving as the guardians of the country and its citizens at all costs. The Dean of Student Welfare, Prof. Sudhakar Dwivedi, also spoke



SKUAST-Jammu faculty and students during a programme.

about the significance of the day and urged students to adopt the principles of discipline exhibited by the armed forces. He encouraged students to draw inspiration from the lives of brave martyrs and live with a sense of dedication and responsibility.

The NSS Coordinator, Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap, in his welcome address, emphasized the importance of discipline in students' lives. He reminded the gathering of the immense sacrifices made by soldiers, who, in fulfilling their duties, have given up much for the

nation. He called on students to strive to meet the aspirations of their parents and teachers by leading disciplined lives.

It is noteworthy that 7th December has been observed as Armed Forces Flag Day since 1949, honoring the martyrs and men in uniform who have fought and continue to fight to protect the nation. On this day, funds are collected to support war-disabled soldiers, Veer Naris (wives of martyrs), and the families of fallen heroes.

To initiate the fundraising, students pinned the Armed

Forces Flag on faculty members and collected donations, which will be handed over to the Zila Sainik Welfare Office for the welfare of soldiers.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Aditi Lal Koul, NSS Officer of the Faculty of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry. The event was attended by NSS students from Chatha Campus and supervised by Dr. Narinder Panotra, Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Dr. Divyendu Chakraborty, and Dr. M.K. Pandey, Nodal Officer of Labour.

Natrang creates history in 2024, breaks records of 10 years by showcasing 150 shows

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Natrang, the pioneering theatre group of Jammu, has achieved an unparalleled milestone in 2024 and broke all records of last 10 years by creating history by staging 150 successful shows in a single year. This remarkable feat sets a new benchmark in the world of theatre, highlighting Natrang's unwavering commitment to artistic excellence and cultural enrichment. Among the year's highlights were the impactful productions Loktantra Ka Asli Mantra (35 shows), Mata Ki Kahani (18 shows), and Naye Yug Ki Naari (10 shows), all written and directed by the renowned Padmashri Balwant Thakur. These plays captivated audiences with their thought-provoking narratives and stellar performances. Natrang's celebrated play Bawa Jitto added to its glory during the iconic Jhiri Mela, drawing massive crowds to the extent of 50,000. This production, depicting the heroic story of a

legendary farmer's fight against injustice, became a cultural highlight, connecting deeply with its audience and showcasing the rich heritage of Jammu. The group also launched the Theatre for Youth initiative in collaboration with IIM Jammu, under which 20 short plays were produced and staged. This program aimed at nurturing young talent and fostering a love for theatre among the youth. Meanwhile, Natrang's Sunday Theatre series continued its successful run, presenting 52 shows throughout the year. Reflecting on the year's accomplishments, Padmashri Balwant Thakur said, "This has been a landmark year for Natrang and a testament to the collective efforts of our talented team. Theatre has the power to inspire, educate, and unite, and through our performances, we strive to bring meaningful narratives to life. Our achievements in 2024, particularly the success of Bawa Jitto at the Jhiri Mela and our collaboration with IIM Jammu, reflect our

dedication to promoting cultural heritage and nurturing the next generation of artists. We are deeply grateful to our audiences, supporters, and team members for making this extraordinary journey possible.

Padmashri Balwant Thakur was honored with the World Theatre Day Honour by the Gaiety Theatre Society and the Language and Culture Department of Himachal Pradesh, as well as the Theatre Promoter of North India Award by HPA, Haryana. Pawan Verma received the State Award in the Performing Arts category, while young talent Priyal Gupta earned the prestigious National Scholarship in Theatre Acting from the Ministry of Culture, making her the sole recipient of this honor from Jammu & Kashmir in 2024.

With this historic year, Natrang has reaffirmed its status as a cultural institution that continues to push boundaries and inspire through the transformative power of theatre.

Traffic Advisory issued for New Year 2025 celebrations

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: As we approach the New Year 2025, the Traffic Police Rural Jammu on Monday issued a traffic advisory to ensure the safety and well-being of all road users, especially youths and motorists who may be tempted to engage in reckless driving, including unnecessary honking, speeding, and consuming alcohol.

The Traffic Police urged the public to prioritize safety on the roads and adhere to traffic rules to help ensure a safe and enjoyable celebration. This advisory specifically applies to the areas of Samba, Kathua, Rajouri, and Poonch. The Traffic Police advised everyone to plan ahead for

their New Year celebrations and travel, taking into account the expected increase in crowds and traffic congestion.

It is important to have a designated driver or a reliable transportation plan in place to avoid driving under the influence. Motorists are urged to adhere strictly to all traffic rules, including following speed limits, obeying traffic signals, and respecting pedestrian crossings.

Driving in the hilly regions of Samba, Kathua, Rajouri, and Poonch requires extra caution. The roads in these areas may be slippery and prone to landslides, particularly during the winter season. Drivers are advised to

exercise extreme caution when navigating steep roads, use low gears while driving uphill to maintain control, and avoid overspeeding on winding roads to prevent accidents.

The Traffic Police has a strict zero-tolerance policy towards driving under the influence of alcohol. Anyone found violating this rule will face severe penalties, including fines, imprisonment, and suspension of their driving license. The public is reminded not to risk their own lives or the lives of others by driving under the influence of alcohol.

Motorists are urged to ensure that all occupants of the vehicle wear seat belts, and that riders wear crash

helmets. Patience and courtesy are essential while driving, particularly in congested areas, and high beam lights should be avoided to prevent blinding other drivers. Rash driving and illegal parking should be avoided to help maintain discipline on the roads.

In case of any emergency, the public can contact the numbers for assistance which include Traffic Police Control Room Jammu: 0191-2459048, 0191-2740550, 9419147732, 103; Traffic Police Rural Jammu: 9484321021; Traffic Helpline Samba - Kathua: 8899041447; and Traffic Helpline Rajouri-Poonch: 9419324490.