

Lays foundation stone of Sri Shankaracharya Temple in Katra Soul of J&K UT deeply rooted in India's rich civilizational heritage: LG

STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: Marking a historic milestone, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha laid the foundation stone on Wednesday for the much-anticipated Sri Shankaracharya Temple. Perched on hillocks beside the revered Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, this project takes root after decades, realizing a vision first envisioned in the 1960s.

Total expenditure for the temple complex, amounting to Rs. 31.51 crore, will be fully borne by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board. The Lieutenant Governor announced that the Shrine Board will construct 50 commercial shops within the Temple complex, which will be allotted to the landowners who donated it for sacred cause.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) and the concerned landowners was executed in 2025, wherein the landowners have consented to donate 41 Kanals for sacred cause. "In the years ahead, the Sri Shankaracharya Temple will serve as a spiritual anchor for millions of devotees. It will be a living emblem of India's eternal culture, collective faith, resilience, and profound spiritual-cultural consciousness. Devotee visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi for darshan will also come to Sri Shankaracharya Temple, generating significant economic momentum across the region. This influx will create employment opportunities, strengthen local enterprises, and inject fresh energy into overall regional development," the Lieutenant Governor said.

During his visit to the holy town of Katra, the Lieutenant Governor presided over the 'Samridh Nari, Samridh Bharat' program at the Spiritual Growth Centre, where he interacted with the women entrepreneurs of Self-Help Groups of Reasi and adjoining areas. The Lieutenant Governor reiterated the commitment of SMVDSB towards keeping spiritual hubs vibrant while prioritizing every devotee's comfort, safety, and dignity. He said when sacred sites thrive with vitality, they spark renewed faith and unlock paths to progress. "SMVDSB has consistently prioritized welfare of local communities. It has not only generated large-scale local employment and supported extensive business activity, but has also contributed significantly to shaping a renewed social and cultural identity in



LG Manoj Sinha laying foundation stone for the Sri Shankaracharya Temple at Katra on Wednesday.

Historic Day

Historic day for J&K UT, Historic for Nation & Unforgettable for all time. After long wait of 6-decades Lieutenant Governor laid the foundation stone for Shri Shankaracharya Ji Temple.

After six decades of wait, we have finally witnessed the foundation laying ceremony for Shri Shankaracharya Ji Temple, situated on the adjoining hillocks of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. The concept for construction of Shri Shankaracharya Ji Temple was originally conceived in 1967. During 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) and the concerned landowners was executed. The landowners have consented to donate 41 Kanals of land for creation of motorable track and Yatri amenities such as toilets and water points at Shankaracharya Ji Temple.

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board has proposed construction of the Shri Shankaracharya Ji Temple, along with the access track, associated public utilities, and 50 commercial shops for landowners, at a total estimated cost of Rs. 31.51 crore. Shri Shankaracharya Ji Temple will nourish the spiritual lives of billions of devotees while simultaneously driving substantial regional economic activity. SMVDSB will ensure that this spiritual center is vibrant and alive, that prioritizes devotee welfare while also contributing to the prosperity of local communities who sustain them. It is a moment that will live permanently in our hearts and in the pages of history.

the Union Territory," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor said that SMVDSB in a recent meeting had approved key decisions to transform the Shrine and surrounding area into India's premier vibrant spiritual hub. He announced that the Shrine Board is enhancing the annual procurement of Puja Samagri and Prasad from SHGs from current procurement value of Rs.5 Crore to Rs. 12 Crore significantly strengthening livelihood generation in the region.

"A standout measure was to prioritize purchases from local self-help groups, women, and young entrepreneurs to boost the regional economy. This initiative will onboard 20 additional self-help groups into the supply chain, providing livelihood support to around 1,500 women from villages in Reasi, Udhampur, and Jammu. Total annual

purchases from these groups will be scaled to Rs. 50 crore in coming years," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that the soul of J&K UT is deeply rooted in India's rich civilizational heritage, so we have decided to channel Vedic education's vast wisdom to the youth to nurture this legacy. He said, through the Gurukul initiative, SMVDSB will nurture youth who will uphold sacred traditions and perform religious practices with authenticity and understanding.

The Lieutenant Governor also shared his vision for the future of the holy town. "I envision Katra carving a unique global identity in the coming years- drawing investments, superior infrastructure with SMVDSB support, booming business activity, and boundless opportunities for the youth," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor further

highlighted that the SMVDSB envisions building a world-class cultural and spiritual center-one that provides society with a foundation of lasting stability. Suresh Kumar Sharma and Gunjan Rana, Members, SMVDSB; Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor SMVDU; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Mohd Aijaz Asad, Secretary Rural Development & PR; Sarah Rizvi, DIG Udhampur and Reasi Range; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO SMVDSB; Nidhi Malik, Deputy Commissioner Reasi; senior officers of Police and Civil Administration, members of women self-help groups from Reasi and adjoining districts attended the function.



Vijay Saraf elected Secretary of Amar Singh Club



Newly elected Secretary of Amar Singh Club, Vijay Saraf along with Executive Committee team members.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Vijay Saraf, a known businessman of Jammu having multifaceted business interests including a petrol pump, transport business & a renowned restaurant brand, who secured highest votes in the recently concluded club executive committee elections, was on Wednesday unanimously elected as the Secretary of the prestigious Amar Singh Club by all the elected executive committee members in presence of Ramesh Kumar, Vice-President of the club.

It would be pertinent to mention

here that Vijay Saraf was elected as an executive member of club along with other elected members who all had contested this recently held executive committee elections collectively as team Vijay Saraf.

He had earlier also served the club as a Secretary in the past committees and the club had seen a self speaking development and renovations during his tenure which are till today hailed by the members of the club. All the executive committee members present during the election of the secretary of the club lauded the efforts

and skills of Vijay Saraf in leading the club to the path of development and are optimistic that the pace of club would further be enhanced under his able leadership.

Vijay Saraf, while presenting his vote of thanks to the executive committee members for putting in their faith in him, assured them all that he won't let their confidence down and would work 24 x 7 towards the club's development and also thanked Ramesh Kumar, Vice President of the Club for his vision and guidance in day to day affairs of

the club.

All elected members of the executive committee unanimously proposed the name of Vijay Saraf for the post of Secretary. Members who present during the meeting included Sahil Mahajan, Rajesh Langer, Er. Ajay Anand, Tania Kukreja, Manish Gupta, Nitika Bhandari, Er. Viplove Gupta, Manmohan Singh, Naresh Kumar Gupta (Tony), Viraj Malhotra, Dr. Anil Mahajan, Anita Jagjeet Kumari, Seema Shekhar Khajuria, Sidharth Daluja and Anil Kapahi (outgoing secretary).



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