

Mahashivratri Festival celebrated across Jammu region



Devotees waiting in queue to perform Darshan at Bhagwan Shiv's Mahanaal Cave at Kathua.

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BILLAWAR: Thousands of thousands devotees and followers from districts of Jammu, Samba and Kathua including pilgrims from Himachal Pradesh and Punjab States visited Lord Shiva's Mahanaal at Kathua District for celebration of Mahashivratri festival. The devotees were lined up to get a glimpse of Lord Shiva's Mahanaal and seek his blessings on Mahashivratri. The devotees queue up for long

Shiv Caves lies in the fact that it resembles with the Shri Amarnath Cave in appearance. It is observed with great enthusiasm in which the people of all castes and religious participate. Fasting, prayers and vigil marked the celebrations with devotees making a beeline for Lord Shiva's Mahanaal associated with Shivaism and chants of 'Om Namah Shivaya' rent the air near Ujh river. Hundreds of local volun-



Devotees paying obeisance in a temple at Bhadarwah.

hours, just for one glance of the lingum of Lord Shiva's Mahanaal as mark of their reverence for the deity. Mahashivratri hold religious importance in Kathua District and the unique importance of the Mahanaal

teer's organizations including the prominent social-work umbrella of Mahanaal Vikas Samithi (MVS) from areas of Jakhole, Bakhta and Jasrota routes organized lingers and bhandaras to the devotees who performed their

Darshans for worshipping and blessings of Lord Shiva on MAHASHIVRATRI-2022 festival. Local residents also came forward to arrange facilities on every two to three kilometres to provide refreshments for the devotees. However, the locals of the area regretted that the State/UT administration is not showing any interest in building Mahanaal Shiv Caves as per national standard requirements during the last more than one decade.

BHADARWAH: Like other parts of the country as well as Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Maha-Shivratri festival was celebrated across Chenab Valley with religious fervor and gaiety on Tuesday after two years of Corona restrictions.

People from different age groups, including children, young and elders, thronged the Shiv temples for paying obeisance to Lord Shiva and offering water and milk on the holy Shivalingam.

The devotees especially offered Bael and Bael Patri (Golden Apple and its leaves) to Lord Shiva while chanting 'Om Namah Shivaya'.

At Bhadarwah devotees throng towards the Historical Gupt Ganga Temple since early in the morning where main function was organized.

On the occasion, special arrangements were made in all the Shiv temples of Doda district, particularly ancient Gupt-Ganga temple near Jai Road Bhadarwah and Shiv temple Linghai Gatha, where heavy rush of devotees was

witnessed throughout the day. The devotees, including men, women and children, were seen waiting in queues for their turn to reach near the Shivalingam for paying obeisance and offering water with flowers.

DDC Chairman Doda Dhananther Singh and other prominent also participated in the celebration. Beside SHO Bhadarwah Jatinder Singh Rakval also greeted people on this auspicious occasion.

Manish Anand Giri, Mahanat Gupt Ganga Temple said that the day before the Amavasya (new moon) of each lunar month is called Shivratri. Among all the Shivratri of the year, the one that falls in the lunar month of Magha in February-March each year is considered to be most auspicious, and is celebrated as Mahashivratri. it is considered the night when Shiva married Parvati and Shiva have defeated all his enemies on this day.

"Jaagran (nightlong vigil) will also be observed in Gupt Ganga Temple, where a large number of devotees from whole Distt Doda will sing hymns and devotional songs, in praise of Lord Shiva," Mahant informed.

While speaking devotees from different parts of Bhadarwah said that on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri, married and unmarried women perform Puja with great faith, as Goddess Parvati who is also called 'Gaura', is regarded as the giver of 'Suhag' (good hus-

bands), marital bliss and a long and prosperous married life.

To facilitate the devotees, the administration had also made elaborate arrangements besides ensuring adequate security around the temples to ensure peaceful conduct of religious celebration.

Individuals and organisations had organized Bhandaras near temples where people were served sweets and light refreshment. The reports coming from other areas of Chenab Valley said that festival was celebrated with full religious enthusiasm in Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Sangaldaan, Batote, Drabshala, Nagseni, Chinta, Thathri and other places as well.

UDHAMPUR: Shivsena Udhampur unit took out a grand and beautiful procession on the occasion of Mahashivratri. Beginning from Party's office Udhampur with chanting of Bholenath, the procession depicting mythical scenes and events related to the marriage of Bhagwan Shiva with Parvati.

The people gave a rousing welcome with floral showers and Bholenath's cheers to the holy procession. The beautiful tableaux narrating the glory of Shiva remained the center of attraction of the people. On this occasion, party president UT J&K Manish Sahni was the chief guest. Sahni prayed for early passage of Corona epidemic, restoration of peace for Jammu and Kashmir and

economic progress in the country with warm wishes of Mahashivratri to the people of the country. Sahni said that Mahashivratri is a festival to worship Lord Bholenath, who even unknowingly worshipped Lord Mahadev, his wish is sure to be fulfilled.

On the occasion, Meenakshi Chhibber, General Secretary of Women's Wing, Vikas Bakshi, On this occasion, General Secretary Vikas Bakshi, Raj Singh, Mangu Ram, Deepak Kumar, Ashwini Prabhakar, Anil Vijay, Ramesh Verma, Rajesh, Vishal Verma, Rajinder Singh, Intiaz Hussain, Sahil Gandotra, Raj Singh, Rajesh Khajuria, Vikal Abrol, Sanjay Pandita, Jatindra Arora, Rajesh Verma, Ajay Gupta and many other leaders and workers were present.

Maha Shivratri was celebrated at different places in Udhampur with great gaiety. To celebrate Maha Shivratri all temples of the entire city were fully decorated. People setup a stalls of sweets and Prasad at various Chowk in Udhampur. Volunteers distributed Prasad to passenger traveling in different vehicles and passerby. Besides this number of stalls at different places in Udhampur and it's outskirts locality with great deal and served the eatables to the people. Late evening traditional Puja was performed at Aap Shambu temple till mid night. At century old Aap Shambu temple Lord Shiva's marriage was celebrated where Jangam presented Shiv Vivah in tra-



Shobha Yatra being taken out at Udhampur.

ditional manner which enthralled the devotees much.

POONCH: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Inder Jeet paid obeisance at Shiv Khori Temple where he performed the Havan and sought the blessing of Lord Shiva.

Officers present on the occasion included Senior Superintendent of Police, Poonch, Rohit Baskotra, amid

he said the auspicious occasion reflects the true spirit of our composite culture and instills the spirit of brotherhood and harmony among all.

The DC also prayed for sustained peace, progress and prosperity in the lives of the people. Thousands of devotees from across adjoining districts today throng Shiv Khori temple to pay obeisance



DC Poonch, Inder Jeet participating in Hawan at Shiv Khori Temple.

Army Officers and other officers The Management Committee of Mandir warmly welcomed and greeted the team of officers of District Administration Poonch.

Talking to the pilgrims, the DC extended his greetings to them on the occasion of holy festival of Mahashivratri. In his message of felicitations,

Mahashivratri celebration. Dressed in colorful attires, men, women, and children were seen visiting the religious place and taking part in the special prayers organized to mark the auspicious occasion. The visitors were seen enjoying local cuisine at the food stalls put up enroute the temple Shrine.

DFO Nowshera conducts series of plantation drives



Forest officials and others planting a sapling.

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NOWSHERA: A series of plantation drives under Har Gaon Hariyali were conducted by Divisional Forest Officer Nowshera on the occasion of Shivratri. She planted Bel and Palash plants at Dharpur Temple Makol along with distribution of 370 plants among the devotees present on the occasion. While speaking

on the occasion Neelima shah Divisional Forest Officer Nowshera said that Nowshera Forest Division is conducting plantation drives across the jurisdiction by involving members of Panchayat Raj system as well as locals. Rajeev Dhiman Divisional Forest Officer Rishikesh also participated in the plantation drive at Dharpur Temple

Complex. Another plantations drives were held at Shiv mandir Bagnoti, shiv mandir Deeng, Shiv Mandir Lamberi, Shiv Mandir Chingus, Shiv Madir Nowshera, Shiv Mandir Ramsoo and Shiv Mandir zero point Kalsian, Bargad, Peepal, Bel and Palash plants were planted during the plantation drives. The plantation drives at Sunderbani Range were organised by Rakesh Verma Range Officer Sunderbani along with Ved Parkash Block Officer Devak and the plantation drives at Nowshera were organised by Sudesh Kumar Range Officer Now shera. The plantation drives were conducted under the direct supervision of Vivek Verma Conservator of Forests West Circle Rajouri.

Army organises science project competition



Army officials along with participants during the event.

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KISHTWAR: Carrying forward the initiative to shape future of students, with the aim of promoting scientific acumen and equip the new Generation with innovative thinking and creativity, a Science Project Competition was organised by army at Chas, Kishtwar. The competition received overwhelming response from the students. A total of 12 students participated in the competition and showcased their hidden talent. The students demonstrated functioning of models in an impeccable manner and registered their scientific approach to resolve the day to day challenges. The winners of the competition were awarded with prizes. This competition has inspired other students in the area thus promoting a positive outlook amongst the generation next.

Army holds pulse polio campaign

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BATOTE: Nationwide Pulse Polio Drive was organized on 27 February 2022 by Ministry of Health and Welfare in conjunction with civil administered UT. Indian Army, in its quest to promote social upliftment in Jammu Region, whole heartedly supported this National initiative to emancipate any child from Poliomyelitis. Indian Army Establishment at Dharmund village provided assistance to the State Health representatives from Batote in establishing 'Polio Ravivar Booth' at Government Middle School, Dharmund apart from security, the Indian Army provisioned support facilities to health representatives and parents;



A doctor administering polio drops to a child.

children from adjoining villages for success of the event. Establishment at Dharmund resulted in immunization of 157 children with polio vaccine from approximately 96 village families. The event was caused an instance of bonhomie of Awaam and the Indian Army wherein, the village women were thrilled to see a women in

uniform. Seeing her a mother requested the Indian Army officer to give the first polio drop to her child. The Indian Army also reciprocated in equal humility and warmth. The officer became the role model as she administered the campaign and motivated the women of the village to scale new heights.

Shaheen flays administration for power woes in Banihal

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BANIHAL: National Conference leader and District President Ramban Mir Sajjad Shaheen on Tuesday while expressing deep concern over power crisis in Banihal and it's peripheral areas said that unscheduled power cuts have aggravated woes of people in district Ramban including Gool particularly in Banihal constituency. Despite a load-shedding schedule announced by the government, unscheduled and frequent power cuts continue unabated and people are facing massive inconvenience due to power cuts. He said power cuts are randomised in the entire district & PDD has totally failed to implement its own given schedule. It is preposterous that people have been forced to go without electricity for days together even in the metered areas. The power crises is worse in hilly and remote areas where people are rendered helpless in the absence of electricity.

Danar, Tethar, Kuthtal and KhairKoot where he interacted with several people and enquired about their problems post recent snow fall in their respective villages. He said that "This is a matter of grave concern that the utility services in various areas of Banihal constituency are yet to be restored even after a week of recent snow fall adding that areas like Mahu-Mangit, Tajnihal, Kharvan, Dhak, Khari, Neel, Gagarnag, Shagan, Trigam, Pogal-Paristan, Panchal, Sarbagni, Chaka, Sarachi, Amkote, Thachi, Phago, Hinjal, Chamalwas, Chaknarwah, Tanjiwar, Dardahi, Sumar, Lamber, Ashtar, Chachal, Bingara, Gujrara, Nowgam, Bajinasta and other areas are facing immense problems due to scarcity of drinking water and unscheduled power cuts.

Moreover major link roads that include Banihal-Mangit road, Khari to Mahu road, Chamalwas-Neel roads are still blocked even after more than one week of snow fall and the situation has further worsened after the ongoing snowfall.

He appealed to the administration to expedite the restoration work in the effected areas on war footing and restore the utility services in all the effected villages particularly in remote areas. Shaheen was accompanied by block president Banihal Abdul Ahad Shan besides Mohd Akram Bhat, Gulam Mohd Naik, Naseer Ahmed Naik, Abdul Rashid Malik, Firdos Ahmed Ganai, Abdul Latif Shah and others.

DDC Member starts pond construction work at Ramkund Temple

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SAMBA: On the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri, District Development Council (DDC) member Ramgarh, Sarabjit Singh on Tuesday started the construction work of a pond in the Ramkund Temple of Kajeyal.

On the occasion, District President BJP, Amar Singh, BJP senior leader Advocate Jatinder Kumar Sharma, Vijaypur Mandal President Ajay Sharma, Naib Sarpanch, Panch Nancy Choudhary, Panch Sudhagar Mal, Yuva Morecha Mandal President Gurmeet Choudhary and District Executive Member, Parveen Sharma besides a large number of devotees and local residents were present.

DDC member, Sardar Sarabjit Singh Johal, in his address, said that the first objective of the Modi led government at the Centre is all round development of every nook and corner of the nation, especially that of far flung and remote areas of rural India. As part of the same objective, we are executing the development works in Samba, he asserted. He informed that this under construction pond at the Ramkund Temple will be entirely a concrete structure and is estimated to be completed at a cost of about Rs. 8 lakh. He said that due care shall be taken of the aesthetic aspect as well as the religious significance of the pond while building the same. He said that



DDC member Sarabjit Singh inaugurating construction work.

though a large number of people visit this temple Ramkund temple to pay their obeisance, yet the completion of this work of construction is expected to attract more devotees thus increasing their foothall in the area.

District Executive Member, Parveen Sharma in his address

said that it is because of the BJP Govt and the LG Manoj

Sinha led UT administration that Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory is witnessing drastic transformation in the BJP leaders, workers and activists putting in their best right from the grass roots level to the top. Moreover, the developmental works are going on unabated at an unprecedented pace with full support of the Union Govt. as there is no constraint of funds for J&K.

Sarabjit Singh Johal and Parveen Sharma appealed to

the people to strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ensuring peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir: They asserted that based upon the performance the Bharatiya Janata Party is undoubtedly going to achieve landmark victory in the coming Assembly elections and form its own Govt in this sensitive Union Territory that has borne the brunt of terror onslaught during the past three decades.

GDC Nowshera organises national one-week virtual workshop

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NOWSHERA: With a collective vision to celebrate the unity in diversity of our nation and to ignite the sense of togetherness among the diverse set of communities, religions and ethnicities, Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat Club of Govt. Degree College Nowshera in collaboration with NSS Unit of College organised a National One-Week Virtual Workshop. The idea of a sustained and structured cultural connect between denizens of different regions was mooted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Rastriya Ekta Divas held on 31st October 2015, to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Prime Minister propounded that cultural diversity is a joy that ought to be celebrated through mutual interaction & reciprocity between people of different States and UTs so that a common spirit of understanding resonates throughout the country. Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat club ensures the collaborative efforts towards development and recognition of the spirit of unity in diversity, which stands out as a tall flame of nationhood that needs to be nourished and cherished into the future. India is a unique nation, whose fabric has been woven by diverse linguistic, cultural and religious threads, held together into a composite national identity by a rich history of cultural evolution, coupled with a

freedom struggle that was built around the tenets of non-violence and justice. On the opening day of workshop, a webinar was organised on the theme "Culture of Jammu & Kashmir and Tamil Naidh" in which 120 students from across the country participated. Keynote Speaker of the webinar was Prof. Rajiv Kumar, Assistant Professor (Mathematics) GGM Science College, Jammu. He throw light on the culture of Culture of Jammu & Kashmir and Tamil Naidh. On the second day of workshop A quiz competition was organised in which 125 students participated. E-Certificates were awarded to students who secure more than 50% in the quiz. On the other successive day other activities organised including Slogan Writing/Reading Competition on the theme unity in diversity, Essay Writing Competition on the theme "Unsung Heroes of Indian Freedom Struggle", Video Contest on the theme Aao Dekhen Apna Desh, Online singing Competition on the local Songs of J&K/ Different states/UTs, Poster Making Competition on the Culture of J&K/ Different states/UTs. The whole event was organized under the able guidance of Principal of the college Dr. Surinder Kumar and the event was hosted by Prof. Harshal Sharma Coordinator of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat Club and Prof. Inam Ul Haq, NSS Programme Officer.

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