

# Maha Shivratri celebrated with religious fervour



Thousands converge at Ancient Gupt Ganga Temple Bhadarwah to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
BHADERWAH: Like other parts of the country as well as Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, huge number of devotees converged at ancient Gupt Ganga Temple Bhadarwah to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva beside large number of people visited other Temples of Chenab Valley on Friday to seek blessings of Lord Shiva on the eve of Maha Shivratri. 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 Bhaderwah devotees throng towards the ancient 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 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 Dhananter Singh, Neeraj Singh Manhas BJP leader, Ex President Sanatan Dharam Sabha Bhaderwah Raju Charak and other prominent personalities also participated in the celebration and greeted people on the occasion. According to priest of Gupt Ganga Temple, 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 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," a devotee 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 husbands), marital bliss and a long and prosperous married life. Some young girls especially students said, "we came to pray for our 11th exams, which are scheduled to

begin." "My exams are approaching and I am here not only for Maha Shivratri puja but to seek blessings from lord Shiva for my examinations as well, so that I can excel and make sure good percentage," said Payal a student devotee from Bhadarwah. The ancient Gupt Ganga Temple is an important ancient religious shrine of District Doda. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva with huge Shivalingam and it is believed that the shrine is positioned in the same place where the Pandavas spent a few days in Bhadarwah during their exile period. Even one of the rocks at the temple has the footprint of Bhim, the 2nd Pandava brother. 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 Langer, sweets and light refreshment. The reports coming from other areas of Chenab Valley, Maha-Shivratri festival was celebrated with full religious enthusiasm in Banihal, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Sangaldaan, Batote, Drabshala, Nagseni, Chinta, Thathri and other places as well. **SUNDERBANI:** Maha Shivratri festival was celebrated with zeal and religious fervour at Shiv Khori Ransoo of district Reasi and village Gandeey block Sunderbani & Gian Ganga Ashram Sunderbani of district Rajouri. A large number of devotees came from different states in both the religious places paid obeisance and took a Shiv Langer Parshad. Similarly in village Gandeey block Sunderbani of district



NGO members serving Langar to devotees at Sunderbani.

Rajouri near Line of Control (LOC) in old Shiv temple such as ( Prachine Shiv Mandir) approx 20 thousands devotees came and took a Langer Parshad. Priest of this Temple Mahatma Ram Sewak Dass said this Temple was made by Pandavs in Sat Yug adding that now we have redesigned this temple in a new way. In Gian Ganga Ashram Sunderbani Swami Vishvatma Nand Saraswati ji Maharaj celebrate Shiv Ratri with Hawan Pujan and bandara. The devotees prayed for

the welfare of people in the area as well as peace and prosperity in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. NGO Anmol Cultural Club (ACC) and others organised Langer Parshad. Thousands of people took Langer parshad in this occasion. Zorawar Singh Khalsa president of NGO Anmol Cultural Club Sunderbani organised Langer Parshad for people and thousands of people/devotees took Langer parshad in main bazar Sunderbani of district Rajouri J&KUT.

## Expert delivers talk at SMVDU on International Women's Day



International Wellness Coach, Dr. Samita Gupta delivering lecture.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
KATRA: In an enlightening session at SMVDU University, renowned International Wellness Coach, Dr. Samita Gupta, captivated over 100 eager students with her expertise on the topic "Journey of Women from Womb to Tomb." She was welcomed by Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Coordinator of NSS, and Dr. Varun Dutta, Assistant Professor at SMVDU. Dr. Gupta, a certified nutrition and fitness expert, delivered profound insights into the holistic health and well-being of women, covering physical, mental, and emotional aspects. The expert lecture, organized by the National Service Scheme (NSS) at SMVDU, centered on crucial aspects of women's health and wellness in contemporary society. Dr. Gupta's comprehensive discussion delved into the nutritional requirements, reproductive stages, and reproductive health of women, offering invaluable knowledge to the

attendees. Highlighting the significance of pregnancy and postpartum nutrition, Dr. Samita Gupta emphasized the pivotal role it plays in ensuring the health and vitality of both mother and child. The expert lecture, strategically scheduled on the eve of International Women's Day, not only empowered the students with knowledge but also served as a reminder of the ongoing journey towards gender equality and the imperative need for collective action. Dr. Samita Gupta's expertise, coupled with her passion for women's health and wellness, left an indelible mark on the audience, ensuring that the session was not only educational but also transformative. As the event concluded, students departed enriched and inspired to contribute towards a healthier and more equitable society. Other members from SMVDU present on the occasion were Prof. Ankush Anand, Dr. Kamini Pathania and Ms. Shivani Khajuria.

## DAHWA holds annual Shivratri-cum-rural awareness Mela at Khooneshwar Shiv temple

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
UDHAMPUR: The Destitute And Handicapped Welfare Association (DAHWA), in collaboration with district administration, Udhampur, today organized the 27th annual Maha Shivratri-cum-rural awareness mela at Khooneshwar Shiv temple, Khoon in Majalta tehsil of the district. Thousands of people thronged the ancient Aap Shambu Temple to be part of the congregation held amid spiritual ambience of the revered shrine. On the occasion, the government departments including Agriculture, Health, Veterinary and others established their stalls to educate the farmers regarding their respective schemes. They spoke in length about the procedure and requirements for availing the benefit of these ambitious schemes. The Agriculture department distributed free seeds



Glimpses of Shivratri Mela at Khooneshwar temple at Udhampur.

among the farmers besides the Health department facilitated the rural participants with free healthcare check up. The religious Granin-Kisan mela was organized by DAHWA, on the eve of Mahashivratri which witnessed a good participation of devotees who thronged the event and paid obeisance at the historic ancient temple to seek blessings of Lord Shiva. Founder President DAHWA, Surat Singh Sumbria, inaugurated the mela which was among others attended by government officials and prominent citizens. Speaking on the occasion, the speakers appreciated DAHWA for organizing this pro-people event since the past over 27 years. They said the event has immensely helped the rural populace avail benefit of various government schemes thus expanding the coverage of beneficiaries. They lauded the efforts of DAHWA for organizing this annual festival saying that such events help in generating awareness and seeking involvement of village community in various initiatives designed by the government for their welfare. Lauding the enthusiasm among the participants at

the annual feature, Chairman DAHWA and founder of Mela, Surat Singh Sumbria, said the event aims at generating awareness among the rural masses about the government schemes meant for their socio-economic emancipation. Sumbria expressed gratitude to all stakeholders especially Deputy Commissioner Udhampur and all departments for extending cooperation in making this festival a grand success. He urged upon the government to observe this annual Maha Shivratri festival officially in view of its popularity and

importance for the area. He said that it will go a long way in satiating the religious aspirations of the devotees, as infrastructural development will give rise to the influx of pilgrim tourists giving a big fillip to economic activity in the area. On the occasion, a scintillating cultural bonanza featuring folk music, folk dances and Dogri songs, was presented by the artists of Cultural Wing, District Information Center, Udhampur besides renowned Ram Ditta party and other local artists on themes like Shiv Parvati Vihaw and Bhajans devoted to Lord Shiva besides awareness oriented events on government schemes. Among others present were former PRI members including Chain Singh, Romesh Chander and others besides prominent citizens and a large number of devotees were present on the occasion.

## Sham Lal hails PM Modi's rally, terms it as historic

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Sham Lal Gupta, Chairman of the Anti Crime Bureau (ACB), recently commended Prime Minister Narendra Modi's monumental rally at Bakshi Stadium, heralding it as a historic moment for Jammu and Kashmir. His praise for Modi's visionary leadership resonated with the audience, as he articulated how the Prime Minister's initiatives have translated the slogan of "Viksit Jammu Kashmir and Viksit Bharat" into tangible realities. In his statement, Sham Lal Gupta underscored Modi's unparalleled connection with the masses, emphasizing the overwhelming love and support the people of Jammu and Kashmir have demonstrated towards the Prime Minister. This sentiment reflects the significant strides made by Modi's administration in fostering a sense of unity and development across the region. Sham Lal Gupta reiterated the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP)



unwavering commitment to bringing prosperity and development to Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP's ambitious agenda for the region encompasses various initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure, enhancing economic opportunities, and fostering social cohesion. Expressing confidence in the BJP's prospects in the upcoming 2024 parliamentary elections, Sham Lal Gupta predicted a resounding victory with an unprecedented majority. He boldly stated that the BJP would surpass the 400-seat mark, reflecting the trust and confidence the nation has placed in the party's leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Such a prediction reflects the prevailing optimism among BJP supporters regarding the party's electoral prospects and its ability to deliver on its promises. Sham Lal Gupta concluded his remarks by reaffirming the transformative journey of "Naya Kashmir" under the Modi

regime. He highlighted the relentless pursuit of development and progress that characterizes the government's approach, ushering in a new era of prosperity for the people of the region. The vision of "Naya Kashmir" encapsulates the aspirations of the people for a brighter future, underpinned by inclusive growth and sustainable development. The rally at Bakshi Stadium served as a platform to showcase the BJP's commitment to the welfare and upliftment of Jammu and Kashmir. It also underscored the significance of strong leadership in steering the region towards a path of stability and prosperity. Overall, Sham Lal Gupta's endorsement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and the BJP's agenda reflects the prevailing sentiment among many in Jammu and Kashmir. As the region continues its journey towards progress and development, the support and enthusiasm of its people remain crucial in shaping its future trajectory.

## Grand event marks International Women's Day celebration in Ramban

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
RAMBAN: District Administration Ramban on Friday celebrated International Women's Day, 2024 with the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," with an emphasis on economic empowerment of women folk. The programme was held under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary. District Social Welfare Officer Rahul Gupta, Chief Education Officer Dev Anand and officers and women participated in the programme. District level programme was held at Conference Hall, District Administrative Complex, Maitra where, the Chairperson, District Development Council Dr.



Chairperson, District Development Council Dr. Shamsahd Shan and other during the event.

Shamsahd Shan was the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson highlighted various programmes launched by the Government for the overall development of women especially girls. She also appreciated the District Administration especially Social Welfare Department and other departments for organizing a grand programme on the occasion. She stressed the importance of fostering a society where

both men and women have equal opportunities and rights. Dr. Shan also addressed the issue of violence against women, emphasizing the need to combat and eradicate such violence from society. Meanwhile, the DSWO also congratulated all the participants on IWD, 2024 besides sensitizing the girls about the programmes being implemented in the district for providing opportunities to them to make their career

in all sectors. The Administration also felicitated the various meritorious girl students for their outstanding performance in their respective field. Meanwhile Dr. Asia from the Health department also spoke on the occasion. Earlier, a cultural bonanza was also presented by the students of different schools and local artists. Later, the Dignitaries also distributed the certificates and trophies among participants.

## RSETI Ramban celebrates International Women's Day



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
RAMBAN: State Bank of India, Rural Self Employment Institute (RSETI) Ramban celebrated International Women's Day on its campus today. District Development Manager NABARD Aarushi Sharma was Chief Guest, while Lead District Manager Abdul Rashid Sofi was the Guest of Honor. During the program Trainees shared their experience. DST Neelam narrated her long journey from School to becoming a successful Woman

Entrepreneur. She expressed gratitude to RSETI for support during her struggle. Ex-Trainee Mehroon Nisa also shared her life and business journey. She thanked RSETI Ramban for support during her journey. DDM NABARD interacted and made the trainees aware about the Fundamentals Rights and government support for upliftment of women in every sector. Lead District Manager also interacted and educated the trainees about women upliftment schemes of the government. Later, gifts were also presented to the Women Domain Skill Trainers & EX. Trainees. Senior Faculty Amrik Singh Raju concluded the program with the vote of thanks.

## GDC Bhadarwah organises Interactive Workshop-cum-lecture on EVM and VVPAT



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
DODA: In a significant move towards promoting voters awareness, the NSS Unit of Government Degree (PG) College Bhadarwah, in collaboration with District Election Office Doda, hosted an interactive workshop-cum-lecture on the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPATs). The workshop was attended by more than 200 students and faculty of the college. The initiative was led by the District Nodal Officer SVEEP, Dr. Akhtar Hussain, who guided the participants through the

nuances of these modern electoral technologies. The event aimed to educate students and faculty members about the functioning and importance of EVMs and VVPATs in maintaining the integrity of the electoral process. As part of the voters' awareness campaign, the workshop served as a platform for open dialogue and hands-on experience with the equipment, fostering a deeper understanding of their role in democratic governance. Dr. Akhtar Hussain, a renowned electoral expert, delivered a comprehensive lecture on the technical aspects of

EVMs and VVPATs and addressed concerns and misconceptions surrounding these systems. His extensive experience in the field provided valuable insights into the functioning and benefits of these technologies. The interactive workshop offered participants the opportunity to engage in practical sessions, learning how to operate EVMs and VVPATs. The organizer of this event, Prof. Mohd Yaseen Sirwal, NSS Programme officer said that educating the public about the electoral process is crucial for a healthy democracy. The event culminated by a vote of thanks proposed by Prof. Zain-ul-Abidin, HOD Political Science who thanked Dr. Akhtar Hussain, organizers of the event, all the staff members, students and others who are directly or indirectly involved in this event for their tireless efforts in making this event successful.

## International Women's Day observed at DPL Rajouri



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
RAJOURI: The Jammu and Kashmir police in Rajouri observed International Women's Day with an event organised at District Police Lines (DPL) Rajouri. The event was organised under the overall supervision of SSP Rajouri Anrpal Singh with police officers including Deputy SP DAR Afrat Hussain, Deputy SP HQ Ashwani Sharma. All the women working directly or indirectly with police department were present in the event who were felicitated. A token of gratitude was presented to Deputy SP SDRF, Jabeen Lone was appreciated for being the torchbearer of women in twin districts of Rajouri & Poonch as she had served the region in different capacities and ranks of police. The speakers who addressed the event included Inspector Sushma Thakur, Incharge Anti Human Trafficking Unit, Neetu Sharma from One Stop Center for Women Rajouri, Dr. Farah Chouhan Medical Officer at District Police Lines Rajouri. The event was a huge success as the ladies from all ranks were present.

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