

# Shat Chandi Maha Yagya concludes at Vaishno Devi Shrine

## STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA: The 9-day long deeply revered Shat Chandi Maha Yagya organised by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) at the Holy Shrine during Chaitra Navratri for universal peace and prosperity concluded on a grand note with "Purna Ahuti" on the auspicious occasion of Ramnavami.

Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Dr. Neelam Sareen, Board Member; Vikas Anand, SDM Bhawan, other officers and staff of the Shrine Board, besides pilgrims participated in Purna Ahuti and other religious ceremonies performed amidst Vedic mantras on the occasion. A group of Pandits led by Padma Shri Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri, performed the Maha Yagya.

More than three lakh devout pilgrims made their journey to the revered Shrine during the auspicious



Shat Chandi Maha Yagya concluding at Vaishno Devi Shrine with Puran Ahuti.

Chaitra Navratri. To ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all devotees visiting the Vaishno Devi Shrine regardless of their physical abilities, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board has been continuing providing free pony, battery car service and assistance in Darshans to Divyang pilgrims during Navratri as per directions of Manoj Sinha, Lt. Governor, JK-UT who is also Chairman, SMVDSB.

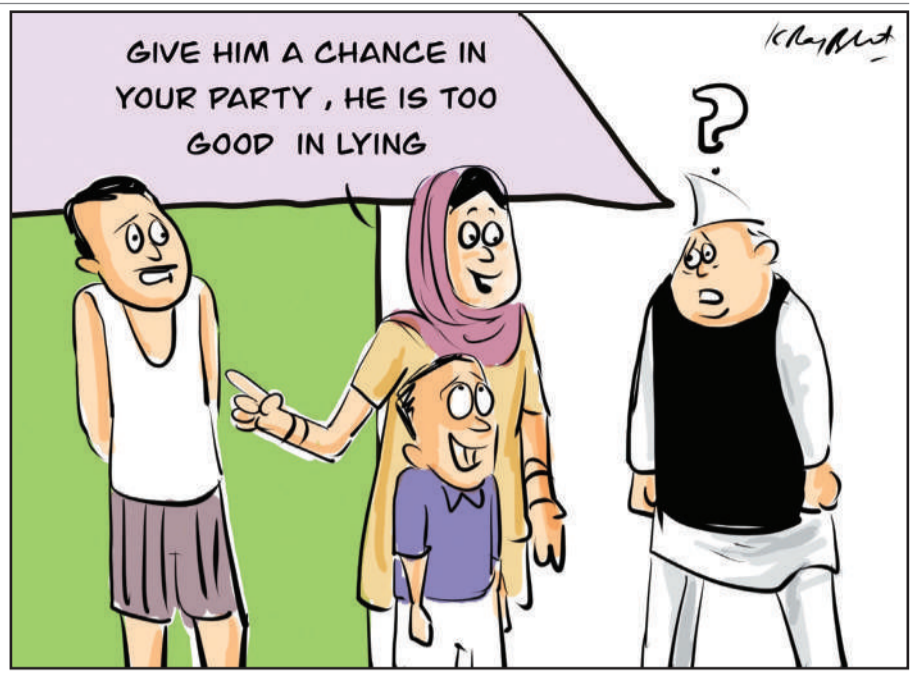
Elaborate decorations with exquisite fresh flowers of varied varieties brought from various parts of the country and abroad, traditional motifs and ornate lighting captivated the hearts of devotees who thronged to seek the blessings of Mata Vaishno Devi during these Navratras. Artistically designed huge reception doors were also installed in the Bhawan area.

Besides, the Board had also made impressive arrange-

ments for the pilgrims visiting the Holy Shrine including round the clock water and power supply all along the tracks and in the Bhawan Area, Sanitation and Sanitisation, Medicare and availability of special "fast related" food at the catering outlets of the Board. The Board also made arrangements for free food for the pilgrims at Tarakote Marg, Prasrad Kendra at Sanjichhat, and Bhairon Ji.

For the ease and comfort of pilgrims, facilities like battery operated vehicles, passenger ropeway and helicopter services were available through both online and offline modes.

Other special features were Bhajan and Bhaint performances by the renowned artists such as Hansraj Raghuvanshi, Lakhwinder Wadali, Kapil Sharma, Akriti Kakkar, Sagar Bhatia, Roshan Prince besides budding students of SMVD Gurukul during morning and evening Atka Aarti during these Navratras. The live telecast of Atka Aarti witnessed an unprecedented engagement from pilgrims worldwide who partake in the divine rituals from the comfort of their homes. As a special feature, Bhajan Sandhya was also organised by the Board twice a day for the pilgrims at the newly constructed Sheetla Bhawan at Adhkuwari and the same shall be a regular feature henceforth.



# Ram Navami celebrated in Kashmir, Shobha Yatra taken out in Srinagar

## MASROOR AHMAD

SRINAGAR: Ram Navami was celebrated with religious fervour across the Kashmir Valley on Wednesday.

Kashmiri Pandits took out Shobha Yatra in Srinagar on the auspicious occasion as the festival was celebrated with religious fervour and all temples in the city were decorated with colourful lights.

The Yatra, with a group of children dressed in traditional attire, was taken out from Kathleshwar temple in Tankipora area in Srinagar and passed through the roads of Habbakadal, Ganpathyar, Barbar Shah, Regal Chowk, LalChowk, Hari Singh High Street and Jahangir Chowk amid tight security arrangements.

Chanting "Hare Rama Hare Rama" slogans a good number of Kashmiri Pandits were accompanying the Yatra that passed off peacefully.

Like every year, this year too, the main Shobha Yatra started from the Zaindar Mohalla in the old city and culminated at Tankipora with a large number of



Kashmiri Pandits taking out Shobha Yatra in Srinagar.

majority community was also participating.

"We have been taking out this Yatra and 'Jhanki' every year for the past more than 18 years. Earlier, it was stopped due to turmoil in the Valley," said devotees.

He said that despite being a minority, the Kashmiri Pandit community takes out the procession with great enthusiasm through the city centre and we are enjoying every moment as majority community is supportive and helpful in every manner.

The devotees expressed gratitude to both Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmir Pandits for their support in

carrying out the procession. Large number of the majority community members were also seen greeting them by the roadside at various points of the Srinagar City.

Security forces were deployed at various points in strength as a precautionary measure, an official said. President of the Hindu Welfare Society said that with the Shobha Yatra, the Navratras followed by Ram Navami, the birthday of Lord Rama, concludes.

He said special prayers for peace and prosperity of the country and Jammu and Kashmir were conducted during all these days.

# BJP set to sweep in Udhampur-Doda-Kathua Parliament seat: Raina

## MASROOR AHMAD

RAMBAN: Launching a scathing attack on the opposition parties, Ravinder Raina, President, Bharatiya Janata Party, Jammu & Kashmir, said that NC, Congress, and PDP are completely filled with the tumour of corruption, nepotism and dishonesty.

He said that these parties have destroyed the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir with their deceit and now it is the BJP under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which is correcting those grave mistakes.

Raina, while addressing the massive public rallies at Nashri, Maitra, Batote, Ramsu, Ukhral, Pogal-Paristan, Neel, Sawni Kadma and other areas in Banihal & Ramban Assembly Constituencies, in Ramban district, said that with all the development-based record of past 10 years, BJP is all set to sweep in Udhampur-Doda-Kathua Parliament seat.



BJP J&K Ravinder Raina during public rally at Ramban.

Ravinder was accompanied by District President Rajeshwar Kumar, DDC Rakesh Thakur, DDC Renuka Katoch, DDC Jagbir Das, DDC Balbir Singh, Saleem Bhat, Aizaz Ahmad Bittu, Sarpanch Mohd Haneef Wani, Nawaz Hussain Wani, Mandal President Riaz Ahmad, Ranjit Singh, Raghuraj Singh, Ganesh Singh, Narain Singh, Amrit Varsha and other leaders of the party.

Raina ferociously attacked the past

governments led by NC, Congress, and PDP during his multiple public meetings in the Ramban District.

He maintained that these parties destroyed the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh emotionally, socially, economically, and politically.

He said that these parties viciously harmed the present and the future of youth, women, and communities like refugees, Paharis, STs, SCs, and OBCs and dented the beautiful state in multiple ways.

While asking the people to vote for peace and progress in the region and to defeat the divisive forces, Raina said that the Modi government has brought the vision to develop Jammu & Kashmir in a multi-pronged approach.

"The Modi government has given new medical colleges, nursing colleges, paramedical colleges, IIT, IIM, and AIIMS, Cancer Hospital, degrees colleges, and engineering colleges, new industrial estates, e-buses, big investments, smart cities, roads, highways, tunnels, hydropower, four-lane highway and numerous other things. I must also thank and appreciate Dr. Jitendra Singh, who has shown paramount interest in developing this Parliamentary constituency by bringing unique projects", Raina said and appealed to all the voters to vote massively in favour of Dr. Jitendra Singh, the MP candidate of BJP from Udhampur-Doda-Kathua Parliament seat.

# J&K at threshold of mega development under PM Modi's leadership: Slathia



Former Minister Surjeet Singh Slathia during public meeting at Samba.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBA: With peace gaining momentum across the Valley, Pradesh BJP Vice President and former minister Surjeet Singh Slathia on Wednesday said Jammu and Kashmir is at the threshold of mega transformation after large scale investments pouring in various sectors and focus shifting on holistic development and implementation of welfare schemes.

Welcoming new entrants into BJP in village Nehari in Block Sumb Samba here this afternoon, Slathia said the initiatives underway will open up vistas of opportunities in terms of jobs and economic upliftment across the Union Territory.

Slathia said rapid industrialization and infrastructure upgradation is the pre-ambler for Naya Jammu and Kashmir under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He referred to the cherished agenda of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and said the BJP is working towards realizing this vision by ending

discrimination and ensuring holistic development of all the regions and sub-regions irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

He said the BJP is a mass movement, standing for empowerment of the people and support from all sections of the society. Public goodwill and support is the biggest strength that enables the party to fight for the just cause of the marginalised segments and stands steadfast in resolving issues confronting them. As a result of sustained efforts, the BJP has emerged as a force to reckon with, he added.

Slathia said the BJP's focus would be to usher Jammu and Kashmir in a new phase of progress and development with restoration of complete normalcy and peace remaining a focal point. The BJP is committed to address the issues of the youth, the marginalized and weaker sections besides women, he said and asserted that the party will ensure to remove the disparity between region and sub regions with regard to

allocation of funds for development and opportunities to flourish.

The Pradesh Vice President said the BJP has paved the way for the people to have access to all the privileges, rights and facilities available to their fellow citizens across the country. This is something not known in this part of the country due to wrong policies adopted over the decades, he said adding that continued support of the people to the BJP will help in expediting the development and making Jammu and Kashmir part of the country's growth story, he added.

Slathia said the joining of public spirited activists will further strengthen the BJP at the grassroots level, enabling it to face the challenges faced by the nation with resilience and courage.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included Vice President BJP Samba Mohan Lal Sharma, Vijay Singh Mandal President, Balbinder Singh Naib Sarpanch, Thodu Ram and others.

# Regional parties used youth as scapegoats for their political gains: Bukhari

## STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, on Wednesday, said that "traditional political parties and their leaders have been responsible for spilling innocent blood, as they have made youth scapegoats for their own political dividends, using deceptive narratives and emotional sloganeering over the past several decades." He urged the young population in J&K to "join hands with the Apni Party in order to shape a brighter future of this region and its people."

He made these comments today while addressing an event at the party headquarters in Srinagar. The event was organised to welcome a large number of youth from Srinagar and Pampore into the party fold.

Addressing the occasion, Bukhari blamed the traditional parties and their leaders for being responsible for the deaths and destruction of J&K.

He said, "These parties and leaders deceived our youth with misleading political narratives and emotion-



Apni Party President S.M.A Bukhari with newly joined members.

ally charged slogans, and by setting unattainable goals. They paved the way for violence and bloodshed here. As a result, we have tragically lost thousands of our young people over the years and decades. The irony persists as the families of these victims continue to suffer, with a significant number of youths still imprisoned."

"On the other hand, the politicians who used the young population as cannon fodder for their political ambitions created empires and accumulated riches for their families during this time," he added.

Bukhari urged the youth to join hands with the Apni Party to contribute their

efforts to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said, "Together, we can change the scenario of J&K for the better. I assure you that the Apni Party will ensure that democracy and democratic institutions in Jammu and Kashmir are strengthened, and the people receive all the rights guaranteed to citizens by the constitution of the country."

Assuring people that the Apni Party would always stand by the truth and never mislead them, he said, "Our politics is based on truth and honesty. Unlike traditional parties, we will never

mislead people for our political advantage."

Reiterating the party's fundamental principles, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, "Apni Party was established post-August 2019, when the entire J&K region was under lockdown and in a state of significant chaos. At that time, people were apprehensive that after losing Article 370 and the statehood, this region would face demographic changes, potentially altering the Muslim-majority identity of J&K. Ironically, the traditional politicians who had been in power for over 70 years chose to remain silent during this testing period. We could have also chosen to be silent spectators during that time, but we decided to step forward and stand by our people in those challenging times. We launched the party and traveled to Delhi to meet with leaders in the central government. We successfully convinced them to preserve the exclusive rights of the people of J&K over jobs and land here."

Those who joined the party today included prominent social and political activist

from Srinagar's Sannat Nagar; Shujaat Wani; entrepreneur Mukhtar Ahmad from Dalgate; Zahoor Ahmad Sheikh from Dalgate; Shahid Ahmad Yatoo from Pampore; Asif Ahmad Yatoo from Pampore; social and political activist Tabish Mushtaq from Wanabal, along with their associates.

Besides Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, the prominent party leaders who were present on the occasion included party's Media Advisor Farooq Andrabi, Senior Vice President for Srinagar and party In-charge for the Habba Kadal constituency Jeelani Hamid Kumar; Provincial President of the party's Youth Wing Khalid Rathore, party in charge for the Chanapora constituency Mohammad Ashraf Dar; Zone President Chanapora Aijaz Ahmad Khan, Youth Zonal President of Chanapora constituency Irshad Ahmad Shah, Ward President Budshah Nagar Mohammad Jamal, Media Coordinator Dr Naqeeb Raja, Senior Worker Farooq Ahmad Khan, Senior Leader Syed Muzamil Rizvi, and others.

# Election 2024: CA aspirants to face difficulties during travel restrictions in Rajouri, other parts of country for Exams

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: "The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), as a regulatory body, is expected to uphold principles akin to those of the State. Consequently, any decision, action, or adjudication should align with the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution, including the right to vote as outlined in Articles 326 to 329. While voting rights may not be classified as fundamental rights per se, they remain a cornerstone of democracy and are safeguarded under the Constitution. Postponing exams not only respects the legal framework surrounding voting rights but also promotes civic engagement and democratic participation, in

line with the ethos of our constitutional democracy," stated ICAI handout.

"The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has gained notoriety for its stringent actions against students, as highlighted by the recent case before the Rajasthan High Court. In a scathing rebuke, the court condemned ICAI for withholding the result of a student simply for expressing criticism against the institute. This egregious act underscores the dangers of allowing an overzealous pursuit of professional excellence to silence student voices. Upholding freedom of speech and fostering a culture of constructive criticism should be fundamental principles upheld by regulatory bodies like

ICAI," it stated.

"If a candidate from Rajouri (Jammu & Kashmir) exercises her right to vote on her polling date i.e 7th May 2024 and gets free by 4:00 PM. It is impossible for him/her to travel to the nearest exam center i.e Jammu for CA Final Exam on 8th May 2024 which is 187 km away and takes roughly 10 hours in normal conditions. This gets even more difficult during political instability and travel restrictions which are extremely prevalent in Rajouri and other parts of the country during election," it added.

"Similarly Phase 3 voting on May 7 while CA exam is on May 8 while Phase 4 voting will be held on May 13 while CA exam is on May 14," it added.

# Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha meets LG Sinha



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha meets Gajapati Maharaja Shri Dibyasingha Deb, Chairman, Shree Jagannatha Temple Managing Committee, Puri.

## STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, Chairman, Shree Jagannatha Temple Managing Committee, Puri and Aadya Sevak of Lord Jagannatha met Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan, here on Wednesday.

He was accompanied by his wife Maharani Leelavati Pattamahadevi and social activist Vinay Saraf. Meanwhile, Tarun Uppal, Chairman, Nibhaya Bharat Foundation today called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. A delegation of All Minority Employees Association Kashmir led by its President Sanjay Koul also met the Lt Governor.