

Historic 3-day Baisakhi Devika Mela concludes; over 60,000 devotees, visitors participate

STATE TIMES NEWS
UDHAMPUR: The historic three-day Baisakhi Devika mela, which commenced on April 13, 2025, on the sacred banks of the holy Devika rivulet in Udhampur town, concluded today amidst immense enthusiasm and devotion. The event witnessed an overwhelming participation of over 60,000 visitors and devotees from various parts of Jammu Province. On the concluding day, Member Legislative Assembly Udhampur West, Pawan Kumar Gupta, graced the occasion as the chief guest, while Additional District Development Commissioner Udhampur, Rajinder Singh was the guest of honour and DDC Member Narsoo, Subash Chander, DIO/ CEO, Municipality, Rajinder Dagra, Mela Officer Tehsildar Udhampur, Jai



MLA Udhampur West, Pawan Kumar Gupta along with other dignitaries during the Mela.

Singh were the special guests at the concluding day. While addressing the gathering, the chief guest lauded the tireless efforts of the District Administration for smooth and successful organization of this grand event. He extended warm congratulations to the public for their enthusiastic participation and stated that such traditional fairs are not only reflective of our rich and diverse cultural heritage but also serve as a major attraction for tourists. He further emphasized that these melas significantly contribute to the economic upliftment of the region and act as vital platforms for promoting brotherhood, peace and prosperity. He also underlined the importance of preserving and promoting the region's cultural legacy, stating that melas like the Baisakhi Devika Mela are indispensable parts of our cultural identity, encouraging the younger generation to stay connected with their roots. The three day mela was organized under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, the District Administration made adequate arrangements for the successful culmination of the event. These included robust measures for security, water, power supply, medical care, traffic regulation and sanitation to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all visitors. The mela featured a number of temporary sweet shops, toy shops and other eateries by both locals and outside vendors, attracting the general public visiting the mela site. During the three-day mela, Information Department Udhampur presented cultural programme in which local artists including students from various educational institutions and folk artists from surrounding areas presented performances depicting the traditions of the area and theme-based skits, which were highly appreciated by the audience.

GDC Ramgarh hosts seminar on Cyber bullying and Anti-Bullying Policies

STATE TIMES NEWS
RAMGARH: Government Degree College (GDC) Ramgarh, organized a seminar on "Cyber bullying and Implementing Anti-Bullying Policies in Schools" under the aegis of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The event was conducted under the esteemed guidance and supervision of Prof. (Dr.) Meeru Abrol, Principal of the college with the aim to raise awareness about the growing concern of cyber bullying and the importance of creating safe and inclusive environments in educational institutions. The whole event was organized and coordinated by Prof. Sandeep Kumari. Several students took part in the seminar with great enthusiasm, presenting insightful and well-prepared perspectives on the issue of cyber bullying and the importance of implementing anti-bullying policies in schools. The presentations were evaluated by an esteemed panel of judges comprising Prof. Brham Dutt and Ashok Kumar. Chahat of Semester IV secured the First Position, while the Second Position was jointly awarded to Kirandeep of Sem. VI and Harmandeep of Sem. IV. The Third Position was shared by Ruhii and Alisha, both from Semester VI. The event concluded with a warm and appreciative vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Brham Dutt, who acknowledged the efforts of all participants, faculty members, and organizers for making the event a meaningful success. The seminar also witnessed active participation from faculty members including Dr. Shivali Panjgotra, Dr. Neeraj, Priya, and Anjali as well as large number of students who contributed to the program's success through their involvement and curiosity.



A student expressing views during the seminar.

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Assessment camp for specially abled persons held



Locals participating in camp at Poonch.

STATE TIMES NEWS
POONCH: The District Social Welfare Department, in collaboration with the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), on Tuesday organized an Assessment Camp for Persons with Disabilities here at Dak Banglow Surankote. The camp was held under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal and supervised by District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Wakeel Ahmed Batt. The initiative was part of the flagship ADIP (Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances) Scheme, aimed at identifying eligible beneficiaries and assessing their needs for assistive devices and prosthetic aids. The focus was on

empowering individuals from remote and underserved areas. A dedicated team of medical professionals and technical experts conducted thorough assessments to ensure that each individual receive customized and appropriate support devices. The camp witnessed significant community participation, with local residents, beneficiaries, and community leaders expressing appreciation for the initiative. They highlighted its impact on enhancing mobility, independence, and dignity among differently-abled and elderly populations. These outreach initiatives are vital in fostering inclusive growth, enhancing accessibility, and upholding the commitment to leaving no one behind in the journey of social and economic development.

Delegation of JKTF meets with MLA Shagun Parihar



JKTF delegation calling on MLA Shagun Parihar at Kishtwar.

STATE TIMES NEWS
KISHTWAR: On the direction of State President Mohd Ashraf Sheikh, a delegation of the Jammu and Kashmir Teachers' Forum (JKTF), led by Provincial President Jammu Sanjeet Sharma, met with MLA Shagun Parihar to discuss pressing issues affecting teachers & students in the region. The delegation urged MLA Parihar to address the vacancies of Headmasters, Masters, and Teachers in District Kishtwar. The delegation sought MLA Parihar's intervention in resolving issues related to ATD and transfer policy for Teachers appointed under the ReTs Scheme. The JKTF delegation emphasized the need to reinstate the old pension scheme, citing the inadequacies of the New Pension Scheme (NPS). The delegation requested MLA Parihar to that rationalization of Teachers should be on PTR basis especially in hard zones, to ensure students' interests are protected. The delegation requested MLA Parihar to discuss the matter of AAYAS with higher authorities to ensure continuity of services for Pre-Primary students. MLA Shagun Parihar took swift action and resolved many issues on spot and assured the delegation that she would prioritize genuine concerns. She emphasized that she will work both for the betterment of employees and the student community. Sanjeet Sharma also highlighted the shortcomings of NPS/UPS, stating that retired employees receive minimal pensions, and requested the MLA to raise voice so that old pension scheme will be reinstated for the welfare of lakhs of Government Employees. The delegation included Swami Raj, Deepak Raj, Jeevan Lal, Murli Lal, Ashok Kumar, Suresh Kumar, Beer Singh, Manjeet Sharma, Arun Kumar, Manjeet Sharma, Arun Kumar, Sunil Kumar, Munshi Ram, Kuldeep Kumar, Bal Krishan, Jai Krishan, Krishan Lal, and others.

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DC releases booklet Visual Highlights of Dev under District Capex Budget 2024-25

STATE TIMES NEWS
KATHUA: District Development Commissioner Dr. Rakesh Minhas on Tuesday released a dedicated booklet titled 'Visual Highlights of Development under District Capex Budget 2024-25'. Compiled by the Chief Planning Office, the booklet captures the breadth and impact of developmental initiatives carried out across the district during the last financial year. The publication reflects a focused and inclusive approach adopted under Dr. Minhas's leadership, aiming to align government initiatives with grassroots-level needs and aspirations. By prioritizing genuine public demands during the preparation and execution of the Capex Budget, the district administration has succeeded in translating policy into meaningful on-ground transformation.



DDC Dr. Rakesh Minhas and other releasing booklet at Kathua.

The documented highlights include progress made in education infrastructure, healthcare accessibility, water resource management and community development. Special attention has been given to rural areas, with initiatives that address long-standing challenges while promoting resilience, equity and opportunity. The administration also made key interventions to improve rural connectivity, safety, and environmental sustainability. New infrastructure supporting youth engagement, health awareness, and social upliftment forms a central part of the district's developmental narrative over the past year. Efforts to strengthen power infrastructure and address critical service gaps in remote areas have also been underscored in the booklet, showcasing a holistic approach to rural transformation. These steps have collectively enhanced the quality of life and boosted economic potential for residents across various regions of Kathua. Dr. Minhas commended the efforts of all stakeholders, including the District Development Council, field departments and community members, whose collaboration made these achievements possible. He emphasized that the visual compilation not only serves as a record of accomplishments but also as a motivation for future goals. The launch of this maiden visual booklet is a significant step by District Administration Kathua towards transparent governance. It offers citizens a clear glimpse into the district's development journey and is available on the official website: [www.kathua.nic.in] ([http://www.kathua.nic.in]). ADDC, ADC, CPO and ACD were also present on the occasion.

Implementation of Jal Shakti Abhiyan-Catch Rain Campaign reviewed



DDC Dr. Vikas Kundal reviewing the progress of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

STATE TIMES NEWS
POONCH: Vikas Kundal convened a meeting on Tuesday to assess the progress of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign and to discuss the Action Plan for the fiscal year 2025-26. The meeting, held at the DC complex, brought together officers from various line departments. The District Development Commissioner reviewed the physical and financial progress achieved under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan in the year 2024-25. He underscored the critical need for water conservation in view of growing challenges related to water scarcity in the region. The functionalities of stakeholder departments provided updates on the initiative, detailing the advancements made under different schemes. The DDC directed the planning department to constitute a water conservation committee, comprising PO ICDS, DFO, PO IWMP, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti and Irrigation and the Chief Agriculture Officer. He emphasized the need for a thorough study of the campaign to ensure effective implementation in the current financial year. The DDC stressed the importance of proper documentation of all programs and activities conducted under the Abhiyan to ensure transparency and effectiveness. He urged all officials to complete targeted projects within prescribed timelines, advocating for dedication and efficiency in their work.

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6-day Management Dev Program for MSME Entrepreneurs begins

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SAMBHA: Deputy Commissioner of Rajesh Sharma on Tuesday inaugurated a six-day Management Development Program (MDP) aimed at enhancing the capabilities of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the region. The training program, organized under the Raising & Accelerating MSME Productivity (RAMP) scheme, is being implemented by the Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI). The inauguration ceremony commenced with a comprehensive welcome address by the District Nodal Officer of JKEDI, who outlined the program's objectives and expected outcomes. The training has attracted 20 established entrepreneurs from across Samba district, demonstrating strong interest in business development opportunities. In his inaugural address, the DC emphasized the critical role of MSMEs in driving economic growth and employment generation in the district. "This training initiative represents a significant step towards building a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in Samba," remarked the Deputy Commissioner. Later interacting with the participating entrepreneurs, he encouraged them to fully utilize the knowledge and skills offered through the program to scale their businesses effectively. The RAMP scheme, under which this training is being conducted, is a central government initiative designed to strengthen the MSME sector through targeted interventions, capacity building and technology adoption. This inaugural training program in Samba marks a pivotal development in enhancing MSME productivity within the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The program will cover essential aspects of business management including financial planning, market expansion strategies, digital transformation, and efficient operational practices tailored specifically for MSMEs.

Col Mahan, MLA Darshan inaugurate Rs 7.5 Cr JJM Scheme in Palanu



Col Mahan Singh (Retd), Chairman DDC Kathua, along with Th. Darshan Kumar, MLA Basohli inaugurating JJM scheme.

STATE TIMES NEWS
MAHANPUR: In a significant step towards ensuring clean and reliable drinking water supply to the remote regions of Kathua, Col Mahan Singh (Retd), Chairman District Development Council (DDC) Kathua, along with Th. Darshan Kumar, MLA Basohli, on Tuesday inaugurated the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Upper Sawank Scheme at Palanu. Constructed at a cost of Rs 7.5 crores, the scheme is a game-changer for the water-scarce villages of Sawank, Kelhari, Palanu, Pankhar, Taloti, and adjoining areas. It comprises six Ground Service Reservoirs (GSRs) of varying capacities, a 10,000-gallon sump tank, and a robust pipeline network spanning over 30 kilometers. The commissioning of this critical infrastructure will provide potable water to over 5,000 residents, significantly improving their quality of life. Prominent among those present at the inaugural ceremony were DDC Member Tajinder Goldy, Sarpanch Narita Manhas, Sadhu Ram, Shanti Bushan, AEE PHE, AEE Mechanical, and a large gathering of local residents and PRI representatives. Speaking on the occasion, Col Mahan Singh expressed heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for their visionary leadership and commitment to ensuring basic amenities in even the most remote corners of Jammu & Kashmir. He said the JJM is a landmark initiative that has transformed the water supply landscape in the UT. "The successful completion of this scheme is a testament to our government's dedication to inclusive development. It reflects the spirit of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas," Col Mahan stated, adding that the administration remains committed to bridging developmental gaps and uplifting rural infrastructure. MLA Darshan Kumar also lauded the efforts of the engineers, ground staff, and public representatives who ensured timely execution of the project and reiterated his commitment to furthering the developmental agenda in the region.

Panchayat Level anti-drug IEC Campaign witnesses widespread participation



Officials along with participants during the programme.

STATE TIMES NEWS
KISHTWAR: In continuation of its efforts to combat the menace of substance abuse, the District Administration Kishtwar under the Supervision of Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan, on Tuesday conducted the Panchayat-Village level Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign activities across the District. The initiative, launched across all 13 blocks of the district, witnessed enthusiastic participation from diverse sections of society, including local residents, youth, students, educators, and community leaders. The campaign aims to sensitize the masses about the devastating consequences of drug addiction and to galvanize collective action towards building a "Nasha Mukta" (Drug-Free) society. As part of this ongoing initiative, awareness programs are being conducted every Monday in various panchayats by resource persons designated by the District Administration. These included resource persons from eight key departments, including Health, Police, Education, Rural Development Department (RDD) and others. These sessions are designed to ensure sustained engagement and knowledge dissemination at the grassroots level. The main focus of today's event was the selection of educational institutions as venues for the events. Today's events were marked by impactful IEC activities organized by the designated nodal officers and Nodal agencies across multiple locations. The programs focused on instilling awareness, fostering community dialogue, and encouraging proactive involvement of youth in preventive efforts. The campaign emphasizes the importance of consistent and coordinated action to eliminate drug abuse, while also highlighting the Administration's unwavering commitment to public health and societal well-being. These events are being carried out under the guidance of District Social Welfare Officer Zubair Ahmed.

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