

Chairperson DDC Kulgam visits Shahoo Sachan, participate in 10th Muharram Procession

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KULGAM: Chairperson, District Development Council (DDC) Kulgam, M Afzal Parrey visited Shahoo Sachan Kulgam on Sunday and participated in the solemn procession marking the 10th Muharram, a significant day of remembrance for the Muslim community.

His presence highlighted the administration's dedication to fostering unity and supporting the community during this sacred occasion.

During the visit, DDC Chairperson interacted with local residents, religious leaders and participants of the Muharram procession, ensuring that all necessary arrangements were in place



for a peaceful and dignified observance.

He directed the concerned departments to provide essential services, including security, healthcare and sanitation along the procession

routes to facilitate mourners.

On the occasion, DDC Chairperson also visited blood donation camp organised in collaboration with local health authorities and

voluntary organizations. The camp, reflecting the spirit of sacrifice and compassion central to Muharram, witnessed active participation from the community.

Chairperson praised the donors for their humanitarian gesture, emphasizing that such efforts embody the essence of Muharram and strengthen communal harmony.

He reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and mutual respect during the observance, and assured continued administrative support to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants in the Muharram processions across Kulgam district.

10th Muharram Processions held with religious significance in Budgam

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BUDGAM: The 10th Muharram (Ashoora) procession was on Sunday held in Budgam with deep religious reverence and solemnity.

The main Zuljana Sharief procession began from Bab-ul-Ilem Imambara in Mirgund early in the morning and culminated late in the evening at Daar-ul-Mustafa, Budgam.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, along with SSP Budgam, Nikhil Borkar, actively participated in the procession from Mirgund. They were also accompanied by Director Health Services Kashmir, ADC Budgam, CPO Budgam, CMO Budgam,



and other concerned district officers.

As a mark of respect and solidarity, DC and SSP Budgam also carried the Alam and walked alongside the Taziyah procession. They personally participated in serving water and refresh-

ments to the mourners at various points, including the district administration's refreshment stall set up outside Behishte Zehra Park Budgam.

District administration had made elaborate arrangements for smooth observance

of Ashoora processions across the district. Medical camps, water distribution stalls, sanitation services, and police deployments were ensured at all major locations.

DC, who was continuously monitoring and reviewing the arrangements on the ground, reiterated the importance of the day and said, "Remember the significance of 10th Muharram and the message it gives us - of sacrifice, patience and standing for truth."

He expressed gratitude to all departments, volunteers, and the local community for their coordination and support in maintaining the sanctity and smooth conduct of Ashoora across Budgam.

Treasury office Bandipora organises orientation programme on SNA-SPARSH



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BANDIPORA: District Treasury Office Bandipora under the directions of Finance department conducted an orientation programme on the Single Nodal Account Samyochit Pronali Aanakrit Shighr Hastantaran (SNA-SPARSH), model for efficient management of funds under Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).

The programme was attended by Drawing and Disbursing Officers

(DDOs) associated with the District Treasury Bandipora and its subordinate Treasuries, aimed at familiarizing them with the SNA-SPARSH system for seamless financial operations. The session began with a comprehensive introduction to the model by the District Treasury Officer Bandipora, who highlighted the role of SNA-SPARSH in strengthening the financial governance at the grass-roots level. A Power Point

Presentation on SNA-SPARSH and a demo on bill generation on JKPaySys from DDO maker to checker login were presented by the experts of NIC Bandipora

The SNA-SPARSH model integrates critical financial platforms, including JKBEAMS, PFMS and eKuber of RBI, facilitating real-time fund transfers directly from the central and state consolidated funds to the implementing agencies. On the occasion, DTO Bandipora said that this reform is part of a broader financial transformation under the Finance department, complementing the systems like BEAMS, JKPaySys, Treasury Net and e-Kuber, aimed at ensuring timely, transparent and efficient release of funds to the beneficiaries.

Islamia College organises Shabeel at Alamgari Bazar on Ashura

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: In a heartfelt gesture of community service and interfaith harmony, the NSS Unit I of Islamia College of Science and Commerce, Srinagar, set up a Sabeel (facilitation camp) at Alamgari Bazar Chowk on the eve of Youm-e-Ashura.

As part of its regular outreach initiatives, the camp served refreshments including fruit juices, water, lassi, tea, and coffee to the mourners participating in the Ashura procession. Additionally, a mobile charging station was established at the site to assist attendees during the religious gathering. The initiative was conducted under the supervision of NSS Programme Officer and saw enthusiastic involvement from NSS volunteers along with the college's supporting staff.

Commending the initiative, Prof. (Dr.) Tehmina Yousuf, Principal of Islamia College, lauded the team for their thoughtful planning and dedicated service to the community. She appreciated the NSS Unit's role in fostering a spirit of unity, empathy, and volunteerism among students.

Speaking on the occasion, NSS Programme Officer underscored the importance of such facilitation camps, describing them as integral to the institution's sustained commitment to social welfare. He noted that Islamia College has consistently led by example through similar community outreach drives.

As a follow-up, the NSS Unit also plans to undertake a cleanliness campaign in the area immediately after the culmination of the Ashura procession.

DC Kulgam visits Shahoo Sachan, oversees arrangements

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KULGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan on Sunday visited Shahoo Sachan to oversee the arrangements for the 10th Muharram, today. During the visit, DC served water and refreshments to the mourners at various points. Among others, DC was accompanied by ACR, Tehsildar, besides other officers.



Javid Dar pays tributes to sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS)

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, on Sunday paid rich tributes to the sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and other martyrs of Karbala.

In a message, the Minister said that the day reminds us that Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions sacrificed their lives for

upholding the high values of truth, justice and righteousness. He said their martyrdom reminds mankind of the high principles of human dignity and morality. Javid Dar also added that the Ashoora is also a day to rededicate ourselves to equality, brotherhood, compassion and justice as epitomised by Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS). The Minister prayed that on this day, let all of us resolve to work together to build a peaceful, just and equitable society.

Fadnavis launches podcast ‘Maharashtra Dharma’, urges people to preserve legacy of state’s icon

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday appealed to citizens to preserve and nurture the knowledge shared by the state's saints and icons, calling it a responsibility.

Maharashtra produced not just warriors, but protectors of dharma, visionaries of the nation, and architects of modern India, he said.

"Though we may not be the direct descendants of Dnyaneshwar, Shivaji Maharaj, Savitribai Phule and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, we are the carriers of their intellectual legacy. With their knowledge, sacri-

fice, and courage, they shaped this state," he said.

He was speaking during the first episode of his podcast 'Maharashtra Dharma', launched on 'Ashadhi Ekadashi'. The podcast was conducted by scholar Dr Sadanand More.

"Preserving, nurturing, and advancing the intellectual legacy of Maharashtra's saints and icons is our duty," said Fadnavis.

Maharashtra Dharma is not mere nostalgia, it is people's moral compass, he said.

"Maharashtra Dharma is understanding who we are and determining what we want to become," the CM said.

During his first tenure as the chief minister between 2014 and 2019, Fadnavis had hosted a television show named 'Mi Mukhyamantri Boltoy'.

The first episode, titled 'Maharashtra Dharma: Foundation and Formation' covered topics ranging from the Ramayana and Mahabharata to the teachings of Gautam Buddha and the evolution of Maharashtra's spiritual journey.

Thanking the listeners for joining the first episode, he said that the podcast would continue to explore the rich history, culture, and literature of Maharashtra, which he

called a land of saints, spirituality, and valour. The programme aims to explore why Maharashtra is what it is, he said.

Fadnavis explained how the foundation and formation of Maharashtra are deeply rooted in values.

"Maharashtra Dharma is not a religion, it is a living code of ethics. It urges us to think wisely, act with service, and stand with courage. From Dnyaneshwar's verses to Shivaji Maharaj's sword, from Phule's bravery to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision, this chain has never broken. It has always moved forward," he said.

The story of Maharashtra begins with divine footsteps, he said, adding that the land finds mention in Ramayana and Mahabharata, with several places across the state linked to events from the epics.

He also talked about the 'vari' tradition of devotees walking all the way to Pandharpur to seek Lord Vitthal's blessings. "Rarely does such a pilgrimage exist globally, one that symbolises social equality," he said.

Paying rich tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, he said the legendary king fought not for power, but for dharma, country, and culture.

"His battles were not for conquest but to protect values. His idea of 'swarajya' was shaped in tales told by his mother, Rajmata Jijabai. His governance was rooted in ethics, respect for all religions, and protection of women, far ahead of his time," the CM said.

He said Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, a poet, warrior, and scholar, followed with valour and sacrifice.

Fadnavis also recalled the contributions of Ahilyabai Holkar, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Lokmanya Tilak, Dr Ambedkar, Sant Gadge Baba and Tukdoji Maharaj.

Muharram 2025: DC Bandipora participates in Mourning Procession at Sumbal

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Sunday participated in the Muharram procession taken out by mourners from various villages at Sumbal sub-division of the district.

The procession was taken out to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (R.A). On the occasion, DC distributed refreshments and drinking water among mourners. People from all schools of thought joined the processions, offering refreshments and water to the mourners, highlighting communal and sectarian harmony and brotherhood.

Pertinent to mention that the district administration ensured all necessary arrangements, enhancing the spirit of unity and peace, and ensuring the smooth conduct of the processions.

DC said that the district administration is working closely with local communities to maintain peace and order and to ensure all the necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Muharram observance.

Among others, DC was accompanied by SDM Sumbal, ASP Bandipora, Tehsildar Sumbal, and other officers from the district and sub-divisional administration.

1,400 health workers appointed in Delhi govt hospitals; Ayushman vans flagged off

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday handed over appointment letters to 1,388 nursing officers and 41 paramedical staff, and flagged off Ayushman Bharat registration vans aimed at expanding access to health schemes for vulnerable communities in the capital. The event was attended by Union Health Minister JP Nadda, Delhi Health Minister Dr Pankaj Singh, and other senior ministers.

Addressing the gathering, Nadda said the city's "double-engine government" had managed to fill health sector vacancies that had remained undressed for nearly 15 years, and that too, within 100 days of the new administration taking charge.

"This is not just a recruitment drive, it is a mission to revive Delhi's broken health recruitment system," Nadda said. "The appointment letters being distributed today are not mere job offers, but symbols of national service. Nurses and healthcare workers are messengers of God on Earth."

In her address, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta criticised the previous government, and alleged that it had allowed Delhi's health infrastructure to deteriorate significantly.

She pointed out that at one point, there were just 0.42 hospital beds available per 1,000

people, and diagnostic equipment across government hospitals were severely limited.

"The so-called Mohalla Clinics lacked basic infrastructure and monitoring. In contrast, our government is establishing 1,139 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across the city - 100 are already ready and 34 have been inaugurated," she said.

Highlighting her government's progress, Gupta said that over 4 lakh citizens in Delhi have already been registered under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, including more than 2 lakh senior citizens.

"We approved Ayushman Bharat in our very first cabinet meeting, and the results are already visible. So far, over 2,200 patients have received free treatment in empanelled hospitals. Currently, 108 hospitals in Delhi are onboard under the scheme, and this number continues to grow," she said.

She also noted that, for the first time, every Delhi hospital now has its own dedicated medical superintendent. "Earlier, one medical superintendent was responsible for multiple hospitals, which affected the quality of services," she added. Speaking on the status of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, Gupta said that although Rs 1,700 crore had been provided by the Central

government to the previous administration over five years for their construction, the funds were left unutilised.

"Now, it is my responsibility to ensure that all the 1,150 Arogya Mandirs are completed in the remaining months. So far, 34 have been inaugurated, and several more will follow this month. We plan to add 100 Arogya Mandirs every month and aim to complete all the 1,150 by March next year," she said.

Meanwhile, Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Singh, addressing the newly appointed staff, said that their contribution would be crucial in strengthening the city's healthcare system. "These nurses and health workers will become the backbone of a new, robust healthcare structure in the capital," he said. Additionally, in his address, Nadda also said India's health sector had seen transformative changes in the last decade.

"Maternal and child health indicators have improved significantly, and we have expanded medical education with 20 operational AIIMS, 780 medical colleges, and over 1.18 lakh medical seats," he said.

"Our focus now is on preventive healthcare and accessibility, and initiatives like Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are pivotal in delivering quality care at the grassroots," he added.

BRICS summit opens in Brazil overshadowed by Trump’s tariff policies, Middle East tensions

■ AGENCY

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil is playing host to a summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies Sunday and Monday during which pressing topics like Israel's attack on Iran, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and trade tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump are expected to be handled with caution.

Analysts and diplomats have said the lack of cohesion in an enlarged BRICS, which doubled in size last year, may affect its ability to become another pole in world affairs. They also see the summit's moderate agenda as an attempt by member countries to stay off Trump's radar.

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has some of his priorities, such as debates on artificial intelligence and climate change, front and centre for the talks with key leaders not in attendance.

Lula said in his speech on Sunday that "we are witnessing the unparalleled collapse of multilateralism" and that the meeting is taking place "in the most adverse global scenario" of the four times Brazil has hosted it. He called for the group to promote peace and mediate conflicts.

"If international governance does not reflect the new multipolar reality of the 21st century, it is up to the BRICS to contribute to its renovation," Lula said at the opening of the summit.

China's President Xi Jinping did not attend a BRICS summit for the first time since he became his country's leader in 2012. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who will make an appearance via videoconfer-

ence, continues to mostly avoid travelling abroad due to an international arrest warrant issued after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Egypt's Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi are also absent from the gathering in Rio de Janeiro.

Three joint statements expected The restraint expected in Rio de Janeiro marks a departure from last year's summit hosted by Russia in Kazan, when the Kremlin sought to develop alternatives to US-dominated payment systems which would allow it to dodge Western sanctions imposed after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

A source involved in the negotiations told journalists Friday that some members of the group want more aggressive language on the situation in Gaza and Israel's attack on Iran. The source spoke under the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak about the matter publicly.

"Brazil wants to keep the summit as technical as possible," said Oliver Stuenkel, a professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation think tank and university.

Consequently, observers expect a vague final declaration regarding Russia's war in Ukraine and conflicts in the Middle East.

As well as suiting Brazil, a watered-down and non-controversial statement may be made easier by the absences of Putin and Xi, Stuenkel said. Those two countries have pushed for a stronger anti-Western stance, as opposed to Brazil and India that prefer non-alignment.

A Brazilian government official told The Associated Press on Thursday that the group is expected to produce three joint statements and a final declaration, "all of which less bounded by current geopolitical tensions." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak publicly about the summit's preparations.

Joao Alfredo Nyergay, an international business and geopolitics professor at the Pontifical Catholic University in Parana, said the summit could have played a role in showing an alternative to an unstable world, but won't do so.

"The withdrawal of Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the uncertainty about the level of representation for countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are confirming the difficulty for the BRICS to establish themselves as a cohesive pole of global leadership," Nyergay said. "This moment demands high level articulation, but we are actually seeing dispersion."

Brazil, the country that chairs the bloc, has picked six strategic priorities for the summit: global cooperation in healthcare; trade, investment and finance; climate change; governance for artificial intelligence; peace-making and security; and institutional development.

It has decided to focus on less controversial issues, such as promoting trade relations between members and global health, after Trump returned to the White House, said Ana Garcia, a professor at the Rio de Janeiro Federal Rural University.

"Brazil wants the least amount of

damage possible and to avoid drawing the attention of the Trump administration to prevent any type of risk to the Brazilian economy," Garcia said.

While Brazil advocated on Sunday for the reform of Western-led global institutions, a cornerstone policy of the group, the country's government wants to avoid becoming the target of tariffs - a predicament it has so far largely escaped.

Trump has threatened to impose 100 per cent tariffs against the bloc if they take any moves to undermine the dollar.

BRICS was founded by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, but the group last year expanded to include Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates.

As well as new members, the bloc has 10 strategic partner countries, a category created at last year's summit that includes Belarus, Cuba and Vietnam.

That rapid expansion led Brazil to put housekeeping issues - officially termed institutional development - on the agenda to better integrate new members and boost internal cohesion.

Despite notable absences, the summit is important for attendees, especially in the context of instability provoked by Trump's tariff wars, said Bruce Scheidl, a researcher at the University of Sao Paulo's BRICS study group.

"The summit offers the best opportunity for emerging countries to respond, in the sense of seeking alternatives and diversifying their economic partnerships," Scheidl said.