

Janmashtami celebrated with religious fervour across Jammu



Devotees thronged in various temples across Jammu to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami with devotion on Monday.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The festival of Janmashtami, commemorating the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna, was celebrated with religious fervour and gaiety here with temples witnessing huge rush of devotees since early this morning. Devotees thronged temples to pay their obeisance to Lord Krishna on the occasion of Janmashtami. "Janmashtami is a very significant festival in the Hindu religion and every year, I, along with my family, make sure to pay obeisance at the temple here," a devotee Parshotam Lal said. Children dressed in colourful attires as Krishna and Radha while some people celebrated the day by flying kites on their rooftops. **The Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Management Trust**

in **Gandhi Nagar** organized grand celebrations starting with Ganesh and Nav Greh Pooja. A colourful Rath Yatra carrying the idols of Lord Krishna in a well decorated 'Rath' which started from Shree Lakshmi Narayan Mandir Gandhi Nagar accompanied by besides, large number of devotees, especially the students and staff of various educational institutions members and special invitees of the Trust led by Gulchain Singh Charak (Former Minister) and President of the Trust passing through various temples including Shree Mahadev Mandir Gandhi Nagar, Dhudha Dhari Mandir, Shri Durga Mandir and then Gole Market Gandhi Nagar etc. Enroute various organiza-

tions had arranged water, cold drinks and other items as parshad for the yatris. Then the yatra culminated at the main complex Shree Lakshmi Narayan Mandir. The yatra concluded at Shree Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, where a 'Bhajan Sandhya' was held and children dressed as Radha and Krishna were honored. The evening ended with a Maha-Aarti at midnight, and parshad was distributed among the devotees. Prominent among others who participated included S.C.Rekhi (Secretary), V.K.Abrol, Romesh Thakur, KB Magotra, P.C.Gupta, Kapil Slathia, Indu Bhushan Sharma, Ashok Khajuria, Sumesh Damral, Ved Verma, Prem Sharma, Prashant Sharma, Sandeep Singh, Tarun Gupta, Brij Raj Singh, Jagjeet Singh, Kulbir

Singh Chib, Pankul Vaid and other prominent persons. **At Vaishno Devi Mandir in Bhagwati Nagar**, the festivities included extensive temple decorations and a significant turnout of devotees. Mahant Lucky Baba, the temple priest, highlighted the spiritual significance of Janmashtami and Lord Krishna's teachings. The celebration featured Bhajan and Kirtan sessions, and parshad was distributed to attendees. **The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) Temple** in Dream City, Muthi, hosted a grand celebration attracting thousands of devotees. The day began with Mangal Aarti and continued with Akhand-Kirtan. The temple was adorned with flowers and lights, and special book stalls

were set up. Highlights included children dressed as Krishna and Gopikas, and various floats depicting Lord Krishna's incarnations. The evening concluded with Maha Abhishek and Falahar Prashadam served to the devotees. **The Mahila Wing of Bharat Vikas Parishad (BVP), Tridev Branch**, organized a Bhajan/Kirtan function at Durga Mandir, Rampura. The event featured traditional rituals, soulful bhajans, and discussions on Lord Krishna's teachings. Chief Guests Arti Sharma and Kailash Mohani emphasized the relevance of Krishna's message to Arjuna. The celebration was marked by a spiritually enriching experience, with a call for similar future events. Prominent attendees

included Bharat Bhushan Sharma, Arun Sharma, Shiv Ram Sharma, Sunita Gupta, M.L. Padha, B.R. Sharma, J.S. Slathia, Darshan Gupta, Bharti Sharma, Suman Khanna, and Kusam Sharma. These diverse celebrations across Jammu showcased the deep devotion and cultural richness of the region, bringing communities together in honour of Lord Krishna. On the occasion of Shree Krishna Janmashtami, the **Shree Ram Leela Club in Sainik Colony** organized a grand Shobha Yatra that traversed the entire Sainik Colony area. The vibrant procession was a highlight of the festivities, drawing considerable attention and participation from the local community. The Shobha Yatra featured

a magnificently decorated chariot carrying an idol of Lord Krishna, accompanied by lively devotional music, traditional dance performances, and the chanting of bhajans. Devotees dressed in festive attire joined the procession, which moved through the streets of Sainik Colony, creating a festive and spiritual ambiance. The event not only celebrated the birth of Lord Krishna but also fostered a sense of unity and community spirit among the residents. The Shree Ram Leela Club's initiative provided a colorful and joyous tribute to Lord Krishna, marking the occasion with both devotion and cultural vibrancy. **Gaurav Gupta, Secretary of Jammu Club** and former General Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and

Industry, Jammu attended the Janmashtami program organized by the R S Pura Bazar Association. On the auspicious occasion of Janmashtami, the association's unwavering dedication to Sanatan Dharma and our rich Indian culture was consistently evident. The event showcased their commitment to preserving and celebrating our heritage through vibrant and meaningful festivities. The meticulous organization and heartfelt participation highlighted the deep reverence for Lord Krishna and the cultural traditions that bind our community together. The festival of the birth of Lord Krishna, celebrated at **Shiv Mandir in New Plot Jammu**. Devotional songs and hymns dedicated to Lord Krishna created a spiritual and festive atmosphere.

KNIT celebrates Janmashtami with devotion



A students delivering speech on Janmashtami.

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Kotwal National Institute of Teaching (KNIT), Bharat Nagar celebrated the sacred occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, the birth of Lord Krishna with great fer-

vour and enthusiasm where students, teachers and staff gathered to commemorate the divine birth with colourful programme. Prof. J.L. Kotwal, the Director said that

Janmashtami is a celebration of compassion and divine guidance. "We aim to instill these values in our students and this pious day is a wonderful opportunity for them to connect with their cultural heritage," Prof. Kotwal added. Principal, Bimla Blawria motivated the students to follow the teachings of Lord Krishna. Also, a series of competitions and activities is going on every Saturday. Group Discussion among the students of Classes 9th, 10th 11th & 12th was held on Environmental problems and challenges.

CUJ inaugurates 'Swami Vivekananda Youth Parliament'

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: In a significant move to promote the culture of healthy debate and foster the spirit of democracy, the Department of Educational Studies at Central University of Jammu (CUJ) on Monday inaugurated a new debate and discussion platform for students under the name of 'Swami Vivekananda Youth Parliament'. The event, held at Madan Mohan Malviya Bhawan, was marked by a compelling address from Prof. Asit Mantry, Head of the Department. Prof. Mantry emphasized the importance of such platforms in nurturing



Central University of Jammu faculty and students posing for a photograph.

critical thinking and active citizenship among students. The inaugural session saw enthusiastic participation from students who engaged in debates on various topics

related to elections. Issues such as voter rights, the impact of social media on electoral outcomes, and the importance of electoral reforms were substantially

debated. The discussions not only highlighted the students' deep understanding of democratic processes but also underscored their commitment to upholding democratic

values. The event concluded with special acknowledgments of outstanding presentations. The faculty recognized the best speakers, highlighting their eloquence, clarity of thought, and ability to engage the audience. As a token of appreciation, the students were awarded to commemorate their achievements. The 'Swami Vivekananda Youth Parliament' is expected to become a regular feature in the department, providing students with ongoing opportunities to engage in meaningful debates on pressing political issues.

Over 23 lakh govt employees under NPS get option to choose unified pension scheme

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The just-announced Unified Pension Scheme for central government employees will be available only for those who are currently subscribers of the New Pension Scheme (NPS), including retirees. The new scheme guarantees employees 50 per cent of their average basic pay over the last 12 months before retirement as a pension for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years against a market returns linked payout under the NPS. According to the scheme approved by the Union Cabinet, the pension will be proportionate for a lesser service period of up to a minimum of 10 years. Also, assured pension of Rs 10,000 per month on superannuation after a minimum of 10 years of service. The scheme has been brought out to address the concerns of government employees over NPS, which came into effect from January 1, 2004. Under the old pension scheme (OPS), effective before January 2004, employees got 50 per cent of their last drawn basic pay as pension. Unlike the old pension scheme, NPS is contributory in nature, wherein employees will be required to contribute 10 per cent of their basic salary and dearness allowance

while the employer's contribution (the central government) will be 18.5 per cent. Under the NPS, the employer contribution is 14 per cent, and the employee contribution is 10 per cent. However, the eventual payout depends on the market returns on that corpus, mostly invested in government debt. Employees, under the OPS, were not required to make any contribution. They, however, contributed to the General Provident Fund (GPF). The accumulated amount, along with interest, was paid to the employee at the time of retirement. As the NPS was less attractive than the OPS, several non-BJP-ruled states decided to go back to the old pension scheme, which offered a DA-linked benefit. This prompted the Centre to constitute a committee in April 2023, under former Finance Secretary and now Cabinet Secretary-designate TV Somanathan to suggest improvement in the NPS architecture. Fulfilling the long pending demands of government employees ahead of assembly elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Cabinet on August 24 approved the UPS, which will provide assured pension to 23 lakh eligible central government employees. BMS will decide its future

Those opting for the UPS will not be able to switch back. The UPS will put an additional burden of Rs 6,250 crore on the exchequer per year. The expenditure will vary every year according to variations in the number of employees. In addition, there will be an arrear of Rs 800 crore that has to be paid under the National Pension System (NPS) to employees retiring before March 31, 2025. If these retirees opt for UPS, they will receive arrears. "UPS is being implemented by the Central Government, benefitting 23 lakh central government employees," Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said on X on Sunday. If states also adopt the UPS architecture, a total of over 90 lakh government employees, who are presently on NPS, would be benefited, he added. On Sunday, Maharashtra, where assembly elections are due later in the year, became the first state to announce the adoption of the UPS for its employees. RSS-affiliate Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) said though the government has attempted to overcome the shortcomings of the NPS, there are still some issues compared to OPS. BMS will decide its future

course of action only after a detailed study of the UPS after it is notified. All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) said it is nothing but an extension of the existing NPS. The trade union expressed apprehensions that UPS will have a lot of aberrations once implemented. AITUC reiterated that it will continue to fight for the restoration of the non-contributory OPS. Iera Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said assured pensions will add to the government's committed expenditure in the future while reducing the uncertainty for employees. "This will have to be built into the fiscal consolidation roadmap going ahead," Nayar added. The UPS reflects a thoughtful approach to long-term social security, addressing concerns about the adequacy and sustainability of pension benefits in a rapidly changing economic landscape, said Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co Partner Dorothy Thomas. "This move signals the government's commitment to providing robust support for its workforce, enhancing financial stability for millions of government employees across the country," Thomas said.

Motivational lecture held at Training Academy Nagrota



Hony Capt Mohd Sadiq delivering lecture at NCC Training Academy Nagrota.

STATE TIMES NEWS
NAGROTA: The NCC Training Academy in Nagrota witnessed an electrifying atmosphere as Hon'y Capt Mohd Sadiq, a distinguished Shaurya Chakra recipient from 7 JAK RIF,

delivered a motivational lecture to 500 NCC Cadets. In an inspiring and heartfelt speech, Capt Mohd Sadiq shared his experiences and insights gained from his exemplary service to the nation. His words resonated

deeply with the young cadets, igniting a renewed sense of patriotism and dedication. Cadets were captivated by Capt Mohd Sadiq's stories of valour and sacrifice, leaving them truly thrilled and motivated.

Non-compliance with SNJPC proposals: CSs of 18 states, UTs to appear in SC

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The chief secretaries of 18 states and UTs are scheduled to appear personally on Tuesday before the Supreme Court which has summoned them for non-implementation of the Second National Judicial Pay Commission's (SNJPC) recommendations on payment of pension arrears and retirement benefits to judicial officers. The top-most bureaucrats of Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Bihar, Goa, Haryana and Odisha have to be present before the apex court on August 27.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra has listed the plea of the All India Judges Association and 22 other similar petitions for hearing at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, according to the apex court website. "I can see there is no substantive compliance. They will have to personally appear before us or we will issue non-bailable warrants (NBW) against them," the CJ observed on August 22. The direction came when senior lawyer K Parmeswar, who is assisting the court as amicus curiae (a friend of court), had told the bench that despite several orders and the extension of time, as many as 18 states and Union

territories (UTs) have not complied with the SNJPC recommendations fully. The All India Judges Association (AIJA) is seeking implementation of welfare and other measures for former judges and judicial officers. The bench said the top bureaucrats will have to appear personally to explain the delay and rejected the request of various states that the chief secretaries be permitted to appear virtually. On July 11, the bench had summoned the chief secretaries of 23 states for non-compliance with the SNJPC recommendations on August 23. The amicus later informed the court that five more states have complied with the directions in the meantime.

As the three-judge bench headed by the CJ was not available on August 23, the officials will now have to appear on August 27. While expressing strong displeasure over non-compliance, the bench had said, "We know how to extract compliance now. If we just say that the chief secretary will be present if the affidavit is not filed then it will not be filed. "We are not sending them to jail but let them be here and then an affidavit will be submitted. Let them be personally present now," the bench had said. Though seven opportunities have been granted to the states, it appears that full compliance has not been given effect to and several states are in default, it had said.