

# Tourism Deptt celebrates World Tourism Day 2025 at Iconic Mansar Lake



Dignitaries at World Tourism Day 2025 celebration being organized by Tourism Deptt at Iconic Mansar Lake.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Under the guidance of Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism Department, J&K, the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu celebrated World Tourism Day 2025 at the scenic Mansar Lake, in line with this year's global theme, "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation." The event brought together government officials, stakeholders and local communities to highlight the importance of responsible and sustainable tourism. The celebrations commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by MLA Udhampur East,

Ranbir Singh Pathania, in the presence of senior officials including Devinder Singh Katoch (CEO, Surinsar Mansar Development Authority), Ajaz Qaisar (Joint Director Tourism, Jammu), Savita Chauhan (Deputy Director Tourism), Mamta Sharma (Deputy Director Tourism), and Riyaz Ahmad (General Manager, JKTCDC), Lone, JKAS AD Tourism. In his welcome address, Joint Director Tourism Jammu, Ajaz Qaisar, expressed heartfelt gratitude to all guests, participants, and local stakeholders for their participation. Highlighting the significance

of Mansar Lake, a designated Ramsar site, he underscored its unique ecological and cultural importance, noting that it supports diverse flora and fauna and serves as a vital habitat for migratory birds. He urged visitors and stakeholders to adopt responsible practices by reducing disposable waste, supporting local vendors providing handmade and eco-friendly products, and safeguarding both the environment and local livelihoods. "This lake is not just water; it is our temple, and it is our duty to protect it," he remarked. He further emphasized that, under the guidance of Dr. Vikas Gupta,

JKAS, Director Tourism Jammu, the Directorate is actively promoting sustainable tourism initiatives across the Jammu division. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Ranbir Singh Pathania commended the Tourism Department for organizing the event at Mansar. He called upon stakeholders and visitors to adopt eco-friendly tourism practices, minimize waste, and conserve natural resources. He reiterated that Mansar's recognition as a Ramsar site places a shared responsibility on all to preserve its ecological balance for future generations. Addressing the gathering, CEO SMDA, Devinder

Singh Katoch, outlined ongoing efforts to safeguard Mansar Lake, including regular clean-up drives, eco-friendly infrastructure development, and community engagement programmes aimed at conserving its biodiversity. The celebrations featured a vibrant line-up of activities including a dance performance by 'Feel the Beat Band,' Plantation drive, eco-walk, boat rally, live musical performances by local artists and painting and slogan-writing competitions. A panel discussion on "Tourism & Sustainable Transformation" further reinforced the importance of sustainable and responsible practices in the tourism sector. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Deputy Director Tourism Jammu, Ms. Savita Chauhan, who acknowledged the contributions of all dignitaries, participants, officials, and local stakeholders for making the celebration a success.

# Om Parmarth Jai Parmarth Trust organizes 38th Bhandara



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Om Parmarth Jai Parmarth Trust organized its 38th Public Feast (Bhandara) at Patta Paloura, continuing its commitment to community service and spiritual harmony. The event was inaugurated by Rajeev Khajuria, Joint Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), alongside Trust Chairman Sandeep Manhas. Expressing his gratitude, Khajuria said, "I feel truly blessed to be part of such a noble cause. The Trust's pledge to organize 101 Bhandaras is commendable, and today's 38th event shows their unwavering dedication. It is heartening to witness the presence and service of Babu Hussain Malik

and Kamla Sharma, reflecting the deep-rooted communal harmony and inclusiveness promoted by this Trust." He praised the Trust for bringing people of all faiths together in the spirit of service, feeding hundreds with devotion and love. Khajuria also extended Navratri greetings and lauded the Trust's consistent efforts in fostering unity, spirituality, and social welfare. Trust members reiterated their commitment to continue organizing such events as a means to serve humanity selflessly and spread peace and brotherhood. The event saw enthusiastic participation from devotees and volunteers, making it a spiritually uplifting and socially significant occasion.

# Bhagat Mahasabha J&K observes 107th Birth Anniversary of Shaheed Bhagat Amar Nath



Bhagat Mahasabha members paying tributes to 107th birth anniversary of Shaheed Bhagat Amar Nath.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The J&K unit of Bhagat Mahasabha observed the 107th birth anniversary of Shaheed Bhagat Amar Nath Ji at Tonal Anand Nagar, here. Bhagat Amar Nath attained martyrdom on June 1, 1970, while fighting for the reservation rights of the downtrodden Dalit community. The event was attended by prominent personalities and Mahasabha office bearers who paid heartfelt tributes to the "Hero of Reservation."

Mahinder Bhagat, President of Bhagat Mahasabha, highlighted Bhagat Amar Nath Ji's unwavering resolve and his ultimate sacrifice for social justice. "He was committed to the cause of the deprived and was ready to give his life if the government failed to deliver justice," he said. Er. Pawan Bhagat, Chairman, shared that Bhagat Amar Nath began a fast unto death and observed silence from May 21, 1970, and embraced martyrdom on June 1, protesting the denial of

reservation rights. Chanchala Bhagat, daughter of the martyr, raised concerns over rising atrocities against the SC community post-abrogation of Article 370 and questioned the implementation of the SC/ST Atrocities Act in the UT. Others present included Er. Suraj Prakash Bhagat, Advocate Ravinder Bhagat, Vikas Bhagat, Sunesh Bhagat, Darshan Lal Bhagat, Yashpal Bhagat, Sunesh Bhagat, Manohar Lal Bhagat, Romesh Kumar and Ajay Kumar Bhagat.

# GST reduction will boost trade, commercial activities across country: Billawaria

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
UDHAMPUR: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) district unit Udhampur organised a program in the Ramnagar assembly constituency to express gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Central Government for their historic decision to reform the Good Service Tax (GST). The event witnessed the participation of a large number of BJP workers, traders, social organisations, and local citizens.



BJP J&K General Secretary Baldev Singh Billawaria speaking at a programme.

Addressing the gathering, BJP J&K General Secretary and former Deputy Mayor Jammu, Baldev Singh Billawaria, said that the reduction in GST rates will not only provide relief to common consumers but will also boost trade and commercial activities across the country. He said this decision will strengthen India's economy and ensure avail-

ability of goods at cheaper rates, benefiting both the public and the trading community alike. Billawaria further said that the BJP government has always prioritized public welfare, which is India's economy today is advancing robustly at the global level. Criticizing the Congress party, he remarked that when the Modi government introduced GST, Congress mocked it by calling it "Gabbar Singh Tax." But

today, when the government has reduced GST in the interest of the people, the Congress has chosen to remain silent. This clearly shows that Congress's politics has always been limited to mere opposition, whereas

He emphasized that the BJP's goal is not just to win elections but to improve the quality of life of the common man. Local traders and representatives of social organizations also expressed their happiness, stating that the reduction in GST rates will infuse new energy into businesses and benefit everyone from small shopkeepers to large industries. The program concluded with BJP workers and citizens jointly expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Central Government, reaffirming their faith that the people stand firmly with the BJP's policies and decisions.

# Rekha Mahajan inaugurates "Sindoor to Sparkles Karwachauth & Diwali" exhibition



Vice President Rekha Mahajan after inaugurating "Sindoor to Sparkles-Karwachauth & Diwali" exhibition at KC Regalia.

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The festive spirit came alive in Jammu today as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory Vice President Rekha Mahajan inaugurated the "Sindoor to Sparkles-Karwachauth & Diwali" exhibition at KC Regalia. The exhibition, organized by Divya Abrol of DA Lifestyle Exhibitor, showcased an array of ethnic wear, jewelry, festive décor, and lifestyle products, aimed at enhancing the joy and vibrancy of the upcoming festival season. Speaking at the inauguration, Rekha Mahajan said, "Festivals like Karwachauth and Diwali bring families and

communities together, and events such as this exhibition not only celebrate our rich cultural heritage but also provide a platform for local entrepreneurs and artisans to showcase their talent. I am delighted to see such enthusiastic participation, and I urge everyone to support initiatives that promote culture, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship." The event attracted a large number of visitors, who explored a wide variety of stalls featuring traditional attire, festive accessories, home décor, and personalized gifts. The organizers ensured a lively and engaging environment with interactive sessions, live demonstrations, and cultural performances that kept the festive energy alive throughout the day.

Divya Abrol, the organizer, expressed her excitement, stating, "Our aim with 'Sindoor to Sparkles' is to bring the essence of Karwachauth and Diwali to the people of Jammu in a unique and memorable way. The exhibition offers an opportunity for families to shop for festive essentials while enjoying entertainment and cultural activities. We are grateful to Rekha Mahajan for gracing the occasion and encouraging women entrepreneurs and local artisans." The exhibition will continue for the next few days, offering festival shoppers an ideal blend of tradition, lifestyle, and entertainment, while celebrating the spirit of togetherness, culture, and festive cheer in Jammu.

# Workshop on 'Vision of Viksit Bharat' under Sewa Parv organized

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
BASOHLI: The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Regional Centre Jammu & Kashmir, in collaboration with the Divisional Administration, Jammu and the Lalit Kala Akademi, successfully organized a one-day workshop on the theme "Vision of Viksit Bharat" under the nationwide celebration of Sewa Parv. The event was held at the Vishwa Sthali Art Gallery, Basohli.



Senior officer Shakti Pathak (IPS) witnessing a painting.

The highlight of the programme was a special exhibition of Basohli paintings. More than 50 professional artists from Basohli, along with painters from Rajasthan and Bengal, showcased their works. Students from 20 schools

across 10 districts also participated enthusiastically, bringing the total participation to over 500 students in the workshop series. The painting workshops were conducted across several iconic heritage and cultural sites of Jammu Division - Mubarak Mandi, Bagh-e-

Bahu, Samba Fort, Basohli Fort, Char Chinar Kishtwar, Sula Park Reasi, among others. Students artistically interpreted these locations within the framework of "Viksit Bharat," presenting a creative vision of India's future rooted in culture and heritage. The

collected artworks were later displayed at the Vishwa Sthali Art Gallery, where Atal Setu was showcased as a symbol of modern India's development. Basohli painting, once considered an art form on the verge of extinction, has been revived and recognized at the national level. Thanks to the efforts of the Prime Minister and the strong will of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, this historic art form recently received the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) Tag. The workshop and exhibition thus became an occasion to celebrate not only the art but also its growing cultural and economic significance. The event was graced by MLA Basohli, Darshan Singh and senior officer Shakti Pathak (IPS), who encouraged the students and artists to actively contribute to the preservation and promotion of heritage and culture.

On the occasion, students also took a pledge of 'Sewa Vrat', symbolizing their commitment to selfless service, national development and community welfare. Speaking at the event, Shruti Awasthi, Regional Director, IGNCA Jammu & Kashmir, emphasized the role of culture and heritage in the vision of Viksit Bharat. She stated, "India's soul lies in its cultural diversity and traditions. When we preserve and empower these traditions, we are in fact contributing to making India self-reliant, strong and developed." The workshop concluded with a powerful message of national unity, cultural pride and the spirit of service. The event not only infused new energy into the tradition of Basohli painting but also inspired the younger generation to recognize art and culture as vital forces that can shape India's identity and place on the global stage.

# Sheetal Devi becomes Para World Archery champion at 18

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
GWANGJU (SOUTH KOREA): Eighteen-year-old Indian armless archer Sheetal Devi scripted history by defeating Turkey's world No.1 Ozgur Cure Girdi 146-143 to bag the women's compound individual category gold at the Para World Archery Championship here on Saturday.



Sheetal, the only armless archer in the competition, shoots using her feet and chin, and this was her third medal of the championships. She had earlier won a mixed team bronze in the compound event with Toman Kumar, defeating Great Britain's Jodie Grinham and Nathan MacQueen 152-149. In the compound women's open team event, Sheetal and Sarita settled for silver after losing to Turkey in the final. The individual final was a tense battle but Sheetal stayed consistent and shot with composure. The first end was tied at 29-all, but Sheetal fired three 10s in the second end to take an early lead, winning it 30-27. The third end was also tied at

29-all. Sheetal's only slight lapse came in the fourth end, where she scored 28 as Girdi took it by one point, yet Sheetal still held a two-point lead at 116-114. She then sealed her maiden gold with a flawless final end, hitting three perfect arrows for 30. Earlier in the semifinals, the Jammu and Kashmir archer produced a commanding 145-140 victory over Great Britain's Jodie Grinham to reach the final. The title clash was a repeat of the 2023 Pilsen World Championships, where Girdi had narrowly beaten Sheetal 140-138. This time, Sheetal turned the tables to avenge her defeat two years ago. In the open team final,

Sheetal and Sarita started strongly but only to lose by 148-152 to settle for silver. The Indian duo began strongly, edging out Turkish pair Ozgur Cure Girdi and Bursa Fatma Un 38-37 in the opening end. The Indians produced three 10s from their first four arrows, while Turkey managed just one 10. However, the Turkish archers bounced back in the second end with three 10s and a nine to outscore India by a point and level the contest at 76-all. The third end saw the momentum shift further as nerves appeared to affect the Indian duo. They managed just one 10, along with two 9s and an 8, to total 36. The Turkish duo was more consistent, shooting 37 with one 10 and three 9s, to seize a one-point overall lead. Girdi and Un were nearly flawless in the final end, hitting 39 out of a possible 40. In contrast, the Indians faltered with a 36, including one arrow landing in the 7-ring, as Turkey sealed the gold medal with a four point margin.

# World Deaf Day Awareness Program held at SVMCM Hospital

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: Swami Vivekananda Medical Mission Charitable Hospital, Ambphalla, Jammu, observed World Deaf Day with an awareness program aimed at educating the community on deafness, preventive care, and hearing health. The event was graced by Chief Guest Dr. Sunil Kotwal, Senior ENT Consultant, along with Management Committee members -Anar Chand, Senior Vice President; B.B. Gupta, General Secretary; Jatinder Gupta and Dr. Brij Mohan Gupta, Members; and Dr. Saehin Gupta, Member. Senior hospital officials, including Dr. Arvind Kohli, Medical Director; Dr. Yashpal Karsyal, Assistant Medical Superintendent; Iqbal Deep Singh, Hospital Manager; and senior consultants also attended.



Dr. Sunil Kotwal emphasized the importance of ear health, warning that untreated com-

mon ear infections can lead to serious complications. He urged individuals to seek timely check-ups, follow proper medication protocols, and manage ENT issues such as wax impaction, middle ear infections, and noise-induced hearing loss. Dr. Pankaj Gupta, ENT Consultant, delivered a detailed session on the causes, prevention, and management of deafness. He highlighted the importance of early detection, modern treatment options like hearing aids and cochlear implants, and preventive measures against excessive noise, infections, and misuse of ototoxic

medications. As part of the program, the hospital conducted free audiometric tests for patients, demonstrating its strong commitment to preventive healthcare. Dr. Arvind Kohli, Medical Director, said, "Raising awareness about deafness is crucial in breaking stigma, promoting timely intervention, and ensuring a better quality of life for individuals with hearing impairments. SVMCM remains committed to preventive health programs and charitable healthcare services for the community." The program, attended by consultants, RMOs, staff, and patients,

# Court rejects bail in rape, sexual exploitation

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
JAMMU: The Court of Additional Sessions Judge Udhampur, Kamlesh Pandit, has rejected the bail plea of Fared Ahmed, son of Mohd. Rafiq, resident of Badali, Udhampur, who was arrested in FIR No. 323/2025 registered at Police Post Roundmail for rape, sexual exploitation, voyeurism, and related offences under Sections 64, 74, 351, and 77 BNS. The victim lodged a complaint that she was raped by the accused on September 4, 2025, and had been subjected to continuous exploitation under threats. Her statement recorded before the Judicial Magistrate corroborated the complaint. Police also revealed that the accused was earlier convicted in another case (FIR No.

503/2024) under Sections 115(2) and 126(2) BNS. The accused's counsel argued that he had been falsely implicated due to neighborhood enmity and claimed the relationship between the accused and the victim was consensual. However, the APP for the UT vehemently opposed bail, asserting that the offence was heinous and punishable with not less than ten years imprisonment. The court held that acquaintance or alleged consensual ties cannot justify exploitation and that rape is "a crime which destroys the basic equilibrium of society and lowers the dignity of women." Considering the gravity of the charges and the accused's antecedents, the court dismissed the bail application.