

Tawi Mohatsav Baisakhi Mela to be elevated as Jammu's major festival: Dy CM



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that the Baisakhi Mela on the banks of River Tawi will be promoted into one of the biggest festivals of Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at attracting the tourists from across the country and beyond.

Addressing a large gathering during the concluding day of Tawi Mohatsav celebrations, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the vibrant mela has fulfilled a long-cherished dream of

the people of Jammu to celebrate such a grand cultural festival along the banks of River Tawi, also revered as Maa Surya Putri.

He said that the government is working earnestly towards promoting Jammu as a key cultural and religious destination, adding that sustained efforts will be made to further enhance the scale and outreach of the Baisakhi Mela in the coming years.

He also appreciated the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha and the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, for their continued support

and encouragement in organizing such a grand event. He also lauded the efforts of the Jammu Municipal Corporation, Smart City officials, Tourism Department and other concerned agencies for their coordinated work in making the festival a grand success. Highlighting the collective efforts behind the event, the Deputy Chief Minister said that while planning plays a crucial role, it is the dedication and hard work of officers and officials on the ground that ensure successful execution of such mega events. He further said that

all efforts shall be taken to elevate the Baisakhi Mela into one of the biggest festivals of Jammu and Kashmir, drawing participation from artists, tourists and cultural enthusiasts from across the globe.

The Deputy Chief Minister also called for incorporating public feedback and suggestions to further improve the event in the coming years, ensuring that the festival continues to grow in scale, quality and appeal.

The three-day event witnessed a series of cultural programmes, musical performances, traditional activities and large public participation, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and festive spirit of Jammu region.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister also witnessed Dargah, cultural events and participated in Arti puja held on the banks of river Tawi. He also felicitated various participants of dangal, cultural events and others for their role in making the festival a big success.

Commissioner JMC, Dr. Devansh Yadav, Joint Commissioner and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

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The thirteen member House Committee, constituted for Jal Jeevan Mission in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, today commenced on-ground inspections of various JJM schemes in Rajouri district.

The Committee is being headed by legislator and former High Court judge Hasnain Masoodi with M. Y. Tarigami, Ali Mohammad Dar, Altaf Ahmad Wani, Ajaz Ahmad Jan, Rajiv Jasrotia, Ranbir Singh Pathania, Tanvir Sadiq, Javaid Riyaz Bedar, Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Rafiq Ahmad Naik, Rajun Singh Raju and Iftikar Ahmed as its members.

The Chairman along with members including MLAs Haveli, Thanamandi, Rajouri, Udhampur East, Tral, Ramban and Pattan visited multiple project sites in Rajouri. The team inspected works at Sasalkote, Agrati, Kakora, Neili and Gambhir Mughlan to assess the status and quality of ongoing JJM projects.

During the visit, the Committee was accompanied by the senior officers



including Anjali Seharawat, Mission Director JJM; Abhishek Sharma DC Rajouri, Reyaz Bhat, Technical Advisor JJM; Nawaz Ahmed Bhat, Technical Advisor; Rajat Choudhary, Technical Officer; Owais Bashir, Technical Officer besides other concerned officials to facilitate a detailed on-ground assessment.

MLA Kalakote, Thakur Randhir Singh, also met the House Committee during the visit.

Several deputations from far-flung areas interacted with the Committee and apprised it of issues concerning the implementation of JJM works and delay in commissioning of water supply schemes in

their respective localities. The inspections are expected to provide firsthand insights into implementation of JJM schemes and enable the Committee to formulate recommendations aimed at ensuring transparency, accountability and effective delivery of safe drinking water to the public.

Historic 3-Day Baisakhi Devika Mela concludes at Udhampur

Over 75,000 devotees, visitors visit mela site

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The historic three-day Baisakhi Devika Mela, which commenced on April 14, 2026, 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 from over 75,000 visitors and devotees coming from different parts of Jammu Province.

On the concluding day, Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh was the chief guest, while Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh was the guest of honour.

A large number of people and government officials attended the concluding programme.

Addressing the gathering, the ADC extended warm greetings to the public for their enthusiastic participation. "Such traditional fairs are not only reflective of our rich and diverse cultural heritage but also serve as a major attraction for tourists," he added.

He also underlined the importance of preserving



and promoting the region's cultural legacy, stating that events like the Baisakhi Devika Mela are indispensable parts of our cultural identity. He encouraged the younger generation to stay connected with their roots.

The three day mela was organized under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa. The District Administration had made adequate arrangements for the successful culmination of the event.

The mela featured a number of temporary sweet shops, toy shops and eater-

ies put up by local and outside vendors.

During the three-day mela, District Information Centre organised a scintillating cultural programme, featuring captivating performances by Folk Artists and students from different educational institutions.

Dogri Music Sammelen held at Marh

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Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in collaboration with Dogri Sahitya Sabha on Thursday organized day-long Music-cum- Kavi Sammelen at Shakti Shikshan Niketan Higher Secondary School, Marh with a vision to promote and preserve the rich heritage of Dogri language, literature and the cultural legacy of the Dogra region.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by President Dogri Sahitya Sabha Marh Puran Chander Sharma. The first session featured scintillating Dogri folk music performances.

Local folk artists captivated the audience with soulful renditions of "Karkaan" and "Baaran," reflecting the deep-rooted cultural ethos of the Dugar region. Melodious Dogri light music presentations by local singers further enriched the programme, adding emotional depth and charm.

The programme was presided over by eminent Dogri scholar and senior litterateur Dr. Om Goswami. Renowned personality Padamshree Mohan Singh graced the occa-



sion as the Chief Guest, while as MLA Marh, Surinder Kumar graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from artists, litterateurs and cultural enthusiasts, making it a memorable celebration of Dogra culture and literature.

The poets who recited their poetry in Kavi Sammelen included Balwan Singh Jamworia, Dr. Sushma Rani, Randhir Singh Raipuria, Dr. Sarita Kajuria, Sushil Begana, Dr. Padam Dev Singh

"Nadan", Deepak Arsi, Anand Khajuria, Rajni Thapa, Rakesh Verma, Heena Mahajan, Neha Sharma and Dr. Sheetal Sharma.

The poets enthralled the audience with their thought-provoking and emotionally rich compositions on diverse themes of society, culture and human values, creating a vibrant literary atmosphere.

In his address, MLA Surinder Kumar lauded the organizers for hosting such a meaningful event dedicated to the promotion of Dogri language, lit-

erature and culture. He appreciated the participating artists and poets for their dedication and expressed optimism for a bright future of Dogri heritage, emphasizing the need for sustained collective efforts.

The Chief Guest shared his views and presented engaging compositions. In his presidential address, Dr. Om Goswami captivated the audience with his remarkable literary creations.

The vote of Thanks was presented by Mrs. Reeta Khadyal.

CS reviews development of key tourism circuits to boost Tourism in Jammu

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Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo today chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress of works and strategic initiatives undertaken by the Tourism Department for the promotion and holistic development of tourism across the Jammu region.

The meeting focused on assessing the implementation of various tourism development strategies aimed at strengthening diverse tourism circuits across districts and positioning Jammu as a vibrant, all-season tourism destination.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretaries of Finance, Tourism, and Public Works Department (PWD), Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Managing Director JKTDC, Director Tourism Jammu, and other senior officers.

Emphasising the immense untapped tourism potential of the re-

gion, the Chief Secretary directed the department to identify and prioritise high-impact works under the Capex budget. He specifically called for immediate interventions at key religious and heritage destinations such as Shivkhori, Katra, Uttarbehni, and Purmandal. He observed that even diverting a small percentage of pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine to these circuits could significantly boost tourist footfall and transform them into major attractions.

Highlighting the importance of border tourism, the Chief Secretary stressed large-scale development at Suchetgarh, noting its growing popularity among visitors in recent years. He also underscored the need to explore and expand adventure tourism avenues at locations such as Aithem and the iconic Chenab Rail Bridge, suggesting that many such projects could be developed through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models.

Further, he instructed the depart-



ment to identify suitable land parcels around Patnitop for development under the "One State: One Global Destination" programme.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed ongoing promotional strategies and stressed the importance of timely completion of all infrastructure projects. He called for a comprehensive approach to convert the large influx of pilgrims into multi-day tourists by encouraging them to explore leisure, heritage, adventure, and spiritual

tourism offerings beyond traditional routes.

Detailed reviews were conducted for major pilgrimage circuits, including Katra-Shivkhori and Uttarbehni-Purmandal, as well as adventure circuits covering Aithem, Chenab Rail Bridge, Baradari (Reasi), and Ranjit Sagar Lake (Kathua). Progress on leisure tourism circuits such as Patnitop-Sanasar, Surinsar-Mansar, and Rajouri-Poonch was also assessed.

Additional Chief Secretary Finance, Shailendra Kumar, suggested measures to improve accessibility to tourist destinations, including upgradation of road infrastructure, development of essential amenities such as eateries and refreshment points, and strengthening public transport connectivity. He also proposed the development of entertainment and amusement facilities within Jammu city to encourage longer tourist stays.

Additional Chief Secretary Tourism, Ashish Chandra Verma, presented a comprehensive overview of departmental initiatives, outlining a multi-pronged strategy focused on thematic tourism circuits, heritage experiences, adventure tourism, infrastructure augmentation, and promotion of offbeat destinations. These initiatives aim to enhance tourist footfall while encouraging extended stays through diversified and customised experiences.

Director Tourism Jammu, Dr.

Vikas Gupta, provided detailed insights into the works executed and promotional efforts across various circuits. He highlighted the integration of major religious and heritage sites within the Katra-Shivkhori circuit, including Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Shivkhori, Krimchi Temples, Raghunath Temple, and Ranbireswar Temple. He also briefed the meeting on ongoing projects and long-term development proposals for each destination.

The meeting was further apprised of key initiatives such as the development of an Adventure Hub and Food Village at Aithem, establishment of a rafting centre at Baradari, and proposed adventure activities including bungee jumping, ziplining, and paragliding at the Chenab Rail Bridge with support from professional agencies. Plans for water sports at Ranjit Sagar Lake and promotion of border tourism at Suchetgarh and Gharana were also discussed.