

CM Omar Abdullah inaugurates 1st Int’l Film Festival of J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated the first International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK) at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), marking a new chapter in Jammu & Kashmir’s long and enduring relationship with cinema.

The four-day festival brings together filmmakers, artists, delegates and cinema enthusiasts from across the world, with participation from over 30 countries and more than 130 films being showcased during the festival.

Describing the inaugural edition of IFFJK as more than a celebration of cinema, the Chief Minister said the festival shall portray Jammu & Kashmir’s as a vibrant and alluring destination for filmmakers, storytellers and creative talent from across India and the world.

“Today, as we launch this festival, bringing together filmmakers from over 30 countries and showcasing over 130 extraordinary films, we are not just opening a cinema event. We are opening a new chapter in the longstanding romance between Jammu & Kashmir and the silver screen,” the Chief Minister said.

Welcoming the distinguished guests, filmmakers and delegates, Omar Abdullah said Kashmir was a place where stories were not merely hosted but born.

“To stand here today, under the majestic shade of the Chinar trees, surrounded by the sentinel peaks of the Himalayas, is to be reminded that some places on earth do not merely host stories—they are born of them,” he said.

Referring to Kashmir’s enduring appeal to filmmakers, the Chief Minister described the region as “the world’s most breathtaking natural canvas” and said the launch of the festival was an assertion that Jammu & Kashmir was ready to welcome the global creative community.

“We are declaring to the world that Kashmir is not just a location on a call sheet; it is a creative sanctuary, a home for global storytellers, and a voice that is ready to speak to the world,” he said.

Recalling the deep imprint of Jammu & Kashmir on Indian cinema, the Chief Minister said the region had provided the backdrop for some of the most memorable moments in the history of the silver screen.

He recalled the iconic



portrayal of Kashmir in films such as Jungle, Kashmir Ki Kali, Aradhana and Bobby, noting how the landscapes of Gulmarg and Dal Lake became part of the visual imagination of generations of Indians.

Referring to Shammi Kapoor’s iconic sequence in Jungle, Omar Abdullah said the famous “Yahoo!” moment on the snow-covered slopes of Gulmarg had come to symbolise an entire generation’s idea of joy and freedom.

He also recalled the imagery of Sharmila Tagore against the waters of Dal Lake in Kashmir Ki Kali and the youthful romance of Rishi Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia in Bobby, including the iconic Bobby Hut in Gulmarg.

The Chief Minister particularly acknowledged the contribution of legendary filmmaker Yash Chopra in creating a distinct cinematic language around Kashmir.

“Directors like Yash Chopra did not just film here—they built a visual language around this land,” he said, referring to films including Silsila, Kabhi Kabhie and Jab Tak Hai Jaan.

He said the changing seasons of Kashmir—from the vivid greens of spring and golden hues of autumn to the quiet white of winter—had enabled filmmakers to mirror the entire spectrum of human emotions.

Omar Abdullah also referred to the evolution of cinema in Kashmir in more recent decades, citing films such as Mission Kashmir, Haider, Rockstar, Highway and Bajrangi Bhaijaan.

He praised filmmakers Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Vishal Bhardwaj, Imtiaz Ali and Kabir Khan for bringing different dimensions of Kashmir to the screen, while observing that cinema in the region had increasingly moved beyond conventional representations to explore deeper and more nuanced human narratives.

Recalling some of his favourite Hindi film songs shot in Jammu & Kashmir, the Chief Minister spoke fondly of Kabhi Kabhie

Mere Dil Mein, pictured on Amitabh Bachchan and Rakhee; Tere Bina Zindagi Se from Aandhi, featuring Sanjeev Kumar and Suchitra Sen against the backdrop of Martand Temple; and Yeh Vaada Raha, filmed at the Shiv Temple in Gulmarg.

“Do not just film our mountains; seek out our stories”

The Chief Minister emphasised that Jammu & Kashmir’s appeal to cinema extended far beyond its landscapes.

“Cinema is more than landscapes; cinema is culture. And the true beauty of Jammu and Kashmir lies in its soul—its cultural ethos, built on Kashmiriyat, warmth, hospitality, and a rich artistic tradition,” he said.

Describing Jammu & Kashmir as a land of storytellers, Omar Abdullah highlighted its rich traditions of music, crafts and oral storytelling, including the Santoor and Rabab, Sufiyana Kalam and Rouff.

He also drew attention to the region’s renowned craftsmanship, including walnut wood carving and the intricate art of carpet weaving, as well as its distinctive culinary and cultural traditions represented by Kahwa and the saffron fields of Pampore.

Addressing filmmakers participating in the festival, he urged them to explore the region’s living culture and people rather than restricting their lens to its mountains and scenic beauty.

“When you bring your cameras to Jammu and Kashmir, do not just film our mountains. Seek out our stories. Talk to our artisans, listen to our musicians, walk through our old city lanes, and let the living, breathing culture of this land infuse your narratives,” he said.

The Chief Minister said nostalgia alone could not build a sustainable film industry and stressed the need for a modern ecosystem capable of supporting filmmakers through the entire production process.

“Under our comprehensive Jammu & Kashmir Film Policy, we have trans-

formed J&K from a beautiful location into one of the most filmmaker-friendly destinations in the world,” he said.

Highlighting the key provisions of the policy, Omar Abdullah said Jammu & Kashmir has introduced a single-window clearance system to simplify the process of obtaining permissions for film shooting.

Through a dedicated online portal, filmmakers can seek necessary permissions, including location approvals and security coordination, through a streamlined mechanism involving designated nodal officers.

He said the policy also provides financial incentives and production subsidies for filmmakers shooting in J&K, with support linked to shooting days and local expenditure, covering independent filmmakers as well as larger productions.

The policy, he added, also seeks to strengthen local participation in the film industry by incentivising productions that employ local artists, technicians and crew members and promote the cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir.

“We are building a robust local workforce of cinematographers, line producers, sound engineers, and actors so that you can arrive with a script and find everything else right here,” the Chief Minister said.

He further announced the government’s intent to invest in modern post-production facilities, equipment banks, film studios and film education institutions across Jammu & Kashmir, with the objective of creating a complete, end-to-end production ecosystem.

The Chief Minister said the government was treating cinema not merely as entertainment but as an industry capable of generating employment, nurturing young talent and building bridges between cultures.

“This festival belongs to our young people”

Calling the first edition of IFFJK a “declaration of intent”, Omar Abdullah said the festival would provide an important platform for young people of Jammu & Kashmir to engage with filmmakers and creative professionals from across the world.

“Over the next four days, as you watch films from every corner of the world, engage in master-classes, panel discussions, and casual conversations over tea, I urge you to look beyond the screen,” he said.

DIPR Jammu organises grand cultural evening to mark launch of 1st IFFJK

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Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Jammu on Monday organised a special and grand cultural event here at Wave Mall to generate public awareness and mark the commencement of the first-ever International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK), inaugurated at Srinagar today.

The three-hour long event featured a series of cultural performances, including folk songs, ghazals and theme-based songs, presented by artists from Culture Wing DIPR Jammu and renowned artists of Jammu and Kashmir. The event was designed to highlight the significance of the festival for the region.

The event attracted audiences from all walks of life and age groups, successfully highlighting the significance of the rare event and the opportunity the film festival is going to offer to local stakeholders.

Earlier, Deputy Director Information (PR) Moksha Dogra alongwith Deputy Director (HQ) Ashu Kumari reviewed the arrangements put in place at the Wave Cinemas for the film festival, during which the Information Department is screening acclaimed shorts films and movies for



the general public.

Culture Officer Rajinder Kumar Digna, Field Publicity Officer Mohit Sharma, District Information Offi-

cer, Poonch Hardeep Singh Choudhary, along with other officials of the department also attended the event.

HDFC Bank Presents ‘20 Ka Dum, 20 Kadam – Nasha Mukht Bharat Ki Aur’ with 95 FM Tadka at GCW Parade

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JAMMU, SEP 07

As part of its 20th Anniversary celebrations, 95 FM Tadka organised “20 Ka Dum, 20 Kadam – Nasha Mukht Bharat Ki Aur”, a Drug Addiction Awareness and Talent Hunt initiative at Government College for Women (GCW), Parade, Jammu, aimed at sensitising students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encouraging them to adopt a healthy, positive and drug-free lifestyle.

The programme was Presented by HDFC Bank, Supported by the Excise Department J&K and Powered by Wheelocity Motors – Škoda Jammu, with Team Ideation as the Event Partner, Bharati Lok Sangeet Kala Sanasthan as the Cultural Partner and The Himalayan Mail as the Print Partner. The programme was organised in collaboration with the NSS Units of GCW Parade, Jammu.

The event was graced by Dr. Satish Bhardwaj (KPS), SDPO West, Sarabjeet Kaur, Psychologist & Expert, and Sahil Sharma, renowned singer and music director and Judge for the Talent Hunt.

Representing Government College for Women,



Parade, Dr. Naveen Anand, Principal, along with Prof. Bindu Kumari, Associate Professor and Member, NSS Advisory, Prof. Anuradha Kalsi, Associate Professor and NSS Programme Officer, and Dr. Atiya Syed, Assistant Professor and NSS Programme Officer, actively participated in the programme. The college representatives addressed the students and highlighted the serious consequences of drug abuse. They appreciated 95 FM

Tadka for taking up such an important youth-focused awareness initiative and encouraged the team to continue organising similar programmes in educational institutions.

Addressing the students, Dr. Satish Bhardwaj (KPS), SDPO West, spoke about the harmful effects of drug abuse and guided students on how to stay away from substance abuse. He highlighted the importance of cooperation between the police, students, parents

and the community in preventing drug addiction. He encouraged students to make responsible choices, focus on education and positive goals and work towards a successful and meaningful life. He also reinforced the message, “Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life.”

Sarabjeet Kaur, Psychologist & Expert, interacted with the students and sensitised them about the emotional, psychological and social impact of drug addiction. She encouraged stu-

DC Shopian inaugurates Spring Shed Development Programme for Climate Adaptation Project at Zainapora

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, today inaugurated the Spring Shed Development Programme for Climate Change Adaptation at Cluster Zainapora, a project funded by NABARD, aimed at rejuvenating and sustainably managing local springs and strengthening water security in the area.

The inauguration was held in the presence of Vikas Mittal, OIC NABARD J&K UT; Nasir Ahmad Lone, ADDC Shopian; Bilal Ahmad, SDM Zainapora; and Zubair Wasil, DDM NABARD Shopian, besides representatives of the Village Springshed Committee, facilitating NGO VOESEP and local residents.

The project has a total financial outlay of ₹87.38 lakh, comprising NABARD contribution of ₹81.33 lakh and community

contribution of ₹6.05 lakh. The project will be executed by the Village Springshed Committee, Zainapora, with VOESEP serving as the facilitating NGO.

Under the three-year implementation programme, 12 springs will be treated, covering a total area of approximately 300 hectares in eleven villages across the Zainapora Block. The initiative is based on the core principles of climate adaptation-conservation of natural resources, groundwater recharge, ecological restoration, community participation and building resilience of vulnerable communities to climate variability.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated NABARD and the implementing agencies for taking up the important initiative in Zainapora. He stressed the need for community participation and scientific management of spring sources to en-



sure their sustainability and availability of water for future

generations. The Deputy Commissioner

highlighted that the project will have a direct impact on liveli-

hood security in the cluster. With rejuvenation of springs and improved moisture regime, irrigation facilities will be augmented, ensuring assured water for agriculture even during lean periods. This will enable diversification of crops, promotion of high-value and climate-resilient crops and increase in cropping intensity, thereby enhancing farm incomes.

He further added that the project will ensure sustainable drinking water availability for local habitations, reduce drudgery of women, and create livelihood opportunities through watershed works, nursery raising and afforestation. The works will be converged with VB-G RAM G and other schemes of Agriculture, Horticulture and Rural Development departments for asset creation and income generation.

He emphasized on public

ownership and Jan Bhagidari to take the project ahead, so that the created assets are protected and maintained by the community itself for long-term sustainability and climate adaptability of the agrarian economy of Zainapora.

He called upon the concerned stakeholders and local communities to ensure effective implementation of the project and protection of the treated areas so that the intended benefits reach the people in a sustainable manner. The project, sanctioned on 05 August 2026, is expected to make a significant contribution towards spring conservation, water security, ecological restoration and climate change adaptation in the Zainapora area.

Among others, LDM, officers and officials of allied departments, besides a large number of farmers, were present on the occasion.