

Grand Shobha Yatra marks third day of Navratra Festival 2026 in Katra

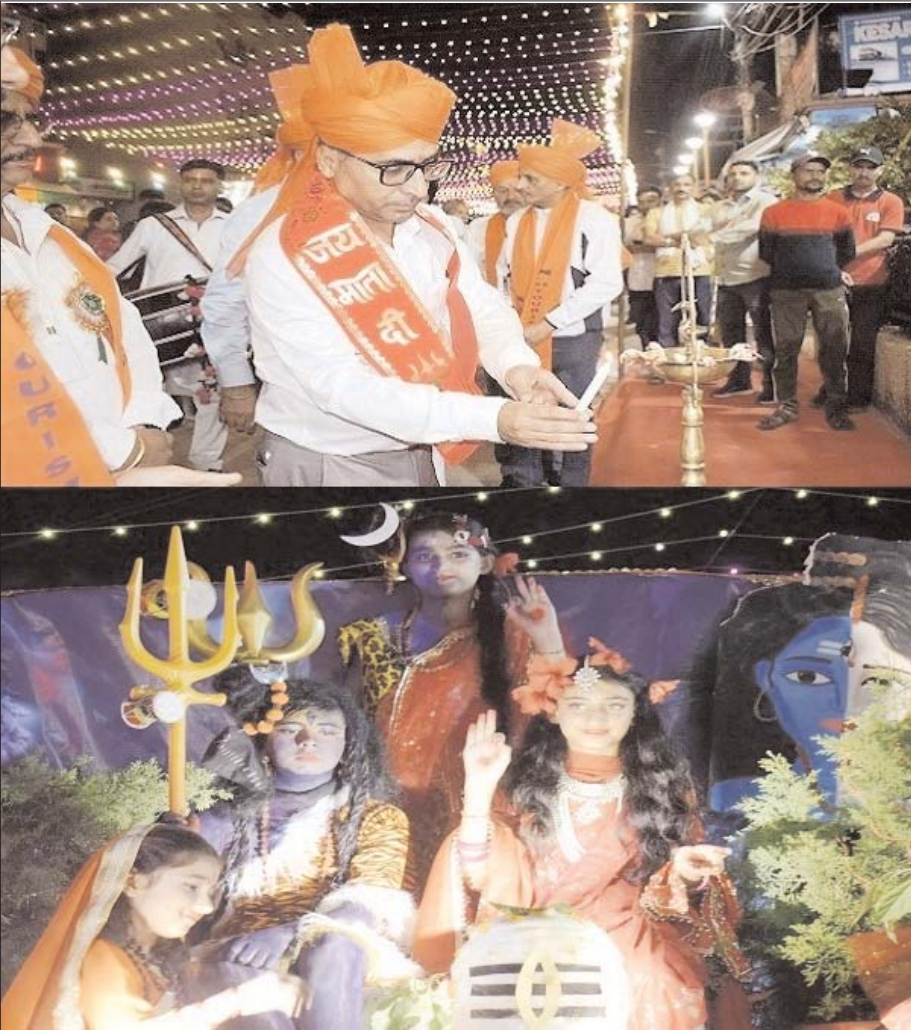
HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 13

The third day of Navratra Festival 2026 was celebrated with religious fervour and enthusiasm in the holy town of Katra. A grand Shobha Yatra was taken out from Suraj Palace amid participation of a large number of devotees.

Chief Executive Officer Patnitop Development Authority Rakesh Dubey graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The Shobha Yatra witnessed enthusiastic participation from devotees, locals and visitors, adding to the festive atmosphere in the town during the ongoing Navratra celebrations.

The Shobha Yatra featured beautifully decorated Jhankis depicting religious and cultural themes, accompanied by the rhythmic beats of traditional dhol. The colourful tableaux, traditional music and enthusiastic participation of devotees reflected the region's rich cultural heritage, religious traditions and deep-rooted faith.

Speaking on the occasion, Rakesh Dubey highlighted the religious and cultural significance of Navratra Festival and appreciated the efforts being made to preserve and promote the region's spiritual heritage. He observed that such festivals



play an important role in strengthening social bonds, promoting communal harmony and showcasing the cultural identity of Jammu and Kashmir. He also emphasised the importance of promoting religious and cultural tourism, noting

that such events provide visitors with an opportunity to experience the region's spiritual traditions and vibrant cultural legacy.

The Shobha Yatra further enhanced the festive atmosphere in Katra, reaffirming the town's significance as a

major pilgrimage destination associated with Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. Navratra Festival 2026, being celebrated from October 11 to 19, features a series of religious, cultural and tourism-related activities for devotees and visitors.

Secretary Tourism reviews functioning of SKICC

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 13: Secretary Tourism, Avny Lavasa, today chaired an introductory meeting to review the overall functioning, management and operational capability of the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), the premier Government-run international convention centre in Jammu and Kashmir.

On arrival, the Secretary was accorded a warm welcome by SKICC officials led by the Director General, SKICC, Mufti Fareeduddin.

During the meeting, the SKICC management gave a detailed presentation on the Centre's operational capability, its importance as a leading MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) destination, and other key aspects



of its functioning. The Director General briefed the Secretary on the current status of bookings, the revenue structure and the Centre's future plans.

Issues relating to the promotion of SKICC and its MICE services were also

discussed. The Secretary gave a patient hearing to the issues raised and assured all possible support to take SKICC to new heights as a world-class convention destination.

Earlier, the Secretary toured the entire Centre to

get a first-hand feel of its facilities and infrastructure.

The Secretary was accompanied by senior officers of the Department, including Special Secretary Tourism, Suraj Parkash Rukwal, Director Planning and Director Finance.

NCST Member Dr Asha Lakra reviews implementation of Tribal Welfare Schemes in Anantnag

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 13

Member of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST), Dr. Asha Lakra, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, Anantnag, to assess the implementation of various safeguards, welfare schemes, developmental programmes and infrastructure projects aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the socio-economic welfare of Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities in the district.

During the meeting, Dr. Lakra undertook a detailed review of the progress achieved under various tribal welfare initiatives and assessed the role of different departments in ensuring that the benefits of government schemes reach eligible beneficiaries. She stressed the need for effective implementation of welfare measures, timely resolution of pending issues and removal of administrative bottlenecks that may hinder the delivery of benefits to members of Scheduled Tribe communities.

Emphasising accountability and a result-oriented approach, the NCST Member directed the concerned



officers to ensure strict adherence to prescribed timelines, strengthen monitoring mechanisms and improve coordination among departments for effective implementation of welfare schemes. She underscored the importance of ensuring that eligible beneficiaries are adequately informed about the schemes and safeguards available to them and are able to access the intended benefits without unnecessary delays.

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, briefed the Member on the status of implementation of various tribal welfare schemes, ongoing developmental works and initiatives being undertaken by the district administration and line departments for the welfare and

upliftment of Scheduled Tribe communities. He also apprised her of the progress made by the concerned departments and the measures being taken to facilitate the delivery of government benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

Detailed deliberations were held on departmental progress, implementation challenges and issues requiring inter-departmental coordination. The meeting also emphasised the need to strengthen outreach, improve awareness among tribal communities regarding government schemes and entitlements, and ensure that welfare initiatives translate into tangible benefits at the grassroots level.

Dr. Lakra stressed that the welfare and protection of Scheduled Tribe commu-

nities must remain a priority and called for a coordinated approach by all concerned departments to ensure transparency, accountability and timely implementation of government programmes. She urged the officers to address genuine grievances promptly and work towards improving access to essential services, welfare assistance and developmental opportunities for tribal communities.

The review meeting was aimed at strengthening the implementation and monitoring of tribal welfare initiatives in the district and ensuring that the intended benefits of government schemes reach eligible Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries in a timely and effective manner.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chief Planning Officer and officers from the Police, Health, Education, Rural Development, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Sheep Husbandry, Jal Shakti, Roads and Buildings, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Fisheries, KPDCL, banking institutions and other concerned departments.

Athar Amir Ul Shafi Khan assumes Charge as Mission Director NHM J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 13

Athar Amir Ul Shafi Khan, today formally assumed charge as the Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), Jammu & Kashmir, at the State Health Society, NHM Office, Old Secretariat, Srinagar.

Upon his arrival, he was warmly welcomed by the NHM staff, reflecting their enthusiasm and strong confidence in his leadership.

He took over the charge from outgoing Mission Director, Akriti Sagar, who was present on the occasion and provided a brief overview of the ongoing operations and functioning of the office. The joining ceremony was also attended by



the Director Planning NHM J&K, FA & CAO SHS NHM J&K, Divisional Nodal Officer NHM Kashmir, and other senior officers of

NHM. Addressing the officers and staff during his inaugural address, Athar Amir Ul Shafi Khan underscored

the critical importance of teamwork, innovation, and a people-centric approach in healthcare delivery. He reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to the core objectives of the National Health Mission, ensuring accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare for every resident of Jammu & Kashmir.

Highlighting the Union Territory's unique geographical and logistical healthcare challenges, the newly appointed Mission Director called for collective efforts and innovative solutions. He emphasized that the health and well-being of the people of J&K will remain the absolute central focus of all future NHM initiatives and programs.

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MD NHM chairs Introductory review Meeting of NHM J&K

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JAMMU, OCT 13

Athar Amir Ul Shafi Khan, Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), Jammu & Kashmir, today chaired a comprehensive introductory review meeting to evaluate ongoing performance, financial progress, human resource frameworks, and healthcare infrastructure across the Union Territory.

Reviewing annual financial planning, resource allocations, and fund utilization patterns, the Mission Director emphasized transparent and efficient fund management to support robust healthcare delivery across all districts. Highlighting maternal and child health indicators, the meeting noted that J&K continues to maintain exceptional performance through high institutional deliveries and robust antenatal care coverage supported by central and UT welfare schemes.

The review placed special focus on the extensive network of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs operational across the region, which successfully bring comprehensive primary healthcare, free essential drugs, diagnostics,



and tele-consultations closer to grassroots communities.

Significant progress under major capital works, including the construction of Critical Care Blocks, Integrated Public Health Labs, and Block Public Health Units, was thoroughly assessed to ensure timely project completion and enhanced critical care capabilities.

The successful implementation of the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan and the rollout of Diplomate of National Board postgraduate courses across district hospitals and community health centers were commended as major milestones that mitigate specialist short-

ages and reduce unnecessary tertiary care referrals.

Furthermore, the continuous operation of the 102/108 ambulance network, free dialysis services under the PM National Dialysis Programme, and the Tele-MANAS mental health helpline, NP-NCD were acknowledged for providing seamless public services.

Urging officers to accelerate facility quality assurance certifications, and ensure rigorous grassroots monitoring, Athar Amir Ul Shafi Khan stressed that continuous inter-departmental coordination and streamlined medical supply chains remain vital to elevate public

healthcare standards. He placed specific stress on improving the functioning of RBSK, PC & PNDD, Tele-Sanjeevani, and DBT schemes.

The meeting was attended by key senior officials, including the Director Planning NHM J&K, Financial Advisor and Chief Accounts Officer SHS NHM J&K, State Nodal Officer, Divisional Nodal Officer Kashmir, Programme Managers, State Programme Manager, State Media and Evaluation Officer, State Accounts Managers, Associate and Assistant Programme Managers, and other senior functionaries of NHM J&K.

Calls for Teamwork, Accountability and Efficient Public Service Delivery

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 13

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shreya Singhal, today chaired an introductory meeting with district and sectoral officers at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Ganderbal, to review departmental functioning, discuss key priorities and strengthen inter departmental coordination for effective delivery of public services.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with the officers and took stock of the functioning of their respective departments, ongoing developmental activities and key administrative priorities. She emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure effective governance and timely delivery of public services.

The DC appreciated the teamwork and coordinated efforts of the district administration and stressed that collective responsibility, mutual coordination and a shared commitment to public service are essential for taking the district forward. She called upon all officers to work as one team, maintain close coordination and ensure that developmental



initiatives translate into tangible benefits for the people.

Stressing the need for swift and efficient execution of official work, the DC directed the officers to ensure timely disposal of matters, expedite developmental works and avoid unnecessary delays in decision-making and implementation. She emphasised that public grievances must be addressed promptly and that the administration must remain accessible, responsive and sensitive to the needs of the general public.

The Deputy Commissioner further stressed upon all officers to discharge their duties with honesty, integrity, dedication and a

strong sense of accountability. She underscored the importance of transparency in administrative functioning and directed the officers to take responsibility for the tasks assigned to them and ensure their timely completion.

She also emphasised the effective implementation of government schemes and flagship programmes, directing the concerned departments to ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the intended benefits without unnecessary delays. She called for regular monitoring of departmental performance and close coordination to resolve bottlenecks affecting public service de-

livery.

The DC reiterated that public welfare must remain at the centre of all administrative efforts and urged the officers to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, sincerity and commitment. She expressed confidence that, through teamwork, accountability and dedicated service, the district administration would continue to work towards the overall development of Ganderbal and meet the expectations of the people.

The meeting was attended by all district and sectoral officers of the district.