

Secretary Tourism reviewed working of Jammu Tawi Golf Course, Sidhra

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
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Secretary, Tourism, Avni Lavasa, today visited Jammu Tawi Golf Course, Sidhra here, to review its existing infrastructure, ongoing developmental works, operational requirements and future growth prospects.

During the visit, a comprehensive presentation was made outlining the origin and evolution of Jammu Tawi Golf Course, its scenic setting, existing infrastructure and facilities, financial requirements, annual budgetary provisions, CAPEX requirements and future development plans. The presentation also highlighted the golf course's significance as a recreational and sporting destination, as well as its potential to contribute to tourism promotion in Jammu and Kashmir.

The presentation was followed by detailed deliberations between Avni Lavasa and Secretary, Jammu Tawi Golf Course, on matters requiring immediate intervention, longstanding issues awaiting resolution, and key requirements for



the effective functioning and sustainable development of the facility. Discussions also focused on future priorities and measures to strengthen the golf course's infrastructure and enhance its overall potential.

Secretary Tourism also inspected ongoing developmental works, including the swimming pool project and the open terrace project.

She toured the golf course to assess its existing infrastructure, facilities and overall setting.

During the review, Avni Lavasa emphasized the need to further harness Jammu Tawi Golf Course's tourism potential by strengthening its facilities and visitor experience, promoting it as a destination for golf and recreation, and

aligning its development with the broader tourism objectives of Jammu and Kashmir.

She directed that the identified developmental requirements and ongoing projects be pursued in a coordinated manner, with due focus on improving the course's appeal to visitors and supporting its sustainable growth.

Katra Navratra Utsav 2026 8 contestants enter Grand Finale of All India Devotional Song Competition

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All India Devotional Song Competition, organized by SMVD Shrine Board, Department of J&K Tourism and PTC Network as a part of Navratra Utsav 2026, entered the Grand Finale today.

As many as 16 semi-finalists competed for their entry into Grand Finale. Of these, eight singers - Stanzin, Rajiv Kumar, Aarav Wazir, Mohinder Soni, Vanshika Dogra, Sukhjinder, Lalit Bhardwaj & Aditya make it to Final.

The panel of experts comprising Dr. Surinder Sharma Head of the department Govt. Degree College Sanjoli Himachal Pradesh. CL Verma, Ex Chairman, Post Graduate University of Himachal Pradesh, & Suraj Singh H.O.D Music Department



ment Jammu and Top-Grade Artist All India Radio & Usha Bhagati judged the contestants.

Rakesh Wazir, while speaking on the occasion, said that the competition has emerged as

a major platform for the new singers and a major Tourism booster.

"The kind of talent which has made it to the Final will make the event a major entertainer," he added.

Meanwhile, Anjusha Sharma & Shreya Gandral enthralled the audience with their mesmerising devotional presentations and adding to the spiritual ambience.

Nation First' Commitment Must Go Hand in Hand with Building a Drug-Free Society: Billawaria

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Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Jammu and Kashmir General Secretary and former Jammu Deputy Mayor Baldev Singh Billawaria today said that the BJP has carved out a distinct identity in Indian politics through its unwavering commitment to the ideology of 'Nation First', with national interest remaining at the core of every party policy, decision and public welfare initiative.

Billawaria was addressing series meetings with party workers in BJP District Kathua, Nagri Mandal, Lakhampur Mandal and Keerian-Gandia village of Jasrota, where he called upon workers to further strengthen the organisation at the grassroots level and actively contribute to social service and public welfare initiatives.

He said that politics is not merely a means of acquiring power, but a commitment to serving society and the nation. The responsibility of every BJP worker, he added, is to reach out to the last person in society and work towards bringing meaningful and positive change in the lives of those in need.

Highlighting the urgent need to combat drug abuse, Billawaria said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of building a 'Drug-Free India' must become a collective social mission. He emphasised that every sec-



tion of society must contribute towards protecting the younger generation from the menace of drugs.

"Drug abuse does not destroy the life of an individual alone; it impacts the entire family and ultimately weakens society. We must therefore transform the fight against drugs into a sustained social movement," Billawaria said.

He called upon BJP workers to take the message of Nasha Mukta Bharat to every village and every household and undertake awareness campaigns among youth to encourage them to stay away from drugs. He stressed that the energy, talent and potential of the youth must be channelled towards nation-building, education, entrepreneurship and constructive social engagement.

Billawaria further said that extending support to daughters of poor and needy families so that they can lead dignified lives, as

well as helping economically weaker children continue their education, is an important responsibility towards society.

"If our initiative helps even one child continue his or her education, saves even one young person from falling into the trap of drugs, or brings a smile to the face of even one needy family, that is our greatest achievement and the true essence of social service," he said.

He urged BJP workers to discharge their responsibilities with the spirit of "Nation First, Society Above All and Public Service as Our Commitment." He underlined that the battle against drug abuse cannot be left to government agencies alone and must become a collective movement involving youth, parents, social organisations, community leaders and political workers. Billawaria said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is scaling new heights

of development and progress. At the same time, he said, the nation must collectively address the serious social challenges confronting society.

He called upon party workers to work with complete dedication and commitment towards building a drug-free, educated, empowered and self-reliant society, while strengthening the BJP's organisational presence at the grassroots.

BJP District President Updesh Andotra briefed party workers about the upcoming organisational programmes and called upon them to ensure their successful implementation with complete dedication and enthusiasm.

He said that BJP workers must continue strengthening the organisation down to the booth level and use upcoming programmes as an effective platform to take the achievements and public welfare initiatives of the Central Government to every section of society.

SBIOA seeks MP's intervention for early implementation of 5-day banking

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A delegation of the State Bank of India Officers' Association (SBIOA), Jammu Module, called upon Rajya Sabha MP Gulam Ali Khatana at his Jammu residence and sought his intervention for the early implementation of a five-day banking week.

The delegation, led by association representatives, highlighted the long-pending demand for declaring the remaining Saturdays as bank holidays, benefiting around 20 lakh bank employees across the country.

Rajesh Mehta, Deputy General Secretary, SBIOA Jammu Module, said the proposed arrangement would promote a healthier



work-life balance without affecting banking services. He added that bank unions had agreed to extend week-

day working hours to compensate for the additional holidays, while digital banking services, including

UPI, internet banking, mobile banking and ATMs, would continue uninterrupted.

Director Tourism Felicitates Natrang Artists for Acclaimed Presentation of 'Mata Ki Kahani' in Katra

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Vikas Gupta, JKAS, Director Tourism, Jammu, felicitated and appreciated the Natrang team of artists for their outstanding performances in Mata Ki Kahani, presented at the Shridhar Auditorium, Spiritual Growth Centre, Katra, as part of the Navratra Festival-2026.

The production was staged by Natrang with the support of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu.

Termining the presentation of Mata Ki Kahani as world-class, the Director Tourism observed that such productions have immense potential to promote cultural and spiritual tourism.

He emphasised that this outstanding production deserved to be staged repeatedly, not only in Katra but also in other parts of India, to reach wider audiences and showcase the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

Appreciating the various aspects of the production, he noted that every department, including acting, direction, stagecraft, lighting, sound and choreography, demonstrated exceptional standards of perfection and professionalism. He commended the artists and the entire creative team for presenting a production that combined artistic excellence with spiritual significance. Commending Padamshiri Balwant Thakur for creating such masterpieces, he



termed his as the true cultural ambassador of India who glorified Indian culture globally.

Mata Ki Kahani has remained one of the major attractions of the Navratra Festival in Katra since 2017, contributing significantly to raising the standard of the festival through its high-quality theatrical presentation. Beyond its artistic appeal, the production holds particular significance for narrating the legendary story of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji, offering audiences an engaging and meaningful theatrical experience rooted in faith, devotion and cultural heritage.

Through its continued presentation, Mata Ki Kahani has emerged as an important cultural initiative that connects devotees and visitors with the legendary story of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji while strengthening Katra's identity as a prominent destination for spiritual and cultural tourism.

History has perhaps never witnessed a

production of this class at Katra which unfolds the entire legend in a highly spectacular manner. Balwant Thakur who is credited for having created theatrical wonders of world class once again established the fact that his magic spell will continue to mesmerize audiences through his mind-blowing ventures. 'Mata Ki Kahani' - a unique theatrical experience for the audience, beautifully showcased the popular legend of Mata Vaishno Devi. Magically it transported the entire audience to a mesmerising journey unfolding the story of Mata Vaishno Devi which is a classic narrative that echoes every Hindu household and is a part of every grandma's midnight tale. As per the legend, during the period when the Goddess was busy in annihilating the Asuras, Her three main manifestations viz. Mata Maha Kali, Mata Maha Lakshmi and Mata Maha Saraswati got together one day and pooled their collective Tejas or spiritual

strength. Today Mata Vaishno Devi is worshipped by millions and trillions of people across the world. Mata Vaishno Devi has surfaced as an embodiment of will, strength and peace. In the present times, when the atrocities against the mankind is prevailing, the legend of Mata Vaishnodevi gives a guiding light to her followers to help her devotees to uphold inner confidence and faith within themselves and on the strength of her healing and cosmic powers.

The most striking feature of today's performance was the demonstration of perfection in every creative department be it the stage action, design, lighting, scenic imagery and visual poetry which left a life-time impact of a highly vibrant presentation. Pan-India audience on the occasion appreciated the performance and termed this as their lives best memorable presentation which they desired to continue for the entire year so over one Crore pilgrims visiting Katra every

year get benefited by such educative showcasing of artistic presentations. Majority of the audiences admitted that they were not fully aware of the whole story of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi and after having witnessed this mind-blowing presentation they have come to know about various aspects of the story.

The production has been mounted by an accomplished team of artists, performers, technicians and designers. Neeraj Kant has contributed to direction, sets by Gaurav Angural, Bhavishya Aggarwal and Rahul Gupta while Rahul Singh, Pawan Verma, Mohd. Yaseen and Mahikshit Singh have handled costumes and properties. Sunny Mujoo has led the choreography, and Shivam Singh is responsible for light design. The collective efforts of the entire team have brought this ambitious theatrical production to life.

The artists who featured in this mega show included Neeraj Kant, Sunny Mujoo, Kananpreet Kaur, Arya Sharma, Pallvi Sharma, Khushboo Pandita, Vani Thakur, Muskan Gupta, Sakshi Gupta, Shailja Singh, Jhanvi Biloria, Vanshika Manhas, Anshika Wazir, Damini Thakur, Aanya Sharma, Navya Sharma, Ridhima Devi, Sakshi Devi, Ishani Sharma, Shivangi, Kaashvi, Ishita Sharma, Keerti Sharma, Suneha Angural, Aryan Sharma, Sanket Bhagat, Krishna, Arun Dev Verma, Arun Sharma, Amit Rana, Narinder Verma, Sahil Narwallia, Palshin Dutta, Mihir Gujral, Radhika Khajuria, Kushal Bhat, Mitali Sharma, Bhoomi Sharma, Priyal Gupta, Lal Mohd., Arun Sagar, Krishay Bhatia and Aadesh Dhar.