

Shat Chandi Maha Yagya Concludes with Divine Blessings at Vaishno Devi Shrine

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 20

The nine-day-long Shat Chandi Maha Yagya, organized by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) during the auspicious occasion of Shardiya Navratras, concluded with spiritual fervour and devotion on Mahanavami. The Purnahuti ceremony was performed amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras, invoking divine blessings for universal peace, prosperity and the well-being of all.

Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB, along with senior officers and staff of the Shrine Board besides, a large number of pilgrims participated in the concluding rituals. The Maha Yagya was performed by a group of learned Pandits led by Padma Shri Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri, lending spiritual sanctity and significance to the sacred occasion.

An average of over 40,000 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Holy Shrine daily during the Navratras, taking the cumulative number of pilgrims to over 4 lakh since the commencement of the Navratra. This marks a significant increase over the approximately 1.78 lakh pilgrims who visited the Holy Shrine during the corresponding period of last year's Shardiya Navratras, reflecting the growing enthusiasm and devotion among pilgrims.



To facilitate a smooth, safe and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage, the Shrine Board put in place elaborate arrangements for the convenience of devotees. Dedicated help desks were established at key locations along the track to provide guidance and assistance. Arrangements were strengthened to ensure uninterrupted water and power supply along the tracks and at Bhawan, alongside enhanced sanitation, hygiene and cleanliness measures. Special fasting meals were also made available at the Shrine Board's Bhojanalyas and Langars to meet the dietary requirements of devotees observing fasts during Navratras.

A significant addition to the pilgrim infrastructure this year was the New Vaishnavi Bhawan at Bhawan, inaugurated in May 2026 by Shri Manoj

Sinha, Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, JK-UT also Chairman, SMVDSB. The facility has augmented accommodation capacity at Bhawan while further enhancing the range and quality of amenities available to pilgrims. Designed to provide a modern, comfortable and efficient environment, the facility represents an important step towards strengthening pilgrimage infrastructure in response to the growing number of devotees.

The festive ambience at the Holy Shrine was further enriched by attractive floral decorations and thematic installations at Bhawan, Atka and adjoining areas. These arrangements added to the spiritual charm of the Shrine and enhanced the festive experience of pilgrims during the auspicious Navratras.

The celebrations were

further enlivened by a series of devotional Bhajan performances by renowned artists at Bhawan. These artists included Navdeep Wadali, Sudhir Vyas, Manan Noor, Sippy and Raj Ashoo, Dilbagh Singh, Milind Gaba, Nitin, Milan Singh, Malini Awasthi, Gyan Pankaj, Kanhaiya Mittal, Master Noor, Shashwat Sachdev, Arunika Kanjilal, Jyotica Tangri and Ajay Yagnik. The students of SMVD Gurukul also enthralled devotees with soulful devotional performances, blending the richness of traditional spiritual music with youthful talent and enthusiasm.

Notably, the Shrine Board continues to reaffirm its commitment to preserving the spiritual traditions and sanctity of the Holy Shrine while providing safe, comfortable and enriching pilgrimage facilities to devotees.

Ajatshatru, Ranvijay perform Dussehra, Shastra Puja at Raghunathji Temple, Amar Mahal

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Marking the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami, M.K. Ajatshatru Singh, former Minister, and Ranvijay Singh of the Dogra Royal Family performed traditional Dussehra rituals and Shastra Puja at the historic Shree Raghunath Ji Temple and Amar Mahal Palace in Jammu, reaffirming their commitment to preserving the region's rich cultural and religious heritage.

At the historic Shree Raghunath Ji Temple, members of the Dogra Royal Family performed the traditional Dussehra rituals and Shastra Puja amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras. Similarly, at Amar Mahal Palace, the rituals also included Singhasan Puja, symbolising reverence for the historical legacy of the Dogra rulers. The palace was beautifully illuminated and adorned with flowers to mark the festive occasion.



Speaking on the occasion, M.K. Ajatshatru Singh said that Dussehra represents the eternal triumph of good over evil and righteousness over injustice. He said that Shastra Puja and other traditional rituals hold a special place in the Dogra cultural ethos, reflecting the region's historical legacy, valour and civilisational values. He emphasised the impor-

ance of preserving these traditions and passing them on to future generations.

Ranvijay Singh said that the Dogra Royal Family remains committed to preserving and promoting Jammu's rich cultural heritage and ensuring that its time-honoured customs continue to be observed with dignity and reverence. He added that such tradi-

tions strengthen the bond between generations and keep younger people connected with their cultural roots.

The traditional ceremonies reflected the enduring spirit of Sanatan Dharma and the rich Dogra traditions, reaffirming the importance of preserving Jammu's religious and cultural heritage for future generations.

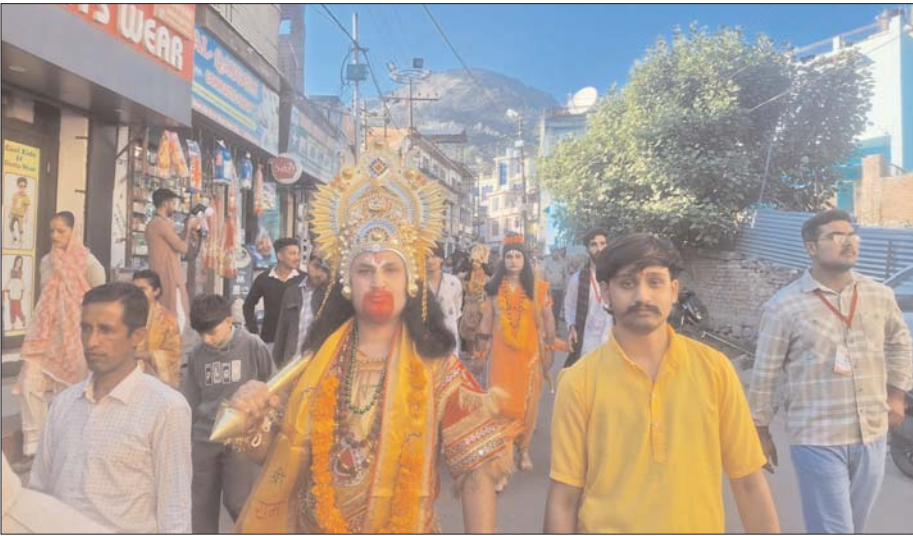
Grand Dussehra Procession Draws Thousands in Doda

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Thousands of devotees participated in a grand Dussehra procession organised by Shri Ram Leela Charitable Trust, Doda, on the occasion of Vijay Dashami.

The procession commenced from Government Middle School, Doda, featuring beautifully decorated tableaux depicting Lord Shri Ram, Mata Sita, Laxman and Lord Hanuman. It passed through Radhe Shyam Temple, Shiv Temple Nagri and Shiv Mandir Tondwah, where devotees accorded a warm welcome to the procession.

The celebrations culminated at Sports Stadium,



Doda, where the effigy of Ravana was ceremonially burnt, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. People from different parts of the district gathered in large numbers to witness the fes-

tivities.

The District Administration Doda made elaborate arrangements for security, traffic management, sanitation and other essential facilities to ensure the smooth

and peaceful conduct of the event.

The celebrations concluded in a festive atmosphere, with devotees praying for peace, prosperity and communal harmony.

JJM, JKAACL join hands to Promote Water Conservation at Basohli Utsav

JAMMU, Oct 20: The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Jammu and Kashmir, in collaboration with the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), is using the ongoing Basohli Utsav 2026 to spread awareness about water conservation, cleanliness and the judicious use of water.

Being held from October 19 to 21, the festival celebrates Basohli's rich cultural heritage, traditional arts, tourism and local economy through miniature paintings, Ramleela, folk performances, traditional sports, local cuisine and Ravi Aarti.

As part of the initiative, street plays (Nukkad Nataks) are being staged to highlight the importance of conserving natural water resources and



preventing pollution. The performances use traditional storytelling to encourage people to adopt responsible water-use

practices. The awareness campaign emphasises that expanding water-supply infrastructure alone cannot ensure long-term wa-

ter security without protecting natural springs, streams and catchment areas and promoting rain-water harvesting.

BNI launches 7th Chapter, Pinnacle in Jammu



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Business Network International (BNI), a global business referral organisation, launched its seventh chapter in Jammu and Kashmir, BNI Pinnacle, at

Taj Vivanta Jammu on Tuesday.

The launch witnessed the participation of 43 founding members, marking the organisation's largest chapter launch in Jammu and Kashmir since 2022. The initiative aims to

strengthen structured business networking and promote collaboration among entrepreneurs in the region. CA Raghav Gupta, Founder and Head of BNI Jammu and Kashmir, said the organisation has a network of over 275 referral

partners and has generated business worth more than Rs 564 crore since its inception in 2018. He added that members benefit from a structured referral network backed by over 3.75 lakh members across 76 countries.

Dr Karan Singh remembers Maharaja Gulab Singhji's role in uniting J&K

NEW DELHI, OCT 20: Dr. Karan Singh, veteran Parliamentarian and former Sadr-e-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir, today paid rich tributes to his illustrious ancestor, Maharaja Gulab Singh Ji, on his birth anniversary. He highlighted the historic role played by the Dogra rulers in building a unified, multi-ethnic Jammu and Kashmir and urged the community to uphold the ideals of national unity, service and sacrifice.

In a handout issued today, the former Member Parliament said "On the occasion of the birth anniversary of my great ancestor Maharaja Gulab Singh ji I send a message of goodwill to all the people of the erstwhile



Jammu & Kashmir State. The creation of the multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic State of Jammu & Kashmir by the Dogra warriors and rulers

at great personal sacrifice was a major political event of the 19th century.

Although the original State has now been fragmented, it still remains a

strong northern frontier of which India can be proud. For the Dogra community in Jammu and Himachal Pradesh this was a massive contribution to extending the frontiers of India all the way to Central Asia and Tibet. Our great military leaders like General Zorawar Singh are recorded in military history around the world."

"In the present context, although the Dogras remain a minority in Jammu & Kashmir, they must continue to strengthen and support the country and make such sacrifices as may be required from time to time. That would be our best homage to the memory of Maharaja Gulab Singh ji," he added.

Vikramaditya pays visit to Rajnath

NEW DELHI, OCT 20: Yuvraj Vikramaditya Singh, scion of the Dogra Royal Family of Jammu and Kashmir and former MLC, paid a courtesy visit to Union Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh in New Delhi.

During the meeting, Yuvraj Vikramaditya Singh appreciated the Defence Minister's leadership and his continued efforts towards strengthening India's defence



preparedness, modernising the Armed

Forces and safeguarding the nation's sovereignty

and security. He also lauded the dedication and valour of the Indian Armed Forces in protecting the country's borders and upholding national interests.

The meeting provided an opportunity for an exchange of pleasantries, with Yuvraj Vikramaditya Singh conveying his regards to the Defence Minister and appreciating his commitment to national service.