

Navratra festival concludes with vibrant celebration of faith, culture, tradition in Katra

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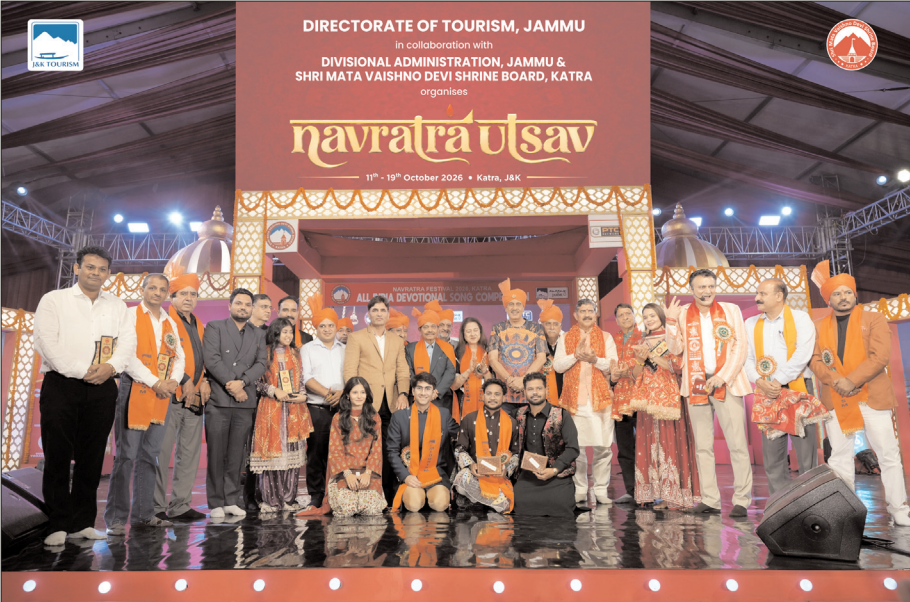
The Navratra Festival 2026, organised by the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu in collaboration with Divisional Administration Jammu, District Administration Reasi & Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board concluded today at Katra after a series of religious, cultural and traditional programmes.

The festival was organised to promote pilgrimage and tourism in the region and to provide yatris and visitors an immersive experience of the religious and cultural traditions associated with Katra and the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage.

The Shobha Yatras, Mata Ki Kahani, Dangal, Devotional Song Competition and various other cultural programmes remained the major highlights of the festival, attracting participation from pilgrims, tourists, local residents and artists. The weeklong celebrations were conducted under the supervision of Secretary to the Government, Department of Tourism J&K Ms. Avny Lavasa (IAS) and Dr. Vikas Gupta (JKAS) Director Tourism Jammu.

Hon'ble Member of Parliament Shri Jugal Kishore Sharma was the Chief Guest on the closing ceremony, Hon'ble MLA Shri Baldev Raj Sharma and Hon'ble MLA Reasi Shri Kuldeep Raj Dubey were the special guests.

Joint Director Tourism,



Jammu, Shri Aijaz Qaiser (JKAS) delivered the introductory address wherein he gave a detailed overview of the 9 day navratra festival showcasing local culture and highlighted the importance of organising such festivals for promoting pilgrimage tourism in the region. He emphasized on providing visitors with a meaningful experience that combines spirituality, culture and tradition. He also extended his thanks and gratitude towards Divisional Commissioner Jammu Sh. Vikas Kundal (IAS), Deputy Commissioner Reasi Sh. Kumar Abhishek (IAS) & Chief Executive Officer Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Katra Sh. Sachin Kumar Vaishya (IAS) for the support during the weeklong celebration.

Speaking on the occasion, Hon'ble MP Shri Jugal Kishore Sharma lauded the role of tourism depart-

ment and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board for organizing such festivals in preserving cultural traditions and strengthening the moral and social values of individuals. He said that such events also provide an opportunity for the younger generation to remain connected with the country's rich heritage and traditions. A ballad of Bollywood celebrities namely Preeti Sapru, Deepak Prasher & Ganesh Jain also attended the closing ceremony.

The grand finale of the Devotional Song Competition was one of the major attractions of the festival, witnessing enthusiastic participation by talented singers. Mr. Aditya Kumar emerged as the winner of the competition with his devotional performance. The competition provided a platform for showcasing musical talent while adding a distinct devotional and

cultural dimension to the Navratra celebrations. Special performance by famous Punjabi singer Inderjeet Singh and Sonali Dogra were applauded by the audience.

The event was also attended by Deputy Director Tourism, Jammu, Shri Pankaj Sasan (JKAS); Assistant Director Tourism, Jammu, Shri Vishal Sadhota (JKAS); Accounts Officer Ms. Annie Jamwal; and Assistant Director Tourism, Katra, Shri Rajesh Raina, besides other officers and officials of the Tourism Department and associated agencies.

The conclusion of the Navratra Festival 2026 marked the culmination of the annual celebrations in Katra, bringing together religious observances, cultural performances and traditional activities around the Navratras and the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage.

Basohli Utsav 2026: Around 500 participate in 21-Km Half Marathon

Runners traverse scenic Atal Setu-Dunera-Rani Talab route; Rs 2 lakh in cash prizes awarded to top finishers

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Around 500 individuals took part in the 21-kilometre Half Marathon organised today as part of Basohli Utsav 2026, promoting fitness, sportsmanship and athletic excellence amid the picturesque landscape of Basohli along the banks of the River Ravi.

The marathon was flagged off by former Minister Prem Sagar Aziz, MLA Basohli Darshan Singh, ADC Basohli Pankaj Bhagotra from the iconic Atal Setu. The route proceeded towards Dunera and culminated at Rani Talab, Basohli, after the return leg. The scenic course, featuring the iconic Atal Setu, the Ravi riverbank and Basohli's natural surroundings, added to the experience for participants.

In the men's category, Vishal Singh of Himachal Pradesh secured first position, followed by Pramod



Singh of Dehradun in second place and Rohit of Udhampur in third place. In the women's category, Nikita Sharma of Una, Himachal Pradesh, secured first position, followed by Rubina of Una in second place and Ramani Patel of Madhya Pradesh in third place. Excise Commissioner Vaibhav Kohli, gave away prizes to the winners and participants. The first, second and third-place finishers in both the men's and women's categories

were awarded ₹50,000, ₹30,000 and ₹20,000, respectively. The total prize pool amounted to ₹1 lakh for each category, taking the combined prize money to ₹2 lakh.

Director ACB Shakti Pathak, CEO BBDA B. R. Tandon, SDPO Om Parkash, DFO Suresh Sharma, BDO/Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Basohli Rajesh Kumar, ZEO Radha Krishan, ZDPO Tara Singh, former Municipal Committee

Chairman Sumesh Sapolia, former BSF Deputy Commandant Bhupinder Vikas, athlete Sudhir Anand and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Half Marathon formed part of the sporting events organised under Basohli Utsav 2026, highlighting the importance of physical fitness, sporting spirit and public participation while showcasing the natural beauty and tourism potential of Basohli.

Dussehra celebrated with religious fervor, enthusiasm in Bhaderwah

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Dussehra was celebrated with great religious fervour, devotion and enthusiasm here, marking the triumph of good over evil and commemorating Lord Rama's victory over the demon king Ravana.

Traditionally, Dussehra celebrations in Bhaderwah have been held at Sehri Bazaar. However, keeping in view space constraints and changing developmental requirements, major celebrations have also been organised at the New Bus Stand, Kotli, Bhaderwah, providing space for the gathering of devotees and the smooth conduct of the festivities.

The highlight of the celebrations was the burning of large effigies of Ravana and his associates, which were prepared by specialised artists. The effigies were set ablaze amid fireworks and



traditional arrow-shooting rituals performed by participants portraying Lord Rama, creating an atmosphere of religious devotion and festive enthusiasm.

A large number of devotees, locals and visitors participated in the celebrations, reflecting Bhaderwah's rich cultural heritage and longstanding religious traditions. The occasion also served as a reminder of the enduring

message of righteousness, truth and the ultimate victory of good over evil.

MLA Bhaderwah Daleep Singh Parihar, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, Additional Superintendent of Police, Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Station House Officer and other officers of the civil administration, police and concerned departments were also present on the oc-

casion.

The ADC, in coordination with the police and other concerned departments, ensured comprehensive arrangements for the smooth and peaceful conduct of the celebrations. Necessary measures were put in place for security, traffic management, sanitation and the uninterrupted supply of power and drinking water to facilitate the public.

Dussehra celebrated with grandeur in Poonch

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On the auspicious occasion of Dussehra, a grand celebration was held at the Sports Stadium Poonch.

Member of Legislative Assembly, Aijaz Ahmed Jan; Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma; Senior Superintendent of Police, Vaibhav Meena; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik, along with several other civil and police officials attended the celebration.

The event began with a



special Pooja in reverence of the cultural and spiritual essence of the festival, which was followed by the

ceremonial burning of the effigy of Ravan, symbolizing the eternal victory of good over evil.

The MLA Haveli, Deputy Commissioner and SSP extended warm wishes to the people of Poonch. They highlighted the significance of Dussehra in promoting unity, peace and the rich cultural heritage of the Country.

The celebration drew large crowds from across the district, with families and friends coming together to witness the vibrant festivities.

The atmosphere was filled with enthusiasm, joy and community spirit marking a successful and memorable Dussehra celebration.

Vijayadashami Celebrated with Devotion, Enthusiasm at Parade Ground in Jammu

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The auspicious festival of Vijayadashami (Dussehra) was celebrated with immense devotion, religious fervour and enthusiasm at Parade Ground, Jammu, on Tuesday, under the aegis of Shree Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Jammu and Kashmir. The grand Programme, steeped in religious and cultural traditions, was graced by Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament and BJP Jammu and Kashmir President, Shri Sat Sharma, as the Chief Guest, Revered Swami Dinesh Bharti Ji Maharaj inaugurated the programme with his divine blessings, inspiring devotees to follow the path of righteousness, truth, moral conduct and humanity.

On the occasion, Dr. Gautam Mengi, Prant Sanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and Mahant Shri Rameshwar Dass Ji of the Puarani Mandi Temple were also present. Jammu West MLA Shri Arvind Gupta and Jammu East MLA Shri Yudhvir Sethi attended the Programme as distinguished guests. Shri Tarun Singla, President of the Federation of Industries, Jammu, and eminent educationist Prof.

(Dr.) Ajit Angral also graced the occasion with their presence.

Shri Parshotam Dadhichi, President of Shree Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Jammu and Kashmir, said that Vijayadashami holds immense significance in Indian culture and Sanatan traditions, symbolising the victory of righteousness over unrighteousness, truth over falsehood, and good over evil. He stated that the life of Lord Shri Ram inspires everyone to uphold dignity, dedication to duty, sacrifice, truth and righteousness. He added that the Sabha strives to connect the younger generation with India's rich cultural heritage, spiritual traditions and moral values through such celebrations. Expressing gratitude to all devotees and distinguished guests, he said that Dussehra provides a sacred opportunity to resolve to eliminate social evils and embrace virtuous conduct.

Chief Guest Shri Sat Sharma, in his address, said that Vijayadashami reinforces the belief that no matter how great the challenges may be, truth, righteousness and justice ultimately prevail. He described the life of Lord Shri Ram as an exemplary model of ideal leadership, duty, sacrifice and public welfare. He



emphasised that religious and cultural events play a vital role in strengthening India's rich cultural heritage and Sanatan traditions while promoting unity, harmony and positive thinking in society. He urged people to adopt the ideals of Lord Shri Ram in their daily lives and work towards strengthening moral values in society.

Revered Swami Dinesh Bharti Ji Maharaj, in his blessings, said that Vijayadashami is not merely a religious festival but also an occasion for introspection, self-purification and overcoming one's inner weaknesses. He stated that the life of

Lord Shri Ram represents truth, dignity, compassion, sacrifice and unwavering devotion to righteousness. He urged everyone to give up negative qualities such as ego, anger, greed and hatred and embrace love, service, harmony and humanity. Emphasising the importance of religious values, spiritual awareness and mutual brotherhood, he prayed for the happiness, peace and prosperity of all devotees.

Dr. Gautam Mengi, Prant Sanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, said that Vijayadashami holds special significance in Indian culture

and national life. The festival reminds people of their responsibilities towards righteousness, discipline, duty and society. He said that the ideals of Lord Shri Ram provide guidance in both personal and social life through truth, self-restraint, courage and service. He emphasised that preserving cultural values, maintaining mutual harmony and demonstrating dedication towards the nation are essential for building a strong society. He added that such celebrations play an important role in connecting the younger generation with their traditions and fostering unity

and positive awareness in society.

Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, was also present on the occasion, adding significance to the grand celebration.

Jammu West MLA Shri Arvind Gupta and Jammu East MLA Shri Yudhvir Sethi also addressed the gathering and shared their views on the significance of Vijayadashami, highlighting the festival's enduring message of truth, righteousness and the triumph of good over evil.

The programme was conducted by Shri Sanjay Gupta, who ensured its smooth proceedings and introduced the various speakers and distinguished guests. At the conclusion of the event, Shri Prabhat Singh Jamwal extended a vote of thanks to all guests, saints, religious leaders, devotees, members of the organising committee and supporters, appreciating their valuable contributions towards making the celebration a success.

The office-bearers of the Welfare Committee of Shree Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Jammu and Kashmir, played a significant role in the successful organisation of the grand

event. Those who contributed included Vice Presidents Shri Arun Gupta and Shri Shakti Dutt Sharma; Treasurer Shri Anil Kumar Magotra; Secretary Shri Subhash Sharma; Joint Secretary Shri Dalip Gupta and Shri Atma Ram Sagar; Joint Treasurer Shri Ashok Gupta; Building and Stores In-charge Shri Ashutosh Sharma; Educational Institutions In-charge Dr. Sanjay Kaushal; Gausshala Department President Shri Raj Kumar Gupta; Saints, Religious Institutions and Temples In-charge Shri Kuldeep Kotwal; Temples and Religious Institutions Department In-charge Shri Sanjay Kaul; Shri Rajesh Gupta; Natak Samaj President Shri Anil Masoom; and Mahavir Dal Coordinator Shri Hitesh Malhotra, along with other members.

Shri Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Jammu and Kashmir, described the Vijayadashami celebration as a symbol of religious faith, cultural heritage and social unity and expressed its gratitude to all citizens for their support and participation. The Sabha expressed hope that the ideals of Lord Shri Ram would continue to inspire society to uphold truth, justice, service, harmony and strong moral values.