

# Balwant Thakur's play breaks records, set to feature in 26th National Theatre Festival

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**JAMMU:** Renowned theatre director Balwant Thakur's iconic children's play Aap Hamaare Hain Kaun has achieved yet another milestone by becoming the only children's production selected for the 26th National Theatre Festival, scheduled to be held in Amritsar from March 21 to 30, 2026.

The play will be staged at Virsa Vihar, Amritsar, on March 25. Originally written in 1994, this landmark production has earned the distinction of being India's longest-running children's play, and today stands on the threshold of creating world theatre history.

With over three decades of continuous relevance and more than 300 performances across the country, it represents an unprecedented achievement in the domain of

children's theatre—not only in India but on a global scale.

The play has travelled extensively across the length and breadth of the nation, captivating audiences in cities such as Delhi, Shimla, Chandigarh, Patiala, Srinagar, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Kurukshetra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Jabalpur, Indore, Bhopal, Mumbai, Goa, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Guwahati, Tezpur, Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur, Madurai, and Chennai. Its repeated staging on public demand is a rare distinction, underscoring its enduring connect with audiences across generations and geographies.

Recently showcased at one of the world's largest international theatre festivals in Delhi, the play continues to push boundaries, reaffirming its status as a pioneering and path-breaking work in children's theatre.

Sharing insights into the production, Balwant Thakur—also the founder of Natrang—emphasized that Aap Hamaare Hain Kaun marked a decisive shift in the philosophy and practice of theatre for children in India.

“At the heart of conventional children's theatre lies a fundamental contradiction,” Thakur observed. “Children are often asked to perform within frameworks designed for adults—frameworks that do not resonate with their imagination, emotional rhythms, or lived realities.”

Breaking away from these conventions, the production embraced a revolutionary, child-centric methodology. Instead of imposing rigid scripts and performance structures, it evolved through improvisation, play, movement, and collective imagination. Children were treated

not as passive performers but as active co-creators, shaping both the narrative and the theatrical language.

This innovative approach has not only redefined how theatre can be created with children but has also positioned the play as a benchmark for alternative theatre practices worldwide. Its sustained journey over three decades, combined with its artistic integrity and participatory process, places it among the rarest theatrical phenomena—one that is now poised to be recognized as a historic contribution to global children's theatre.

More than just a production, Aap Hamaare Hain Kaun has evolved into a living institution. Many children from its original 1994 ensemble have grown into accomplished theatre practitioners and actors, carrying forward its ethos into contemporary Indian theatre and cinema.



## NIELIT organises Mega Job Fair under Digital J&K Project of MeITY in Jammu

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**JAMMU:** The National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) Jammu on Wednesday organized a Mega Job Fair at Convention Centre, Canal Road here under the Digital J&K Project sponsored by Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY).

During the fair, more than 500 vacancies across technical and marketing roles were offered for youth through the participation of over 20 reputed companies from IT services, electronics manufacturing, and allied industries.

Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director & Officer Incharge, NIELIT Jammu, Rajneesh Raina highlighted the importance of the fair in bridging the



gap between industry requirements and skilled youth, while expressing gratitude to his dedicated team, trainers, and the hospitality and protocols department for their ground and background support in making the event a success.

Joint Director and Event Coordinator, Sarita Kaur in her address underlined the trust and enthusiasm

shown by companies and candidates in the fair.

Placement Officer, Kanchan Koul noted that the initiative ensured transparent and merit-based recruitment, while as CGC Coordinator, Gopal Sharan observed that the Career Guidance & Counselling tie-up with NIELIT will strengthen industry-academia collaboration, ensuring structured

guidance and placement support for students.

The event drew a large turnout of graduates, diploma holders, and skilled youth from across the Union Territory, reinforcing NIELIT Jammu's role in strengthening the skill ecosystem and aligning with the Government of India's vision of digital empowerment and inclusive growth.

## From Iran relief to global missions, India leads by action: Gaurav Gupta

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**JAMMU:** BJP spokesperson and Convenor International Affairs Gaurav Gupta on Thursday said that India has once again demonstrated its role as a global first responder, citing its recent humanitarian assistance to Iran amid the ongoing West Asia crisis.

Referring to the latest development, Gupta said Iran has expressed heartfelt gratitude to India and its “kind people” after receiving the first shipment of medical aid from New Delhi, a gesture that underscores India's commitment to stand with friendly nations during times of distress.

He noted that the aid reached Iran at a crucial time when conflict in the region has disrupted supply chains, strained healthcare systems, and created an urgent need for essential medicines and medical support.

Highlighting the



broader context, Gaurav Gupta said India's engagement with Iran has remained constructive and humanitarian, even amid geopolitical tensions affecting maritime routes, trade flows, and regional stability.

Shifting focus to economic resilience, Gupta welcomed the Centre's

Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) scheme, terming it a timely and decisive intervention to safeguard Indian exporters from the fallout of the West Asia crisis. He said the ₹497 crore initiative will help offset rising freight costs, insurance premiums, and logistical disruptions caused by tensions in the region.

Emphasizing India's consistent global outreach, Gupta said the country has repeatedly stepped forward during international crises. He cited the Vaccine Maitri initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic, under which India supplied vaccines and medicines to over 90 countries, particularly aiding developing nations.

He also highlighted India's large-scale evacuation operations, including Operation Ganga (Ukraine), Operation Kaveri (Sudan), and Oper-

ation Rahat (Yemen), where India not only rescued its own citizens but also assisted nationals of other countries.

Further, Gupta pointed out that India has extended humanitarian assistance across the world by providing food, medicines, and disaster relief to nations affected by earthquakes, floods, and other calamities, often in record time.

He said such actions reflect India's guiding principle of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, reinforcing its commitment to treat the world as one family.

According to Gaurav, whether it is supplying medicines to Iran, evacuating citizens from war zones, or protecting exporters through policy measures like the RELIEF scheme, India continues to lead with decisive action and global responsibility, strengthening its position as a reliable and trusted partner on the world stage.

## Raman asks govt to curb hoarding, act before crisis deepen

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Raman Suri has called upon the public to use gas and petroleum products judiciously amid emerging signs of an energy crisis triggered by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

He said that while there is no panic buying of petrol and diesel at present, a shortage of LPG (cooking gas) cylinders is increasingly being witnessed across Jammu Kashmir, particularly in the Jammu division. He noted that this situation stands in contrast to claims of regular supply by authorities.

“Despite the Union Government doing its best to ensure uninterrupted availability, the ground reality suggests otherwise. Long queues for LPG cylinders and reports of black marketing are surfacing from multiple locations,” Suri said

adding that this needs to be checked regularly and not occasionally or symbolically.

He further highlighted that although the administration has issued warnings against hoarding and constituted district-level monitoring teams, the effectiveness of these measures remains questionable.

“Raids have been conducted in certain areas, but hoarding continues. It appears that enforcement is largely limited to official meetings and procedural formalities,” he added. Describing the current situation as an early warning, Suri cautioned that the crisis could deepen if the international conflict persists.

He stressed the need for a proactive and strict approach by the administration to prevent escalation. Raman Suri urged the government to take stringent action against hoarders and black

marketers, especially those involved in illegal stockpiling of LPG cylinders. “There must be zero tolerance for those trying to exploit the situation for personal gain,” he asserted.

Appealing directly to citizens, Suri said, “This is a time for collective responsibility. People must avoid unnecessary consumption and wastage of LPG, petrol, diesel, and other petroleum products. Judicious use of resources will ensure that everyone gets their fair share.” He also called for intensified public awareness campaigns to promote responsible consumption and prevent panic-driven behaviour.

“Only through coordinated efforts between the government and the public can we successfully navigate this challenging period. Let us act responsibly and ensure that no household suffers due to artificial shortages,” Suri added.

## IGNOU Term-End Exams from 1st June; online form submission link thrown open

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**JAMMU:** The online link for submission of examination forms for June 2026 Term End Examinations of IGNOU has been thrown open for the eligible students. The examinations are tentatively going to commence from June 1, 2026 across the Country in one go and will conclude on July 15, 2026.

The online link for submission of examination forms is <https://ignou.samarth.edu.in/index.php/site/login> which can be accessed on the SAMARTH portal of IGNOU.

The last date for submission of exam forms has been fixed for April 10, 2026 without late fee. From April 11, 2026 onwards, a late fee component of Rs.1100/-



in addition to Rs.200/- per course will be charged.

Under the Jammu Region, 34 Examination Centres have been established including four Examination Centres in District Jail Ambhalla, District Jail Udhampur, District Jail Kathua and

Central Jail Kot Bhalwal Jammu exclusively for Jail inmates and also in one Examination Centre in Northern Command Udhampur exclusively for Army personnel.

Regional Examination Centres established in Jammu and District Jail Kathua and

in all the ten-district headquarters of Jammu province in order to ensure that no student has to travel long distances to take their respective exams. Regional Director Dr. Sandeep Gupta informed that out of the 34 examination centres established in the region, as many as 13 exam centres have been established in Jammu district only other than the two jail centres of Central Jail and District Jail Jammu.

This has been done keeping in mind the huge rush of examinees opting for Centres in Jammu city and outskirts in summers.

The exam centres established in Jammu district include prominent and prestigious Institutions like GGM Science College, Government SPMR College of

Commerce, Government Degree College, RS Pura, Government Degree College Paloura (Mishriwala), Government College for Women, Parade, Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Govt. M.A.M. College, Central Sanskrit University, Kot Bhalwal Campus, SKUAST Jammu, Chatha Campus, KC College of Education, Akhnour Road, and Govt. Degree College Akhnour.

Dr. Sandeep Gupta expressed confidence in conducting fair and smooth Term End Examinations across the region with the cooperation of administration, Higher Education Department, management and staff of RC, Centre Superintendents and other stakeholders and field functionaries in the region.

## Training on Phase-I House-listing, Housing Census conducted in Reasi

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**REASI:** A training programme for Phase-1 of the House-listing and Housing Census was organized in Reasi by Census officials.

The session aimed to thoroughly train Charge Officers, Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) and their Census Clerks on all aspects of the upcoming first phase of Census operations.

The training covered critical components of the House-listing and Housing Census, including preparation of the House-list, collection of data on housing conditions, household amenities, assets and infrastructure facilities. Participants were given hands-on guidance on the use of digital tools, mobile applications and the self-enumeration portal to ensure accurate, efficient and transparent data collection during the field operations.

The programme was

graced by the presence of district officers, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Chief Planning Officer (CPO), District Statistics & Evaluation Officer (DSEO) and Accounts Officer to the Deputy Commissioner (AO to DC). Census officials conducted detailed interactive sessions, practical demonstrations and addressed queries related to roles, responsibilities, timelines and quality control measures for Phase-1 operations. Emphasis was laid on achieving complete coverage, maintaining data integrity and adhering strictly to the prescribed schedules and guidelines. Officials present reiterated the vital importance of the House-listing phase as the foundation for the entire Census process and urged all trainees to discharge their duties with dedication, accuracy and full coordination with field staff.

## Shiv Sena demands Amarnath Yatra Registration Fee waiver

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**JAMMU:** Jammu & Kashmir unit of Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) demanded the immediate abolition of the registration fee for the holy Shri Amarnath Yatra 2026, scheduled to commence from July 1.

In this regard, party State President Manish Sahni submitted a formal memorandum to party MP Anil Desai in New Delhi.

Sahni urged the MP to raise this issue prominently in the upcoming session of Parliament and pressurize the Central Government and the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir (Chairman of the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board) to abolish the registration fee.

Sahni stated that the Shri Amarnath Yatra is a symbol of unwavering faith for millions of devotees of Lord Shiva, and turning it into a means of revenue



generation is unfortunate.

He pointed out that prior to 2019 and before the abrogation of Article 370, the registration fee was merely Rs 50, which has now been increased to Rs 150/250 (offline/online).

He further added that during the pilgrimage, devotees already bear expenses related to

transportation, accommodation, medical check-ups, and other arrangements, and therefore, this additional fee is unjustified and insensitive.

Sahni also informed that MP Anil Desai assured him that he would strongly raise the matter in Parliament and make every possible effort to safeguard the interests of the devotees.

## Youth need opportunities, not promises: AICC member

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**JAMMU:** AICC Member and Bharat Yatri, Shamsheer Chand, Thursday made a strong appeal to both the Union Government and the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference Government to urgently address the growing concerns of youth in Jammu and Kashmir by ensuring their meaningful engagement and holistic development.

In a statement issued here, Shamsheer Chand expressed serious concern over rising frustration among the youth due to unemployment, limited opportunities, and lack of constructive platforms to channel their energy.

He emphasized that the future of J&K lies in empowering its young population and providing them with avenues that foster confidence, discipline, and growth.

He stressed the urgent need to promote sports and games as a powerful tool for youth engagement, character building, and social cohesion.

“Sports not only keep the youth

physically fit but also instill values of teamwork, dedication, and resilience,” he said, adding that a focused approach towards sports development can play a key role in steering young minds away from negativity.

Shamsheer Chand called upon the government to develop modern sports infrastructure in both rural and urban areas of the Union Territory. He highlighted that while some progress has been made in select cities, vast rural pockets still lack basic playgrounds, training facilities, and coaching support.

He urged the authorities to bridge this gap by establishing stadiums, indoor sports complexes, and community-level playfields accessible to all sections of society. He further emphasized the importance of identifying and nurturing local talent at the grassroots level.

“There is immense untapped potential among our youth, especially in far-flung areas. With proper guidance and facilities, they can excel at national and international levels,” he added.