



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Hearath Festival

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Why is in news? Herath being celebrated with religious fervour in J&K

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, **Maha Shivratri, known as 'Hearath' in Kashmir**, is being celebrated with religious fervour and gaiety by Kashmiri Pandits who pay obeisance to "Watak Nath" and offer pooja archana to Lord Shiva on this auspicious occasion.

'Herath' is a **three-day festival for Kashmiri Pandits** in which the families come together for elaborate prayers and celebrations.

The festival has been a **symbol of communal harmony** for ages in the Kashmir Valley.

The second day of Hearath is known as '**Salaam**' when on this day, Muslims greet their Kashmiri Pandit brethren on this auspicious occasion.

The biggest gathering in Kashmir was held at Shri Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar where devotees since early morning hours were seen thronging the Temple to pay their obeisance to Lord Shiva.

The temple authorities at Ganpatyaar in Habba Kadal and Hanuman Temple at Amira Kadal in Srinagar also held special prayers throughout the day.

Hundreds of devotees also thronged Mata Kheer Bhawani temple at Tullamulla in district Ganderbal. The temples were decorated with different colours and flowers.

The Hearath festival is also being celebrated from the other parts in the Kashmir Valley.

The festival holds a colossal importance among the Kashmiri Pandit community, who **celebrate it to mark the wedding of Lord Shiva with Parvati**.

On this festival, the Kashmiri Pandits distribute soaked walnuts as a mark of respect to the Hindu deities which are subsequently given as "prasad" among the friends and relatives after worshipping the "Watak Nath" at homes for three days and three nights.

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