

THE MAY ISSUE

COVERING APRIL & MAY 2026

JammuBeat

THE PULSE OF THE CITY

THE MAY COVER STORY

Into the Hills

Beat the heat: a weekend map of the Chenab Valley cool-outs — Patnitop, Sanasar, Bhaderwah and beyond.

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- **Bahu Mela 2026** — a field guide to the grandest spring fair
 - **King of the season** — mango takes over the menus
 - **Admissions, decoded** — CUET and results without the panic
 - **Summer of Dogri sound** — the folk evenings that refuse the heat
-

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Half the city is packing for the hills; the other half is refreshing a results portal. This double-month issue is for both — April's fairs and green weekends, May's heat, mangoes and big decisions. One city, two months, one magazine.

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April & May, *in brief*

Eight things that actually happened while you were revising, travelling or hiding from the sun — each verified against the papers of record.

APRIL

₹156 cr

Tawi Riverfront opens its first stretch

The ₹156-crore riverfront's Phase 1 was inaugurated on Baisakhi — four promenade stretches for walking, jogging and cycling, plus a dedicated aarti ghat.

APRIL

< 5 hrs

A direct train to Srinagar, finally

The extended 20-coach Vande Bharat was flagged off from Jammu Tawi on April 30 — Srinagar now sits under five hours from the city.

APRIL

520

IIM Jammu sends off 520 graduates

The institute's ninth convocation at Jagti conferred degrees across its MBA, Executive MBA and IPM programmes.

MAY

3 weeks

CUET UG runs May 11–31

The computer-based window ran through the month, with the May 28 papers shifted around the rescheduled Eid holiday.

APRIL

89.8%

JKBOSE results land early

Class 10 and 12 Summer Zone results arrived on April 21 — 35,299 of 39,309 Class 12 candidates cleared, an 89.8% pass rate.

MAY

41.1°C

The mercury hits 41.1°C

A rain-free mid-May heatwave gripped the UT, with the MeT department advising against peak-afternoon exposure.

APRIL

57 days

Amarnath Yatra registration opens

Advance registration for the 57-day pilgrimage (July 3 – August 28) opened April 15 at ₹150 per pilgrim, online and at bank branches.

MAY

No. 13

JU climbs the national rankings

The University of Jammu placed 13th among India's state multidisciplinary universities — and 8th in the North Zone — in the THE WEEK–Hansa survey.

SECTION 01

News

Yatra season warms up, the Tawi fights for its water, and the city learns to live with 41°.

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NEWS · ENVIRONMENT

Saving the *Tawi*

From the Swachh Tawi Mahotsav at Baisakhi to year-round volunteer clean-ups and the University of Jammu's Save Tawi campaign, a look at the people trying to bring the city's river back from the brink.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 4 MIN READ



IMAGE · PAUL LA PORTE (USER:LAPORTECHICAGO) / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Ask anyone who grew up in Jammu and they will describe a Tawi that no longer exists — a river clean enough to swim in, fish from, drink at the edges of. The river that runs through the city today is a harder thing to love: shrunken in stretches, clogged with plastic, carrying the runoff of a growing city. But this spring, between civic festivals, campus campaigns and a few stubborn volunteers, the Tawi is getting more attention than it has in years. The question is whether attention turns into a river anyone can swim in again.

A festival to make the river visible

Around Baisakhi, the city tried something different: instead of only celebrating the harvest, it celebrated the river. The Jammu Municipal Corporation and the Smart City effort organised a Swachh Tawi Mahotsav at the 4th Tawi Bridge — a multi-day event built around cleanliness drives, awareness activities and cultural programming, timed to draw families to the riverbank during the festival season. The idea is simple and smart: you cannot make people care about a river they never look at, so bring the city to the water and let it remember what it is missing.

Events like this are easy to be cynical about — a clean-up that coincides with photo opportunities. But the honest counterpoint is that visibility matters. A river that disappears from the public imagination gets treated like a drain. A river that hosts a festival, however briefly, gets seen again — and seeing is the first step to protecting.

A river that disappears from the public imagination gets treated like a drain.

The campus that adopted a river

The more sustained pressure has come from the University of Jammu. Its environmental sciences department and green-campus volunteers, working with the municipal corporation, have run a Save Tawi campaign along the banks — clean-up drives, water-quality awareness, and a particular focus on the religious immersions that load the river with plastic and non-biodegradable waste during festival seasons. That last point is delicate and important: a lot of the Tawi's pollution is not industrial villainy but the cumulative residue of ordinary devotion, and addressing it means persuasion, not policing.

Researchers have been blunt about the numbers. Water testing along polluted stretches has repeatedly found pollution parameters well beyond safe limits. That is the unglamorous backdrop to every clean-up photo — a river under real chemical and biological strain, not just a littered bank.

The volunteers who never left

Long before any festival, small groups of Jammu residents were wading into the Tawi on weekends

to pull out what others threw in, often with little official support. Their work is the least photogenic and the most honest part of this story: no stage, no banner, just gloves, sacks and the grim arithmetic of a river that refills with trash faster than a handful of people can empty it. They will tell you the same thing every time — clean-ups treat the symptom; the cure is upstream, in how the city handles its sewage, its solid waste and its habits. What keeps them going is not optimism so much as stubbornness, the refusal to accept that a river their parents swam in is simply gone.

What a revived Tawi could be

It is worth being concrete about the prize, because abstract appeals to 'save the river' rarely move anyone. A genuinely cleaner Tawi is not a fantasy; it is a riverfront the city could actually use. Picture an evening walk along a bank that does not smell, a stretch of water clean enough that the migratory birds come back in number, ghats where people gather without wading through plastic. Cities that have turned filthy urban rivers around — and several in India are trying — did not perform a miracle; they fixed the sewage, managed the solid waste, and then, crucially, gave residents a reason to keep showing up. The Tawi has the geography for all of it. What it has lacked is sustained will.

→ The full story is at jammubeat.com/post/saving-the-tawi-jammu-river-revival

NEWS · THE CITY

Festival *Days*

Baisakhi, Ram Navami and the Bahu Mela all land in one packed stretch. A practical guide to navigating Jammu's busiest festival days — traffic, parking, crowds and staying out of trouble.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE · VARUN BAJAJ / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY 2.0)

April is the month Jammu collectively goes out. Baisakhi, Ram Navami and the long Bahu Mela stack up within a few weeks, and the city's temples, fairgrounds and markets fill to bursting. It is glorious — and, if you have not planned for it, exhausting. Consider this your survival guide to the busiest festival days of the year.

Plan your movement, not just your outing

The single biggest festival-day mistake is treating traffic as an afterthought. On peak days — especially around the Bahu Fort during the mela and near the major temples on festival mornings — roads clog early and stay clogged. The smart play is to go early or go late. Where you can, leave the car behind and take an auto or share-ride to the edge of the action, then walk in; parking near a packed mela is a battle you will usually lose. If you do drive, know your exit before you arrive.

Crowd sense and small kindnesses

Big religious gatherings are overwhelmingly safe and joyful, but density brings its own risks — mostly to your wallet and your

patience. Keep valuables in a zipped front pocket, keep a hand on your phone, and with little ones settle a meeting point in case anyone gets separated. Carry water; festival queues and spring sun are a tiring combination. And mind the small courtesies — let the elderly and families go ahead in the crush, and be patient with the volunteers managing impossible numbers.

Leave the place as good as you found it

Here is the civic bit, and it is the one that matters past your own convenience. Festival days generate enormous waste, and much of it ends up on the streets and, eventually, sliding toward the Tawi. Use the bins where they exist, carry a small bag for your own litter where they do not, and please do not immerse plastic or synthetic material in the river during rituals; collection points are increasingly set up for exactly this. Jammu's festival season is one of the genuinely lovely things about living here, and a little planning is all that stands between you and enjoying it. Go early, travel light, mind the crowd, clean up after yourself, and let the city show you its best, busiest face.

NEWS · YATRA

Peak Season at *Katra*

Summer sends pilgrim numbers to Mata Vaishno Devi soaring. A quick explainer on the peak yatra season, the routes on offer, and why it matters far beyond Katra.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE · MAHESHKUMARRATHI / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

If Jammu has a summer heartbeat, much of it is audible in **Katra**. As the season peaks, the town at the base of the trek to **Mata Vaishno Devi** swells with pilgrims, and the ripple of that movement runs through the whole region's economy — hotels, transport, eateries and thousands of seasonal jobs.

The scale is hard to overstate. The shrine draws roughly 95 lakh pilgrims a year, second in India only to Tirumala, with the vast majority making the journey on foot from Katra. Summer, alongside the wider holiday calendar, is when those numbers run hottest.

More ways up the mountain

The yatra is no longer a single hard climb. Pilgrims can choose the traditional route via Banganga, the gentler Tarakote Marg, battery-operated cars, ponies and palkis, or a short helicopter hop toward Sanjichhat. A ropeway now also links the main Bhavan to the Bhairo temple, trimming what was once a steep onward trek to a brief ride — small upgrades that, at this volume of visitors, add up to a very different experience.

Behind the numbers is a town that runs on the yatra — and a city that feels its rhythm every summer.

What it means for young Jammu

Peak season is not only a pilgrimage story; it is a livelihoods one. The rush sustains hospitality, transport, portering and retail work all along the corridor, much of it seasonal and much of it filled by young people earning through the summer months. Hotels staff up, taxi unions run flat out, shops in Katra restock daily, and the eateries along the route rarely see an empty table — the whole town effectively works a different shift when the pilgrims are at their peak.

For students on summer break, it is a live case study in how faith, tourism and a local economy move as one, and a reminder that the busiest few months on the mountain quietly underwrite a good part of the region's year. Whether you make the climb yourself or simply watch the buses roll toward Katra, the summer yatra is one of the clearest expressions of what this part of Jammu actually runs on.

NEWS · HEAT

Every Drop *Counts*

As temperatures cross 40 degrees, water conservation and heat-wave awareness move from posters to daily habit. What the season demands of the city and its young residents.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE · PAUL LA PORTE (USER:LAPORTECHICAGO) CROP... / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

When Jammu city sizzles past 40 degrees, the heat stops being a talking point and becomes a public-health reality. This year's hot spell has done what every Jammu summer eventually does: turned the abstract language of conservation into a question of survival — for people, for the **Tawi**, and for the green cover that keeps the plains liveable.

The civic response shows up in two familiar forms each May and June. One is heat-wave awareness — advisories to avoid the harsh midday sun, stay hydrated and check on the elderly, the very young and outdoor workers who cannot simply step into the shade. The other is the longer game of conservation: protecting the rivers and groundwater the city leans on hardest exactly when supply is tightest.

41.1°C

JAMMU'S MID-MAY PEAK

A rain-free heatwave week across the UT in mid-May, per the MeT department.

The Tawi, and the volunteers who watch it

No conversation about water here skips the Tawi. The river is both lifeline and warning sign, and it has drawn a small but persistent community of volunteers working to clean and protect it. Their message lands harder in a heat-wave month: a river

treated as a drain in good times has nothing left to give in a bad one.

Plant now, shade later

The season's other reflex is the spade. Plantation drives — including efforts along the Tawi riverfront and through the urban forestry network — recur every year, often under campaigns that frame each sapling as a personal act rather than a bureaucratic one. The logic is simple and slow: the tree planted in a brutal June is the shade somebody sits under a decade from now.

You cannot air-condition a city. You can only shade it, conserve for it, and look out for the people the heat hits hardest.

What young Jammu can actually do

For students and young professionals, the to-do list is unglamorous but real. Fix the dripping tap and the running overflow. Carry a reusable bottle instead of buying plastic. Check on a neighbour during the worst afternoon hours. Show up for one plantation drive and actually water what you plant. None of it makes headlines. All of it adds up.

The heat will break, as it always does. But the habits formed in the hardest weeks — using less, wasting less, watching out for each other — are what decide how rough the next summer feels. In a city this exposed to the sun, every drop genuinely does count.

NEWS · SPORT

A Big Year for *Local Sport*

With a fresh sports calendar under review and the MA Stadium still the heart of the action, young athletes in Jammu have more to play for this season. A quick look at the field.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE · UNSPLASH

If you are a young athlete in Jammu, the next year is shaping up to be a good one to be serious. With a new Sports Calendar for 2026–27 under review and the city's sporting infrastructure getting fresh attention, the structures that turn weekend players into competitive ones are slowly improving.

The home ground

The centre of organised sport in Jammu remains the Maulana Azad Stadium — the MA Stadium — perched on the bank of the Tawi near Jewel Chowk. Established in the 1960s with a capacity in the tens of thousands, it is one of the home venues for the J&K cricket team and a genuine multi-sport hub, hosting cricket, swimming, kabaddi, basketball and badminton. Its value is not just its size but its accessibility: it is where school teams play, where district trials happen, and where a teenager with talent and no connections can still get spotted.

Why the calendar matters

A sports calendar sounds like bureaucracy, but for athletes it is everything — the difference between training for nothing and

training for a fixture. The 2026–27 review, taken up at the level of the J&K youth and sports administration, signals a push to expand sporting opportunities across the region, which means more events for more young players to aim at. For families weighing whether to let a child take sport seriously, that turns 'playing' into a pathway rather than a hobby that goes nowhere.

How to get in the game

If you want to be part of this, do not wait to be discovered. **Find your sport's local association** and learn its trial and tournament schedule — the calendar only helps athletes who know it exists. **Use the public grounds;** the MA Stadium and the city's other facilities are there to be used, not admired from the stands. And **turn up to district-level events** even if you do not expect to win, because the experience of competing is itself the training that separates the players who progress. Jammu has never lacked sporting talent — only the structures to catch it. If you have got game, this is a season to show it.

SECTION 02

Culture

Pink halls, birch-bark books and the folk evenings keeping Dogri loud through the heat.

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CULTURE · HERITAGE

Treasures in the *Pink Hall*

Inside Mubarak Mandi's restored Pink Hall sits one of north India's great miniature collections. A guide to the Dogra Art Museum — and the heritage circuit of galleries around it.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 3 MIN READ

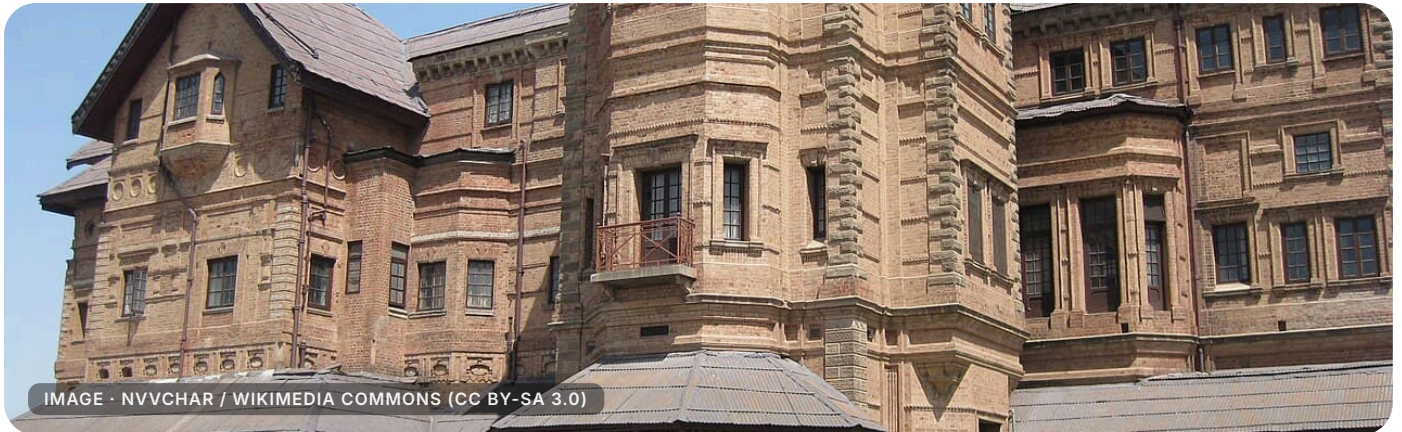


IMAGE · NVVCHAR / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

Most people in Jammu have driven past Mubarak Mandi a hundred times. Far fewer have walked into the Pink Hall at its heart, where the Dogra Art Museum quietly holds one of the finest collections of miniature painting in this part of India. It is, frankly, one of the city's most underrated afternoons — and as the old palace complex slowly gets restored, there has never been a better time to actually go in.

What is inside

The museum's collection runs to thousands of objects, but its crown jewels are its paintings. The Basohli and Pahari miniatures — including the celebrated Rasmanjari series — are the kind of work that art historians travel for: jewel-bright, intensely detailed, and utterly distinct to this region's schools. Alongside them sit rare illustrated manuscripts, among them beautifully rendered Persian works, plus arms, coins, textiles and objects from the Dogra court. It is, in effect, the visual memory of a whole kingdom, gathered under one roof.

What makes it special is not just the quality but the locality. These are not borrowed treasures from a national collection — they are this region's own art, made here, kept here, telling the story of the people who became the city around you. Standing in front of a Basohli miniature in Jammu hits differently than seeing one in a metro gallery.

The wider heritage circuit

The Dogra Art Museum is best treated as one stop on a short heritage circuit. Right beside it, the Kala Kendra cultural centre

runs galleries, an auditorium and open spaces that regularly host exhibitions and workshops — worth checking before you go, in case there is something on. Across the city, Amar Mahal is the other essential: the 19th-century palace-turned-museum famous for its golden throne, its miniatures and a library of tens of thousands of books, all set above the Tawi with one of the best views in Jammu.

Done together over a day, these add up to a genuine cultural outing — the kind of thing that makes you feel less like you live in a transit town and more like you live in a city with a long, layered past.

How to make the visit work

A few practical notes. **Check timings and any closures** before you set out, since heritage venues keep their own hours and the Mubarak Mandi complex is an ongoing restoration site. **Go slow** — miniatures reward close looking, so this is not a place to rush through for a reel. And **bring someone curious**; these collections are far more fun explored with a friend who will argue with you about which painting is the best.

There is a quiet civic point here too: museums survive on footfall and attention, and a collection this good deserves a city that actually visits it. Every young person who walks into the Pink Hall is a small vote for keeping Jammu's heritage funded, staffed and open. So spend an afternoon among the miniatures — the treasures have been waiting there the whole time.

CULTURE · EXHIBITIONS

Birch Bark & *Old Coins*

Rare manuscripts, antique utensils and centuries-old paintings turn up at the city's exhibition halls more often than you think. A guide to seeing Jammu's past up close.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

Most cities keep their history behind glass in one building and forget about it. Jammu, to its credit, keeps bringing the past out into the open — staging heritage exhibitions where you can stand a foot away from objects that are older than the country itself. For anyone who thinks museums are dull, these shows are a quiet argument to the contrary.

What actually turns up

The range can be genuinely startling. Heritage exhibitions mounted at venues like **Abhinav Theatre**, often by the Kala Kendra Society, have gathered hundreds of artefacts at once — works in the tradition of the Kashmir school of painting, ancient copper utensils, manuscripts inscribed on **birch bark**, and coins spanning different historical periods. Standing in front of a text hand-copied centuries ago does something a textbook photograph never will.

Beyond the temporary shows, the city's standing collections at the **Dogra Art Museum** and **Amar Mahal** hold miniature paintings, manuscripts and royal-era objects that anchor the Dogra story in things you can actually see.

Not just for historians

The mistake is assuming these spaces are for scholars. For a design student, a miniature painting is a colour-and-composition lesson. For a young writer, a birch-bark manuscript is a prompt. For anyone raised on screens, an hour among physical, hand-

made objects is a rare reset — slow, tactile and completely offline.

A photograph of an old coin is information. Standing in front of the real thing is a different kind of knowing.

How to see them well

A few small habits make a heritage show land harder. Go early or late to dodge the crowds and the heat. Read the labels — the context is often more astonishing than the object. Pick one or two pieces to really sit with rather than speed-walking the whole hall. And bring a friend; nothing makes history stick like arguing about it on the steps afterwards.

Keep an eye out

The catch is timing. The best heritage exhibitions are temporary and not always loudly advertised, so they reward people who pay attention to venue notices and cultural updates. The standing museums, meanwhile, are there all summer — air-conditioned, affordable, and almost always emptier than they deserve to be. There is also something quietly grounding about it in a fast-moving city: a reminder that the place you live in has deep roots, and that the people who came before left behind objects worth crossing town to see. Either way, the city's past is on display far more often than most residents realise. The only thing missing is you, walking in to look.

CULTURE · MUSIC

Summer of *Dogri Sound*

Cultural evenings, folk troupes and Sufi voices keep Jammu's stages busy through the heat. A look at the institutions and artists carrying the Dogra soundscape forward.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 5 MIN READ

IMAGE · UNSPLASH

Walk past Abhinav Theatre on a still summer evening and, often enough, you will hear it before you see it — the thump of a dhol, the long ache of a Sufi line, a chorus of Dogri voices rolling out over the steps. While much of the city retreats indoors against the heat, its cultural calendar quietly refuses to go on holiday. Somewhere in the air-cooled dark of an auditorium, a tradition is being kept alive one performance at a time.

Much of that continuity runs through one institution. The **Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL)**, working with university partners and regional cultural councils, keeps a steady stream of music and dance evenings on the boards — and increasingly pairs Dogri traditions with folk forms from across the country. It is unglamorous, persistent work, and it is the reason a young person in Jammu can still stumble into a live folk evening on an ordinary week.

The venues that hold the scene together

Two addresses do a lot of the heavy lifting. **Abhinav Theatre** is the city's workhorse auditorium, hosting everything from heritage exhibitions to full cultural evenings; if something is happening on a Jammu stage, there is a good chance it is happening here. **Kala Kendra**, the arts complex established by the culture department and operational since the mid-2000s, runs visual and performing-arts programming through the year — an exhibition one week, a recital the next, a workshop the one after.

A folk form without a venue is a rehearsal that never becomes a performance.

Between them, these venues give local artists what every scene needs to survive: a reliable stage and an audience that knows where to find it. A folk form without a venue is a rehearsal that never becomes a performance. The quiet value of these halls is that they turn private practice into public culture, again and again, season after season.

Folk that travels and folk that returns

One of the healthier recent habits has been mixing the local with the national. Programmes built around **Punjabi and Dogri folk traditions** have brought together troupes and singers from the region, while broader festivals have shared the stage between Dogri folk dancers and performers from states as far apart as Manipur, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan. The effect cuts both ways: young audiences here see how their own tradition sits inside a national tapestry, and visiting artists carry a little of the Dogra sound home with them.

That exchange matters more than it might seem. A tradition that only ever performs to itself slowly

turns inward and fades; one that travels, hosts and trades with others stays curious and alive. When a Dogri troupe shares an evening with dancers from the far northeast, both forms come away a little richer, and the audience leaves with a wider map of the country than it walked in with.

The voices at the centre

Sufi and folk voices remain the emotional core of these evenings. When a singer in that lineage takes the mic, the temperature in the hall seems to drop a few degrees — the chatter stops, phones go down, and for a few minutes a few hundred strangers are listening to exactly the same thing. It is proof, every time, that a good live baithak still works better than any air conditioner.

What gives the Dogra soundscape its staying power is range. There are the celebratory folk numbers built for weddings and harvests, the devotional and Sufi strains that turn an auditorium contemplative, and the everyday songs in Dogri that carry the texture of ordinary life in this region. Heard together across an evening, they make the case that this is not a single quaint genre to be preserved, but a living language of music with something to say in every mood.

A folk tradition does not survive in a museum case. It survives because someone keeps singing it, and someone keeps showing up to listen.

→ The full story is at jammubeat.com/post/summer-of-dogri-sound-folk-evenings

SECTION 03

Food & Drink

Patio season, proper thalis and the month the mango takes over everything.

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FOOD & DRINK • EATING LOCAL

The Proper *Dogri Thali*

As regional cuisine has a moment, a fresh look at where to find honest Dogra cooking in Jammu — and why the humble local thali deserves the same hype as the city's pizzerias.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 3 MIN READ



Walk down Residency Road or through Gandhi Nagar on a weekend evening and you would be forgiven for thinking Jammu eats nothing but pizza, momos and fried chicken. The new and the imported get the bright signboards and the long queues. Meanwhile, some of the best food in the city — the dishes that actually belong to this place — sits quietly on home tables and at a handful of unglamorous spots that locals guard like a secret. This spring, with regional cuisine having a genuine moment across India, it is worth going looking for a proper Dogri thali.

What makes Dogra food its own thing

Dogra cooking is the food of the Jammu hills and plains, and it tastes like its geography — hearty, warming, built around what grows and keeps in this region. Think rajma cooked the way only the local variety allows, the legendary kaladi (the dense local cheese that crisps into something glorious in a pan), auria, ambal, the tang of regional dals, and slow-simmered meat dishes that turn a wedding feast into an event. It leans rich and rooted rather than fiery.

The problem is that this food has historically lived at home and at functions, not on restaurant menus — the old assumption being that nobody would pay to eat what their grandmother made better. That assumption is finally cracking.

The slow rise of regional menus

A small but growing number of places in Jammu now put local food front and centre — not as a token 'Dogri special' buried on

page four, but as the main event. Some are no-frills eateries that have always cooked this way and are only now being discovered by a younger crowd looking for authenticity over aesthetics. Others are newer, more deliberate ventures betting that diners want a taste of place they cannot get from a global chain. Kaladi-kulcha carts remain the easiest entry point and the great equaliser: cheap, fast, available across the city, and a genuinely local thing to eat. From there, the search gets more rewarding the more you ask around — the best Dogri meals are still found by word of mouth.

How to eat well this season

A few pointers for the curious. **Ask the locals**, not the apps — the most authentic spots often have the weakest online presence. **Go hungry and go early** for thalis, since the best regional places cook in limited batches and the good stuff runs out. And **treat kaladi as a gateway**, not a destination; if you love it (you will), let it lead you deeper into the cuisine.

There is a quiet case to be made that supporting local food is its own kind of preservation. Every time a young diner chooses the Dogri thali over the default pizza, a cook somewhere gets a reason to keep making it, and a recipe gets one more generation of life. The local cuisine will only survive if enough of us actually order it. This season, make room for it on the table.

FOOD & DRINK • CAFES

Terrace *Weather*

The weather has finally turned terrace-friendly. A roundup of how Jammu's cafe scene — clustered around Trikuta Nagar and Gandhi Nagar — comes alive when the chairs move outside.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 3 MIN READ



There is a specific moment, somewhere in early April, when Jammu's cafes drag their chairs back onto the pavement and the city remembers it likes sitting outside. After a winter of huddling indoors over hot coffee, the terrace season returns — and with it the whole ritual of finding a table in the open, ordering something cold, and letting an afternoon disappear.

Where the scene actually lives

If you are new to the city or just new to going out in it, the centre of gravity is Trikuta Nagar. Over the last few years the neighbourhood has quietly turned into the city's cafe district, with a steady cluster of places that students and young professionals treat as living rooms — somewhere between a study spot, a date venue and a hangout. Gandhi Nagar holds its own too, with a denser, more commercial spread of cafes and casual restaurants. What has changed is not just the number of cafes but their ambition: the better spots now think hard about seating, lighting and an outdoor section that works, because they know that in spring, the table in the open air is the one everyone fights for.

Why spring is the cafe season

The appeal is partly just the weather. For a few precious weeks, the temperature sits in that perfect band where a shaded outdoor table is the best seat in the house — warm enough to linger, cool enough that your iced coffee stays iced. It is the only stretch of

the year when the city's cafe culture can fully move outside before the summer heat drives everyone back indoors.

It is also about what a cafe means here now. For a generation of young people in Jammu, the neighbourhood cafe has become the default third place — not home, not college or work, but the in-between where you actually meet people. Group projects get planned over cold coffee, first dates happen at corner tables, and friends who have not met in months pick a cafe precisely because it asks nothing of them.

How to do it right this season

Go in the golden hours — late afternoon into early evening is when the outdoor tables are most pleasant and the light is kindest for the inevitable photos. **Explore past your usual** — the fun of a cluster like Trikuta Nagar is that there is always one more place you have not tried. And **tip the staff** who carry trays up and down for your three-hour table; the cafe economy here runs on thin margins and a lot of goodwill.

One gentle, very Jammu request: these cafes thrive because young people fill them, but they survive because young people also spend. Nursing a single coffee for four hours is a city-wide rite of passage, but if you can, order the second round — the terrace you love is only there next spring if enough people keep it in business this one. So clear an afternoon, text the group, and claim a table outside while the weather lets you. The chairs are back on the pavement. The season is short. Sit in it.

FOOD & DRINK · MANGO

King of the *Season*

Mango lassi, kulfi, shrikhand and a hundred specials in between: when the fruit arrives, the city's kitchens reorganise around it. A taste of Jammu's summer plate.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 3 MIN READ



IMAGE · UNSPLASH

There is a smell that announces summer in Jammu more reliably than any thermometer — ripe mango, stacked in fragrant pyramids from **Raghunath Bazaar** to the smallest neighbourhood fruit cart. When the king of fruits arrives, the city does not just eat it. It reorganises whole menus around it.

From cart to kitchen

The fruit's genius is its range. The same mango becomes a roadside glass of lassi, a thick milkshake, a scoop of kulfi, a bowl of shrikhand, or simply a plate of cold slices eaten over a newspaper. Restaurants and dessert counters lean into all of it through the season, because nothing else moves a summer menu the way mango does.

Some of this is pure heritage. Long before commercial ice cream, this part of India beat the heat with mango-based sweets and dense, slow-frozen kulfi sold by handcart vendors. The current crop of cafés and restaurants is, in many ways, just plugging that old instinct into a new dining room.

Order the mango lassi, and you will know the rest of the menu before it arrives.

What to actually order

- **Mango lassi:** the benchmark. If a kitchen gets this thick, cold and not-too-sweet, it can be trusted with everything else.

- **Mango kulfi:** the traditional move — denser and slower than soft-serve, and far harder to fake.
- **Mango shrikhand:** the dinner-party flex, rich and tangy, best after a heavy meal.
- **The seasonal special:** whatever the chef has invented this week, because mango season is when kitchens get playful.

You can judge a Jammu summer kitchen on one dish. Order the mango lassi, and you will know the rest of the menu before it arrives.

A season worth chasing

The bittersweet truth about mango is that it does not last. The pyramids in the bazaar shrink as quickly as they appeared, and the specials vanish with them. That is exactly why the city throws itself at the fruit so completely while it can — every glass, scoop and slice is a small race against the calendar.

So treat the next few weeks as a tasting tour. Hit the bazaar carts for the cheap, honest version and the cafés for the inventive one. Compare lassis across three neighbourhoods. Argue about the best kulfi with someone who disagrees. Best of all, much of this is cheap joy — a glass of lassi from a bazaar cart costs next to nothing and tastes like the whole season in one gulp. The heat will pass, the mangoes will go, and the only regret worth having is the one you can still avoid: not eating enough of it while it lasted.

SECTION 04

Travel & Weekends

When the plains sizzle, Jammu climbs. Your map to the cool-outs — and the five weekends worth stealing.

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TRAVEL & WEEKENDS · COVER STORY

Into the *Hills*

As Jammu city bakes past 40 degrees, the hill retreats of Patnitop, Sanasar, Bhaderwah and Kishtwar fill up fast. Here is how to plan a smart, crowd-aware escape.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL · 5 MIN READ

IMAGE · SAROJ KUMAR FROM BANGALORE, INDIA / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY 2.0)

There is a moment every May when the Tawi shimmers like a heat mirage and even the shade under a banyan in Gole Market stops helping. That is your cue. Within a few hours of the city, a string of hill retreats along the Chenab Valley flips the thermometer by fifteen degrees or more, and for Jammu's students, weekend commuters and young families, the great summer migration begins.

15°+

COOLER, A FEW HOURS UP

When the plains cross 40°C, the hill retreats along the Chenab flip the thermometer by fifteen degrees or more.

This is not a secret anymore. When the plains sizzle past 40 degrees, places like **Patnitop, Nathatop, Sanasar, Bhaderwah and Kishtwar** see a genuine rush of visitors, and that popularity is exactly why a little planning goes a long way. The difference between a trip you treasure and one you survive comes down to a handful of small, early decisions. Below is a no-nonsense map for getting up, settling in and coming back without losing a day to traffic on the ghat road.

Patnitop and Sanasar: the easy first trip

If this is your first hill weekend of the season, start here. Patnitop sits on the National Highway and is the most forgiving option for a quick reset — deodar walks, a meadow to sprawl on, paragliding when conditions are kind. It is close enough that you can leave after a late breakfast and be among the pines by afternoon, which makes it the natural choice for a one-night trip or even a long day out when work will not let you take a Monday.

A short drive further, **Sanasar** opens into a green bowl that locals fondly compare to a smaller Gulmarg. In peak summer spells, visitors throng it in their thousands precisely to breathe cooler air, stretch out on the grass and let the children run themselves tired. The meadow, the small lake and the gentle ridge walks make it forgiving for groups of mixed ages and energy levels.

Half the joy is doing very little, very slowly, with a glass of cold something in hand and the plains, for once, far below.

The trade-off, of course, is crowds. The same accessibility that makes Patnitop and Sanasar easy also makes them busy, so timing is everything. Aim to clear Udhampur early so you reach the meadows before the day-trippers, treat the open green at Sanasar as a shared picnic spot rather than a private one, and carry layers — mornings and evenings turn genuinely cool even when the plains are at their worst. A light jacket you never wear is a far smaller regret than the shivering you do without one.

Bhaderwah and Kishtwar: for the slower travellers

If you have two nights and a tolerance for longer drives, push deeper into the valley. **Bhaderwah** — affectionately called 'Chhota Kashmir' — rewards you with pine slopes, the cool rush of the Neeru stream and, increasingly, fields of lavender that have turned the area into a fragrance-and-tourism story all its own. It is the kind of town where the pace drops the moment you arrive: you walk more, scroll less, and measure the day by meals and light rather than by a packed itinerary.

Kishtwar, higher and quieter still, is the gateway to high meadows and a sapphire-and-saffron heritage that feels a world away from any city. This is country for travellers who genuinely want to slow down, not those chasing a checklist of viewpoints. The reward for the longer haul is a stillness the easier hill stations simply cannot offer once the season's crowds arrive.

These are not one-tank-of-petrol towns. Build in buffer time for the mountain roads, check the weather the night before, and never plan a tight return on a Sunday evening when the whole valley is heading home at once. A landslide warning or an afternoon downpour can rearrange your plans without asking, so keep the schedule flexible and your expectations generous.

Pack like a local, travel like a guest

Three things separate a smooth trip from a sweaty one. First, hydration: carry your own water and a reusable bottle, because hill-station plastic litter has become a visible, ugly problem and the mountains deserve better. Second, cash and a full tank — network coverage and fuel both thin out as you climb, and the petrol pump you assumed would be open often is not. Third, humility: these are small, fragile mountain communities, and the meadows that cool you down stay beautiful only if everyone carries their trash back down with them.

A short kit covers most situations. Layers for the cold snap after sunset; sturdy shoes for the inevitable unplanned walk; a basic medicine pouch; a power bank for when there is no socket; and snacks, because mountain meal timings rarely match a city appetite. Pack light otherwise — the more you haul up, the more you resent it on the way back.

The hills are generous in summer, but they are not infinite. Go early, tread light, and leave the meadow exactly as you found it.

Be a responsible escapee

It is worth saying plainly: the rush that makes these places feel alive is also what threatens them. Overflowing bins, choked parking and worn-out trails are the price of popularity, and every visitor either adds to that or eases it. The good traveller spends locally — a homestay, a small dhaba, a village guide — so the season's money stays in the hills it comes for. Refusing single-use plastic and keeping noise down are not grand gestures; they are simply the rent you pay for the view.

The realistic weekend

For most readers, the sweet spot is a Saturday-morning start, one night up top, and a mid-afternoon Sunday return that dodges the evening jam. Keep the itinerary loose — half the joy of a Chenab Valley escape is doing very little, very slowly, with a glass of cold something in hand and the plains, for once, far below. The heat down in the city will still be waiting when you get back. But a day and a night in cooler air, surrounded by deodar and birdsong, has a way of resetting the whole week. Pick your hill, plan it early, and go.

TRAVEL & WEEKENDS · SHORT TRIPS

Five Spring *Weekends*

April is the sweet spot — warm enough to leave the jacket, cool enough in the hills to need it. A practical roundup of short trips from Jammu, from Patnitop's meadows to Bhaderwah's valleys.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 4 MIN READ



IMAGE · GUPTAELE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

There is a short, perfect window every year when Jammu's weather is generous to everyone. The plains have shaken off the winter chill but not yet turned into the summer furnace, the hill stations have lost their snow but kept their cool, and the whole region seems to exhale into green. April is that window, and if you are not planning at least one weekend escape, you are wasting it. Here is a roundup of short trips you can pull off in a day or two, sorted by how far you are willing to drive.

Close and easy: Patnitop and Sanasar

Patnitop remains the default for a reason. Roughly a half-day's drive up the national highway, it offers cedar forests, open meadows and that first cold-air moment when you step out of the car and realise you needed the jacket after all. In spring the slopes are at their most photogenic, and the air carries the smell of pine that no city candle ever quite gets right. It is busy on weekends, so go with realistic expectations about crowds at the main viewpoints.

April is that window, and if you are not planning at least one weekend escape, you are wasting it.

Just beyond Patnitop, Sanasar is the quieter sibling — a bowl-shaped meadow ringed by conifers that has become the region's go-to for paragliding and gentler walking. Even if you never

leave the ground, the drive between the two is the kind of road trip that justifies the whole weekend. Pack layers; mountain weather in April can swing from sunny to suddenly grey within an hour.

Worth the longer drive: Bhaderwah

If you have a full two days, point the car toward Bhaderwah. Often called 'Mini Kashmir,' this valley town rewards the longer journey with alpine meadows, the Neeru stream, apple and walnut orchards, and a slower pace that feels a world away from the city. Spring is also festival season here: Bhaderwah's Baisakhi celebrations are among the most colourful in the Jammu region, complete with local fairs, Kud dance performances and proper Dogra hill cooking. Time your trip to mid-April and you may catch the celebrations in full swing.

Bhaderwah suits the traveller who wants to actually unwind rather than tick off viewpoints. Base yourself in town, take day walks to nearby meadows, eat where the locals eat, and let the valley set the tempo.

Spiritual and scenic: the Katra base

Spring is peak season for the Vaishno Devi yatra, and even if the shrine is not your destination, Katra makes a fine weekend base. The town at the foot of the Trikuta hills has grown into a comfortable launchpad — plenty of places to stay and eat — and the surrounding ridges are at their greenest now. Pilgrims will find the 13-km trek busier but the weather kinder than the summer crush. Non-pilgrims can use Katra as a scenic overnight stop and explore the foothills around it.

If you only have a day

Not every escape needs an overnight bag. For a single day out of Jammu, the city's own edges deliver more than people expect. Bahu Fort and its terraced gardens make for a gentle morning, especially with the spring blooms in, and the river views are at their best before the summer haze settles in. A short run toward Akhnour, where the Chenab opens up wide and slow, rewards you with riverside scenery and a change of pace barely an hour from the city. Even a half-day at one of the orchard belts or a roadside dhaba in the lower hills counts as a reset — proof that you do not need leave from work to feel like you left.

The trick with day trips is to treat them seriously rather than as consolation prizes. Leave at first light, pack a real breakfast, pick one place and actually arrive at it instead of chasing three. The best single-day outings from Jammu are the unhurried ones.

How to plan it without ruining it

A few hard-won tips for spring weekends out of Jammu. **Leave early.** The highway toward the hills gets heavy by mid-morning on Saturdays, and an early start can save you hours and a lot of frustration. **Book ahead** for any April weekend — this is the busiest leisure season, and the good rooms in Patnitop, Sanasar and Bhaderwah go fast. **Carry layers and cash;** hill towns can be cold after sunset and patchy on card payments and signal.

→ The full story is at jammubeat.com/post/five-spring-weekends-from-jammu-hills-turn-green

SECTION 05

Education

CUET, merit lists and the big-decision season — decoded without the panic.

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EDUCATION · CUET

Admissions, *Decoded*

As college admissions heat up across Jammu, a clear-eyed guide to CUET, application timelines and keeping your sanity through the most stressful spring of your school life.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE · UNSPLASH

Every spring, a particular kind of dread settles over Jammu's school-leavers and their families: admission season. Forms, entrance exams, cut-offs, conflicting advice from every uncle in the family — it can feel less like a process and more like a maze designed to confuse you. Take a breath. Here is the clear version.

CUET is the front door now

The single biggest thing to understand is that entrance to most major universities here runs through the Common University Entrance Test. Undergraduate admissions at the University of Jammu and across Cluster University's constituent colleges are primarily driven by CUET-UG scores, with postgraduate entry going through CUET-PG. In practice, your board marks alone no longer decide where you land — a national-level test does a lot of the sorting, and the students who do well are the ones who treat it as seriously as their boards.

Build a calendar before you build a panic

Most admission-season stress comes from missing dates, not from missing marks. The fix is boring and effective: make a

calendar. Note the registration windows, exam dates and counselling timelines for every institution you are considering, and check the official websites directly rather than relying on WhatsApp forwards. Keep your documents ready in one folder — marksheets, certificates, ID, photographs — because portals have a way of demanding exactly the one you cannot find at 11 p.m. on the deadline.

Choose with your head, not the herd

A closing word on the hardest part: deciding. It is easy to chase whatever course your friends are taking or whatever sounds prestigious. Resist. Pick a path you can see yourself actually working in, and talk to current students and recent graduates rather than relatives whose information is a decade out of date. The 'best' college is the one that is best for *you*. Admission season feels enormous because, in the moment, it feels like the rest of your life — but it is one important decision among many, and plenty of people thrive after a messy start. Do the work, keep the calendar, choose with your head, and then let yourself breathe.

EDUCATION · THE NEXT STEP

Results *Season*

Merit lists, seat allotments and counselling deadlines arrive together. A calm, practical guide for Jammu students and parents navigating the college-admission rush.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE · UNSPLASH

For thousands of Jammu families, late May and June are not a holiday at all — they are the most stressful weeks of the academic year. Results land, merit lists go up, seat-allotment rounds open, and counselling deadlines stack on top of each other. The trick to surviving it is not working harder; it is staying organised and keeping your nerve.

Know who publishes what

Half the panic comes from not knowing where to look. Different bodies handle different streams: state entrance and admission portals release provisional merit lists and seat allotments for professional and degree courses, while individual universities run their own counselling and document verification. **Cluster University of Jammu**, for instance, publishes its schedules, merit lists and instructions on its admissions portal — and the single best habit you can build is checking the official source regularly rather than relying on forwarded screenshots.

The deadlines that actually bite

Seat allotment is where dreams are won and lost on a calendar. Once a round is declared, there are usually tight windows to pay the fee and physically report for verification — miss them and the seat can lapse, no matter how good your rank. Write every date

on a wall calendar, keep your documents scanned and in one folder, and never assume an extension is coming.

The student who keeps a single folder of documents and a single list of deadlines sleeps a lot better than the one chasing screenshots at midnight.

Counselling that goes beyond a cut-off

The number on the merit list is not the only number that matters. This is the season to ask harder questions — about which course actually suits you, what it leads to, and whether the 'safe' choice and the 'exciting' choice can be the same thing. Career counselling, whether through a college cell, a teacher you trust or a structured session, is most useful right now, before forms are locked rather than after.

A word for parents

The pressure in admission season is shared, and so is the responsibility to keep it healthy. A result is information, not a verdict on a child's worth. The families that come through these weeks best are the ones that treat the process as a project to manage together — deadlines tracked, options weighed calmly, and the long view kept firmly in sight. The forms will get filled. The seat will get taken. And the panic, like the heat, will pass.

SECTION 06

Events

*Bahu Mela's grand spring, lavender building on the horizon
and floodlit nights at MA Stadium.*

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EVENTS · BAHU MELA 2026

The Grandest *Spring Fair*

Chaitra Navratri turns Bahu Fort into a sea of colour, bells and food stalls. Here is how to do the Bahu Mela right — timings, the climb, the rituals and the snacks worth queuing for.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL · 4 MIN READ

IMAGE · NVVCHAR / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

For two weeks every spring, the old ramparts above the Tawi stop being a quiet picnic spot and become the loudest, brightest, most crowded place in Jammu. The Bahu Mela, held through Chaitra Navratri at the Mahakali (Bawey Wali Mata) temple inside Bahu Fort, is one of the city's largest fairs — part pilgrimage, part funfair, part family reunion. If you have only ever driven past the fort, this is the fortnight to actually climb it.

2 weeks

OF CHAITRA NAVRATRI

The spring mela runs at the Mahakali (Bawey Wali Mata) shrine inside Bahu Fort — pilgrimage, funfair and family reunion at once.

What the mela actually is

The fair is anchored to Chaitra Navratri, the spring nine-night festival that, in 2026, runs through the second half of March into April. Devotees come to the shrine of Mahakali, the presiding deity of the fort, to offer the first *navratra* prayers of the Hindu new year. Around that core of ritual, a whole temporary town springs up: garland sellers, prasad counters, toy stalls, balloon-wallahs and food carts that line the approach road and spill into the gardens below. Locals will tell you Bahu has two melas a year, but the Chaitra one — timed with the harvest and the warming weather — is the bigger draw.

The crowd is genuinely all-ages and all-Jammu. You will see grandmothers in their best *suthan* being helped up the steps, college groups treating it as a day out, and toddlers on shoulders clutching plastic windmills. That mix is the whole point. The Bahu Mela is where the city's religious calendar and its social calendar briefly become the same thing.

You are not at a one-off festival; you are at something your grandparents climbed to as children.

It helps to know what you are walking into. Bahu Fort is one of the oldest fortifications in the region, and the Mahakali shrine inside it has drawn pilgrims for generations — long enough that the fair has become a living tradition rather than an event anyone organises from scratch each year. The deity is fiercely beloved locally; for many Jammu families, the first navratra darshan here is a fixed point in the year, the kind of ritual you grow up assuming everyone observes. That continuity is what gives the mela its particular warmth. You are not at a one-off festival; you are at something your grandparents climbed to as children, doing the same things, eating the same jalebis, in roughly the same chaos.

Getting there and doing the climb

Bahu Fort sits on the left bank of the Tawi, opposite the older part of the city, near the Bagh-e-Bahu gardens and the aquarium. During the mela, expect the approach to be choked with cars and autos, so the smart move is to park well below and walk the last stretch, or take an auto to the nearest drop point and join the human river heading up.

Go early. The shrine and the fort are coolest and least crushed before mid-morning. By noon, especially on weekends and the main *ashtami* day, the queues for darshan can stretch a long way back. If you are coming mainly for the atmosphere rather than a long wait in the sanctum line, an early start lets you do both — prayers, then a slow wander through the stalls before the afternoon heat and the biggest crowds arrive.

A few practical notes: wear shoes you can slip off easily, since you will leave them outside the temple. Carry a small bottle of water and a little cash in change for the stalls. Phones and wallets should go in a zipped pocket — in a crowd this thick, you want both hands free for the steps.

The food, the stalls and the views

Half the fun of any Jammu mela is eating your way down the hill afterwards. The carts around Bahu lean into fair-day classics: hot jalebis coiled to order, kaladi-kulcha if you are lucky, chaat, candy floss, sugarcane juice and the inevitable rainbow of fizzy drinks. None of it is fine dining and all of it tastes better because you climbed for it. Buy from the busy stalls — high turnover is your friend.

Between bites, the fort itself rewards a slow look. The thick sandstone walls are among the oldest structures in the region, and from the ramparts you get one of the best wide views of the Tawi and the city sprawling on the far bank. The terraced Bagh-e-Bahu gardens just below are a good place to sit, catch your breath and let the kids burn off the sugar before the walk back.

Going with intention

One gentle ask, and it is the same one the city's river volunteers make every spring: carry your litter back down with you. Mela days generate mountains of plastic cups, wrappers and offering bags, and a lot of it ends up sliding toward the Tawi below. Bins fill fast; a small bag in your pocket for your own waste is the easiest civic gesture you will make all month.

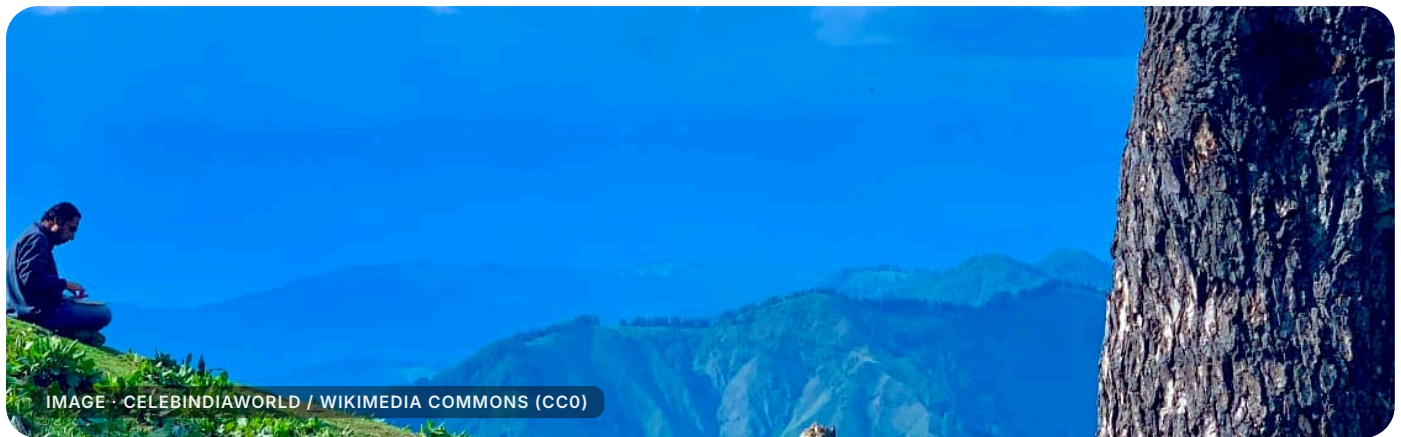
If you do only one Jammu fair this season, make it this one. The Bahu Mela is not a curated event with a hashtag and a stage — it is the real, slightly chaotic, deeply local thing, and it has been happening on that hill for longer than anyone can quite agree on. Climb up, say a prayer if you wish, eat too much, and come down a little more part of the city than you went up.

EVENTS · LAVENDER

Purple on the *Horizon*

As the slopes turn purple, Bhaderwah readies for its flagship lavender celebration — part flower show, part music evening, part shop window for the Chenab Valley's Purple Revolution.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



By late May, the slopes above Bhaderwah start to take on a now-famous tint. The lavender is coming in, and with it the anticipation of the valley's signature summer draw — a celebration that has grown, edition by edition, into one of the Chenab Valley's biggest cultural and economic showcases.

The **Lavender Festival** has become Bhaderwah's calling card, themed in its latest edition around taking the region's lavender 'global'. Organised in connection with the scientific institutions behind the wider Lavender Mission, it folds a great deal into a short window: a flower-and-fragrance spectacle, a startup and entrepreneurship showcase, buyer-seller meets, and the cultural music evenings that give 'Chhota Kashmir' its festive charge.

More than a flower show

What makes the build-up worth watching is that it is not only about the bloom. The festival sits at the centre of the region's 'Purple Revolution' — the push that turned lavender cultivation

into rural livelihoods, agri-startups and a genuine tourism pull. For young visitors, that means the trip works on several levels at once: cool mountain air, fields of purple, a music evening, and a front-row look at how a flower became an economy.

A field of lavender is pretty. A field of lavender that pays a village is something else entirely.

If you want to go

The smart move with a flagship hill festival is to plan early and travel light. Book ahead, since rooms in a small mountain town vanish fast around the event; carry layers for cool evenings; and treat the slopes with the care a fragile valley deserves. Above all, go for more than a photo — talk to the growers and the startups, because their story is the real bloom. As the purple spreads across the hills, Bhaderwah is getting ready. The only question is whether you will be there to see it turn.

EVENTS · GIGS

Live Music, *Waking Up*

From campus fests to Sufi evenings and cafe gigs, live music in Jammu is having a small but real revival this spring. Where to actually hear it.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



For years the complaint was the same: there is nowhere to hear live music in Jammu. You either drove out of the city or settled for a playlist. That is slowly stopping being true. Across campuses, cultural centres and a handful of ambitious cafes, the city's live-music scene is having a quiet revival — and spring, with its season of college festivals and pleasant evenings, is the best time to catch it.

Where the music is happening

The most reliable engine of live music in Jammu remains its colleges. The University of Jammu's multi-genre youth festival has become a fixture of the spring calendar, and across the city's campuses, fest season means battle-of-the-bands sets, open mics and acoustic afternoons, much of it open to anyone who turns up.

Beyond the campuses, the city's cultural venues and a growing number of cafes have started hosting evenings of their own. Sufi and folk concerts in particular have found an audience here, and intimate cafe gigs are giving the city's singer-songwriters

somewhere to play for actual humans rather than a phone camera.

How to be part of it

A live-music scene is one of those things a city does not know it needs until it has one — but it is fragile, runs on tiny margins, and grows only if people show up. So the ask here is refreshingly simple: **go**. Follow your college cultural committee and the local cafes and cultural centres so you hear about gigs before they happen. **Turn up** to the campus fests this season. And if a cafe has the courage to put a live act on, **buy the coffee and stay for the set** — a paying, present audience is the single thing that decides whether they ever do it again.

Jammu is never going to be a metro gig circuit overnight, and it does not need to be. But a city where you can hear someone play live on a spring evening is a better city than one where you cannot — and for the first time in a while, that city is actually here. Go listen.

EVENTS · SPORT

Game *On*

Cricket and football super leagues bring organised, professionally run competition to Jammu's grounds — and a real stage for local talent to be seen.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



For all the summer talk of escaping to the hills, plenty of young Jammu is staying right here — on the grass and the turf, chasing a different kind of heat. The city's competitive sports calendar has found new structure, and the floodlights are firmly on.

The headline is organisation. Sports authorities in the region have rolled out marquee **cricket and football leagues**, with fixtures staged at venues including the storied **MA Stadium** and the synthetic-turf football ground at Parade. These are not casual kickabouts: the formats run to dozens of matches each, played under recognised national rules, with committees of former players, referees, umpires and coaches put in place to keep the standard genuinely professional.

Why structure matters

The difference between a friendly gully match and a properly run league is the difference between playing and being seen. Organised competition gives local cricketers and footballers something they have long needed — a credible stage, real stakes,

and the kind of visibility that lets talent get scouted rather than stay hidden in a neighbourhood ground.

Talent is everywhere in this city. What changes lives is a stage where the right people are actually watching.

For players and fans alike

If you play, this is your invitation to take it seriously — train, turn up, and treat the league as the audition it is. If you do not, it is a cheap, electric evening out: home-ground football under lights, or a cricket finish with a crowd that actually knows the players' names. The leagues also give the city's grounds a sense of occasion they often lack — fixtures to follow, tables to track, and local sides to actually root for week after week. Either way, MA Stadium is doing in summer what it does best: turning the city's raw sporting energy into something organised, watchable and worth showing up for. Grab a spot on the stands. The season is on.

SECTION 07

Jobs & Career

A useful summer: internships that count, incubators next door and the lavender startups.

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JOBS & CAREER · INTERNSHIPS

The Useful Summer

From IIT Jammu's summer research programme to placement cells and BPO floors, May opens hiring season. A practical guide for students chasing their first real work experience.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 4 MIN READ



For final-year and pre-final-year students across Jammu, the long summer break is no longer just a break. It is the window — the stretch of weeks between mid-May and mid-July when internships open, placement cells get busy, and a first line on the resume is there for the taking. Spend it on the sofa and it disappears without trace. Spend it well and it pays off for years.

The good news is that the opportunities are real and increasingly local. The challenge is knowing where to look and how to present yourself when you get there. There is no single right path — the trick is matching the route to who you are and what you want next. Consider this your field guide to four of them.

The research route

If you are technically inclined, faculty-led research is one of the most underrated summer paths. Programmes such as **IIT Jammu's summer research internship** place undergraduate and postgraduate students on faculty-guided projects across science, engineering and interdisciplinary fields, typically running for several weeks in offline mode with a modest daily stipend and hostel options. These are usually open to pre-final-year students from outside the host institute, and selection is academic and project-based rather than first-come-first-served.

The single most important thing to know is that the calendar is unforgiving: applications for these schemes open early in the year and close well before summer begins, with results out weeks ahead of the start. The lesson for anyone reading this a season too late is simple — watch institute notice boards and placement portals from late winter, not late spring. And even outside a formal

scheme, a well-written email to a professor whose work you have actually read can open a door. Specificity beats mass-mailing every single time; a message that shows you understand the research is worth a hundred copy-pasted requests.

The placement-cell route

Do not sleep on your own college's Training and Placement Cell. Engineering and degree colleges in Jammu run technical seminars, recruiter talks and placement drives that bring companies onto campus, and the students who turn up to the 'boring' pre-placement sessions are the ones who hear about openings first. The placement coordinator is, quietly, one of the most useful people you will meet in college — they know which firms are hiring, what those firms test for, and which juniors they will recommend when an opening lands. That relationship is worth more than any job portal.

The students who benefit most treat the cell as a year-round resource, not a final-semester panic button. They sign up early, keep their details updated, and say yes to the small workshops on aptitude, group discussion and interview technique that everyone else skips. None of it is glamorous. All of it shows up on results day.

The first-job route

Not every useful summer is a glamorous one. Jammu has a steady ecosystem of BPO and customer-support roles, marketing and sales internships, and small-business work in retail, hospitality and IT services. These jobs pay you to learn how a workplace actually runs — punctuality, communication, handling a difficult customer, finishing a task you did not feel like doing — and those soft skills transfer absolutely

everywhere. A summer on a call floor, behind a café counter or running a shop's social media is not a step down. For most students, it is the foundation everything else is built on.

There is no shame in starting small. The graduate who has held one real job, however modest, walks into the next interview with a confidence that no certificate can manufacture. They have already learned the unteachable lesson: that work is something you show up for whether or not you feel inspired that morning.

Your first internship is rarely about the work. It is about learning to be reliable, to ask good questions, and to finish what you start.

How to actually stand out

A few habits separate the students who get called back from those who do not. Keep a clean one-page resume and update it the day you finish any project, while the details are fresh. Build one small, finished thing you can actually show — a tidy spreadsheet model, a basic app, a campaign you ran for a college fest, a portfolio of writing or design. 'Finished' is the key word; a humble project you completed beats an ambitious one you abandoned.

Then practise talking about yourself. Most students freeze in interviews not from lack of ability but from never having said out loud, in two clean sentences, what they are good at and what they want to learn. Rehearse it. Get comfortable with a confident, honest answer to 'tell me about yourself', and you are already ahead of half the room.

→ The full story is at jammubeat.com/post/jammu-student-internship-season-field-guide

JOBS & CAREER · STARTUPS

Got an *Idea*?

With more than a thousand J&K startups now registered and incubation centres sitting inside local campuses, a practical primer for students wondering how to actually start something in Jammu.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



For a long time, 'starting a company' in Jammu felt like something that happened elsewhere — in Bengaluru, in Delhi, in a TV-show version of entrepreneurship that had nothing to do with a student in Gandhi Nagar with an idea and no clue where to begin. That gap is closing. J&K now has a working scaffolding of policy, funding and physical incubation space, and a lot of it is sitting on campuses you can walk into. If you have an idea you keep talking about but never start, this is your nudge.

The ecosystem actually exists now

The numbers tell the story. More than a thousand startups from Jammu and Kashmir are now registered with the central industry-promotion body — a base that simply did not exist a few years ago. Behind that growth is a formal J&K Startup Policy running through 2024–27, which lays out seed-fund assistance, co-working spaces, mentorship, acceleration programmes and exposure visits. At the centre of much of this is JKEDI, the entrepreneurship development institute, which hosts startup meets, runs district-level facilitation and connects aspiring founders with banks and mentors. The point is that you are not starting from zero in a vacuum — there is a system designed to catch you.

Help that is literally on campus

Here is the part most students miss: incubation centres have been set up inside educational institutions across J&K, including

at IIT Jammu, the University of Jammu, the Central University and other technical campuses. These centres exist to give early ventures infrastructure, mentoring and hand-holding — the unglamorous scaffolding that decides whether an idea survives its first six months. If you are enrolled at one of these institutions, that support is among the most underused resources on your campus, and the founders who succeed are often simply the ones who walked in and asked.

How to take the first real step

Theory is cheap; here is the practical ladder. **Register and read** — look up the J&K Startup Policy and the central startup registration process so you know what support you are entitled to. **Find your campus cell** — if your college has an incubation centre or entrepreneurship cell, go meet the people who run it before you need anything from them. **Go to the meets** — JKEDI and partner bodies run workshops and facilitation events where you meet mentors, investors and other founders, and where a vague idea gets its first real feedback.

And the unsexy truth underneath all of it: a startup is not the pitch deck or the policy or the incubator. It is a small thing that works, built and shown to a few real customers. Use the ecosystem to lower your risk and shorten your learning curve — but the actual starting is still on you. The good news is that, for the first time, a student in Jammu has somewhere to walk in and say 'I have an idea' and find people whose entire job is to help.

JOBS & CAREER · AGRI-STARTUPS

Field to Founder

The Chenab Valley's lavender story is also a startup story — distillation units, wellness products and student ventures turning a flower into a business model.

BY JAMMUBEAT EDITORIAL • 2 MIN READ



IMAGE · LAITCHE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Behind every photogenic field of purple in the Chenab Valley sits a quieter, more interesting story: people turning that flower into a business. Jammu's startup conversation increasingly runs straight through lavender, and for young founders it is one of the most tangible 'made here' opportunities going.

The driver is the region's **Purple Revolution** — the lavender push that moved the crop from experiment to livelihood. Around it, an ecosystem has grown: distillation of essential oils, value-added wellness and fragrance products, buyer-seller linkages, and the startup showcases that flagship events like the Bhaderwah lavender festival now put front and centre, with students, entrepreneurs and agri-business stakeholders all in the room.

Why it suits young founders

Lavender is an unusually friendly first venture. The raw material is local, the story sells itself, and the path from farm to product is short enough to actually grasp — grow or source, distil or formulate, brand, sell. For a student or first-time entrepreneur, that is a far gentler on-ramp than chasing a purely digital idea against deep-pocketed competition.

The best startup ideas are often the ones growing in your own backyard. Sometimes literally.

Where the gaps are

The most interesting openings sit at the value-addition end of the chain, not the farming end. The lavender itself is well established; what a young venture can own is everything that happens after the harvest — clever packaging, honest branding, wellness and fragrance formulations, online sales, and tourism tie-ins that turn a visit to the fields into a sale. Solve even one of those problems well and you have a real, defensible niche.

Getting in

The way in is to show up where the ecosystem gathers. Attend the festivals and buyer-seller meets, talk to the growers and the institutions backing the mission, and listen for the problems people keep complaining about — those are your business ideas, handed over for free. The flower is already famous. The opportunity now belongs to whoever turns that fame into a product, and there is no reason at all that founder cannot be a twenty-two-year-old from Jammu.

What's next

The diary and the opportunities board — what to book and what to apply for, as this issue goes out.

● THE CITY DIARY

11
JUL

Safar-e-Zindagi: A Live Punjabi Poetry Evening

TCB Studio, Jammu · ₹99 · TCB Studio (The Chatter Box)

28
SEPT

Jammu Film Festival 2026 (5th Edition)

Abhinav Theatre · Vomedh

Full, updated diary at jammubeat.com/events

● THE OPPORTUNITIES BOARD

Assistant Professor (Hospital Administration) — SKIMS, Soura

BY 11 JUL

Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) · Srinagar (SKIMS, Soura), J&K · Rs 67,700-2,08,700 (Level-11)

Institute Engineer, Assistant Registrar, Assistant/Junior Engineer & Ot...

BY 13 JUL

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu · Jammu, J&K

Non-Teaching & Technical Staff (23 posts) — UIET, Kathua

BY 14 JUL

University of Jammu · Janglote, Kathua, J&K · 7th CPC pay levels (e.g. Foreman Level-6E Rs 35,900-1,13,500; MTS SL1 Rs 14,800-47,100)

JKSSB Various Posts (Electrician, Plumber, Computer Assistant, Library ...

BY 21 JUL

Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) · Jammu & Kashmir (UT-wide; Jammu division posts included) · As per J&K pay matrix (post-wise)

Faculty Positions (Professor / Associate Professor / Assistant Professo...

BY 31 JUL

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu · Jammu, J&K

Warder (288 posts) — Advt 05 of 2026

BY 25 AUG

Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) · Jammu & Kashmir

Divisional Cadre Posts, Public Works (R&B) Department (357 posts) — Adv...

BY 30 AUG

Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) · Jammu Division, J&K

72 Divisional Cadre Posts under PM's Package — Advt 07 of 2026

BY 8 SEPT

Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) · Jammu, J&K

Listings live at jammubeat.com/jobs — check official notifications before applying.

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