

# Annual Youth festival 'Sonzal' 2024 begins at University of Kashmir



**Srinagar, Dec 12:** The 17th annual youth festival 'Sonzal 2024', organized by the Division of Youth Affairs, Department of Students Welfare (DSW), University of Kashmir (KU), started here at KU on Thursday.

The festival was officially inaugurated at the varsity's Convocation Complex by Minister for Higher Education UT J&K Ms. Sakeena Masood who was chief guest at the inaugural ceremony.

The festival, running from December 12-20, brings together students from various colleges and universities across Kashmir to showcase their talents in a wide range of competitions.

While declaring the festival open Ms. Sakeena Masood commended the University's efforts in organizing the youth event and said "This university has made significant contributions to society, continuing its legacy of excellence. Sonzal provides a great opportunity for our youth to express their creativity, showcase their talent and grow." While referring to Sonzal, she added, "It is important to use such platforms to promote and preserve the Kashmiri language which is an integral part of our cultural heritage."

Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan highlighted the significance of the festival in fostering creativity, unity, and curiosity among young minds.

“Our university is committed to providing platforms like Sonzal to nurture the talent and potential of our students in various ways,” she said.

Prof. Khan also outlined the University’s breakthroughs and achievements, including the implementation of the NEP 2020 framework at UG level, launch of new programs and courses, research activities, extension and outreach programs, community engagement and varsity’s evolution into a premier institution of higher learning.

“We are constantly evolving as an institution of higher learning and focusing on academic excellence and providing opportunities for our students to contribute to their growth,” she added.

Speaking on the occasion Dean Academic Affairs KU, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada, emphasised the University’s holistic approach to education while as Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, described the event as a celebration of cultural talent, reiterating the University’s commitment to supporting youth and their creative pursuits.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Dean Students Welfare KU, Prof. Shamim Ahmad Shah, stated that the festival is aimed at promoting social cohesion, cultural understanding, and artistic exchange.

The inaugural ceremony featured the live performance of the University Tarana by the DSW cultural group, the release of the annual student magazine ‘Gulala’, and mesmerizing live cultural performances by student cultural groups.

Cultural officer DSW Shahid Ali Khan, the organising secretary of Sonzal 2024 conducted the proceedings on the inaugural day of the festival.

The festival shall host competitions in quiz, debate, elocution, collage making, poster-making, painting, cartoon-making, rangoli-making, clay-modeling, mehandi, photography, musical events and other categories, during next seven days.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by various dignitaries including various deans of schools, heads of the departments, key administrative officials, faculty members, scholars and students of the campus.