

# Governor reviews Yatra arrangements at Baltal, Domel

## *Directs further fast tracking track clearance work, positioning of other Yatra arrangements \_*

SRINAGAR, JUNE 13 – Consequent to the continuing spell of bad weather, the Governor, Mr. N. N. Vohra, who is Chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, has been undertaking repeated trips to the Yatra Camps for review and on-spot directions. In continuation of this process the Governor today inspected all ongoing works in Baltal-Domel sector and reviewed the Yatra track clearance work at a high level meeting of the Divisional and District Administration officers at the Baltal Base Camp.

Expressing serious concern over the continuing delays being caused by intermittent rains and fresh snow falls, the Governor asked the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, CEO of the Shrine Board and all the District and Divisional Heads of various concerned Departments and agencies to speed up every item of work to make up for the delays and hindrances caused by the weather conditions and ensure that all the required arrangements were positioned within the earlier envisaged time frames. When the Governor was inspecting the various ongoing works today forenoon it was raining heavily in the Baltal-Domel area and the upper reaches were experiencing a fresh snowfall.

The Governor also made a sector by sector review of the ongoing track clearance work, along both the Chandanwari and Baltal routes and directed further stepping up of the work on the ground.

The Governor reviewed each element of Yatra preparedness with Mr. A. H. Samoon, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Mr. Navin K. Choudhary, Chief Executive Officer of the Shrine Board, Mr. Showkat Ahmad Mir, Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal, Mr. A. Mujtaba, DIG, Srinagar, Mr. Shafkat Watali, DIG Traffic, Mr. Shahid Mehraj, Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal, Mr. Mohammad Yousuf, CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority, and the senior District and Divisional Heads of Departments.

The Governor directed that the work on improvement of Ranga Morh-Baltal road and alternate road from Nilgrath to Baltal be further expedited for securing better traffic management. He also asked the PWD Engineer to further improve the riding surface of Ranga Morh-Baltal road by using heavy rollers several times a day. He asked the Divisional Commissioner to take up the matter with the Chief Engineer, Beacon Project, for most urgently improving the Kangan-Gund sector of

the Ganderbal-Sonamarg Highway to ensure against delayed movement on this important stretch when the heavy rush of the forthcoming Yatra commences, alongside the peak tourist season movements.

The Governor was informed that water and power supplies are now fully in position at the Baltal Base Camp and three DG sets have also been installed for ensuring 24 hour power supply at this Base Camp. Power supply will be fully provided by 16<sup>th</sup> June at Domel, while 90% of the water required at the enroute Camps and in the Holy Cave area has since been provided and the remainder work will be fully completed within next 2-3 days. The Governor stressed that the important areas in the Camps, particularly the Langars, toilets and medicare centres must be provided high level of illumination.

As regards the installation of Emergency Shelter units by the Tourism Department on both the Yatra routes, the Governor said that these must be ready in all respects by 18<sup>th</sup> June. Similarly, the Public Address System must be made fully functional at all the Camps by 21<sup>st</sup> June. Reviewing the energizing of telecommunication facility by the BSNL, the Governor was informed that this work has been completed in the Baltal-Domel and Chandanwari-Sheshnag sectors. He directed for completing the remaining work on this front in the next 3-4 days right upto the Holy Cave and asked the CEO to take up with the Meteorological Department for immediately establishing Advanced Warning Systems (AWS) at the Sheshnag, Panjtarni and Holy Cave Camps to provide improved forecasts.

While taking stock of the availability of rations, LPG, Kerosene and other essential commodities, the Governor was informed that this process will be completed at all the Camp locations upto the Holy Cave by 20<sup>th</sup> June.

Earlier, the Governor, accompanied by Mr. Navin K. Choudhary, CEO of the Shrine Board, Mr. Showkat Ahmad Mir, Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal, and other concerned officers visited Domel and reviewed the work on construction of Entry Gate and Shelter Sheds being constructed by the Sonamarg Development Authority under the Disaster Management Plan. He issued instructions for completing these works by 20<sup>th</sup> June. He also inspected the site for establishment of Langars at Domel where the Langarwallas have started setting up their Langars. However, due to the very large accumulation of snow at the Langar sites at Baltal Base Camp, due to an avalanche, dozers have been pressed into service to remove the snow and clear the space for the Langars. While inspecting the ongoing work on Pony Stand, the Governor asked to complete it immediately.

Mr. P. K. Pandey, DIG, CRPF; Mr. Preet Pal Singh, Additional CEO of the Shrine Board, Mr. K. G. Bamba, GM Works SASB, Mr. Ashok Kumar Pandita and Mr. Rajnish Kumar, Camp Directors and other concerned Divisional and District Heads of various Departments were present on the occasion.

The CEO of the Shrine Board talking with the media at Baltal Base Camp asserted that notwithstanding the serious delays caused by bad weather, all necessary and urgent steps are being taken to overcome the difficulties and the Yatra will commence from both Baltal as well as Pahalgam routes from 25<sup>th</sup> June, as announced earlier.

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