

Text of the press statement issued on 4th June, 2012 at Bangalore by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji in the wake of protests against reducing the Amarnathji Yatra duration.

I would like to clarify to the Shiva Bhaktas who are eager to go to the Shri Amarnath Yatra that we sincerely wanted to keep the Yatra from Jyeshtha Purnima onwards. There was no pressure from any individual or organization on us. It was purely a logistical challenge to ensure the safety of the Yatris. A sub-committee was established which includes Swami Avdheshanandji of Juna Peethadheeshwar and Swami Gyananand ji.

We had a detailed discussion in which the State Government and the Army presented the weather conditions and the time it takes to clear the path. Only after taking serious consideration of logistics, weather conditions and the preparedness to host thousands of Yatris was it decided to commence the Yatra towards the end of June, this year.

As of today, there is 5-10 feet of uncleared snow. We cannot risk the lives of thousands of people without any infrastructure. We want the Yatra to be safe and comfortable for people. Better toilet and medical facilities are being planned for this year. Even on Jyestha Purnima day, the symbolic Puja could not be held in the cave due to the snow. It was done in Chandanwari glacier.

I am requesting the State Government to make a weather-proof road in Baltal so that in the coming years the Yatra can be performed with greater safety and security. The weather report presented to us shows that there is too much snow and the army is helpless to clear the tracks right now. The present situation is very dangerous for the Yatris to undertake the Yatra.

I know that due to the past history there is suspicion, but I would like to ensure the people that there is no pressure and that myself and other saints would have stepped down from the Amarnath Shrine Board a long time ago if it were the case. The Government is all willing and co-operative.

Note: The press release could be directly downloaded from the official website of His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji (<http://srisriravishankar.org>).

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