

Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2015

29th meeting of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board held: Governor calls for sustained efforts for further improvements

Srinagar, July 31: The Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board met here today under the chairmanship of Governor N. N. Vohra, Chairman of the Board. The Governor called for sustained efforts to further improve the facilities provided to the pilgrims who undertake this annual pilgrimage.

The meeting was attended by Members of the Board, Dr. (Prof.) Ved Kumari Ghai, Dr. Devi Prasad Shetty, Ms. Sunita Narain, Mr. Vijay Dhar, Dr. Chander Mouli Raina, Pt. Bhajan Sopori, and Mr. D. C. Raina, and by Mr P.K Tripathi, CEO and Mr. Jitendra K. Singh, Additional CEO of the Board.

The Members expressed concern over the recurring stoppages of the pilgrimage due to blockage of Sonamarg-Baltal road due to landslides and mud slides following cloud bursts on this route and, in this context, stressed the importance of a more advanced weather forecasting system being set up in Kashmir.

Mr. Tripathi, CEO, made a detailed presentation on the various important aspects of Yatra 2015, highlighting the initiatives taken for bringing about progressive improvements in the logistical and other arrangements for the pilgrimage.

While discussing the arrangements made for provision of health care facilities, Members were informed that the CEO, with the Chairman's endorsement, had issued a standing order for any pilgrim or service provider who took seriously ill in the Yatra area to be airlifted to Srinagar, at the Shrine Board's cost, and provided the best available medical treatment. Members suggested that the CEO should also explore the possibility of medical care being provided during aerial evacuation of the sick person.

CEO also informed that, as directed by the Chairman, the Camp Directors were organizing the cremation of every person who died in the Yatra and providing financial support to the next of kin for the by

air transportation of the dead body to the home town of the deceased, in all cases where the bodies were not cremated here.

The Board also deliberated on Advance Registration Quota, On-Spot Registration and utilization of registration quota till date. CEO also informed the Board members about various facilities for the smooth conduct of Yatra including availability of shelter sheds, railings at vulnerable points, establishment of Transit Camps along the National Highway, arrangements for collection and disposal of garbage and sanitation at various Camps and along the Yatra routes.

The Board was informed that till 30th July, 2015 as many as 2,46,134 pilgrims had secured Advance Registration for undertaking the pilgrimage while 98,584 Yatris had availed On-spot Registration facility and, further, upto 30th July evening, 3,11,990 pilgrims had actually performed Darshan at the Holy Cave Shrine.

The Board was informed that the weather status is being closely watched with the help of the forecasts furnished by the India Meteorological Department, for which IMD has recently commissioned an X-band Doppler Weather Radar at the IMD Campus, Ram Munshi Bagh, Srinagar and 6 Advanced Weather Systems (AWS) at Holy Cave, Baltal, Sheshnag, Panjtarni, Pahalgam and Chandanwari.

The Board was informed that two booklets on 'Kashmir Shaivism' and 'Shri Amarnathji Teerath Yatra', written by Prof. Ved Ghai, Member of the Board, have been published and put on sale at nominal prices. Board Members appreciated the publication of these booklets and hoped that the Yatris will find them useful.

The Board was informed that this year the BSNL has provided 3G connectivity at Baltal, Domel and Chandanwari and also has augmented Bandwidth on V-SATS at Holy Cave, Panjtarni and Sheshnag.

The CEO informed the Board that, as per the data compiled by the Board officials, 36 persons had lost their lives till 30th July 2015 29 of whom died due to medical failures, 4 due to a cloud burst and 3 on account of accidents in the Yatra area.

The Board expressed sympathy over the loss of lives and hoped that all potential pilgrims would duly take into account the harsh

weather conditions in the high altitude region of the Yatra area, and prepare themselves suitably.

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