

Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2017

Governor reviews pace of Yatra; expresses concern over number of deaths during Yatra

Srinagar, July 10: In a review meeting held here today Shri Umang Narula, CEO, and Shri Jitendra Kumar Singh, Addl. CEO of the Shrine Board, informed Governor N.N Vohra, Chairman of the Board, that today, 11921 pilgrims had performed Darshan at the Holy Cave. CEO further informed that during the initial twelve days since the start of the Yatra, the movement of pilgrims from Jammu to Kashmir Valley was stopped on two days due to road blockage/ security reasons and that, despite this two day suspension of movement, so far 1,46,692 pilgrims had performed the pilgrimage.

CEO informed the Governor that till date 14 Pilgrims had died at various locations on both the Yatra routes, upwards of Baltal and Pahalgam, since start of the Yatra on 29th June 2017. Of these 14, two persons died due to accidents caused by shooting stones fall and an accidental while the other 12 died due to medical reasons. One pilgrim from Telangana died due to a cylinder blast at Veesu-Mir Bazar, Qazigund, outside the Yatra area and two persons, an ITBP Personnel and an ISRO Technician by died before the start of Yatra due to cardiac failures.

CEO reported that, as directed by the Chairman, so far six seriously ill pilgrims have been evacuated by Helicopter to Baltal and Srinagar and the Board Camp Directors were taking all necessary action and the Board was incurring the required costs to ensure that the bodies were got delivered to the next kin of the deceased, in their home towns, transporting them by air and also providing an attendant, wherever necessary. CEO informed that the Shrine Board, in coordination with State Health Department, Army, State Police, CRPF, BSF, SSB and NGOs has made elaborate arrangements for providing medical facilities at all the Camps and en-route the Shrine. A total of 66 Medical Camps have been setup on the Yatra route, at every 2 kms to provide medical aid to the Yatris. The State Government has established 5 Base Hospitals, 9 MACs, 14 EACs and other medical facilities with

adequate number of doctors and health professionals, modern equipments and medicines. Doctors and paramedics have also been deployed by the Union Health Ministry from various prestigious hospitals which include medicos from AIIMS, Safdarjung and RML Hospital in Delhi and P.G.I Chandigarh. Besides, doctors have also been deputed by the States of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana to provide Medical Care facilities in the entire Yatra area. During the Yatra 34058 OPDs have been performed and 3013 Indoor Patients have been treated. Further, so far 1666 injuries have also been treated, 684 X-rays done and 793 ECGs carried out.

The State Health Department has set up 6 special Oxygen Kiosks (with oxygen concentrators) at critical locations between Wavbal and MG Top, Panjtarni and Sangam Top, Sangam Down and Sangam Top, at Lower Cave; between Lower Holy Cave and Kalimata Top; and at the start of Holy Cave Stairs. These oxygen Kiosks are in addition to the Oxygen Concentrators which are available at each Base Hospital.

The Shrine Board has put in place arrangements for providing immediate help and in rescuing Yatris in distress. 08 Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs), each comprising 10 highly trained personnel of the State Police, have been located at various vulnerable places enroute Holy Cave to undertake immediate evacuation of any Yatri in trouble. Besides, 11 teams of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and 01 MRT of CRPF have also been deployed in the Yata area at vulnerable locations to assist Yatris. Critically injured and sick Yatris, Service Providers and others are also assisted by timely evacuation from the higher altitude camps to the lower camps to enable provision of adequate medical attention.

In response to the Governor's direction to the CEO to urgently issue a fresh appeal to all the Yatris to strictly follow the Health Advisory and Dos and Don'ts issued by the Shrine Board, the latter has yet again urged pilgrims to come fully prepared after achieving physical fitness before under taking the pilgrimage; do deep breathing exercises and Yoga, particularly Pranayam, for improving oxygen efficiency of the body; avoid exerting beyond their normal capacity; consume plenty of carbohydrates to reduce fatigue and prevent low blood sugar levels; take time to acclimatize before commencing trekking; stopping and relaxing

for a short while on steep inclines and to quickly descent to a lower elevation if they start having symptoms of High Altitude Sickness; not to rush while trekking. The CEO has further advised the Yatris to consult their physician before proceeding for pilgrimage in case there is any change in their status of health after having obtained Compulsory Health Certificate some weeks earlier.

The CEO further advised all the Yatris to immediately take medical assistance available in the nearby medical facility in the Yatra area to prevent any medical complication. He also advised Yatris to take immediate precautions while undertaking this arduous pilgrimage and not to ignore any sign of high altitude sickness or any other discomfort/uneasiness and immediately contact Doctors at the Medical Camps and enroute the Shrine.