

Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2017

33rd Meeting of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board

Board expresses its sympathy for the families of Yatris killed in terror attack and serious accident

Srinagar, July 24: Governor N.N. Vohra chaired the 33rd meeting of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board at the Raj Bhavan today. The meeting was attended by Dr. (Prof.) Ved Kumari Ghai, Pt. Bhajan Sopori, Ms. Sunita Narain, Dr. Chander Mouli Raina and Sh. D.C. Raina, all Members of the Board, and by Sh. Umang Narula, CEO, Sh. Jitendra Kumar Singh, Additional CEO and other officers of the Board.



The Board expressed its concern and heartfelt sympathy for the families of the 8 pilgrims who were killed during the terrorist attack on their bus near Khanabal on 10th July 2017 and the 17 pilgrims who lost their lives in a tragic road accident near Banihal on 16th July, when an SRTC bus rolled down a Khud. The Board appreciated the Chairman's midnight decision to continue the Yatra without any interruption, after news were received about the terrorist attack. The Board also endorsed the Chairman's view that the families of those killed and injured in the terrorist attack required to be afforded enhanced ex-gratia relief.

Board also endorsed the Chairman's decision for the Board to bear all costs for transporting the mortal remains of the Yatris who had died, for whatever reasons, and providing an escort/ attendant and a police personnel to ensure that the coffin of the deceased was delivered to his family, in his home town. In this context CEO informed the Board that during 29th June – 24th July, the Board had spent Rs. 17,92,479 on account of transportation costs and Rs. 1,49,71,000 towards payment of ex-gratia relief.

CEO informed that four additional branches of Punjab National Bank were added for registering Yatris for the yatra, which are located at: (i) Baddi, H.P.; (ii) Vyara, District Taapi, Gujarat; (iii) Gadag, Karnataka; and (iv) Club Chouhan, Malerkotla, Punjab and one additional branch of J&K Bank had been added at Main Market, Leh, J&K, to cover the erstwhile uncovered areas for Yatra 2017.

Board was apprised about the various steps taken for improving and enhancing the facilities for promoting the convenience of the pilgrims and these included upgradation of the tracks and the road from Neelgrath to Baltal Base Camp; extension of Yatri shelters at Domel, Nunwan, Neelgrath and Panjtarni; erecting railings at all vulnerable places along the two tracks, development of resting places along the track; installation 2540 Toilets and 499 Baths and 100 Bottle Catchers in the Yatra area etc. For facilitating the stay of Yatris at Jammu, air-conditioned accommodation has been provided in the three storey building of the Yatri Niwas, Jammu. The Board was apprised that the planned laying of Optical Fibre Cable along both the Yatra routes will further strengthen the telecommunication facilities during the future Yatras.

The Board noted with satisfaction that the State Governments of the Rajasthan, Punjab, and Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has this year deputed a good number of doctors from prestigious institutions like AIIMS, PGIMER, Safdarjung and RML Hospitals to assist the medical arrangements for Yatra. CEO reported that the available doctors on duty have been instructed to assist Yatris on the tracks and particularly check the vital parameters of those showing symptoms of illness.

CEO informed that important Yatra related information, particularly with regard to Dos and Don'ts to be followed by the Yatris have been publicized through Doordarshan, FM Channels, All India Radio and Press Information Bureau through broadcasting Documentary Film, Video Spots, and Audio Spots prepared by the Shrine Board. He also informed that more than 28 lakhs SMSs were sent to the Yatris directly.

CEO apprised the Board Members that Group Insurance for all Service Providers and Yatris has been enhanced to Rs. 3.00 lakhs from the existing Rs. 1.00 lakh.