

Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2017

Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board distributes compensation to owners whose ponies were killed in accidents

Srinagar, October 27: At a function held at Raj Bhavan here today, Mr Umang Narula, Principal Secretary to Governor, J&K, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), gave away cheques valuing Rupees Twenty two lakhs and fifty thousand to 75 ponywallahs for the loss of their horses / ponies in accidental deaths during the Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2017. The pony owners were awarded compensation at Rs.30,000 for each pony / horse killed accidentally.



Mr Umang Narula interacted with the claimants and lauded their cooperation and contribution in facilitating the Yatris and making the annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra a successful event every year. He observed that ponywallahs are an important part of the pilgrimage and that on the directions of the Hon'ble Governor, it has been ensured that the insurance claims' payable to the ponywallahs are settled without any delay whatsoever. He further observed that ever since the Shrine Board decided in 2010 to provide insurance cover to ponies killed in accidents, compensation valuing about Rs.1.92 Crore has been disbursed in 626 accident cases so far .

Mr. Umang Narula informed that this year 2,60,003 Yatris paid obeisance at the Holy Shrine Cave and elaborate arrangements were made by the Shrine Board with the active support of various Departments of the J&K Government, NGOs and the local people, particularly the residents of Ganderbal and Anantnag districts. The security arrangements were provided by the Army, Central Police Organization and the State Police. For 2017, 8924 ponies / horses were registered by the Animal and Sheep Husbandry Department for the use of pilgrims. Besides, 4188 Pithoos, 5372 dandiwallas and 7166 ponywallahs were registered by the Labour and Employment Department for providing services during this year's Yatra. CEO further informed that the Shrine Board has since 2010 been providing Group Insurance of Rupees One lakh to all Registered Yatris and

Service Providers against death resulting from any kind of accident, natural or man-made, during the period commencing one month ahead of the Yatra till one week beyond the date of conclusion of the Yatra. This Group Insurance Cover was further enhanced to Rupees Three lakhs from Yatra 2017.

In 2010, an insurance cover of Rs. 20,000 was provided to the registered ponies against death resulting from any kind of accident, natural or man-made. The Insurance cover for ponies was enhanced to Rs.25,000 in 2011 and further increased to Rs.30,000 from Yatra 2013 onwards.

Mr. Bhupinder Kumar, Additional CEO of the Shrine Board, gave details of the insurance claims of the pony owners who were presented insurance claim cheques.

Mr. R. K. Bhagat, Commissioner/ Secretary Animal Husbandry Department; Dr. M.Y. Chapru, Director Animal Husbandry Department, Kashmir; Dr. Mohd Rafeeq Sheikh, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Ganderbal; Dr. Tahir Beigh, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Anantnag; officers and official of SASB and pony/ horse owners were present on the occasion.