

Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2018

Governor chairs emergent meeting of Shrine Board

Yatra to begin on 28th June 2018

New Delhi, January 9: Governor N. N. Vohra, Chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), presided over an emergent meeting of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board today to, inter alia, particularly discuss the implementation of the directions recently passed by National Green Tribunal (NGT) in regard to the conduct of Shri Amarnathji Yatra and to decide the further course of action.

The 34th meeting of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board was attended by its members H.H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Dr. (Prof.) Ved Kumari Ghai, Pt. Bhajan Sopori, Shri Vijay Dhar, Ms. Sunita Narain, Dr. Devi Prasad Shetty, Shri



D.C. Raina, Prof. Chander Mouli Raina and by Shri Umang Narula, Chief Executive Officer, Bhupinder Kumar, Additional Chief Executive Officer, and other senior officers of the Shrine Board.

The Board deliberated upon the NGT's directions contained in its orders dated 13th and 14th December, 2017, in the case titled "Gauri Maulekhi Vs State of J&K and Others". CEO informed the Board about the issues raised before the NGT and the directions passed in regard thereto. After deliberations, the Board decided to file a Review Petition against the NGT's directions.

While discussing other important Yatra related issues, particularly the date of commencement and duration of Yatra 2018, keeping in view its foremost concern to safeguard the safety and security of the pilgrims, the Board decided that a 60 days long Yatra would commence on 28th June 2018, on the auspicious day of Jyestha Purnima, as per Hindu Calendar, and, as per continuing tradition, conclude on Shravan Purnima (Raksha Bandhan) on 26th August, 2018.

Considering the carrying capacity of the existing tracks and other available infrastructure in the Yatra area, the Board decided that 7500 Yatris, per day per each of the two routes, excluding Yatris who would travel by helicopters, would be allowed to secure Advance Registration for the pilgrimage.

Board noted the steps taken by CEO for the registration of pilgrims through 437 designated branches of Punjab National Bank, Jammu and Kashmir Bank and YES Bank, located in 32 States and UTs, and directed him to take all required steps to commence Advance Registration of pilgrims w.e.f. from 1st March 2018. Board further directed CEO to repeatedly publicize, through the electronic and print media, and advise the intending Yatris to timely secure the prescribed Compulsory Health Certificates issued by the Doctors/ Hospitals nominated by the State or UTs in which they reside and only thereafter proceed to seek Advance Registration from the nearest located designated Bank which would issue the pilgrim a Yatra Permit which shall be valid for the specified date and route. Board also advised CEO to appeal to all the potential pilgrims to consult their doctors before embarking on the pilgrimage. CEO shall also widely publicize that no person below the age of 13 years and above the age of 75 years shall be permitted to undertake the pilgrimage.

The board directed CEO to take timely steps for ensuring uninterrupted telecom connectivity in the Yatra area during Yatra 2018. Appreciating the important services rendered by the Langar Organizations, the Board looked to their continued support during Yatra 2018.

The board directed CEO to caution all potential pilgrims to particularly take into account the difficult climate and terrain in the high altitude region of the Yatra and prepare themselves fully before embarking on the pilgrimage. As in the past, the awareness campaign would be launched with the cooperation and support of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and CEO shall place all information relating to Yatra on the Board's Website (www.Shriamarnathjishrine.com).

Noting the Chairman's direction for sustained efforts being made to further improve the facilities to be provided to the pilgrims this year, the Board reviewed the Action Plan drawn up for the conduct of Yatra 2018, particularly the arrangements which are being made for providing medical care, sanitation facilities, installation of the railings at all vulnerable points along each of the two routes, measures being take to preserve the environment of the Yatra area by ensuring removal of garbage in a

scientific and environment friendly manner. Chairman directed CEO to ensure that all the arrangements are timely in place well before the commencement of the Yatra 2018.