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Sinha flags-off 1st batch of Amarnath pilgrims from Jammu

Yatra gets rousing reception enroute; Mobile App 'Yatra22' for healthcare launched



LG Manoj Sinha flagging-off first batch of Shri Amarnath Yatra pilgrims from Bhagwati Nagar Base camp in Jammu during wee hours of Wednesday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday flagged off the first batch of 4,890 pilgrims for the annual Amarnath yatra from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu city for their onward journey to the Pahalgam and Baltal base camps in Kashmir.

The 43-day pilgrimage to the cave shrine will begin from twin base camps in Kashmir on Thursday and will conclude on August 11 on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan.

The annual Amarnath Yatra is being organised after a gap of two years due to the Covid pandemic.

Amid chants of 'Bam Bam Bhole' and 'Jai Barfani Baba ki', the pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp here in a convoy of vehicles amid tight security.

Flanked by political leaders and officials, Mayor Jammu Municipal Corporation, Chander Mohan Gupta;

Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta ADGP Jammu, Mukesh Singh; Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar; DC Jammu, Avny Lavasa; Commissioner JMC, Rahul Yadav, besides BJP leader Devender Rana, the LG flagged off the convoy of buses and other vehicles carrying pilgrims on their inward journey to the twin base camps in Kashmir. The first batch of pilgrims

left for the cave shrine amid chanting of Vedic mantras. The Lt Governor prayed for the peace, prosperity and a safe journey of pilgrims.

Marking the beginning of the annual pilgrimage, the first batch left at around 4 am in a cavalcade of 176 light and heavy vehicles, officials said.

The yatra has passed through Udhampur and Ramban districts amid a grand welcome accorded by

the top officials district administration led by DCs and SSPs.

At Nayug Tunnel, Qazigund, the Yatris were received by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din-Bhat and other officials.

The yatrics were also welcomed by DIG South, Abdul Jabbar, SSP Kulgam, Dr. GV Sandeep, PRI members and locals.

In Srinagar, they were wel-

comed by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar and other officers of the District Administration in presence of SSP Srinagar, Rakesh Balwal, Commissioner SMC, Athar Amir Khan, SSP Traffic Muzafar Ahmad Shah and other senior officers of Police and Civil Administration were present on the occasion.

While, Mayor, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Junaid Azam Mattoo,

Chairman District Development Council(DDC), Srinagar, Malik Aftab Ahmad, Vice Chairman DDC, Bilal Ahmad, DDC Member Balhama, Aijaz Ahmad and other PRIs also welcomed the Yatrics at the venue.

Meanwhile, Principal Secretary, Health Medical Education Department (H&ME) Manoj Kumar Dwivedi this afternoon launched the mobile applica-

tion "yatra22" and webpage www.yatra22.com for tracking health care facilities for Pilgrims undertaking Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2022 and to facilitate the identification and tracking of health facilities during emergencies.

The App is available on the Google Play Store and IOS platform and can also be accessed through web browser.

Speaking during the launch of mobile application,

Dwivedi said that for smooth facilitation of holy devotees, 150 health facilities have been established from Lakhampur to Holy Cave by health authorities and it has all been made available on the App with all the coordinates and the distance from the individual accessing the App/portal.

The Principal Secretary further said that the Department of Health has also deployed around 1500 highly skilled health personnel for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2022 duties, while as there has been a threefold increase in infrastructure during this year's Yatra. He added that this has been made to ensure seamless and smooth delivery of health care to the pilgrims by the UT administration.

The Principal Secretary also remarked that mobile application shall subsequently cover all the 3500 health institutions of UT of

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24 JKAS officers transferred

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Government on Wednesday transferred 24 JKAS officers.

According to the order issued by Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Principal Secretary, General Administration Department, Leena Padha, JKAS, Additional Inspector General of Registration, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Mission Director, Skill Development Mission; Mansoor Aslam Choudhary, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes (Hqr) as Additional Inspector General of Registration, Jammu; Roshan Lal, JKAS, Joint Director, Education, Doda as Special Secretary, Labour

and Employment Department; Ghulam Rasool, JKAS, Deputy Director (Administration) in the Directorate of Handlooms Department, J&K as Joint Director, Handicrafts, Jammu; Afshan Masood, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, as Secretary, J&K Advisory Board for Development of Other Backward Classes; Rajeev Magotra, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, as Principal, Excise and Taxation Training Institute, Jammu; Hakeem

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Two LeT terrorists killed near Amarnath Yatra route in Kulgam

Hybrid ultra arrested in Bandipora; terrorist associate held in Budgam

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgam district on Wednesday, police said, adding the operation site was very close to Amarnath Yatra route.

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation at Nawapora in Mir Bazaar area of Kulgam following information about presence of terrorists there, a police official said.

The official said the search operation turned into an encounter in which two terrorists were killed.

"Both the killed #terrorists



have been identified as #catagorised local terrorists of proscribed #terror outfit LeT. Again an important #encounter as the operation site was very close to NHW (#Yatra route)," Inspector General of Police, Kashmir

zone, Vijay Kumar tweeted.

Giving details of the operation, another police official said a joint party of police and army was searching suspected areas along national highway near Mir Bazaar when they came across some

suspicious movement in nearby orchard.

"They cordoned the area during which the party came under terrorist fire which was retaliated and an encounter started. The operation concluded in which two terrorists have been killed. They were identified as Yasir Wani and Raees Manzoor," the official said.

Yasir, wanted in many cases of violence, was an old terrorist belonging to LeT and became active in 2020, he said, adding that Raees joined terrorist ranks just two months ago. IGP Kashmir congratulated

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Centre asks states, UTs to screen 2 pc passengers from each incoming flight through RT-PCR

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: With India consistently reporting more than 10,000 Covid cases over the past few days, the Centre Wednesday asked states and Union Territories to ensure a random RT-PCR screening of about two per cent passengers in each incoming flight, and send all positive specimens for genomic sequencing.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan issued the advisory through a letter to states and UTs, referring to the 'Operational Guidelines for Revised Surveillance Strategy in context

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COVID: 73 fresh cases in J&K, 13 in Ladakh

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported 73 new Covid cases on Wednesday that took the infection tally to 4,55,006, officials said.

No Covid-related fatality was reported and the death toll stands at 4,756, they said.

Of the new cases, 52 were reported from Jammu division and 21 from the Kashmir valley, officials said. There are 447 active cases while the overall recoveries have reached 4,49,803, they said. There were 51

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GST Council withdraws exemption on host of items

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: Pre-packed and labelled wheat flour, papad, paneer, curd and buttermilk will be taxed at 5 per cent after the GST Council decided to stop allowing exemptions on such items while raising rates on a host of others. The GST Council, at a two-day meeting here, accepted

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Election for Vice President on Aug 6: EC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The election for the post of vice president will be held on August 6, the Election Commission said on Wednesday.

The notification for the election to decide the successor of M Venkaiah Naidu will be issued on July 5 and the last date for filing of nomination papers will be July 19.

The scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on July 20 and the last date for

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Uddhav Thackeray quits as Maharashtra CM ahead of floor test



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: Stating that he was not interested "in playing the numbers' game," Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday said he was resigning from his post.

"I am also quitting as member of Legislative Council," Thackeray said in a webcast, while appealing the workers

'Karma': BJP leaders take swipe as Uddhav resigns

NEW DELHI: BJP leaders invoked 'karma' and the legacy of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray as they took a swipe at outgoing Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray who resigned Wednesday night after the Supreme Court cleared the decks for a floor test following a rebellion by a big chunk of his party MLAs.

"Karma does not spare anyone," BJP general secretary C T Ravi, who is in charge of his party's affairs in the state, said. "Balasaheb Thackeray was a man who could control governments, despite not being in power."

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of his party not to take to the streets in protest.

Thackeray's announcement came minutes after the Supreme Court refused to stay Maharashtra Governor's direction to the Shiv Sena-

NCP-Congress Maha Vikas Aghadi government to take a floor test in the Assembly on Thursday. He had no regret leaving his post, Thackeray, who was facing a rebellion

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Helicopter services open for tourists in Ladakh

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: The helicopter services in Ladakh are now open for tourists to travel across the Union Territory, with the first batch of tourists having already availed the heli-service, officials said.

The first batch took the helicopter ride here on Tuesday.

The helicopter services operated by the administration will be available to the locals and tourists in general across sectors in the Union territory, they said.

Rates to avail the service have been notified by the administration for the residents of Ladakh,

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Farooq, Mir, Raina attend high tea meeting with LG; Mehbooba skips



LG Manoj Sinha interacting with heads of various political parties to discuss UT's prevailing situation including Amarnath Yatra.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti was the only notable absentee from the "high tea" party hosted by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at the Raj Bhavan

here on Wednesday.

Sinha invited heads of various political parties in the union territory for a meeting to discuss the prevailing situation including the Amarnath Yatra scheduled to begin Thursday, officials

said. National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, J-K BJP chief Ravinder Raina and Congress president G A Mir were among the notable leaders who attended the meeting.

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AGNIPATH: Youthful armed forces for nation, career progression for youth

JAMMU: What an irony. What ought to have been celebrated by the nation turned into nightmare with arsonists and rogues indulging in vandalism in the name of democracy?

Agnipath Scheme should have been received with a sense of pride and enthusiasm, for it being a win-win situation for the nation and the youth having passion and fervor to serve the motherland.

Without going into the broader contours of the scheme, explained by the top hierarchy of the defence forces in detail, the rogue elements took to streets, obviously at the behest inimical elements mostly drawn from disgruntled political outfits. Of course, a sizable chunk of well-meaning youngsters fell into the trap laid by those destabilizing the nation on one or the other count. They didn't even think for a while that the scheme stands tailored to give the nation a youthful army, navy and air-force besides vistas of opportunities for progression to the youth joining as Agniveers, having Josh and Jazba.

Those intending to join as Agniveers should have known that no employer-government or the private sector-could place their employees, with

the qualification of matriculation, so well in terms of package and career progression options. Even engineering professionals or MBA graduates can't get so much of emoluments at the beginning of their careers. The Agniveers have additional benefit of starting their careers afresh at the age of 21 at the strength of qualification of 10+2 and diplomas conferred by Indira Gandhi National Open University. Such trained and disciplined young people will be in good stead to pursue their careers; they can either continue their higher education or compete in various competitions in the job market. After all they will have an edge of having the experience of serving the country's armed forces.

All the three service chiefs of the army, the navy and the air-force made a sincere and pro-active outreach to youth, explaining the salient features of the Agnipath scheme. The customized monthly package for Agniveers includes allowances for risk and hardship applicable in the three services.

Agniveers will be paid a fixed monthly package of Rs 30,000 in the first month, which includes Rs 21,000 (70 per cent) in hand while Rs 9,000 (30 per cent) will be deducted as a contribution to Agniveer Corpus Fund. The Centre will also make a contribution of Rs 9,000 to the corpus.

In the second year, Rs 33,000 will be paid, Rs 36,500 in the third year and Rs 40,000 in the fourth year.

Contribution towards the Agniveers will be raised each year, which by the end of four years will be Rs 5.02 lakh by the recruits, with the Centre adding a matching Rs 5.02 lakh. At the exit after four years, Rs 11.71 lakh will be paid out to Agniveers as Seva Nidhi Package, which includes accumulated interest on the sum and will be exempted from income tax.

A Rs 48 lakh non-contributory life insurance cover will be provided to Agniveers for the duration of their engagement period. Those selected for enrolment will be required to serve for 15 years as regular cadre and will be governed by the existing terms and conditions of the service

of Junior Commissioned Officer.

The motivation behind the Agnipath Scheme has been to ornament the armed forces with a youthful profile. Such a need was felt immediately after the Kargil War and during all these years the idea was discussed and deliberated at various levels in the armed forces, before the government arrived at a consensus.

This scheme is bound to tap young and techno savvy talent, which is motivated, disciplined and having passion for serving the nation to defend its integrity and sovereignty. Air Marshal and Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief South Western Air Command, Vikram Singh has aptly summed up the Agnipath Scheme, saying, "It will not just create a disciplined, motivated, skilled, more confident and capable workforce at the end of four years when the training and service period ends".

The massive response to the registration for Agniveers in the Indian Air Force speaks of good sense prevailing upon the youth, which has manifested in dwindling protests-much to the discomfort of the inimical elements. (concluded)

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 38.1°C Min: 31.2°C

Humidity

Max: 66 Min: 64

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 34.0°C Min: 21.5°C

Humidity

Max: 69 Min: 39

Sunset : 19:44 Hours

Sunrise : 05:27 Hours



PART-II