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Amarnathji Yatra: LG performs Pratham Puja; assures smooth, safe Yatra



LG Manoj Sinha virtually performing 'Pratham Puja' to mark the ceremonial commencement of the Annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra on Saturday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha performed the 'Pratham Puja' to mark the ceremonial commencement of the Annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, through video conferencing on Saturday.

The Lt Governor sought the blessings of Baba Amarnathji and prayed for the good health, progress, and well-being of all the people.

Interacting with the media persons, the Lt Governor highlighted the efforts of the Administration and the Shrine Board to bring qualitative improvement in the overall Yatra experience for devotees. "Officials of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board and concerned departments are committed to provide better facilities and services for pilgrims. There has been significant enhancement in essential facilities, infrastruc-

ture and security. We are taking every possible measure to ensure the yatra is smooth, safe and hassle-free," the Lt Governor said. He urged all the enlightened citizens to come together to welcome and serve the pilgrims coming from different parts of the country and abroad. "It has been ancient tradition of J&K that people from all communities participate in this Yatra irrespective of their religion," the Lt Governor

said. This year, the annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra will start from 29th June, simultaneously from both the routes - the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district. Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board; senior officials of SASB, Army and Lt Governor's Secretariat also attended the Pratham Puja.

Sinha launches Swachh initiatives for Yatra

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha launched various Swachh initiatives of Directorate of Rural Sanitation for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2024, at Raj Bhawan on Saturday.

In his address on the occasion, the Lt Governor commended the Directorate of Rural Sanitation. He said the new logo, Swachh Yatra Anthem, Website and mobile application will greatly benefit our objective of Zero-Waste Pilgrimage.

The Lt Governor highlighted the integrated strategy of the UT Administration and Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board aimed at Zero-waste, clean and efficient sanitation system and complete protection to natural resources and environment.

"J&K is at the forefront of promoting sustainable tourism. For this holy Yatra, we have worked a solution through fusion of technology and human resource," the Lt Governor said.

Speaking on the new endeavours, the Lt Governor said the logo 'Shivamsankalpamastu' symbolises the resolve to make Yatra memorable. A dedicated website shivamsankalpamastu.in and Nandi- the Yatra Saathi App will be accurate info source related to Yatra and sanitation, he added.

He also lauded the initiatives aimed at creating awareness among the pilgrims and all the stakeholders. He said the anthem 'Chal Amarnath' symbolises the convergence of spirituality, natural heritage and ecology.

The Lt Governor called upon the officials and all stakeholders to make dedicated efforts for installation of all the requisite facilities in view of the

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First Darshan of Baba Barfani amid commencement of Amarnath Ji Yatra.

Three ITBP personnel among 26 injured in two mishaps

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BANIHAL/JAMMU: At



In one of the accidents, a Kashmir-bound private truck carrying ITBP personnel skidded off the road and fell into a gorge at the Kharpora village of Ramban district along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, officials said.

Three jawans and a civilian driver were injured in the accident. They were rescued and rushed to Banihal Hospital for treatment,

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GST Council tweaks tax rates; waives interest, penalty on tax dues for first 3 years of rollout

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The GST Council on Saturday decided to tweak tax rates on items, including accommodation services for students and solar cookers, and took a host of taxpayer-friendly measures including waiver of interest and penalty for demand notices issued in the first three years of GST rollout.

Briefing reporters after the 53rd GST Council meeting, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Council has recommended to roll-out the biometric-based Aadhaar authentication of registration applicants on pan-India basis in a phased manner. This will help check fraudulent registration done to avail input tax credit and evade taxes.

To reduce litigation, the Council decided to fix a monetary limit for tax officers



to file appeals before the GST Appellate Tribunal, the High Court and the Supreme Court at Rs 20 lakh, Rs 1 crore and Rs 2 crore, respectively.

It also recommended reduction of the quantum of pre-deposit required to be paid by taxpayers for filing of appeals under Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The maximum amount of pre-deposit

for filing appeal with the appellate authority has been reduced from Rs 25 crore CGST and SGST each to Rs 20 crores CGST and SGST each. This will help ease cash flow and working capital blockage for the taxpayers.

"The 53rd GST Council meeting has taken a number of decisions on trade facilitation, easing compliance burden and giving relief to taxpayers in terms of easing compliance," Sitharaman said.

The Minister said the next meeting of the GST Council will be held in August in which the Group of Ministers (GoM) on GST rate rationalisation under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sumant Chaudhary, will give a presentation on the status of the work and aspects covered by the panel and work pending before the

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LS polls presented strength of country's democracy to world: Rajnath

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LUCKNOW: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said the recently-concluded Lok Sabha elections has "effectively presented the strength of the country's democracy and the depth of its strong roots to the world".

Addressing a 'kaarykartaa abhinandan samaaroh' (thanksgiving function for party workers) in Lucknow, Singh said, "More than 64 crore people of the country have voted in this election. Out of this, 23.59 crore people voted for the BJP and 13.67 crore for the Congress."

"For the first time after 62 years since 1962, a person in the form of Shri Narendra Modi has succeeded in becoming the prime minister of India for the third consecutive time," he added.

Highlighting the works done by the BJP-led NDA government, Singh said the last ten years have been truly unprecedented.

"Currently, India's growth rate is the highest in the world. In the last ten years, our exports have increased and the Current Account Deficit has decreased. Opportunities and income, both have increased

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Newborn dies at hospital in Ramban, inquiry ordered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A newborn died at a government hospital in Ramban district, officials said on Saturday, as the hospital authorities ordered an inquiry and suspended four junior staff nurses following accusations of medical negligence. A pregnant woman from Pogal was admitted in the district hospital on Thursday. She gave birth to a healthy baby through caesarean on Friday, the officials said. They said the infant was shifted to the neonatal intensive care unit due to medical complications and died during treatment.

The woman's relatives, including her husband, alleged that the baby died due to negligence by the paramedical staff.

The hospital administration took note of the allegations and placed four junior staff nurses under suspension and also constituted a three-member team of doctors for a thorough inquiry with a directive to submit its report by Sunday, the officials said.

Security of Amarnath Yattris top priority: CS



CS Atal Dulloo inspecting arrangements at Bhagwati Nagar base camp.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo said on Saturday the security of the Amarnath Yattris is a top priority of the administration, as he chaired a meeting to review arrangements at the Bhagwati Nagar base camp.

Accompanied by the Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu zone, Anand Jain, Dulloo went around the heavily guarded base camp to

inspect the arrangements ahead of the annual pilgrimage.

The 52-day pilgrimage will commence via the traditional 48-kilometre Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag and the 14-kilometre shorter but steep Baltal route in Ganderbal on June 29.

"The first batch of pilgrims will be flagged off from here (Bhagwati Nagar) on June 28 and the yatra will start (in Kashmir) the next day. We have come to oversee the arrangements and had a meeting with officers of various departments concerned," the chief secretary told reporters at the base camp.

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NTA DG shunted out over NEET-NET 'paper leak'; Pradeep Singh Kharola appointed as New Chief

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: National Testing Agency (NTA) Director General Subodh Singh was shunted out on Saturday, amid a massive controversy over alleged irregularities in competitive exams NEET and NET.

An official said he has been put on "compulsory wait" in the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) till further orders.

India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) Chairman and Managing Director Pradeep Singh Kharola has been assigned additional charge of the test-

NEET-PG postponed, health ministry to assess robustness of exam process

NEW DELHI: The Union Health Ministry on Saturday said it has decided to postpone the NEET-PG entrance examination, scheduled to be held on June 23, as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of recent allegations on the integrity of certain competitive exams.

Ministry of Health has decided to undertake a thorough assessment of the robustness of processes of the NEET-PG entrance examination, conducted by the National Board of Examination (NTA) for medical students, it said. "It has accordingly been decided, as a precautionary measure to postpone the NEET-PG entrance examination, scheduled to be held tomorrow -- 23rd June, 2024," the ministry said. The fresh date of this examination will be notified at the earliest, it said. "Ministry of Health sincerely regrets the inconvenience caused to the students. This decision has been taken in the best interests of the students and to maintain the sanctity of the examination process," the ministry said.

ing agency till appointment of a regular incumbent.

"NTA DG has been put on compulsory wait in the Department of Personnel

and Training. Pradeep Singh Kharola has been assigned additional charge of NTA DG till further orders," a senior official said. The gov-

ernment has cancelled the UGC-NET even as there are allegations of paper leak in NEET-UG as well and demand for its cancellation.

LG chairs security, development review meeting with DCs, SSPs of Jammu Div

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday chaired a high-level security and district development review meeting in Jammu with the DCs and SSPs of 10 districts of the division and senior officials of Civil and Police Administration.

The meeting was attended by Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; RR Swain, DGP; Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary Home Department; Vijay Kumar, ADGP Law & Order; Nitish Kumar, ADGP CID; Anand Jain, ADGP Jammu; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, DIGs, Deputy



LG Manoj Sinha chairing security and district development review meeting in Jammu.

Commissioners, SSPs and other senior officials.

The Lt Governor reviewed the overall security scenario in the region. He called for close synergy between the Security forces, Civil and Police administration to dismantle the entire terror ecosystem. He said the terrorists and those aiding and abetting them should be neu-

tralised on priority.

The Lt Governor also took stock of the development projects and the progress achieved on saturation of social welfare and other government schemes.

The DCs briefed the chair on the implementation of Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), development of

Industrial Estates and extension of public services.

The meeting also discussed the preparations ahead of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra and important matters related to Yatra Security; traffic management; essential facilities for yattris on the route; lodging; upgradation of roads; distribution of RFID Cards etc.

The Lt Governor also sought the action taken report on the measures taken by the Districts and Police administration to control the increasing incidents of accidents, illegal mining activities, and the steps taken to curb the drug menace.

He highlighted the growing concern of the people over road safety and road accidents in hilly districts of Jammu division resulting in severe injuries and fatalities. To address this issue, the Lt Governor instructed DCs and SSPs to adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards traffic rule violators and strict monitoring and penalization. He said unfit vehicles flouting rules should be immediately identified and impounded.

Infiltration bid foiled in Uri: two terrorists gunned down



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Two terrorists were believed to be killed as security forces foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Uri sector of Baramulla district on Saturday, officials said.

Army personnel noticed suspicious movement along the LoC in the Gohallan area of north Kashmir's Uri

sector, the officials said.

On being challenged, the terrorists opened fire, inviting a retaliation by the Army, the officials said.

They said there was an exchange of fire for some time which has now stopped.

Two militants are believed to have been killed, but their bodies have not been recovered yet as the area is on the LoC, the officials said.

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 39.7°C Min: 24.9°C

Humidity
Max: 40 Min: 27

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 24.8°C Min: 14.5°C

Humidity
Max: 85 Min: 57

Sunset : 19:41 Hours
Sunrise : 05:23 Hours

