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Amarnath flash flood...

National Disaster Response Force. He said the rescuers were clearing the debris to look for survivors as the administration was cross-checking the data of pilgrims to get the exact number of casualties. Every pilgrim has been provided with a Radio Frequency Identification card this time because of terror threats.

Among those who escaped the tragedy was Telangana BJP MLA T Raja Singh. The legislator and his family members, who reached Amarnath by a helicopter, decided to ride ponies on their way back as the weather began deteriorating.

"We sensed that the weather suddenly changed for the worse. In that circumstance, the helicopter service would also be cancelled. So we decided to descend the hills riding ponies. I could see the rains on the hills and then several tents got swept away in the floods," Raja Singh told reporters on Friday night.

The annual pilgrimage, which began on June 30, has been suspended following the tragedy and a decision on its resumption will be taken after rescue operations get over, a senior administration official said.

"Most of the pilgrims, who were stranded near the holy cave shrine area due to the flash flood, have been shifted to Panjtarni. The evacuation continued till 3.38 am. No pilgrim is left on the track. About 15,000 people have been safely shifted till now," the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) spokesperson said.

The BSF spokesperson said medical staff of the paramilitary force treated nine patients who were critically injured in the floods. "They have been shifted to the lower-altitude Neelgrath base camp."

A team of BSF personnel has been deployed at the Neelgrath helipad to assist the pilgrims coming from the cave shrine. About 150 pilgrims stayed at the BSF camp set up in Panjtarni on Friday night and 15 patients have been airlifted to Baltal on Saturday morning, he said.

The injured were being treated at the Nilkant camp in Sonamarg. An integrated command centre has been set up under the charge of the divisional commissioner of Kashmir while helpline numbers have been established in Anantnag in South Kashmir, Srinagar and in Delhi for families of pilgrims to know about the wellbeing of their kin.

An Army official said an infantry battalion led by a colonel along with Quick Reaction Teams, an additional company from the Rashtriya Rifles Sector and a team from special forces had reached the shrine with specialised rescue equipment to undertake the operation.

"Through the night, the senior Army officers of the infantry battalion and Rashtriya Rifles oversaw and coordinated rescue operations. Medical resources at the cave and at Nilgrar were activated and additional resources deployed," he said.

Nine surveillance detachments with hand-held thermal imagers, night-vision devices and other gadgets were deployed for the search operations, the official said

"Two advanced light helicopters were moved for casualty evacuation at the holy cave. However, owing to bad weather, night landing at the cave was unsuccessful. Two Through-Wall Radars and two search and rescue dog squads were also moved to the cave," he added.

However, notwithstanding the flash floods and the deaths, the 11th batch of over 6,000 Amarnath pilgrims left Jammu city on Saturday for the twin base camps in Kashmir.

The 43-day Yatra began on June 30 from the twin routes -- the traditional 48-km path from Nunwan in Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag, and the 14-km shorter but steep Baltal route in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir.

The pilgrimage to the cave shrine is being held after a gap of three years. In 2019, the pilgrimage was cancelled midway ahead of the Centre abrogating Article 370 provisions of the Constitution. The pilgrimage did not take place in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid pandemic.

Army engages high...

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"Two advanced light helicopters (ALHs) were moved for casualty evacuation at the holy cave. However, owing to bad weather, night landing at the cave was unsuccessful. Two Through Wall Radars and two Search And Rescue dog squads were also moved to the cave for the rescue operation," he added.

Giving details of the evacuations, the official said the search, rescue and medical effort continued at daybreak.

"At 6.45 am, the first ALH landed at the site to commence evacuation of the injured. A total of 15 bodies and 63 injured yatriss have been taken out. Both Army and Civilian helicopters are carrying out relentless sorties to evacuate the injured and the dead," he said.

"A total of 28 patients have been evacuated from the cave to advanced dressing station Nilagrar. After stabilising, 11 have further been moved to SKIMS Srinagar in civil helicopters for treatment," he added.

The bodies have been moved from the cave to Nilagrar while stranded yatriss are being escorted by the Indian Army personnel up to Baltal, since the track is slushy and slippery.

"Simultaneously search was also commenced at daybreak at Amarnath Nar at Sangam for any possible casualties," the official said.

Chinar Corps Commander Lt Gen ADS Anjla and Major General Sanjiv Singh Slaria, GOC of counter insurgency Kilo Force visited the Holy Cave early on Saturday to review the rescue and medical efforts being undertaken by the Indian Army. The GOC Chinar Corps also interacted with the yatriss and locals and assured of all possible help from the Army.

Police arrests Hybrid...

During checking, one hybrid terrorist identified as Mohd Iqbal Bhat, son of Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, resident of Tilgam Payeen, linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT was arrested. On his personal search, arms and ammunition including 01 Pistol, 01 Pistol magazine, 7 Pistol rounds was recovered from his possession.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused was involved in providing logistics support for terror activities and was in touch with Pakistani terrorist Saifullah and Abu Zarar. The capture of the hybrid terrorist has evaded major terror plots and busted the module responsible for various recent attacks on PRI members and non-locals. Moreover, the arrested terrorist was also actively involved in providing chemicals and other materials for carrying out an IED attack on National Highway between Narbal and Renji. Interrogation of the arrested terrorist is likely to give further inputs for future counter terrorism operations.

In this connection, a case under relevant sections of law was registered and investigation has been initiated.

Magisterial probe ordered...

Massaratul Islam, officials said.

The Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Ramsoo Vikar Ahmad Giri has been made as enquiry officer to conduct probe into the circumstances leading to the death of newly-born baby on Friday morning, they said.

Following death of the baby, people had also carried out protests on the Jammu Srinagar highway on Friday, due to which the traffic was also effected for some time near Makarkoot in Ramsoo.

Muzaffar Ahmad Sheikh, father of the deceased newborn baby, said his wife Naeema Begum delivered a baby on Friday morning and due to the some health issue of baby, "we decided to shift her to Banihal hospital for treatment."

He said the private vehicle carrying the baby was allegedly not allowed to come on the highway near Makarkoot by police officials posted there for the yatra duty.

He said the baby died in the vehicle and was declared brought dead by doctors at near-by hospital in Ramsoo.

LG urges Yatriss...

ongoing rescue efforts at the holy cave. GoC said all the agencies involved in the rescue and relief operation are working in excellent coordination and they are well equipped to clear the debris.

The Lt Governor said the effort should be made to clear the debris within shortest period of time. DGP while briefing the Lt Governor about the injured devotees said, majority of the injured have already been discharged and few others being treated at base hospital and Srinagar likely to be discharged within 24 hours.

The Lt Governor said, teams from Army, CAPFs, NDRF and SDRF are on the ground and doing commendable job.

He also directed the senior officials, Deputy Commissioners and Camp directors to ensure best possible facilities are provided to the pilgrims staying at camps.

Earlier, Lt Governor had visited SKIMS to enquire about the health of injured pilgrims and subsequently went to PCR Srinagar where he was briefed about the status of sending the mortal remains of deceased pilgrims to their respective hometowns.

R K Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary Home Department; RR Swain, Special DG CID; Vijay Kumar; IGP Kashmir; AOC Air force, besides Nitishwar Kumar; Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and senior officials attended the meeting at Raj Bhawan.

Visits SKIMS, enquires

hometowns. Nitishwar Kumar; Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Mohd Aijaz,

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar and other senior officers of Civil and Police Administration accompanied the Lt Governor.

Cloudburst triggers flash...

floods, they said. No casualty has been reported in the incident, an officer said. Some vehicles were stuck in mudslides and the highway was blocked for some time, but it has now been restored for traffic movement, the officials said.

Kathua police seized...

illegal extraction/transporting of construction material from the area.

All the vehicles were seized and immediately handed over to the officials of Geological and Mining department Kathua for further legal proceedings.

As per data available with the STATE TIMES, during last 4 months more than 30 vehicles and mining machines have been seized by Kathua police while from January 22 to July 22, a total of 71 vehicles and machines have been seized by Kathua police.

There is no check from the department which leads to total chaos and theft of building material in J&K. A senior BJP leader and former MLC Vikram Randhawa, in a press conference, had exposed the nexus of mining mafia in J&K. However, after an action against him from BJP headquarters, Randhawa, President of Jammu Crusher Owners Association, stopped exposing the mining mafia.

A senior police officer said, "Why not legal action be taken against those officials of mining department who are deployed to check the transportation of mining material?. " Huge quantity of mining material is being sold at skyrocketing prices without any check from the administration, the officer added.

LG Sinha, Chugh...

In his message, Dr Jitendra Singh said "Warm greetings and good wishes to all Muslim brothers and sisters in J&K and the country on the occasion of Eid-ul-Zuha."

"The festival of Eid-ul-Zuha epitomises trust, compassion, sacrifice and forgiveness. Let us on this day recall the selfless sacrifice made by Hazrat Ibrahim and engage in the service of humanity. Let us strive to lessen the pain of the suffering and needy. May this festival strengthen our efforts to enhance universal brotherhood, peace and harmony in society," he added.

ADGP Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh wished all ranks of police and their families a joyful Eid. He expressed his hope that the festival will bring joy and happiness among the people of the Jammu province including policemen and their families.

He also directed senior officers to ensure enhanced security, law and order arrangements which should be put in place well in advance at all the places where devotees are going to offer prayers.

In his message ADGP Jammu Zone prayed for peace and prosperity in Jammu Region. "Let all of us work for a crime and violence free UT of J&K," Singh said.

Over 6,000 pilgrims...

from Nunwan in Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag, and the 14-km shorter but steep Baltal route in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir.

However, the pilgrimage has been suspended after the flash flood near the cave shrine on Friday evening swept away scores of people, swamping tents and community kitchens with mud and rocks hurtling down a hillside.

A decision on the resumption of the pilgrimage will be taken after rescue operations get over, a senior administration official said.

A total of 6,048 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu city in a convoy of 279 vehicles amid heavy CRPF security, officials said.

They said 1,404 pilgrims, heading for Baltal, were the first to leave the Bhagvati Nagar camp in 115 vehicles around 3.30 am followed by the second convoy of 164 vehicles carrying 4,014 pilgrims for Pahalgam.

With this, 69,535 pilgrims have left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp for the Valley since June 29, the day the first batch of pilgrims was flagged off by Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha.

Till Saturday, over one lakh pilgrims have offered their prayers at the cave shrine, the officials said. The yatra is scheduled to end on August 11 on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan.

Govt moots regulation...

and Siddha drugs and cosmetics.

The draft bill has been put up in the Union health ministry's website and suggestions, comments and objections from the public and stakeholders have been sought within 45 days from the date of issue of the notice (July 8).

The work of review and updating of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 was vigorously taken up from 2016.

"In light of recommendations of the central government and the felt need to have comprehensive legislation, a committee was constituted for framing the New Drugs, Cosmetics and Medical Devices Bill.

"As per recommendations of the committee, the Ministry of Health a proposes a draft New Drugs, Medical Devices and Cosmetics Bill, 2022 in order to keep pace with changing needs, times, and technology," the ministry said.

The draft bill introduces various new definitions or provisions like bioequivalence study, bioavailability study, clinical trial, clinical investigation, controlling authority, manufacturer, medical device, new drugs, over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, adulterated cosmetics, etc. for more clarity and smooth functioning and implementation, an official said.

It proposes for the constitution of a separate Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) and Medical Devices Technical Advisory Board (MDTAB), comprising experts from various associations to advise the central government in technical matters.

The penalties for offences related to import of drugs and cosmetics have been enhanced appropriately, the official said.

The proposed bill provides for regulation of clinical trial of new drugs, investigational new drugs, ethics committee, etc.

"However, in the interest of public health or extreme urgency of drugs, the central government is empowered to make provisions for Central Licensing Authority to waive the requirement of conducting clinical trial for manufacture or import of a new drugs or investigational new drugs in the country," the draft read.

"Where a participant during a clinical trial suffers injury or death on account of his participation in such investigation, provision has been made to provide compensation and medical management to such participants," it stated.

Currently all these provisions are there in the Rules but now it has been proposed in the bill, the official said.

But in the existing rules there is no provision to impose penalties such imprisonment on the erring firms or persons for failure to provide compensation to trial participants in the clinical trial for both drugs and medical devices.

The new draft bill mentions, "Where any person permitted under sub-section (1) of section 72 fails to provide the required medical management or compensation under section 73, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to one year or with fine which shall not be less than twice the amount of compensation."

In the existing Act, medical devices are treated as drugs and there is no separate definition of medical devices.

So in the proposed bill provisions have been made for regulation of medical devices, investigational medical devices, clinical investigation of investigational medical devices, etc in a separate chapter with a view of better understanding of the stakeholders and administration of the law on the subject.

"Separate chapter for medical devices will give distinct treatment to it in line with international practices to boost quality, consumer confidence and expectations of the stakeholders," the official explained.

Further, provisions have been made, inter alia, for, risk-based classification of medical devices based on their intended use, risk and vulnerability to the human body.

"Like as for drugs, the proposed bill envisages provisions relating to clinical investigation in respect of investigational medical devices. However, in the interest of public health or extreme urgency of a medical device, the central government is empowered to waive the requirement of conducting clinical investigation for manufacture or import of a new medical device in the country.

"Where a participant during a clinical investigation suffers injury or death on account of his participation in such investigation, provision has been made to provide compensation and medical management to such participant," the draft said.

Under the new bill, permission has to be taken to operate an e-pharmacy.

"No person shall himself or by any other person on his behalf sell, or stock or exhibit or offer for sale, or distribute, any drug by online mode (e-pharmacy) except under and in accordance with a licence or permission issued in such manner as may be prescribed," the draft said.

In the draft bill, provisions have been incorporated to designate or establish medical device testing centres by the central government for testing and evaluation of medical devices for regulators and industry.

Provisions have been made for adjudication of penalty with fine imposed by adjudicating officer authorised by respective governments for certain minor offences. This will ensure lesser scope for litigation and quicker resolution of minor compliance related issues, the official explained.

Every police officer shall be bound to assist a drugs control officer demanding his assistance in the investigation and preventing the escape of any person who is suspected to commit an offence under this Act or in the prevention of any injury attempted by the person to be committed against the drugs control officer, according to the draft bill.

Several Amarnath devotees...

the base camp established outside the holy cave and were waiting for their turn to have darshan at the evening Aarti (prayer) when the cloudburst struck on Friday at around 5.30 pm.

"Only one person managed to have darshan. I couldn't have darshan as we were standing just outside the cave shrine in a tent. When the water came, there was chaos, there was landslide, we came out," Subham Verma from Patna said while recalling the horror that followed the cloudburst last night.

As soon as Verma and his companions came out of the tents, a massive landslide hit the camp site.

"Just two minutes after we crossed, landslides came but we saved ourselves. Whatever losses in terms of our belongings we incurred, we are not pained by it," he said.

Another pilgrim Rajan Soni said the rescuers gave them very little time to evacuate from the camp to safer places.

"Do we watch others or ourselves. We left our belongings there. When we returned, Army personnel told us nothing remains there. The Army told us to evacuate in 20 minutes and go to the safe zone. So, we reached the safe zone," Soni said.

The group is leaving without having darshan but are determined to come back next year. "We are leaving for home, without darshan. But, we will come back, for sure," they said. At least 16 persons have died and scores of others injured while many are missing after the cloudburst which were followed by landslides.

More than 15,000 pilgrms were at different stages of the arduous track to the 3,880 metre high cave shrine from both Pahalgam and Baltal routes but were asked to return to the base camp. Massive relief and rescue operations have been launched by the Army, NDRF, ITBP, BSF, CRPF and local police to ensure the safety of the pilgrims.

Hand-held thermal imagers, sniffer dogs and night vision devices were put in service as the searches for missing persons continued through the night.

Helicopters could be making sorties as early as 6.45 am on Saturday, evacuating the injured to hospitals for better treatment while bigger choppers were used to carry the bodies of the deceased to Srinagar for their onward final journey to their native places.

Restoration of peace...

Sabha members -- three from the National Conference and two from the BJP. There are no Rajya Sabha members from the union territory as on date.

"If elected, I shall perform my duty as the custodian of the Constitution without fear or favour. One of my priorities would be to urge the government to take all necessary steps to resolve Kashmir issue permanently, and restore peace, justice, democracy, normalcy and holistic development to Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha told reporters here.

He also claimed that harmony in the country has been destroyed but the nation will fight back as it has its own temperament against communalism.

He said it was deeply regrettable that the Supreme Court is yet to begin hearing the matter related to abrogation of articles 370 and 35A nearly three years after the central government revoked them.

"Long pendency of constitutional cases erodes the credibility of the apex court," he said, adding the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir should be restored and free and fair elections to the assembly should be held at the earliest.

"I am opposed to forcible and manipulative demographic change in Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

Sinha also said the central government has failed in its promise to create conditions for the safe and dignified return and resettlement of Kashmiri Pandits.

"It must fulfill the promise not only for Kashmiri Pandits but also for all others who were forced to migrate out of Kashmir," he sid.

Sinha said Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an all-party meeting in June 2020 had promised to remove the "dil ki doori" and "Dilli ki doori" (the distance from the heart and Delhi). "Over two years have passed and the promise remains unfulfilled."

He said he had great personal regard for the NDA candidate Droupadi Murmu.

"However, from Srinagar, I urge her to make same affirmations and promises I have made. The people of Jammu and Kashmir also expect this assurance from her," he added.

The opposition candidate said he was asked the rationale behind his Srinagar visit as Jammu and Kashmir was largely unrepresented in the presidential election.

"I told them I am going to Srinagar to highlight the injustice done to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. I would like the people of rest of India to know how their compatriots in Jammu and Kashmir have been robbed of their fundamental and democratic rights," he said.

Responding to another question, he said Jammu and Kashmir cannot be won over through management.

"There is no will to fight out the injustice in Jammu and Kashmir. Perhaps, that is why there are no assembly elections. Perhaps that is why the unnecessary delimitation exercise was carried out which has done justice to none. They should know that Jammu and Kashmir cannot be won over by management," he added.

Asked the general atmosphere in the country, he said, "The situation in entire country has worsened. The harmony that existed in the country has been destroyed. The condition of the economy is known to everyone and there is no need to go in details today."

Amarnath flash floods...

reported 31 mm of rainfall between 4.30 pm and 6.30 pm on Friday, which is quite low to be categorised as a cloudburst. "The flash floods could have been triggered due to rain-fall in the higher reaches of the mountains near the Amarnath cave shrine," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra told PTI.

According to the IMD, a rain event is categorised as a cloudburst if a weather station receives 100 mm of rain in one hour:

The IMD has an automatic weather station near the Amarnath cave shrine which provides weather forecasts during the pilgrimage. However, the surrounding mountains do not have any weather monitoring stations due to their inaccessibility.

At least 16 people were killed and tents and community kitchens near the shrine were swamped with mud and rocks that came hurtling down with a gush of water after a spell of rain on Friday evening. "It was a highly localised cloud only over the holy cave. Such rain had happened earlier this year as well," said Sonam Lotus, Director of the Regional Meteorological Centre in Srinagar.

The region above the Amarnath cave shrine received 28 mm of rainfall between 5.30 pm and 6.30 pm, a scientist from the IMD said.

Weather scientists said it was very difficult to predict cloudbursts due to their very small scale in space and time. To monitor or issue nowcast, a dense radar network over the cloudburst-prone areas is required or one needs to have very high-resolution weather forecasting models to resolve the scale of such events.

Farooq calls for...

an inquiry commission to know how it happened and why it happened," Abdullah told reporters after meeting Yashwant Sinha, the joint opposition candidate for the July 18 presidential polls, here. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister questioned the decision to set up tents and "langar" (community kitchen) at such a vulnerable area.

"The location of the tents and langars is such that I do not think these things were done there earlier. Panjtarni is such a nice area for this. This needs to be investigated, maybe it is a human error," Abdullah said. He said the kin of the victims should be given compensation and steps should be taken to ensure that such incidents do not take place again. The death toll in the flash floods triggered by heavy rain near the Amarnath cave shrine rose to 16 on Saturday as the search operations continued without a break amid fears that many are still trapped under the debris.

Need of moral education equally important: Karwani

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Sharda Institute of Computer Education run by Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra on Saturday organized a seminar at Sharda Bhawan, Anand Nagar here. Students from its both institutes Anand Nagar centre and Jagti centre participated in the seminar.

JKAS officer, Arvind Karwani was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

The Chief Guest, while hailing the interest of students in culture and history, stressed upon the need of moral education in the younger generation besides competing in the modern education of science and technology.

He stressed for preservation of our mother tongue and learning of Shremad Bhagwat Geeta.

Karwani hailed the efforts of Kendra for imparting moral education among the students besides technical education.

Among Students Drluv Kumar, Sanjana Rajput, Akanksha Raina, Upasana Tiekoo, Chandan and Rupal Koul from Jagti and Anand Nagar centers spoke on the topics of Guru Teg Bahadur and Vaidya Raj Shriya Bhat.

Among other cultural activities the recitation Hanuman Chalisa and a soulful Bajan among the students by Shruti Verma, Meenakshi Chaudhary and Pallavi Gupta laid a great impression on the participants.

All the students were presented a copy of Hunman Chalisa by the Chief Guest in company with Piary Lal Bhat who was presiding over the function.

The vote of thanks was presented by the Dwarika Nath Raina General Secretary of Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra.

The programme started with introduction of the guests by C. L Garoo and subsequent with Deep Prajolan.

Programme was compered by Amisha Raina, faculty member of the Institute.



Chief Guest, Arvind Karwani distributing Hanuman Chalisa among students.