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Big push given...

constables, operation of Langars and security forces at lower Holy Cave, installation of railings and heli services with the officers of the control room and appreciated the exemplary work done by the team.

The Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board's (SASB) control room is working 24x7 and coordinating with various stakeholders on the ground to ensure hassle-free pilgrimage.

Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, CEO, SASB, Rahul Singh, Additional CEO SASB and other senior officers were present during the meeting.

Meanwhile, marking beginning of the annual Yatra, the first batch of pilgrims was flagged off by Secretary Planning Development & Monitoring Department, (Nodal Officer for Yatra via Baltal Axis), Dr Raghav Langer, for revered Amarnath Shrine from Domail, Baltal base camp, Ganderbal.

Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Shyambir and SSP Ganderbal Nikhil Borkar, Camp Director Baltal, ADDC Ganderbal besides other officials from district administration, police and other security agencies were present on the occasion

The pilgrims were seen enthusiastically chanting religious hymns while moving forward towards the Holy Cave of Lord Shiva.

Pertinently, all requisite arrangements with regard to basic amenities, healthcare and security arrangements have been put in place at the base camps and enroute the Holy Cave for comfort and convenience of devotees who are thronging the region for their pious pilgrimage.

Similarly, Secretary Revenue, (Nodal Officer for Yatra via Pahalgam Axis), Dr Piyush Singla flagged off first batch of pilgrims from the Nunwan base camp for the Amarnath Shrine.

DIG SKR, Rayees Mohammad Bhat, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, S F Hamid, SSP Anantnag Ashish Mishra, Camp Director Nunwan, CEO PDA besides other officials from district administration, police and other security agencies were present on the occasion

Adequate facilities have been made to ensure smooth conduct of the 62 day pilgrimage, Singla said, adding, "The endeavour is to make sure that the pilgrims feel secure and visit the shrine peacefully."

Second batch of...

flagged off the first batch of pilgrims for the annual Amarnath Yatra from the Bhagvati Nagar base camp on Friday.

The 62-day-long pilgrimage commenced from Kashmir on Saturday on the twin tracks the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in the Anantnag district and the shorter but steep 14-km-long Baltal route in the Ganderbal district.

"We are very happy to start for Amarnath. I have always longed to see the 'ice lingam' of Lord Shiva," 62-year-old Surinder Joshi from Rajasthan told PTL. Joshi is undertaking the pilgrimage along with his wife Kusum.

A multi-tier security setup has been activated in and around the Bhagwati Nagar base camp for the annual pilgrimage.

Thirty-three accommodation centres have been set up across Jammu and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags are being issued to the pilgrims.

Five counters have been set up for the registration of pilgrims who intend to undertake the yatra. So far, more than 3.5 lakh people have registered themselves online for the pilgrimage.

If anyone tries...

districts are in Chhattisgarh. I can claim the LWE would have been wiped out of the country had the Congress government fully cooperated," Singh said.

Further targeting the Bhupesh Baghel government, the defence minister alleged that incidents of religious conversion were on rise in Chhattisgarh, particularly in tribal-dominated Bastar region, and said it was not acceptable.

The Congress government should take measures to stop forced religious conversions, he said, adding that the Centre will extend support to the state in the matter if necessary.

Highlighting the Modi government's pro-tribals measures, he said it created a separate budget of Rs 90,000 crore for the welfare of tribals and declared November 15 as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.

Talking further about tribal welfare in a state where elections are due by year-end, the senior BJP leader said, "The tribal society had played an active role in driving out Britishers from the country. If we talk about the role of tribal communities in building the country, some people feel strange. It means the country was not told about the contribution of the tribal community and even if it was, very little was told about them. After independence, those who ruled the country for many years gave priority to themselves and their politics. Congress forgot the tribal community and neglected them."

Now, houses, toilets and roads are being constructed in tribal-dominated areas, electricity lines are being put up and free health facilities and schools are being provided, Singh added.

Prime minister Modi has the same commitment to the welfare of Dalits, tribals and backward classes as former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said.

Singh also slammed the Baghel government over corruption, claiming, " in five years of Congress rule, scams took place in multiple sectors."

He mentioned the `Gauthan' land scam, ration scam, liquor scam and coal scam in the state, adding that the last one was the Congress's favourite as there was a coal scam when the party was in power at the Centre too.

"Wherever they go, they commit coal scam," he said.

On the elevation of T S Singh Deo as Chhattisgarh deputy Chief Minister, Singh said, " They have appointed a deputy CM for three month. Baghel ji, you will not be able to save your government by distributing lollipops. The people have decided to vote out the Congress."

While the Congress-led UPA rule was ridden by scams, no one can level a single allegation of corruption against the Modi government, he said.

"We do not tolerate corruption. If a corruption charge is leveled against any of our ministers, his or her place will be in jail," the Union minister added.

"We fulfilled our promises to scrap Article 302 operating in Jammu and Kashmir and build Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. No other place of worship in the world will be as magnificent as the Ram Mandir being constructed in Ayodhya. People can visit it after January 24 next year," he said.

Singh also hailed Padma Shri recipient Ajay Mandavi, known for teaching wood calligraphy to jail inmates including those arrested in Naxal-related cases in Kanker and encouraging them to return to the mainstream.

Before the rally, Singh visited Mandavi at his house in Kanker as a part of the BJP's Mahajansampark Abhiyan (public outreach campaign).

Delhi resident among...



Accused persons in police custody.

indulging in arranging bus service and medical certificates for devotees," the SSP said, adding the accused were running this racket and selling fake registration slips to devotees duping them of their hard earned money.

During raids, a computer and a printer used in the crime have also been seized and further investigation is going on. The SSP appealed to the intending devotees to register themselves only through notified government means and not to fall prey to deceptive tricks of such criminals.

Amarnath Yatra: Journey...

central Kashmir's Ganderbal district and Pahalgam in Anantnag district in the south.

At the Baltal base camp too, hundreds of pilgrims lined up at the access control gate early morning where the first batch of around 6,000 pilgrims was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Shyambir and other senior officers.

Raman Worlikar, a pilgrim from Mumbai, said he has been performing the yatra for the past many years now. "We wait for Baba's glimpse for a year. We are enthusiastic for the yatra. We pray that the yatra remains incident-free."

The pilgrims -- men, including sadhus, women, old, young and children -- wore their faith on the sleeves as they began the walk to the naturally formed ice-lingam at the cave shrine.

Asked whether they would make any special prayers, the yatris said they will pray that there is prosperity and good health all around "In J-K and across the country."

"We will also pray there is no incident like last year's flash floods and everyone performs the yatra smoothly," said another pilgrim from Mumbai.

A group of yatris from Punjab said they want to thank Baba for everything he has bestowed them with. "I have been coming here continuously since 2009, except for the coronavirus period. This yatra goes on smoothly. Everyone leaves happy from here. Baba listens to everyone. Those who come once, come again," said one of them.

Most of the pilgrims were happy with the arrangements made by the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) and the J-K administration.

However, some alleged the process to procure registration cards at the base camp were not up to the mark.

The yatra also presents a snapshot of the syncretic culture of Jammu and Kashmir with the local Muslims playing vital role at all points of the pilgrimage "like lifeline".

Deputy Commissioner Shyambir said the yatra would not be possible without the support of the local people. They provide most of the services including pony rides or 'palkie' rides.

The locals made it to the base camp early in the morning to provide gear like trekking poles made of wood, caps, raincoats etc, to the pilgrims. Many locals have also set up stalls inside the base camp, selling a wide variety of merchandise for the pilgrims.

The Army has said a robust and dynamic security grid complete with the deployment of snipers, anti-drone systems, bomb disposal and dog squads has been put in place to ensure a safe and secure yatra.

The multi-tier security arrangements include domination of the mountains, sanitisation of the yatra route, and round-the-clock domination of the area using the latest night vision devices.

The army's Special Forces are keeping a watch over the yatra route from vantage locations, the army said.

Apart from the deployment, drone surveillance and RFID chips are also a part of the multi-tier security arrangements for pilgrims. The peaks leading to the holy cave have been covered by the security forces and a round-the-clock vigil is being maintained.

The yatra this year is the longest-ever, stretching 62 days. It will culminate on August 31 on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, meanwhile, chaired a review meeting on control room operations set up at Raj Bhawan here for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

He reviewed the queue management, deployment of security personnel, women constables, operation of langars and security forces at lower Holy Cave, installation of railings and heli services with the officers of the control room and appreciated the exemplary work done by the team, an official spokesman said.

The Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board's (SASB) control room is working 24x7 and coordinating with various stakeholders on the ground to ensure hassle-free pilgrimage, he said.

"A big push has been made to improve the facilities for pilgrims and to provide the best of comfort to make the spiritual journey a pleasurable experience," the Lt Governor said.

In Jammu, officials said security arrangements this year are more elaborate than the previous years. Deputy Inspector General of Police, Jammu-Samba-Kathua range, Shakti Pathak warned of legal action against those involved in duping Amarnath pilgrims by providing fake registration permits.

Over 430 Amarnath pilgrims were found in possession of fake registration permits in Jammu, Kathua and Samba district on Friday.

"Those involved in cheating the pilgrims (by selling fake registration slips) are putting them to unnecessary trouble and grave risk. All such pilgrims were facilitated but an investigation is on to identify the wrong-doers. They will face action," the officer told reporters during his visit to Lakhampur corridor, the gateway to Jammu and Kashmir, to review yatra arrangements.

"All the requirements of the pilgrims like boarding and lodging have been taken care of. The security is better than before," he said, adding that even the community kitchens were set up inside the four walls for the safety of the pilgrims.

The DIG said the security along the borders and the highway have been tightened and all the concerned security agencies are keeping a close watch.

Robust, dynamic security...

from vantage locations, he said. "We have also deployed snipers, anti-drone systems, bomb disposal and dog squads to ensure a safe and secure Yatra," the commander said.

The army has augmented a number of yatri camps with adequate tentage facilities to provide additional habitat during, Brigadier Rajput said.

"We have also made available helpdaps at multiple locations for medical emergencies and to cater to other airlift requirements for the yatra," he added.

A whole-of-the-nation approach has been followed to synergise efforts, and the army has offered its expertise in mountain rescue to civil agencies and trained Mountain Rescue and Avalanche Rescue teams of various agencies, he said.

"In addition, we have conducted joint exercises and mock drills to ensure seamless and successful rescue operations, if and when required," the army officer said.

He said based on the experiences of the cloudburst during the yatra last year, rescue teams and earth-movers are being placed at the Holy Cave and multiple locations enroute for any emergencies.

Modern equipment are also available for effective response and meet any contingencies, he added.

"We assure you that till the time last yatri is back from his pious visit to Shri Amarnath, we, the Indian Army, is here to ensure your security, safety and well being always and every time," Brigadier Rajput said.

19th All India...

prisons and at police stations. The role of legal services authorities in rehabilitations of prisoners after release was also discussed in the session.

The third session extensively dealt with court based legal aid with subject area encompassing Legal Aid Defence Counsel System(LADCS), its existing status in States/UTs, selection criteria at various levels and office space and infrastructure relating to the system. A discussion was also held regarding resizing the panel of Legal Aid Counsels and the concept of Open Prisons and role of Legal Services institutions in context thereof.

In the fourth session, the subject area of legal empowerment and Eco-Justice was deliberated, discussions were focussed on need based and area specific legal services covering the subjects of "Reach-Out", awareness and community participation in dispute resolution. The role of Legal Services institution in eco-justice was also discussed in this session. The fifth session exclusively dealt with the utilisation and audit of NALSA grants.

Pertinently, the 19th All India Legal Services Authorities Meet was inaugurated by Justice Dr. D.Y. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India in presence of Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Judge Supreme Court of India & Executive Chairman NALSA; Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Judge Supreme Court of India & Chairman Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, Judges of Supreme Court of India, Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for Law and Justice; Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir; Brig. Dr. BD Mishra, Lieutenant Governor UT of Ladakh; Justice N. Kotiswar Singh, Chief Justice High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh & Patron-in-Chief J&K Legal Services Authority; Justice Tashi Rabstan Judge High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh & Executive Chairman J&K Legal Services Authority and Ladakh and Judges of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh. D.C Raina Advocate General; Senior Advocates, Officers from the Civil Administration, Police department, Registry of Supreme Court and High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Judicial Officers, Prominent NGOs, Law students also, attended the inaugural function.

The Meet was also attended by Chief Justices of High Courts, Executive Chairpersons State Legal Services Authorities, Chairpersons High Court Legal Services Committees, Member Secretaries SLASAs and Member Secretaries of HCLSCs. The programme concluded with the valedictory session and concluding remarks by the chair.

Facilitate movement of...

of CCTVs on National Highway, Motor bikes, interceptors and their outcomes. He called for a detailed report to be submitted to him about the same within a couple of days. He also emphasised on taking full advantage of Integrated Command and Control Centres established in both the capital cities for better management of traffic. He asked for fully switching to e-Challaning in the city limits for having better control over the traffic and its violators.

Regarding the movement of yatra and other tourists, the Chief Secretary said that all of them should be facilitated and there should be no undue restrictions on any-

one. He stated that adherence to time discipline in terms of ROP is the part of SOP that is largely aimed at ensuring safety of one and all. He emphasised on creating ample awareness about these timings at all the base camps including tourist locations of Pahalgam and Sonamarg etc so that people are able to comply readily and enjoy visits to the breath-taking locales of J&K.

As far as the satisfaction level of general tourists is concerned, Dr Mehta instructed both the Divisional Commissioners to take RAS feedback from at least 100 of them daily on both the yatra axis about their travel experience. He asked for recording the hourly volume of traffic from Jammu at major diversions like that of Nagrota, Domail, Udhampur; Nashri Tunnel, Ramban, Banihal, Navyug Tunnel, Qazigund, Mirbazar; Khanabal, Sangam, Pampore till reaching Srinagar to have insights into it for making strategies accordingly.

The other instructions passed on by the Chief Secretary during the meeting included providing opportunities to the locals to do trade as per the past practice, strictly complying with RFID based registrations, restriction on overcrowding of passenger vehicles besides taking all the measures of waste collection and cleanliness enroute, in and around the base camps for pleasant experience of all the devotees.

Every farmer getting...

does not affect farmers, he said and added that this 'Modi guarantee' has been provided by the BJP-ruled central government.

Modi further highlighted that farmers are getting a bag (45 kg) of urea at around Rs 270, which is much lower than Rs 720 in Bangladesh, Rs 800 in Pakistan, Rs 2,100 in China and more than Rs 3,000 in America.

The government has spent over Rs 10 lakh crore towards the fertilizer subsidy in the last nine years to ensure that farmers get crop nutrients at a reasonable price, he said, and quipped "isse badi guarantee kya hoti hai? (can there be a bigger guarantee than this)!"

Stating that the Centre has been serious about ensuring remunerative price for farmers' produce since 2014, Modi said the government has increased the MSP and also provided more than Rs 15 lakh crore to farmers in the last nine years through procurement of foodgrains at MSP.

He also informed about the recent package of Rs 3.7 lakh crore for the fertiliser sector as well as increase in fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane farmers at Rs 315 per quintal.

The prime minister also talked about the role of cooperatives in making India self-reliant and a developed country by 2047.

He asked cooperatives to become carriers of social and national policy instead of politics.

Modi stressed that cooperatives should become a model of transparency and corruption-free governance, and urged them to adopt digital tools in a big way.

He called upon cooperatives to work towards increasing production of oilseeds and pulses, and help the country become self-reliant in cooking oils.

11 unexploded shells...

to their lives, would be cleared from Kargil villages gradually.

Mishra's remarks had come after the public decried the presence of a large number of unexploded shells from the army firing range and the 1999 Kargil war in Kurbathang and other areas.

"The whole area will be sanitised. An operation will be launched immediately to look for the blinds and other dangerous ordnance which will be cleared in a time-bound manner," the Lt Governor had told reporters at a Kargil hospital where he had gone to inquire about the condition of two boys injured in the blast.

HC quashes FIR registered by Crime Branch

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court quashed the FIR No. 9/2018 U/S 409/420/120-B RPC registered with respondent-Crime Branch.

Justice M A Chowdhary while quashing the FIR, observed that the Crime Branch of Police is only competent to register and investigate those cases which are either by reference made by the government or Director General of Police or regarding the offences contained in the Annexure to SRO 202 dated 03.06.1999.

The contention of the learned Sr. AAG relying upon the Apex Court judgment (supra) that on conclusion of investigation, when offences are proved to have been committed, the matter should be left to be considered by Trial court and the High Court should not quash the proceedings, in the considered opinion of this court is misplaced for the reason that the impugned FIR, entirely on a legal question, without reference to factual issues, is liable to be quashed. For the foregoing reasons and observations made hereinabove, it is, by now, clear that the case on hand arising out of the FIR No.09/2018 for the commission of offences punishable under sections 409/420/120-B RPC for want of jurisdiction, cannot be investigated by the Crime Branch of Police having regard to the fact that the notification SRO No. 202 dated 03.06.1999, issued by Government of J&K clearly envisages the offences where Crime Branch of Police is only authorized to register and investigate and none of the offences are included in the schedule.

The petitioner, through the medium of this petition seeks quashment of FIR No.9/2018, registered at Police Station Crime Branch, Jammu on 06.04.2018, for the commission of offences punishable under sections 409/420/120-B RPC allegedly on false/fimsy grounds, being an abuse of process of law.

It has been pleaded that the petitioner was member of the Hindu Education Society, Kashmir (HESK), a registered society which is social and non political body of minority Kashmiri community in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, established to promote and propagate the cause of education, learning, research and training and also for propagating/promoting social and cultural activities in the State of J&K and outside in consonance with the ideas of the Hindu Religion and Culture, so that the minority community enjoys the benefits and privileges as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

A proposal was mooted by the then president of HESK to purchase around 200 kanals of land in and around Jammu city which was supported by U. K. Handoo, member finance and both of them got in touch with Jagdish Singh, Patwari, who promised to them to facilitate the proposed land purchase and in the month

of January 2006, a proposal was circulated amongst members of the Executive Body, however, that at the relevant time, petitioner was not holding any office of HESK and it was only in the month of December 2010, that he was elected as member of the executive body.

It was further claimed that a purchase committee was constituted consisting of President, Member Finance and Dr. C N Tiekoo as members of the Committee and the process of purchase of land was commenced; that the land was purchased with the help of one Dalip Singh S/O Ram Singh, who acted as a facilitator and a total land of 191 kanals was purchased by HESK from time to time; that realizing that the whole process of purchase of land was being delayed, various meetings were convened for speeding up of the purchase of land and in a meeting of Land Purchase Committee on 11.01.2007, under the chairmanship of Sh. Avtar Krishan Diwani with many members of executive body participating, authorized Sh. U. K. Handoo and Dr. C N Tiekoo to expedite the purchase of land and report to the executive body. The land continued to be purchased through registration made by Sh. U. K. Handoo, however, neither physical possession of the land purchased was handed over to HESK, nor any mutation was recorded in the name of this society; that in the month of September 2009, the said Sh. U.K. Handoo resigned from the executive body of HESK from the post of Member Finance and Sh. Avtar Krishan Diwani was authorized to take over the charge of Member Finance.

It is further pleaded in the petition that in the month of December 2010, the elections to the executive body of HESK were held and the new team was constituted having Anil Dhar as president, A.K. Raina as General Secretary and a team of 7 more members including the petitioner herein.

The new executive body, after some investigations, came to know about the hide and seek policy regarding the purchase of land. In an Annual General Meeting (AGM), the executive body was authorized to take any reasonable expenditure to get the process completed with regard to demarcation, mutation and possession of the property/land. It is further pleaded that the term of the petitioner along with other elected members, expired in the year 2014 and, eventually, the petitioner was no more the office bearer of HESK. It was alleged further that to the utter shock and surprise of the petitioner, an FIR was registered against the petitioner and few others at Police Station Crime Branch, Jammu. The petitioner has moved this petition seeking quashment of the FIR, on various grounds, including that no offence is made out on the basis of the evidence, as such, it is an abuse of process of law and prayed that the petition be allowed and prayed that the impugned FIR be quashed qua the petitioner.