

Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2015

Governor reviews situation at Baltal Base Camp

Srinagar, July 25: Following the situation which has emerged at Baltal Base Camp consequent to heavy rains and a cloud burst at 11 pm last night Governor N.N.Vohra, who is the Chairman of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), convened an urgent review meeting this morning at the Raj Bhavan.

Shri P.K. Tripathi, CEO, SASB informed the Governor that the heavy rains and a cloud burst in the higher reaches of the area adjoining the Baltal Base Camp last night had led to a huge down flow of debris which covered the entire area adjoining the main gate of the Baltal Base Camp. Senior Civil and police officers and the Yatra Camp Director, along with personnel of J&K Police, NDRF, SDRF, Army and Central Armed Police Forces immediately swung into action to carry out search and rescue operations.

CEO reported that as per the latest available reports around 50 tents/shops and the parking area outside the main gate of the Baltal Base Camp had been very badly affected. The dead bodies of Deepak Singh S/o Shri Gopal Prasad R/o Sunder Nagri, Delhi, and two children namely Miss Pooja (13 years) d/o Shri Prakash r/o Rajasthan and Shri Vikram (12 years) s/o Shri Kailash r/o Rajasthan have been recovered. The families of the aforesaid two children had set up road side kiosks on the track leading to the Yatra Camp. Dog squads have been deployed to assist in the ongoing search and rescue operations.

It was reported that one seriously injured person, namely Shri Abdul Karim, r/o Shopian, who was working as a Ponywalla, was air lifted early this morning to SKIMS Srinagar after the matter was reported by CEO to Chairman. The latter has asked CEO to airlift, at

the Shrine Board's cost, all seriously injured persons and arrange their best medical treatment. 10 other persons who suffered minor injuries were admitted to the Baltal Base Hospital for medical attention and are now reported to be out of danger. All the injured persons expect one have since been discharged from the Base Hospital.

As directed by Chairman, Shri Jatindra Kumar Singh Additional CEO, SASB left for Baltal early today morning. Shri Showkat Aijaz Bhat, Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal and Shri Imtiaz Ismail, SSP, Ganderbal also reached Baltal early this morning for supervising the rescue and relief operations.

The Sonamarg-Ghumri road is closed to vehicular traffic following damages caused by several landslides and the Border Road Organization has been directed to deploy its men and machinery to remove blockades and ensure the earliest possible opening of the road.

Meanwhile, the pilgrimage has continued from both the Pahalgam and Baltal routes, and 2940 persons left from Chandanwari Access Control Gate and 1276 persons from the Domel Access Control Gate by 11 am tofday morning. Helicopter services from both Pahalgam and Neelgrath helipads are also operating and over 2200 Yatris had paid obeisance at the Holy Cave by 12 noon today.

Governor has expressed grief over the loss of precious lives and conveyed his heartfelt condolence to the families of those killed. He has asked CEO to arrange immediate payment of ex-gratia relief of Rs.1.00 lac each to next of kin of the deceased persons. The Governor has also conveyed thanks to GOC XV Corps for his prompt personal initiatives to deal with the unforeseen disaster at Baltal.

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