1012 pilgrims leave for Machail Mata

1591 yatris perform darshan at Amarnath shrine on 36th day

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 2: On 36th day of pilgrimage, 1591 yatris today performed darshan at holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnath ji in South Kashmir Himalayas of Anantnag district taking total number of yatris paying obeisance to Lord Shiva during this year's 55 days long annual pilgrimage to 3,38,591.

The yatra was progressing smoothly on twin tracks of Baltal and Pahalgam. The weather was also normal despite early morning rains, official sources said.

A new batch of 776 pilgrims including women and Sadhus today left Nunwan in Pahalgam and Baltal base camps for the holy cave shrine early this morning despite normal rains.

The pilgrimage, which commenced from June 28 from both Baltal and Pahalgam routes, was going on smoothly, sources said.

They said despite intermittent rains and cloudy weather, 401 pilgrims, including women and Sadhus, left Nunwan, Pahalgam base camp for Chandanwari, the last motorable halting station on the route. However, those who had night halt at different halting stations, including Chandanwari, also started their onward journey towards the cave shrine.

Sources said 375 yatris left Baltal base camp for the cave shrine.

A batch of 276 pilgrims today left the Jammu base camp for the cave shrine of Amarnath ji.

A convoy of eight vehicles carrying the 36th batch of 276 devotees left the Yatri Niwas at Bhagwati Nagar around 5.05 am to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva.

The batch, comprising 169 men, 23 women and 84 Sadhus reached twin base camps of Pahalgam and Baltal tonight.

A pilgrim has died due to heart attack enroute cave shrine of Amarnath ji, sources said, adding that with this killing the death toll during ongoing pilgrimage has reached 13.

Sixty-year-old Komal Prakash of Shivpura belt of Madhya Pradesh suffered the heart attack at Panjtarni enroute the cave shrine and was shifted to Medical camp, where doctors declared him dead last evening, sources said.

The body has been handed over to the family for last rites.

The total number of deaths that have taken place in 36 days of yatra period is 13, sources said.

Meanwhile, pilgrimage to Machail Mata ji in upper reaches of Kishtwar district entered into second day today with 522 pilgrims leaving base camp of Kishtwar during the day today. Yesterday, 490 yatris have left Kishtwar for paying obeisance to Goddess Machail Mata.

SSP Kishtwar Sunil Gupta has advised the pilgrims to cross Kishtwar by 6 pm, Dool by 6.30 pm and Padyarna by 7.30 pm for onward journey to Gulabgarh for darshan of Machail Mata ji in view of security and weather reasons.

Mr Gupta said the yatra was progressing smoothly.

Army, Police officials and participants interacting during flagging off ceremony of tour at Rajouri on Friday.

Army organizes educational-cum-motivational tour for college students

Excelsior Correspondent

RAJOURI, Aug 2: Under the ongoing Operation Sadhbhavana, Rashtriya Rifles Battalion, Thanamandi under the aegis of Headquarters Counter Insurgency Force (Romeo) organised an educational-cum-motivational tour for the college student hailing from far flung and remote border areas of Rajouri and Poonch districts.

The tour was flagged off by Rajesh Kumar, Inspector General of Police (IGP) in presence of participants and senior police and Army officials.

A total of 23 college students and two teachers from remote areas of Rajouri and Poonch districts are participating in the tour to witness the rich and varied culture of great nation.

The participants will visit Bangalore and Ooty (Wellington) and cover historical places, electronic city, educational institutions and areas of interest to student.

During the visit, the students will also get a lifetime opportunity to interact with senior Army Officers and Dr Hans Raj Bhardwaj, Governor of Karnataka.

During the visit to Bangalore the students will get an opportunity to visit places like Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, ISRO, Nehru Planetarium and MG Road. A training camp for talented youth will be conducted by the Karnataka State Cricket Association at Chinnaswamy Stadium, and the participants will interact with Anil Kumble, International Cricketer and former captain of Indian team.

The participants would also visit Government Polytechnic College, Tea Factory, Milk Produce Union, Hindustan Photo Film Limited and Needle Factory at Ooty.

While speaking, IGP said that the efforts of Counter Insurgency Force (Romeo) in taking such noble initiatives, giving opportunities to college students to witness development taking place in rest of India will act as strong motivation to bring out changes in the society.

'Shaan-e-Awadh' extended till Aug 11

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 2: After getting overwhelming response from the Jammuites, a royal fare-Awadhi Food Festival hosted by Fortune Inn Riviera has been extended till August 11.

Named "Shaan-e-Awadh", the fest promises to tickle the taste buds with a spread of mouth-watering delicacies like Badami Shorba, Dum ka Murgh, Dum ki Deg (biryani), Lucknawi gouloti kebab, Murgh Parcha, Murg Handi Lazeez, Nihari, Dum ka Saag, Baoli Handi, Gil-e-Firdaus apart from other Awadhi dishes.

While speaking, Rakesh Dogra, General Manager, Fortune Inn Riviera said that after getting overwhelming response of the food festival we have decided to extend it till August 11 so that more and more guests will savour the true taste of Awadhi cuisine.

With an array of Starters, live counter, main courses and desserts on the buffet, people of the city cannot ask for more. Prepared indum pukht style (food placed in large pots called handi and cooked over low heat), the Master Chef Nawab promises the dishes would be rich in taste, softness and aroma.

Head Constable dies in road mishap

Excelsior Correspondent

UDHAMPUR, Aug 2: A Head Constable of Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) died after being hit by a rashly driven car while walking on the roadside on the National Highway near Dudher bridge Rehamble.

The deceased was identified as Joginder Raj (number 192-U).

Reports said that a rashly driven Verna car bearing registration number JK 02AW- 8033 hit the Head Constable who was rushed to PHC Tikri where doctors referred him to GMC Hospital Jammu. However, soon after admission at GMC, he breathes his last. Meanwhile, Rehamble Police has seized the Verna car, and arrested one Vishal Gupta son of Bihari Lal of Doda, who drive the car.

Shias holding demonstration against atrocities on the occasion of Yom-e-Qudus at Jammu on Friday. -Excelsior/Rakesh

Shias take out procession against atrocities on community

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 2: On the occasion of Yom-e-Qudus, Shias took out a massive procession and held demonstration against purported atrocities on the community across the world, particularly in Pakistan, Palestine and Iraq.

Shouting slogans and carrying placards, the protesting Shias demanded liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Israel. They also torched the US flags to register their resentment against the world super power.

To avoid any untoward incident during the demonstration, the administration had made necessary security arrangements. The demonstration was organized under the banner of Shia Federation Jammu Province and a large number of Shia community members took part in the programme.

Earlier, a number of Shias, including children also, assembled in Karbala complex near Wazarat Road and held a demonstration there. They were carrying placards with slogans like `Stop Shia Genocide in Pakistan', Don't Kill Us', etc.

Shouting slogans and carrying placards, the Shia Federation members marched towards Wazarat Road in the form of a procession and reached Shahidi Chowk where a strong demonstration was held again.

The demonstrating Shias were addressed by Ashiq Hussain Khan (president of Shia Federation Jammu province), Fida Hussain Rizvi, Imam Syed Ali Badshah, Sheikh Sajjad Hussain, Prof Shujat Khan and others.

They highlighted the grievance of Shia community, which was facing genocide in Pakistan, Palestine, Iraq and other countries. They stressed for peace across the world and said that no religion preaches enmity against the other faith.

Lambasting United States of America and Isreal for targeting the community, the Shia leaders demanded liberation of Al-Aqsa mosque in Isreal.

Ashiq Hussain lauded the administration, bazaar associations and religious organizations of other communities for extending cooperation in organizing the demonstration.

CM's Iftaar party postponed

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 2: Due to inclement weather and forecast of a bad weather tomorrow the Iftaar party to be hosted by the Chief Minister on Saturday August 3, 2013 at Jammu has been postponed.

Slathia cautions people against political chameleons

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 2: Senior vice president National Conference and MLA Surjeet Singh Slathia on Friday described the empowerment of people at grass-roots level one of the most significant achievement in recent years, saying this is in consonance with the cherished agenda of his party which believes people as the fountain head of real power.

Addressing public meetings at Gagore and Koulpur in Vijaypur constituency this afternoon after inaugurating lane and drains and other public utilities in the villages, Mr Slathia said that Panchayat elections were path breaking initiative of the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah led Government that opened up vistas of opportunities for rural population in prioritizing their developmental requirements and getting these implemented in a time bound manner.

"National Conference is not just a political party; it is a public movement that has steered the state from ignorance to literally, under-development to development and offered equal opportunities of progress to the people, irrespective of caste, creed and colour", he said, adding that this odyssey will continue with active support of the people. He said the developmental achievements and turn-around in the situation across the State has become eye-sore for opponents who in sheer frustration have started creating wedge between the people by their divisive politics. He hoped that the politically sagacious people of Jammu and Kashmir will foil all such attempts by maintaining their time tested unity and tranquility.

He urged the people not to pay heed to malicious propaganda of political chameleons who have all along acted against the public interests for their petty political gains. He said that the people should understand the nefarious designs and ulterior motives of them and rally behind NC which stands for the political and social emancipation of the State.

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