

Final Contingent of Baba Budha Amarnath Yatra departs from Kameshwar Temple, Akhnoor

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AKHNOOR: The final contingent of this year's Baba Budha Amarnath Yatra departed today from the ancient Kameshwar Temple in Akhnoor for Baba Budha Amarnath Dham in Poonch. The contingent was led by Mahamandaleshwar Mahant Rameshwar Das Ji, who ceremonially hoisted the sacred saffron flag. BJP J&K Pradesh President and Member of Parliament Sat Sharma Ji flagged off the group. Akhnoor MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat, Vinod Gupta, Daljit Singh, DDC Member Sushma Sharma, along with other dignitaries and devotees, were present on the occasion. As per the annual tradition, Kameshwar Temple serves as a major first halt for devotees undertaking the Baba Budha Amarnath Yatra. Arrangements for food and refreshments are made for the pilgrims here. Thereafter, the devotees proceed towards Poonch amid chants of "Har Har Mahadev." Mahamandaleshwar Mahant Rameshwar Das Ji said that the religious and



spiritual association between Kameshwar Temple and the Baba Budha Amarnath Yatra has continued for many years. He said that the pilgrims displayed great enthusiasm and devotion throughout the journey. With the departure of the final contingent today, the process of sending

Yatra groups from Kameshwar Temple for this year has been completed. The Yatra will now formally conclude with the Chhari Mubarak Yatra. On the occasion, devotees raised chants in praise of Lord Shiva and prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being in the region.

Raksha Bandhan to be celebrated on Aug 28, Friday: Mahant Rohit Shastri

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JAMMU: Mahant Rohit Shastri, State Awardee, President of Shri Kailakh Jyotish avim Vedic Sansthan Trust, informed that the auspicious festival of Raksha Bandhan will be celebrated this year on Friday, August 28. According to Mahant Rohit Shastri, the Shravan Purnima Tithi will begin at 9:09 AM on Thursday, August 27, and end at 9:49 AM on Friday, August 28. Since Purnima prevails at sunrise on August 28, Raksha Bandhan will be celebrated on that day. He stated that Rahu Kaal will be from 10:45 AM to 12:22 PM. Therefore, excluding this period, tying Rakhi throughout the day will be considered auspicious. Religious and Cultural Significance of Raksha Bandhan. Mahant Rohit Shastri said that Raksha Bandhan holds special significance in Sanatan Dharma. The festival symbolizes the sacred bond of love, affection and



protection between brothers and sisters. It strengthens family and social relationships. He appealed to people to use "Made in India" Rakhis this year and boycott Chinese products. Traditional Ritual for Tying Rakhi; The sister should first apply tilak to her brother, perform aarti, and offer akshat (uncooked rice). She should then tie the Rakhi on her brother's right wrist and

perform the traditional worship. After this, she should offer him sweets. The brother should then touch his sister's feet and seek her blessings, and present her with a gift. The entire ritual is traditionally considered especially auspicious when performed while observing a fast or vrat. If a brother and sister are unable to be together, the sister may tie a Rakhi to an idol or image of Lord Shri Krishna, offer prayers and pray for her brother's well-being. The brother may also touch the Rakhi to the deity and take a pledge of protection. Such a symbolic Rakhi ceremony, when performed with devotion, is also considered spiritually meaningful. If someone does not have a biological sister, a maternal uncle, paternal uncle, friend, priest or another person may also tie a Rakhi to the person. In this way, the exchange of social protection, affection and good wishes can be continued.

DC Udh chairs DDMA meeting; Reviews restoration works in rain affected areas

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UDHAMPUR: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa, who is also the Chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority, today chaired a meeting to review the assessment of temporary and permanent damages caused by heavy rainfall. Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh; Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh and other senior officers from concerned departments attended the meeting. During the meeting, the DC conducted a detailed department-wise review of temporary and permanent restoration works, including road projects. He stressed the need for close coordination among



all line departments to strengthen disaster mitigation measures and ensure a prompt, effective and coordinated response across the district. The DC also sought updates on the division-wise assessment of damages to roads and the status

of permanent restoration projects. He directed all executing agencies to expedite the pace of restoration works and ensure their completion at the earliest to restore connectivity and minimize inconvenience to the general public.

District Zoonosis Committee meeting; seeks focus on One Health approach for Rabies Control

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DODA: A meeting of the District Zoonosis Committee (District Steering Committee) was held Tuesday at the DC Office Complex Doda to review the status of zoonotic diseases, particularly rabies and strengthen inter-sectoral coordination under the "One Health" approach. Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal (Chairperson) chaired the meeting. The meeting discussed modalities for strengthening coordination among the Health, Animal Husbandry, Local Bodies, Forest and Wildlife, Education, Water and Sanitation, Police and other concerned departments for effective prevention and control of zoonotic diseases. The Committee stressed the need for strengthening preventive measures to minimize animal-bite incidents in the district. The concerned officers informed that the Health Department has adequate stocks of Anti-Rabies Vaccine (ARV) and Anti-Rabies Serum (ARS) for the management of animal-bite cases.



The meeting stressed that rabies prevention should focus not only on post-exposure treatment but also on comprehensive preventive measures, including animal surveillance, mass dog vaccination, Animal Birth Control (ABC), timely observation and testing of suspected animals and community awareness. The committee also emphasized regular information sharing among departments regarding

animal deaths, dog and other animal-bite cases, suspected rabies cases and other zoonotic diseases, including scrub typhus, snakebite, brucellosis, leptospirosis, anthrax, bovine tuberculosis, avian influenza, glanders and other emerging zoonotic threats. The objectives of the National Rabies Control Programme (NRCPP), aimed at achieving zero rabies deaths by 2030, were also discussed. The meeting

further reviewed the objectives of the Snakebite Envenoming Prevention and Control Programme, which focuses on reducing deaths and disabilities caused by snakebites. The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for intensifying awareness, particularly in rural and vulnerable areas. He emphasized timely treatment of persons affected by animal bites and directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and ensure timely sharing of information and prompt action on suspected cases. The meeting also discussed bottlenecks affecting implementation of preventive measures in rural areas, particularly delays in animal management and the absence of a standardized referral mechanism for the observation, capture and testing of suspected rabid animals. The meeting was attended by the Chief Medical Officer; Chief Animal Husbandry Officer; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat; officers from the Wildlife Department; EO Municipality; District Epidemiologist (IDSP); representatives of NGOs/Animal Welfare Organisations and concerned officers and officials.

DC directs for civic improvements ahead of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, Raksha Bandhan

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DODA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda Krishan Lal, Tuesday conducted a market inspection of Doda town to assess civic amenities, road conditions, cleanliness and overall arrangements made for the convenience of the general public, particularly in view of the upcoming Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi and Raksha Bandhan festivities. The DC was accompanied by ADC Anil Kumar, ASP Mohammad Aslam, Tehsildar and officers and officials from PWD R&B, PHE, PDD, Municipal Council and other concerned departments. The DC directed PWD R&B authorities to undertake immediate repairs of damaged roads and ensure proper maintenance of road infrastructure at all identified



locations. The Municipal Council was directed to ensure immediate removal of dirt and garbage from all areas of the town and maintain cleanliness on a regular basis. He further directed the Municipal Council to keep footpaths clear of encroachments and obstructions, emphasizing that footpaths are meant exclusively for pedestrians. The DC also directed that damaged footpaths and

drains be repaired on priority to ensure safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and improve the overall civic infrastructure of the town. He instructed shopkeepers and business establishments not to place goods, barricades or any other obstructions on footpaths. The concerned agencies were directed to ensure that pedestrian pathways remain accessible to the public at all times, especially during the

upcoming festive occasions. The DC further directed the PHE authorities to immediately repair damaged and leaking water-supply pipes and ensure uninterrupted and adequate water supply to residents. He emphasized that all concerned departments must work in close coordination and undertake prompt corrective measures to improve cleanliness, road connectivity, drainage, water supply and pedestrian facilities across Doda town. He stressed that, in view of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi and Raksha Bandhan, special attention must be given to cleanliness, sanitation, traffic management, public convenience and maintenance of civic infrastructure so that residents and visitors can celebrate the festivals in a clean, safe and hassle-free environment.

Workshop on Aquifer Mapping, Groundwater Management held

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KATHUA: The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), Ministry of Jal Shakti, North-West Himalayan Region Jammu, in collaboration with the District Administration Kathua, today organised a one-day workshop on "Aquifer Mapping and Ground Water Management Plan in Parts of Kathua District and Dissemination of CGWB Data". The workshop was held in the Conference Hall, DC Office. Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma, chaired the workshop, organised with the objective of disseminating findings of the National Aquifer Mapping and Management (NAQUIM) studies and enhancing awareness and capacity among stakeholders regarding sustainable groundwater

management. Regional Director, CGWB Jammu, Dr. M. Sivkumar, welcomed the Chief Guest and other dignitaries. ADDC Surender Mohan Sharma, Chief Planning Officer, Ranjit Thakur, Head and Chief Scientist, Krishi Vigyan Kendra Kathua, Dr. Vishal Mahajan, Senior Scientist CGWB, Rakesh Rana, Hydrogeologist Mohammad Abid Khan, Hydrogeologist Kush Kumar, Geo-Physicist Gulshan Kumar and officers and officials from various departments attended the workshop. In his inaugural address, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the critical importance of groundwater in meeting the requirements of drinking water supply, agriculture and other sectors. He stressed the need for adopting sci-

entific conservation and management strategies to ensure long-term sustainability of groundwater resources. The technical sessions commenced with an overview of the mandate and activities of CGWB and presentations on groundwater management and associated challenges in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Dr. Vishal Mahajan elaborated on groundwater use and agricultural sustainability, while Hydrogeologist Mohammad Abid Khan presented insights into the regional geology and groundwater conditions of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. Hydrogeologist Kush Kumar delivered a detailed presentation on the findings of the NAQUIM study, groundwater availability, challenges and management

plan for parts of Kathua district. The presentation also covered geochemical remediation strategies for treatment of acidic groundwater, including calcium hydroxide neutralisation and limestone dosing. A detailed technical and interactive discussion was also held on groundwater-related issues, field-level challenges, suitable remedial measures and adoption of modern scientific techniques for conservation, recharge, protection and sustainable management of groundwater resources in Kathua district. Chief Planning Officer Ranjeet Thakur coordinated the programme and the proceedings concluded with an interactive feedback session and vote of thanks was presented by Senior Scientist, CGWB Rakesh Rana.

Arvind reviews PHE Works, pushes comprehensive water security plan

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JAMMU: Jammu West MLA Arvind Gupta held a detailed review meeting with senior officers of the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department to assess ongoing development works and strengthen the drinking water supply system across the constituency. The meeting focused particularly on ensuring reliable water supply during floods, heavy rainfall and other emergency situations, with Gupta stressing the need for advance preparedness rather than waiting for a crisis to develop. During the meeting, the proposal for installation of new tubewells at identified locations in Jammu West was discussed as an important step towards strengthening the existing water supply network and meeting the growing requirements of residents.

Gupta also reviewed the functioning and preparedness of the Shitli Flood Lifting system, emphasizing the need to ensure that flood-related disruptions do not affect drinking water supply to the people. A comprehensive "Plan B" for drinking water supply during floods and emergencies was also discussed. Gupta directed the department to keep alternative arrangements ready so that residents continue to receive adequate drinking water even if the main supply network or infrastructure is affected due to flooding, pipeline damage or other unforeseen circumstances. "Water is an essential service and the people of Jammu West cannot be left at the mercy of circumstances during floods or emergencies. We must have a robust backup mechanism in place. Tubewells, flood-lifting arrangements and an effective Plan B must work together

to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply," Gupta said. He directed the officers to identify vulnerable points in the water supply network and ensure that leakages, damaged pipelines and other technical issues are addressed on priority. He also reviewed water tanker arrangements and new water connections to ensure immediate support wherever regular supply is disrupted. Gupta stressed that preparedness must begin before the monsoon and flood situation worsens, directing field officers to remain vigilant and ensure that necessary machinery, manpower and alternative water-supply arrangements are available on the ground. He further directed the PHE officers to expedite all pending works and maintain close coordination with field staff for quick resolution of public grievances.

Army conduct medical health camp at Himote

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DODA: A comprehensive Medical Health Camp was organised at Himote by Sub District Hospital Bhaderwah in collaboration with Military Hospital Doda, under the aegis of the Indian Army with the aim of providing accessible and quality healthcare services to the local population residing in remote and hilly areas. The camp witnessed an encouraging response from the local community, with a large number of villagers availing medical consultations and healthcare facilities. The initiative focused on bringing essential medical services closer to the people while promoting awareness about preventive healthcare and emergency medical care. Free medicines were distributed to patients after medi-



cal consultations. A Mobile Medical Unit equipped with sonography facilities and a Mobile X-Ray Unit were also deployed, enabling diagnostic services to be provided at the doorstep of the local population. A key highlight of the camp was an awareness session on first aid and Basic Life Support (BLS). The villagers were sensitised about recognising medical emergencies, basic first-aid measures and essential life-saving interventions. The demonstration was

conducted by officials of Military Hospital Doda and Dr Versha Sharma, Block Medical Officer, Sub District Hospital Bhaderwah. The health camp highlighted the importance of civil-military cooperation in strengthening healthcare outreach and reaffirmed the commitment of the Indian Army and medical authorities towards community welfare, healthcare accessibility and empowerment of people in remote areas.

Army organise road safety awareness lecture at Harni

POONCH: A road safety awareness lecture was organised at Government Higher Secondary School, Harni, by the Indian Army to promote responsible and safe road-use practices among students. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from 155 students and was attended by five teachers. During the session, students were sensitised about the importance of following traffic rules, wearing helmets and seat belts, avoiding the use of mobile phones while driving, adhering to speed limits and exercising caution while crossing roads. The lecture aimed to create awareness among the younger generation about road safety and encourage them to become responsible road users. The students were also educated about the role of individual responsibility in preventing road accidents and ensuring the safety of themselves.