



# Trikuta

A Quarterly Newsletter

## Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

Volume 6 - Issue 4

October- December 2023

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### President Murmu Visits Vaishno Devi Shrine; Inaugurates Skywalk, Remodelled Parvati Bhawan

President Droupadi Murmu paid obeisance at the Vaishno Devi shrine on October 12 and inaugurated a skywalk and the remodelled Parvati Bhawan at the shrine atop Trikuta hills in Reasi district.

The President, who was on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, was accompanied by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on the visit to the shrine. The CEO of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) Anshul Garg briefed President about the projects.



President Droupadi Murmu with Jammu and Kashmir Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha and others visit Mata Vaishno Devi shrine

The 200-metre skywalk has made the of pilgrims smooth as it has separated the path taken by them to the Bhawan and while returning after visiting the Shrine. Besides, has overcome the problem of a multidirectional flow of pilgrims and a chaotic condition at Bhawan. The skywalk was planned to decongest the flow of pilgrims and help in better crowd management at Bhawan during the peak periods.

Parvati Bhawan has been fully remodelled and is a free-of-cost facility for the pilgrims. It has been linked with the skywalk to ensure that pilgrims proceed directly to the shrine after depositing their luggage. It has facilities of 1,500 lockers that cater to 10,000 to 15,000 pilgrims every day.

### **Lt Governor Inaugurates Online Booking Facility for Passenger Ropeway and releases Panchang-2024**

Lt Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on December 12 inaugurated online booking facility for passenger ropeway from Bhawan to Bhairon ji for the convenience of the pilgrim and also released Panchang -2024 and diary of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

The Lt Governor reiterated the commitment of the Shrine Board to provide better facilities and modern amenities to make the pilgrimage convenient and hassle-free.

The tickets for Passenger Ropeway are available through online portal [www.maavaishnodevi.org](http://www.maavaishnodevi.org) which were earlier only available offline at the counters on first come first serve basis.

Initially, the online ceiling was 2000 tickets per day which is enhanced to 3000 tickets from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan, 2024 for the pilgrims. This initiative of Shrine Board will not only facilitate the pilgrims but also curtail manpower requirement and the operational expenditure of Shrine Board.

Sh Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB briefed the Lt Governor on the action taken report on recent decision of the Board including construction of new Vaishnavi Bhawan, establishment of medical college at Kakryal, passenger Ropeway from Tarakote to Sanjhichhat, widening of track from Sanjhichhat to Bhawan and new langar facility at Bhairon ji.

Members of SMVDSB; Padma Shri Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri, Member, SMVD



Lt Governor released Panchang- 2024 of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

Gurukul; Dr. M.K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor and senior official of Shrine Board were present.

### Free Langar sewa commences at Bhairon ji

For facilitation of the pilgrims, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board started a free Langar Sewa on October 15 at Shri Bhairon Ji Temple Complex after commencement of Shatchandi Yagya on the beginning of auspicious occasion of Shardiya Navratras at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine.

The Langar Sewa was inaugurated by Shri Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB as per the directions of Hon'ble Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT). A pooja was held at the site before the commencement of the Langar Sewa. It is the third such facility by the Board in a row. Two are already operating at Tarakote Marg and Sanjichatt and both the facilities have received wide spread appreciations from the devotees who relish meals being offered in the form of Prasad during the arduous track upto the Holy Cave.

The Langar facility has commenced at the already existing spacious Bhojanalaya of the Board at Bhairon Ji which can cater to around 150 pilgrims at a time. The pilgrims are being served Dal-Rice and Tea.

The Langar sewa has been started by the Shrine Board in its continuous endeavours for providing free meals to the maximum number of pilgrims visiting the Shrine.



Inauguration of Free Langar sewa at Bhairon Ji

### Shat Chandi Yagya for 'world peace' organized during Shardiya Navratra

The nine day long Shat Chandi Maha Yagya organised by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board during Navratras for world peace, harmony, prosperity and health of humanity concluded on the auspicious occasion of Ramanavami at the Holy Shrine.



Shatchandi yagya at Bhawan during Shardiya Navratras

Shri Anshul Garg, CEO other officers and staff of the Shrine Board, besides pilgrims participated in Purna Ahuti and other religious ceremonies performed amidst Vedic Mantras on the occasion. A group of pandits led by Padma Shri Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri, performed the Maha Yagya.

An average of 40,000 pilgrims paid their obeisance daily and over 4 Lakh pilgrims had visited the holy shrine since the onset of Navratras. During the nine day long Shardiya Navratras last year, about 3.15 Lakh pilgrims had visited the holy shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji.

SMVDSB had made grand decorations at Bhawan, Atka and the area surrounding it for the large number of pilgrims visited during Navratras to pay obeisance at the Holy Shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi Ji. The decorations were made with indigenous-foreign fruits and flowers, as well as huge reception doors and pandals have been installed in the Bhawan Area. Likewise, the illumination of the Bhawan area with attractive and colourful lights had also been done.

Other highlights during these Navratras were bhajan and bhaint performances during morning and evening Atka Aarti by the renowned artists like Himesh Reshammiya, Mika Singh, Lakhwinder Wadali, Maithili Thakur, Mani Ladla, Kaler Kanth, Kumar Vishu besides budding students of SMVD Gurukul.

Earlier, the CEO attended the beginning of nine-day long Shatchandi Yagya amidst the vedic hymns, and performance of other religious ceremonies at the Holy Cave Shrine. The Yagya ceremony was also telecasted live on MH1 Shradha from 12:00 Noon to 1:00 PM daily during Navratras.



Night view of Vaishno Devi Bhawan and Floral decoration at Bhawan during Shardiya Navratras

### **Refresher course for Pujaris commences at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine**

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in its pursuit to upgrade and sharpen the skills on religious practices and rituals for their pujaris commenced eleven days well-crafted refresher course on November 01 at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine as per the directions of Chairman, SMVDSB (Hon'ble Lt. Governor JK-UT) which concluded on November 11.

The course was formally inaugurated by Dr. Murlī Manohar, Vice Chancellor, Shri Lal Bhadur Shastri Sanskrit University New Delhi whereas, Dr. Sunil Sharma, Joint CEO attended the valedictory session. He congratulated the participants and rendered formal votes of thanks to the resource persons for imparting the much needed training under the changing scenario. Participants were also given certificates in the concluding ceremony.



Training programme on Vedic Rituals for Pujaris of SMVDSB successfully concludes

The training was imparted on Ritualistic Skills by experts from well renowned institutions of Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi, Kashi, Varanasi in collaboration with Chudamani Sanskrit Sansthan, Basohli, Kathua. The refresher course covered 31 Pujaris in two batches with focus on the specific rituals, mantras & practices that a Pujari needs to master besides, highly specific and professional approach about their Pujan Vidhi. The main training contents include karam kaand,



upasna kaand, gyan kand, suktas, stotras and sandya vandhan etc.

### **Shrine Board batting for development of civic amenities at Katra**

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board continuing with the initiatives for overall socio-economic development of the region as per the directions of Hon'ble Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT) has undertaken various projects in Katra and surrounding areas.

The projects include renovation and upgradation of the road already constructed by the Shrine Board alongwith drain from Hansali to Panthal Road via Bhumika Temple including maintenance of the road for a period of five years besides, renovation and upgradation of Govt Girls High School at Banganga Road, Katra and construction of Lane & Drain from Darshani Deodi towards Katra.

In the endeavour, CEO, SMVDSB on November 8 inaugurated renovation and upgradation of lane & drain works from Darshani Deodi to Shalimar Park, Katra at an expenditure of over Rs.48.06 lakh in the presence of Chairman, Municipal Committee, Katra; SDM, Katra; Jt. CEO, SMVDSB; Engineers of the Shrine Board, ward members and prominent citizens of the town.



Shrine Board batting for development of civic amenities at Katra

Completion of the entire stretch within a period of three months will alleviate the difficulties faced by pilgrims who traditionally travel to the Holy Cave on foot via old

Darshani Deodi. Another projects being executed by the Shrine Board for the renovation and upgradation of Govt Girls High School at Banganga Road, Katra at an estimated expenditure of Rs.98.93 lakh and likely to be completed by March, 2024.

### **Shrine Board's Gurukul excels at North Zone Youth Festival held at Himachal Pradesh**

Students of the SMVD Gurukul have brought laurels to the Shrine Board by winning haul of 11 medals in 08 events during 3-day North Zone Youth Festival held from 28 – 30 November, 2023 at premises of Ved Vyas Campus of Central Sanskrit University Balahar, Himachal Pradesh under the aegis of Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi.



Shrine Board's Gurukul excels at North Zone Youth Festival held at Himachal Pradesh

In the mega event around 300 students from Central Sanskrit University and Adarsh Maha Vidyalaya of Sanskrit, along with its various campuses situated in J-K, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand including Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Gurukul, Katra participated in various competitions.

As many as 40 students of SMVD Gurukul participated in the event and won 02 Gold medals in Group Song and Rangoli; 03 silver medals in Sanskrit News writing, Yogasana and Wrestling; besides secured 06 bronze medals in the categories of Educational Short Film making, Solo Sanskrit Song, Wrestling and High Jump events. The



winning students were congratulated by CEO, SMVDSB for this spectacular performance.

Earlier to the commencement of the event, Mahamandleshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriji Maharaj, Chairman, SMVD Gurukul and Member, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board visited the campus at Katra and motivated the students exhorting that they would be serving as an inspiration for the other students and while participating in the forthcoming event should not feel the pressure of expectations and just focus on giving their 100 percent.

### **CEO SMVDSB launches accommodation management system for the pilgrims**

Adding another technology driven initiative for providing an optimal pilgrimage experience to the devotees, CEO, SMVDSB, Shri Anshul Garg on December 27 launched accommodation management system at Enquiry & Reservation Counter at Katra for the benefit of devotees visiting the Holy Shrine as per directions of the Chairman, SMVDSB (Hon'ble Lt. Governor, JK-UT) which shall be available at all Reservation Counters of SMVDSB.

With the robust accommodation management system in place, the check-ins and check out of the pilgrims would become easier and less time consuming. Besides, the financial transactions pertaining to payments on account of reservations would be secured. In addition, it will also increase the room allotment efficiency of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, thus benefiting more number of pilgrims.

Noteworthy that the Shrine Board has made concerted efforts for adoption of a number of emerging technologies and response mechanisms for state-of-the-art facilities. These include a live darshan facility of "Holy Pindies", development of Bilingual Interactive Chatbot "Shakti", 24X7 toll-free helpline equipped with IVRS for addressing

queries and grievances received from pilgrims across the world.



CEO SMVDSB launches accommodation management system for the pilgrims

On similar lines Shrine Board has integrated digital payments in the various sale units of the Board to minimize the cash transactions by installation of Self-Serve Kiosk machines, QR codes, EDC machines, UPI payments and also on-boarding to popular digital platforms for donations and sale of Prasad. The digitalization of the front-end services of Helicopter, Battery Car bookings, RFID yatra access cards and their real time tracking with the dedicated RF Network and over 700 CCTV cameras by Shrine Board has facilitated the pilgrims and also improved administrative efficiencies through digital records and real time reporting.

### **Education Minister of India pays obeisance at Vaishno Devi**

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in the Government of India visited the holy cave shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi on December 28 and paid obeisance at the sanctum sanctorum.

He was accompanied by Shri Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board. The CEO briefed the Hon'ble Minister about various

infrastructure development initiatives taken and arrangements being put in place by the Shrine Board for continuously improving the facilities for the visiting pilgrims.



Sh Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB presenting a memento to Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Education.

### SMVDSB organises 19 training programmes for staff

19 training programmes were conducted by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board for its staff working in various units during October - December 2023. These trainings were organised in the fields of Health and Hygiene, Basic Life Support, First Aid & Emergency Response, Maintenance of STPs, Sanitation of House Keeping, Basic Disaster Management, Construction Safety, Stress Management, Basic Computer Skills Front Office and Food Safety Management.



Training programme of employees of SMVDSB

### Shrine Board's Archers excel in Asian Games and Championships

The Para-archers, Rakesh Kumar, Sheetal Devi and Sarita trained and groomed at SMVD Sports Complex created history and made the country and JK-UT proud by winning five medals which included two gold and three silver in various archery events at the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China in different categories of Archery events started on October 22 and concluded on October 28, 2023.

Noteworthy that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met all the Para-archers on their return from the event and blessed Sheetal Devi, the only Para athlete to shoot with her feet in the world and made a hat-trick of medals at the Hangzhou Para Asian Games.



Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi interacted with Ms. Sheetal Devi Shrine's Para archer

The Shrine's Para-archers, Rakesh Kumar, Sheetal Devi and Sarita also held country's flag high as India top the medals standings with nine medals at the Asian Para Archery Championships held at Bangkok, Thailand.

India bagged four gold, four silver and one bronze in which Shrine Para-archers contributed six medals by pocketing four gold, one silver and bronze in the total tally of nine medals won by Team India to top Asian Para Archery Championships.



Shrine Board's Archers Shine again in Asian Para Archery Championships held in Bangkok

Rakesh Kumar led the Indian challenge with a hat-trick of gold by clinching the men's compound open crown with a win over Indonesia and partnered Suraj Singh to win the men's compound open doubles against Chinese contestants, besides winning the mixed team gold with Sheetal Devi defeating Indonesia. Fourth gold for Team India was contributed by the phenomenal Shrine Para archer Sheetal Devi alongwith Jyoti in women's compound open team event and settled for silver in the tiebreaker against Singapore.

Noteworthy that besides securing five medals in the recent held Para Asian Games, the Shrine Para-Archers bagged three medals at Czech Republic Para Archery World Championship in the month of July-2023 and along with the medals, also won quota places for the 2024 Paralympics in Paris.

Shrine's Archers were also felicitated by the Lt. Governor, JK-UT who is also Chairman of the Shrine Board at Raj Bhawan on Nov 8, 2023.



Felicitations of Para Archers by Lt. Governor

He expressed satisfaction and pride that the Sports Complex is being developed as a center of excellence by the Board that has been successful in providing state of the art infrastructure, facilities, coaching and opportunities to the young sportspersons to prove their mettle which is being witnessed in the international events.



Para Archer Rakesh Kumar receiving the appointment

Lt Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on December 12 handed over the appointment letter to renowned Para-archer Rakesh Kumar at Raj Bhawan, Jammu. He congratulated the Para-archer on his appointment as an Assistant Coach in the Shrine Board Sports Complex. He said the remarkable performance of Sh Rakesh Kumar in the international events is a source of inspiration for many aspiring athletes.