



## Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

Volume 7 - Issue 4

October- December 2024

**Patron**  
Sh. Manoj Sinha  
Chairman, SMVDSB

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Sh. Anshul Garg, IAS  
CEO, SMVDSB

**Executive Editor**  
Sh. Satish Kumar Sharma, JKAS  
Jt. CEO, SMVDSB

[editor@maavaishnodevi.net](mailto:editor@maavaishnodevi.net)

### Lieutenant Governor chairs 73<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha chaired the 73<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of SMVDSB at Raj Bhawan on December 18, 2024 which was attended by various members of the Board, Principal Secretary to the Lt. Governor and CEO, Shrine Board. On the sidelines of the Meeting, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated several pilgrim-centric facilities including a Yatri Facilitation Centre at Railway Station Katra and the Yatri Facilitation cum Staff Accommodation Complex (Shubhra Bhawan) at Banganga.

The Lieutenant Governor also laid the e-foundation stone of new Exit Track at Bhawan aimed at decongesting the area and launched digital initiatives such as the ERP system and AI-enabled Chatbot "Shakti" on the



Shri Manoj Sinha Chairs 73<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of SMVDSB



official website of the Board. Additionally, the Panchang (Calendar) 2025 and diary of SMVD Shrine Board were also released.

approved measures to improve infrastructure near Battery Car Point at Bhawan and the Master Plan for the Sanjichhat Area.



Shri Manoj Sinha alongwith Board members during the launch of Panchang (Calendar) and diary 2025 of SMVDSB

The Board reviewed its past decisions, ratified actions taken after its last Meeting, and made new decisions against 25 key agenda items. The decisions included the construction of new projects such as a 200 m long Exit Track at Bhawan, development of a helipad at Katra in collaboration with Shri Shiv Khori Shrine Board and the construction of five temples in district Reasi.

The Board also reviewed the functioning of various pilgrim services including the Jammu-Bhawan-Jammu Heli Service, Smart Lockers and Virtual Darshan facility. The Lieutenant Governor issued directions for having critical analysis of various services being provided to devotees, the security scenario of the Shrine, disaster preparedness, mobile connectivity and pilgrim feedback mechanisms.

The meeting approved a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Geological Survey of India and THDC India Limited to identify and treat vulnerable slopes along the Yatra Route. The Board also

Other key decisions included the approval of additional Grant-in-Aid for Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Charitable Society and the revamping of lighting at the facade of the old Gufa in the Atka area. The Board emphasized the timely completion of ongoing projects, including the New Vaishnavi Bhawan at Bhawan and the Covered Holding Area at Adhkuwari.

### **Shardiya Navratra celebrations at the Shrine with sacred Shatchandi Yagya and free Langar Sewa at Adhkuwari**

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) launched a free Langar Sewa at Adhkuwari Complex on October 3, enhancing the pilgrimage experience. Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB inaugurated the facility.

The Langar facility located on the terrace of Sheetla Bhawan can cater to 150 pilgrims simultaneously, offering a clean and welcoming space. The Langar kitchen is well-equipped with modern kitchenware and



utensils to provide hygienic and wholesome food.

The launch was timed with the commencement of Shatchandi Yagya at the Holy Shrine during the auspicious occasion of Shardiya Navratras. To create a sacred ambiance, the Shrine Board had beautifully transformed the Bhawan, Atka and surrounding areas, adorning them with grand decorations, vibrant façade lights and majestic reception doors.



Free Langar Sewa at Sheetla Bhawan, Adhkuwari

Elaborate arrangements were made to facilitate pilgrims, including decorative flower arrangements round-the-clock water and power supply, special sanitation measures, medicare and special "fasting related" food.

The Shrine Board also facilitated Divyang pilgrims by providing free pony, battery car services, and darshan assistance. A 24/7 Call Centre (18001807212) remained available to support pilgrims.

To streamline the registration process and enhance security, the Shrine Board also initiated 08 new registration counters at the Katra railway station. The top management kept monitoring yatra regulation and other arrangements and also interacted with pilgrims to ensure a comfortable and convenient pilgrimage experience.

The Shat Chandi Maha Yagya, organized by Shrine Board, concluded on October 12, 2024, marking the end of the nine-day Navratra celebrations that saw over 4 lakh devotees visting the Shrine. This sacred event took place at the Yagyashala (a dedicated space for large-scale religious rituals) and was attended by various dignitaries including Mahamandleshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriji Maharaj and Anshul Garg, CEO of the Shrine Board.

The Yagya was performed to seek blessings of the deity for world peace, prosperity and human well-being. It was led by a group of Pandits headed by Padma Shri Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri.



Shardiya Navratra begins at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine with sacred Shatchandi Yagya



The Shrine Board also launched several initiatives, such as Langar Sewa at Adhkuwari, enhanced healthcare facilities, and a complimentary Virtual Darshan experience for the devotees.

The Navratras also featured spellbinding Bhajan and Bhaint performances by renowned artists the key among them including Lakhwinder Wadali, Jubin Nautiyal, and Hemant Brijwasi. The students of SMVD Gurukul also showcased their musical talents, adding to the spiritual experience.

### **Shrine Board's Medical College Commences Operations**

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME) - Medical College, under the aegis of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) commenced operations on November 9, 2024.



The Administrative Block of SMVDU, Kakryal. The inauguration was marked by a hawan ceremony, performed amidst chanting of Vedic mantras.

Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB, warmly welcomed the newly appointed faculty members and shared an inspiring overview of

the hospital's journey since its inception in 2016. He highlighted the key milestones achieved and underscored the hospital's dedication to delivering high-quality healthcare in the region.

The Medical College will offer its Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) program from the Administrative Block of SMVDU, accommodating its first cohort of students from the academic session 2025-26. This strategic move ensures that academic activities can begin promptly while construction of the college's dedicated campus is underway.

With an intake capacity of 50 MBBS students per year (upgradable to 100 seats), the Medical College is designed to be a center of excellence in healthcare education and practices. The institution bring together an exceptional team of experienced faculty members, medical professionals and

administrative staff dedicated to fostering a rigorous, compassionate and innovative learning environment.

Establishing Medical College underscores unflinching resolve of SMVDSB's leadership to contributing for healthcare and education infrastructure of the region.



## **Shrine Board dedicates New Waiting Hall and Durlabh Darshan Kendra for Devotees at Bhawan**

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) dedicated a state-of-the-art waiting hall at Bhawan on November 29, 2024, aiming to provide enhanced comfort and convenience to pilgrims visiting the revered Shrine. This 1600 square feet facility can accommodate 100 pilgrims at a time and is located conveniently near the Ram Mandir in the main Shrine Complex.



New Waiting Hall at Bhawan

The waiting hall is equipped with modern amenities including ample seating, lockers, drinking water facilities and well-maintained separate washrooms for men and women devotees. It's expected to facilitate around 1500 devotees per day, adding to the existing daily capacity of 600 devotees at the waiting hall near Kalika Bhawan.

Shri Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB after inauguration highlighted the significance of this new facility, stating that it's a vital addition to the amenities at Bhawan, ensuring devotees can focus on their spiritual journey without logistical challenges. Notably, the Shrine Board has undertaken several initiatives to enhance the pilgrimage experience, including improved tracks, catering outlets, medical facilities and accommodations.

This new waiting hall also features a digital information screen providing live darshans and real-time updates on the yatra schedule, as well as designated counters for inquiry and assistance to ensure smooth management of pilgrims.



Earlier, the Board unveiled Virtual Darshan of the Holy Pilgrimage by offering pilgrims a 11-minute virtual reality experience of the entire Shri Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage during Shardiya Navratras on a complimentary basis. The innovative technology enhances the pilgrimage experience by providing a real, accessible, and immersive spiritual encounter to devotees.

## **SMVDSB expands Healthcare with Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra at Bhawan**

Shri Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB inaugurated the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra (PMBJK) at Bhawan on October 9, 2024 to enhance quality healthcare services for pilgrims and employees. This initiative is meant to provide quality medicines and healthcare products at affordable price to benefit lakhs of pilgrims visiting the Shrine annually.

The PMBJK will offer easy access to generic medicines, medical devices and



essential healthcare products at affordable prices. The CEO reaffirmed the Board's commitment to enhancing healthcare infrastructure along the pilgrimage route, ensuring pilgrims receive affordable medical care when needed. The PMBJ Kendra will bolster the healthcare ecosystem, providing a holistic approach to pilgrims' well-being.



Seven medical units of the Shrine Board with modern equipment are operational along the track, and standby ambulances are available for immediate medical attention. Additionally, nine cloud-enabled Health ATMs and a Telemedicine Studio have been made functional to facilitate pilgrims.

### **Governing Body of SMVDNSH Holds 69<sup>th</sup> Meeting** **Reviews Hospital Functioning and Medical College Operations**

The 69<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Governing Body of SMVD Narayana Superspeciality Hospital was held on October 30 at Kalika Dham, Jammu under the chairmanship of Dr. Ashok Bhan, Member, SMVDSB. Also present in the meeting were Sh. Suresh Kumar Sharma, Member SMVDSB, Sh. Anshul Garg, CEO and Sh. Viren Shetty, Group C.O.O., NH, who joined virtually along with his team.

The Governing Body expressed satisfaction with the hospital's steady growth, reflected in key performance benchmarks like patient footfall, bed occupancy, revenue and clinical capabilities. Notably, the hospital has seen a footfall of over 8 lakh patients since its commencement, with nearly a third receiving free treatment under the UT-sponsored Ayushman Scheme.

The hospital also provided free treatments worth over Rs. 46.83 crore to nearly 92,000 beneficiaries under the Medical Support Policy of the Board since its inception in 2016. The Governing Body convened to review the operationalization of the fully funded 50-seater Medical College, scheduled to commence classes from the academic year 2025-26. The GB was informed that procurement of medical equipment, consumables and over 2,700 books and journals has been progressing rapidly and nearing completion.



Several important decisions were made concerning the hospital's further growth including the introduction of "positive interventions" to strengthen patient care, addressing operational issues and finalizing plans for capital expenditure to expand the hospital's bed capacity to 500. The meeting also saw key decisions made to enhance the hospital's operational capabilities, aligning with the Shrine Board's philanthropic vision.



## 94.84 lakh pilgrims pay obeisance during the Calendar year 2024

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine has seen a consistent surge in devotee footfall, with annual pilgrimages exceeding 90 lakh for three consecutive years. Anticipating a large turnout of pilgrims on New Year-2025, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) convened a review meeting on December 24 to finalize all necessary arrangements.

The meeting was presided by Shri Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB and attended by senior officers of the Shrine Board, representatives from Security Agencies and other key stakeholders.

provide all-time surveillance, guaranteeing a safe environment for devotees.

To ensure a smooth experience, the CEO stressed that security agencies should only allow pilgrims with valid RFID cards to proceed for the yatra. Regular public announcements was stressed to decongest the crowd on the track and maintain a smooth flow of pilgrims.

The CEO also emphasized the importance of disaster preparedness measures, directing to monitor vulnerable areas and conduct joint patrolling. Additionally, directions were issued in respect of smooth regulation of vehicle movement, improved sanitation, drinking water supplies, and enhanced lighting on the track and in the Katra area.



The Chief Executive Officer instructed the concerned authorities to make necessary arrangements for Yatra management, including security measures through RFID card regulation and crowd management strategies to ease congestion along the track, particularly at the Bhawan area. Separate entry and exit routes would be instructed at the Bhawan and over 700 CCTV cameras will

## SMVD Gurukul Shines with 2 Golds, 6 Bronzes at North Zone Youth Fest

Students of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Gurukul excelled at the 3-day North Zone Youth Festival held from October 26-28, 2024, at Shri Raghunath Kirti Campus, Central Sanskrit University, Devaprayag, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand. The students demonstrated their excellence by winning 8



medals across 6 events, comprising 2 gold medals in Group Song and Short Film, and 6 bronze medals in Wrestling, Sanskrit Blog, Rangoli, and Chess.

The mega event saw vibrant participation from around 400 students representing Central Sanskrit University, Adarsh Maha Vidyalaya of Sanskrit, and their campuses across J-K, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, including Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Gurukul, Katra. The students competed in diverse events, including cultural competitions and sports events.

Under his able directions, the institution has witnessed significant advancements by empowering students to excel in various fields. His visionary approach has created a nurturing environment, allowing students to thrive and showcase their talents.

Anshul Garg, CEO, SMVDSB, congratulated the participants nurtured at SMVD Gurukul on their impressive achievement at the prestigious event. He said that it is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the entire SMVD Gurukul family.

Gurukul has commendably preserved



SMVD Gurukul Shines with 2 Golds, 6 Bronzes at North Zone Youth Fest

Chairman SMVDSB and Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha, has been instrumental in fostering the growth of SMVD Gurukul through his steadfast encouragement and guidance.

the rich Vedic and Sanatan heritage in the modern era, while fostering a supportive and nurturing environment that enables its students to thrive in sports, extracurricular activities and academic pursuits.

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Katra-182301.  
Chief Executive Officer: 01991-232124,232075, Fax-232120  
Addl. Chief Executive Officer: 01991-232818  
Jt. Chief Executive Officer (S): 01994 232769  
Email: [feedback@maavaishnodevi.net](mailto:feedback@maavaishnodevi.net) Website: [www.maavaishnodevi.org](http://www.maavaishnodevi.org)