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## ***Makara Vilakku: Safety measures checked and reviewed***

*Sabarimala: A meeting held at the conference hall at Sannidhanam with officials in charge of various departments reviewed the security arrangements in Sabarimala with the Makara Vilakku festival. A mock drill was carried out on the upper floor of Malikappuram to check the security arrangements. The Pathanamthitta District Collector P.B. Nooh chaired the meeting held on Saturday.*

*Officials explained to the Collector, who is also the chairman of the District Disaster Relief Committee, the mechanisms by which various departments have been set up to prevent any adverse events due to congestion. The Collector directed the officials to ensure the efficient functioning of all departments in order to facilitate the Makara Vilakku pilgrimage.*

*The meeting discussed how to implement the action plans in coordination with the various departments. All departments should be prepared with caution in case of any unforeseen occurrence during the pilgrimage season. In the hospital, emergency arrangements should be made in advance.*

*District Collector PB Nooh said the department should ensure the availability of the disaster relief materials. Sabarimala ADM Umesh, Thiruvalla Sub Collector Vinay Goyal, Duty Magistrate C. Biju, DMO A.L. Sheeja, Police ASO Prithviraj,*

*National Disaster Response Force Deputy Commandant G.Vijayan, Rapid Action Force Deputy Collector K. Nirmal attended the meeting.*

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## ***Mock Drill held at Sannidhanam***

*Sabarimala: At around 11.30 in the morning, about 10 people were rushed to the Emergency Operations Center in Malikappuram area. The fire force, police, NDRF and Rapid Action Force teams rushed to the scene with emergency equipment.*

*As security officials shoved the mob aside, the injured were taken to the hospital for treatment. The news spread that stampede had occurred at Malikappuram premises when the people ran amok seeing a snake. Onlookers were called to the phone of the media and enquired about the situation. Tension prevailed for quite some time as no one is sure of what is happening in front of them.*

*District collector P.B. Nooh, who came to knew about the incident, rushed to the spot. He and Sabarimala ADM Umesh took the lead in the rescue operation.*

*The injured were rushed to the government hospital at Sannidhanam and those need urgent care were taken in an emergency rescue vehicle to Pampa. During this time the tractor services have been put to a halt and made way for the easy entry of ambulances to the emergency spot. During this time, the Fire Force has rescued a person who is suspected to have bitten by a snake using rope from the Maliakappuram fly-over and immediately rushed to the hospital.*

*It is not clear what happened. After realizing that the events were part of a mock drill to verify the security arrangements, the panic turned to relief and then to laughter.*

*As part of the safety effort, the Mock Drill at Sannidhanam was conducted under the direct supervision of Collector PB Nooh, District Disaster Relief Committee Chairman. He said that the mock drill understood the procedures that all departments had to take in the event of an accident. Currently, there are two ambulances from Sannidhanam to Pampa. Steps will be taken to increase it to three or four.*

*The arrangements will be based on the rush at Sannidhanam and Pampa. Drinking water will be distributed in cooperation with the Revenue and Local Self Government Institutions. In the coming pilgrimage phase, arrangements will be made to provide facilities for pilgrims in the school, college and other available places in the Laha-Elavungal, Erumeli-Kanamala-Laha area.*

*Deputy Commandant of the National Disaster Response Force G Vijayan, Deputy Commandant of Rapid Action K.L. Nirmal and DMO A.L. Sheeja and others were active participants. Apart from the various security forces, various department officials, Ayyappa Seva Sangam, and Vishudhi Sena Activists also participated in the mock drill.*

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