

# Over 3,900 m above sea level, doctors brave terror threat to treat pilgrims

■ **BACK TO THE ROOTS** | Batch of homoeopaths treat 400 pilgrims for various ailments in medical camps, promise to make it a regular feature



The group of thirty doctors from the state who braved all odds to treat Amarnath pilgrims

**MANOJ MORE**  
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TAKING homoeopathy to new heights, doctors from several parts of the state have just returned from a mission to Amarnath, which they promise will be a regular feature.

In spite of a terrorism threat, the batch of 30 doctors from Pune, Pimpri, Solapur, Kolhapur, Nagar, Sangli, Satara, Aurangabad and Vidarbha region, spent three days with the pilgrims. The 10-day tour, which started from Pune last month, saw doctors holding medical camps all along the 46-kilometre treacherous path that leads to the Amarnath caves. They climbed the steep slopes on foot for better

part of their journey.

"Our mission was to take homoeopathy to a place where none dares. Besides, we wanted to make people know that homoeopathy was in no way inferior to allopathy and has helped many cure incurable diseases," says Amarsinh Nikam, of Pimpri-based Aditya Homoeopathy and Healing Centre, who took the initiative in organising the tour. The centre had also held similar free medical camps during the recently-held Nashik *kumbh mela*.

Doctors claim that it was the first of its kind medical tour to Amarnath. "We were told by the Army personnel and the local populace that only a few doctors are available to the pilgrims there," Nikam said. "Nobody

ventured, so we took the unconventional route."

Nearly 400 pilgrims were treated for various ailments like high blood pressure, breathing problems and high temperature by the doctors who had lugged medicine and other medical equipment to Amarnath caves located at an altitude of 3,952 metre above sea level. While patients were treated right from Chandanwari to Amarnath, medical camps were held at Sheshnag and Panchtarni.

"We didn't carry any oxygen cylinder. Our medicine soothed many a nerve," Nikam said with a smile. For, it was all free treatment.

On top of it, medicines worth thousands of rupees were also

distributed free. "When the mission is from the heart, money takes a backseat," Nikam said adding, it was a dream come true for many doctors as the plan took 10-15 months to take shape. "Everybody pitched in—providing money, services, idea and above all there was collective fearlessness that accompanied us."

Anita Patil, a lecturer with Pune's Bharti Vidyapeeth, said: "It was a thrilling experience. I would love to visit the place again."

Echoing her view, Harpreet Mangat of Ahmednagar, said: "It was an experience to cherish. We gave our best shot." Sagar Mane from Kolhapur concurred: "With Armymen along the route, fear was certainly not the key word."