

*JPNN/Jammu / May 02, 2015/Slamming Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani's demand for restricting Amarnath Yatra to 30 days, Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh today said separatists had become "irrelevant" in the state and were trying to communalise the issue to seek attention. "Statements like these should not be taken seriously. These are given just to seek media attention," Singh told reporters, stressing that the yatra will be held as scheduled and all facilities including security will be provided to the pilgrims. He was asked about hardline Hurriyat leader Geelani's statement at a rally yesterday in Tral that the annual Amarnath yatra in south Kashmir Himalayas should be restricted to 30 days for "safety" of pilgrims and protection of environment. This year, the yatra to the holy cave shrine will be for 59 days from July 2. Hitting out at separatists, Singh said they have lost their ground in the Valley and were now trying to seek attention of the people with such statements. "The separatists are finding themselves to be irrelevant that is why they are raising such issues. People do not follow them and there were only a few hundred people at the rally. "They have become irrelevant and they are doing this to seek the attention of general masses. They are trying to vitiate the atmosphere of J&K but they would not succeed in it," the BJP leader said. "They have been trying to vitiate the atmosphere since 1947. They are the people who have lost their ground. People of Jammu and Kashmir have rejected them as they have given power to PDP and BJP government. People want development-- they want rehabilitation of flood victims," he said. He held separatists responsible for "instigating" youths in the Valley in 2010 agitation which led to the death of more than 100 people. Asked whether government was considering action Geelani after Pakistani flags were waved at his rally yesterday, the Deputy Chief Minister said, "Law will take its own course". "Government is working and police is also working on it. Whosoever is the culprit and indulge in such activities, action would be taken against them," he said.*

*He said that in the coming days nobody would dare to indulge in any anti-national activities in the state. "Everything will move forward as per our Common Minimum Programme (CMP). In the coming days nobody would dare to indulge in any anti-national activities in J&K and stringent action would be taken against any such element," he said. He said that the government has never been soft towards anti-national forces as in the case of "Masarat Alam you see he was booked under treason and he is now behind bars". "I came to know that some flags were hoisted in Kashmir and I assure you that action will be taken and the law will take its own course," he said. Alam, an aide of Geelani, was arrested after he waved Pakistani flag at a rally last month and he was later booked under the stringent Public Safety Act that allows for detention without trial for a minimum of three months. Singh said that the common people of Jammu and Kashmir especially Kashmir are anxiously waiting for the Yatra to commence.*

*"Amarnath yatra is managed by the shrine board and it follows all the traditions under the Hindu mythology. Yatra will go as per schedule. All the facilities including security and safety will be provided to the pilgrims. Jammu and Kashmir government will give all cooperation to the shrine board," Singh said. After the Assembly election, he said, people of the state want to move ahead*

*with a new thinking. "There are some elements who by making controversial statements seek media attention and also Pakistan which cannot control its own internal affairs and is poking its nose in our affairs. This would not have any effect here," he said. "Since this government has come to power, people from different faiths have come closer and these people are trying to create communal disharmony by making such statements," he said.*

*He said that the government has been inviting people to visit Kashmir. "We are inviting people from Bollywood to come and make movies in Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir. Such statements do not have any impact in Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir is peaceful and we want to tell this to rest of the country," he said. On the issue of granting amnesty to youths in Jammu who have were booked during Amarnath land row agitation, he said, "The agreement which was made has everything in it. There is no such instance in my knowledge. There are several cases against me as well." "I do not think that there are any serious charges against anybody relating to Amarnath agitation. If any such case comes o my knowledge, we would see what can be done," he said. Agency*