

UP: High Court denies nod for Jeth Mela; rules 'will not interfere with govt decision'

The court was hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the order issued on April 26 this year, declining permission for holding the annual Jeth Mela at and near the Dargah of Syed Sallar Masood Ghazi

THE LUCKNOW bench of the Allahabad High Court on Saturday refused to interfere with the decision of the state government denying permission to hold 'Jeth Mela' at the Dargah of Syed Sallar Masood Ghazi in Bahraich.

A division of Justices Attau Rahman Masoodi and Subhash Vidyarthi, said in its order that, however, "Until the delivery of the judgment, as an interim measure, we provide that routine activities at Dargah Sharif for carrying out the ritualistic practices shall remain open, for which all support for maintaining law and order as well as necessary civic amenities shall be provided by the State in co-operation with the Committee administering the management of Dargah Sharif."

The court added, "We also provide that the Committee shall ensure that devotees visit the shrine in moderate numbers as per routine in order to avoid the possibility of any stampede or unwarranted situation causing a concern to the safety of the devotees and creating difficulties for the administration."

The court was hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the order issued on April 26 this year by the District Magistrate, Bahraich, declining permission for holding the annual Jeth Mela at and near the Dargah of Syed Sallar Masood Ghazi.

The court said, "As the prayer for organising 'Jeth Mela' having cultural/commercial trappings is concerned, we are not persuaded, prima facie, to interfere with the decision of the state authorities."

A previous court order had said the petitioners' lawyer had made the key points about why the case should be admitted and interim relief granted. These points mentioned that the Dargah was established in 1375 AD by Firoz Shah Tuglaq in the memory of Syed Sallar Masood Ghazi. There is no requirement in law for seeking such permission, thus, there was no question of denying it, the lawyer submitted.

The reasons given in the impugned order are not at all germane to the holding of Urs/Mela. In fact, what is sought to be held is an Urs and not Mela. The Urs/Mela is being organised at the said place for the past several years. He relied upon documents on record pertaining to the last few years to contend that there has never been any law and order or other problem during the Urs, therefore, there is absolutely no basis nor justification for preventing organization of such Urs/Mela.