

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Empowerment, full rights...

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor; A.K Choudhary, Special DG Crime; Nalin Prabhat, ADG CRPF J&K Zone; Ajay Kumar Yadav, IG CRPF; Vijay Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; senior officers of CRPF, Civil and Police Administration and people in large numbers were present.

### Modi slams Congress...

would return the rights of control over temples, now controlled by governments, back to Hindus.

The service to the poor is the real social justice and his government has been relentlessly working for the welfare of the poor in the last nine years, he said.

He also called upon all political parties to join hands with the government in ensuring the welfare of the poor.

Urging the Telangana people to keep faith in him for five years, he said he will bring back what the other parties have looted from people.

He accused the Congress and the BRS of making tall promises before elections and not fulfilling them later.

Alleging that the Congress and its "arrogant" INDIA alliance allies had blocked the Women's Reservation Bill for the last 30 years, he said the parties had to support it out of compulsion in Parliament.

He further alleged that the BRS had supported the Congress in the Karnataka elections.

"The Congress has made a pact with BRS behind the curtains. In the Karnataka elections, BRS had supported the Congress a lot. And now, the Congress is now paying the debt in the elections. Because, the money looted from the people of Telangana was given to the Congress in Karnataka so that Congress can win there and later win in Telangana with it. This is the game played by BRS," he said.

Modi asked the people of Telangana to give him an opportunity to serve them and to work for their welfare.

Modi also said the BJP will work honestly for the development of Telangana and said a "double engine" government will ensure fast-paced development of the state.

"The BJP will stop Telangana's loot. BJP will give new opportunities to Telangana's youth, BJP will ensure honour and security to Telangana women and BJP will provide honest and transparent government in Telangana," he said.

### Our operational plans...

taken to bolster the Indian Air Force's operational prowess, he said a contract to procure 97 Tejas Mark 1A aircraft at a cost of around Rs 1.15 lakh crore will be concluded soon. In February 2021, Defence Ministry sealed a Rs 48,000-crore deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd to procure 83 such jets.

The Chief of Air Staff said another project to upgrade 84 Sukhoi-30MKI jets at a cost of Rs 60,000 crore is being finalised.

Also, the IAF is looking at inducting military platforms, equipment and defence hardware worth Rs 2.5 to Rs 3 lakh crore in the next seven-eight years, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said.

To a question on China's rapid expansion of military infrastructure and enhancing deployment of air assets along the LAC, he said the IAF is constantly monitoring the situation across the borders through ISR (Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) mechanisms.

"We make note of the build-up of the resources and capabilities across the borders. Our operational plans are very dynamic and keep changing based on the situation that we perceive that is developing across any front," he said.

"So in places where we cannot really counter the numbers or the might of the adversary, we will counter it through better tactics and through better training," he said.

The Air Chief Marshal said the IAF does not have a fixed mindset in terms of the deployment of assets in key areas along the LAC.

"Our focus will remain to be dynamic at all times and not to have a fixed mindset in terms of deployment of assets in particular areas. But we have very very flexible and dynamic war plans which we keep revising every now and then based on the ISR inputs that we get," he said.

The Chief of Air Staff said the IAF is in the process of deploying mountain radars to improve surveillance along the borders.

"The situation continues to remain what it was in the last one year. There have been certain disengagements in certain contested areas. But complete disengagement has not yet taken place," he said when asked about the ground situation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh

"We will continue to remain deployed till complete disengagement takes place," he said.

Answering a question, Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said the IAF has received three units of S-400 missile systems from Russia and hopes to get the remaining two by next year.

He said that transfer of technology is taking place between China and Pakistan and Islamabad is manufacturing JF-17 fighter jets.

On lessons from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, he said there is a need to build full spectrum capability to counter India's adversaries.

He also noted that the IAF will replace all MIG-21 squadrons with the LCA Mark 1A by 2025.

The Chief of Air Staff described the Indo-Pacific region as the "new economic and strategic centre of gravity" of the world that offers both challenges and opportunities.

"The Indian Air Force with its inherent capability to see the farthest, reach the fastest and hit the hardest will be critical in mitigating these challenges and will remain a fulcrum in projecting India's might in the region," he said.

"Owing to the volatile and uncertain geopolitical landscape in our region, the need to have a strong and credible military has become an imperative," he said.

The Chief of Air Staff said modern warfare is constantly undergoing a transformation due to rapid advancements in technology and his force has embarked on a journey of transformation and is progressing in a planned and systematic manner.

"Our focus is on force multipliers in the form of AI (artificial intelligence)-based decision tools, electronic warfare equipment, robust networks and harnessing space and cyber capabilities.

"While adding newer and more potent equipment, platforms and weapons to our arsenal, we are also committed to Atmanirbhar Bharat and are contributing extensively towards enhancing indigenisation and defence production, fast-paced development and operationalisation of indigenous aerospace projects," he said.

Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari said persistent surveillance capability, sharpening of sensor-to-shooter time, long-range precision weapons and development of multi-domain capability are the main focus areas of the IAF.

"We have recently witnessed the induction of the first C-295 aircraft. The project is an important milestone in boosting our defence industry and will contribute immensely," he said.

"As we progress in our centenary decade, you have my assurance that IAF will remain fully committed to the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country," the Chief of Air Staff said.

### Opposition parties to...

of completing the delimitation process and then of voter list before holding elections. Both the exercises are complete. So what is pending now for which they are delaying the elections?" Abdullah asked.

Following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019, the Central government has now claimed improvement in the situation while the lieutenant governor is saying that Jammu and Kashmir is marching on the path of development, he said.

"If everything is alright, what prompted the overnight change of thought about the holding the urban local body polls and panchayat elections (scheduled for later this year)? It means that what you said at the G20 event is not right," Abdullah said.

When it comes to holding elections, the situation suddenly becomes bad, he said. "We do not understand this."

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said the meeting condemned the raids by the Delhi Police's special cell at the residences of NewsClick journalists.

"This was initially done against journalists in Jammu and Kashmir, but now it has become a norm across the country," she said and asked the Editors Guild of India to take notice of such developments.

CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami, who attended the opposition parties' meeting, said they held a detailed discussion on the emerging situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the problems being faced by all sections of the society 'in the Union Territory.

Tarigami said that former chief ministers, ex-MLAs and MPs will come together in Jammu on October 10 to defend the constitution and the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit president Ravinder Raina said

the people of the Union Territory have rejected these leaders and they are now resorting to conspiracies by forming the Gupkar alliance and sometimes by forming the INDIA bloc to mislead the people.

"Today, there is peace, progress, prosperity and brotherhood in Jammu and Kashmir... Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji has started a new era of development... and some people are troubled by it," Raina said.

He said the BJP is ready for every election. "We have full confidence that with the way the Modi government has worked in Jammu and Kashmir, I believe the BJP will form government in the Union Territory (whenever the elections are held)," he added.

Those who attended the opposition parties' meeting included PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, her party's general secretary Amreek Singh Reen, Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief Vikar Rasool Wani, its working president Raman Bhalla, CPI(M) leader Tarigami, Dogra Sadar Sabha president Gulchain Singh Charak and Jammu and Kashmir Shiv Sena (UBT) president Manish Sahni.

Awami National Conference Senior Vice President Muzaffar Shah, National Conference provincial president, Jammu, Rattan Lal Gupta, party MP Hasnain Masoodi, Mission Statehood president Sunil Dimple and former MP Sheikh Abdul Rehman were present at the meeting.

Representatives of various other parties, including the CPI, Akali Dal (Amritsar) and the Internationalist Democratic Party also attended the meeting.

### NewsClick founder...

portal founder and editor-in-chief Purkayastha was taken to the Special Cell's office for questioning.

Among those questioned were journalists Urmilesh, Aunindyo Chakravarty, Abhisar Sharma, Paranjoy Guha Thakurta as well as historian Sohail Hashmi, satirist Sanjay Rajoura and D Raghunandan of the Centre for Technology & Development.

After being questioned for over six hours, they were allowed to go.

"After a day long interrogation by Delhi special cell, I am back home. Each and every question posed will be answered. Nothing to fear . And I will keep questioning people in power and particularly those who are afraid of simple questions . Not backing down at any cost," Abhisar Sharma posted on X.

Addressing a gathering in Bhubaneswar, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said probe agencies in the country are independent and work in accordance with law.

"... If someone has done something wrong, probe agencies work on it... Nowhere it is written that if you have got money in an illegal manner or done something objectionable, then probe agencies cannot investigate that," Thakur said.

Police sources said investigators posed a list of 25 questions on various issues, including their foreign travels, protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Shaheen Bagh as well as the farmers' agitation.

Those being questioned have been divided into three categories, A, B and C, sources said, but did not divulge details on this.

The media firm is under the scanner of the Economic Offences Wing (EoW) of the Delhi Police and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) amid allegations it received funds from China.

A fresh case was registered by the Delhi Police Special Cell against the news portal on August 17 under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and other sections of IPC, including Section 153A (promoting enmity between two groups), 120B (criminal conspiracy).

Sources said police have seized laptops and mobile phones related to some journalists, adding that most of the people were questioned about their association with NewsClick and details about their calls to people residing in foreign countries.

In 2021, the Economic Offenses Wing of Delhi Police had started an investigation against NewsClick over suspicious foreign funding. The EoW had also registered an FIR in this case.

The ED in 2022 had attached a South Delhi flat, worth Rs 4.52 crore, linked to Purkayastha apart from fixed deposits worth Rs 41 lakh as part of this money laundering probe.

CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury's official residence at Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla lane was one of the premises searched by police to question his staffer Sri Narayan's son Sumit, who works with NewsClick.

In a statement, the National Alliance of Journalists, the Delhi Union of Journalists and the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (Delhi unit) claimed that the residences of Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, Teesta Setalvad, Mahesh Kumar, Subodh Varma, Aditi Nigam, Mukund Jha and many others, were raided this morning.

The issue caused political ripples with the Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party and the Samajwadi Party as well as the Press Club of India reacting to the searches and criticising the government.

Urmilesh and Chakravarty emerged from the Special Cell office at Lodhi Road after about six hours of questioning around 4.15 pm. They did not respond to queries of mediapersons who had gathered at the spot.

"I will not say anything," Urmilesh told the battery of camera crews.

Sharma came out of the probe agency's office about an hour later. He was followed by Raghunandan, who told reporters that he was asked very general questions about NewsClick.

Recalling how the day unfolded, Thakurta told mediapersons that nine police personnel came to his house in Gurugram at 6.30 am. "They asked me various questions and I came with them voluntarily to the office of Delhi Police's Special Cell at Lodhi Colony."

On Tuesday morning, a Special Cell team took Sharma with it after questioning him at his home in Noida Extension. Before he was detained, the journalist wrote on X, "Delhi police landed at my home. Taking away my laptop and phone."

Another journalist, Bhasha Singh, wrote on X, "Finally last tweet from this phone. Delhi police seizure (sic) my phone."

Hashmi's sister Shabnam Hashmi, posted on X, "Today, early morning at 6 am, Delhi Police's special cell raided Sohail Hashmi's residence. 6 people barged into the house and the bedroom."

She alleged that the team questioned him for two hours and seized his computer, phone, hard disc and flash drives.

The police action drew sharp reaction from the opposition parties, which accused the BJP of indulging in a "witch-hunt" against journalists who criticise the government.

Opposition bloc INDIA strongly condemned the raids and alleged that the BJP government's "coercive" actions are directed only against those who speak truth to power and not against those who spread hatred and divisiveness.

But, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla retorted, "The Congress preaching about the press is like Satan preaching about scriptures."

Congress leader Pawan Khera said the early morning raids on contributing journalists at NewsClick come as a "fresh distraction from the explosive findings of caste census in Bihar and the growing demand for caste census across the country."

"When he faces questions from out of syllabus, he resorts to the only counter he has in his predictable syllabus - DISTRACTION," Khera said on X.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the searches represent a sign of a "losing BJP."

"This is not a new thing, BJP rulers have always raided honest journalists. But how many crores of rupees are being given to 'Mitra channels' every month in the name of government 'prachar-prasar' (advertisements), anyone should also print this," Yadav said in a post on X.

AAP chief national spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar alleged the Modi government is pretending to fight China by arresting journalists because it didn't have the courage to engage with it directly.

The Press Club of India said it is deeply concerned about raids on the houses of journalists and writers associated with NewsClick.

"We are monitoring the developments and will be releasing a detailed statement. The PCI stands in solidarity with the journalists and demands the government to come out with details," it said.

In August, the Delhi High Court sought Purkayastha's stand on a plea by the city police seeking vacation of an earlier order granting him interim protection from arrest in an unlawful foreign funding case.

The website recently hit the headlines for allegedly receiving money from US millionaire Neville Roy Singham for pro-China propaganda in India.

Citing an investigation by The New York Times, Thakur had recently claimed that NewsClick's money trail revealed an "anti-India agenda".

### India asks Canada...

parity in strength and rank equivalence in our mutual diplomatic presence. Their numbers here are very much higher than ours in Canada. The details of this are being worked out," Bagchi had said.

India also announced temporarily suspending issuance of visas to Canadian citizens.

The India-Canada ties were reeling under some strain for the last few months in view of increasing activities of the pro-Khalistani elements in the North American country.

India says the Trudeau government is not addressing its genuine concerns.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told journalists in Washington last week that the governments of India and Canada will have to talk to each other and see how they resolve their differences over the issue and underlined that the larger issue of "permissiveness" must be flagged and addressed.

### Basohli Pashmina gets...

societies, developing clusters and providing benefits of various departmental schemes to the Basohli Pashmina weavers. The artisans and weavers of Jammu Division have expressed their gratitude to J&K UT Lieutenant Governor and Chief Secretary for this much awaited present.

### Two army personnel...

hospitalised and their condition is stable.

Two terrorists are believed to be inside the cordoned area, the officials said, adding that reinforcements have been rushed to plug all possible escape routes.

A defence spokesperson said the joint operation was launched in the general area in Kalakote and technology is being used to monitor the terrorists' movements. An intense operation is underway, he added. The ADGP has rushed to the spot, the officials said, adding that he himself is monitoring the operation, along with top Army and range officers.

### CIC Y K Sinha's tenure ends

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The tenure of Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) Y K Sinha ended on Tuesday. During his tenure, Sinha managed to reduce the number of pending cases before the transparency panel by more than 50 per cent.

His successor's name is yet to be announced by the government.

A committee headed by the prime minister and comprising the leader of the opposition and a Union Cabinet minister selects the CIC and information commissioners.

Those recommended by the committee are appointed to the Central Information Commission by the president.

As against the total strength of one CIC and 10 information commissioners (ICs), the commission is currently functioning with one CIC and four ICs. With Sinha demitting office, it will be left with just four ICs whose tenure will also end by November, officials said.

A 1981-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, Sinha assumed charge as an IC on January 1, 2019. He was subsequently elevated to the CIC's post.

Sinha has served as India's high commissioner to the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka, besides performing a number of important assignments in the external affairs ministry in India and abroad.

He took the reins of the commission on November 7, 2020, with pending cases at a staggering 39,000, which he brought down to less than half, with just 19,000 pending cases and complaints before the commission, according to the latest data.

Son of former Vice Chief of Army Staff, late Lieutenant General S K Sinha, who was also the governor of Jammu and Kashmir and Assam, Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha pushed for bulk disposal of frivolous and vexatious appeals and complaints and kept hearing the cases even during the second wave of COVID-19 through audio-conferencing to avoid any pile-up of cases.

### Scouting for locations in Kashmir for next movie project: Actor Rahul Bhat

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Bollywood Actor Rahul Bhat on Tuesday said he is scouting for locations in Kashmir for his next feature project, which will explore themes of love and peace.

The "Kennedy" actor said while most of the movies made on Kashmir revolve around terrorism and violence, his new movie would not touch upon these issues.

"We want to make a film, made in Kashmir, like Iranian films which are human stories. We want to make a Kashmiri film, in which there is a human story that talks about love and peace," the actor told PTI in Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

"We are totally not touching terrorism. Every film on Kashmir is about terrorism, military, army and violence. We want to make a film about love which would be a story about a village here. This is a real story," the actor said.

Bhat, who hails from Kashmir, said most of the film's cast and crew comes from the union territory.

"If Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, and Telugu films can be made, why not a Kashmiri? So, we have tried to engage Kashmiri talent in it most of the actors are Kashmiri the director is a Kashmiri, the whole team is Kashmiri. The cinematographer and the technical team is from Mumbai," he said.

The actor also teased that the upcoming film will feature a "big star" from Hollywood. "She loved the script. The announcement will be made soon," Bhat added.

### Subedar Late Ajay Singh Volleyball Tournament commences

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: Army proudly announced the commencement of the thrilling Volleyball



An official interacting with players at Rajouri.

Tournament in memory of Late Subedar Ajay Singh at Thanamandi, Rajouri District. The event is being conducted from October 2 to 5, 2023 with the noble objective of fostering sportsmanship and a competitive spirit amongst the youth. The tournament will see the participation from 14 teams and will provide a platform for the youth to display their sporting talent and skills. The event will also serve as a means to strengthen the bond between the Indian Army and the people of the region.

### Modi Govt empowered marginalized communities: Langeh

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

HIRANAGAR: In a significant initiative aimed at fostering community engagement and sharing vital information, Neelam Langeh, President of the Bharatiya Janata Party's Scheduled Caste (SC) Morcha and former Member of Legislative Assembly, intensified the Basti Sampark Abhiyan in Hiranagar.

The event witnessed the active participation of esteemed individuals including Sanjay Nirmal, National General Secretary of the SC Morcha, and Santokh Singh Gumtala, National Secretary of the SC Morcha. The campaign, focused on connecting with the citizens and addressing their concerns, witnessed the active participation of local residents and party members.

During the campaign, Sanjay Nirmal emphasized the various flagship initiatives launched by the central government under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The transformative policies were highlighted for their potential to bring about positive change and development across various sectors, impacting the lives of weaker section of society.

Santokh Singh Gumtala said the Basti Sampark Abhiyan was conducted with an objective to reach every section of society and ensured they were informed about government initiatives that directly affect their lives. He also underlined Party's commitment to hearing the voices of the people and working towards their welfare and progress. Neelam Langeh reiterated the unwavering commitment of the Modi Government to the upliftment and empowerment of marginalized sections of society. The campaign was a testament to the dedication and determination of the Party to make a substantial and positive difference in the lives of the people, he added. The campaign aimed at connecting with the community and disseminating essential information about the ongoing Basti Sampark Abhiyan. A multitude of community members actively engaged in the proceedings, underscoring their enthusiasm and interest in the initiative.

Adarsh Jathiyar, General Secretary, Odhi Atri, Mandal Adhyaksh Sudesh Kumar Sethu, Omkar and Asha Devi were also present.