

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! J&K votes NC...

and others in Jammu district. The NC saw a rise in its vote share as well, improving from



20.77 per cent in 2014 to 23.43 per cent this election cycle. In contrast, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) experienced significant losses, winning only three seats compared to 28 in 2014 and witnessing its vote share drop from 22.67 per cent to just 8.87 per cent.

The Congress also faced a decline, securing only six seats -- down from 12 seats a decade ago -- with a corresponding drop in vote share from 18 per cent to approximately 12 per cent.

There are only three women winners -- Sakina Masood, Shamima Firdous (both NC) and Shagun Parihar (BJP) -- among the 90 successful candidates.

Two NC veterans -- Abdul Rahim Rather (Charar-e-Sharief) and Ali Mohammad Sagar (Khanyar) -- have won for the seventh term as MLA in J&K.

Among the other key winners were NC vice president Omar Abdullah, J&K Congress president Tariq Hamid Karra, PDP youth president Waheed Para and BJP leader Devender Rana.

The key losers include former deputy chief minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig (Independent), Congress leader Tara Chand, PCC working president Raman Bhalla, former PCC president Vaqar Rsool Wani and NC provincial president Nasir Aslam Wani.

Omar Abdullah, a likely candidate for the chief minister's position after winning in both Budgam and Ganderbal, expressed gratitude to the electorate for their support. "We are committed to serving the people and addressing their concerns in this new mandate," he stated.

Abdullah said many attempts were made to destroy his party over the last five years by creating new outfits which have been decimated in this election.

"There were attempts to destroy the NC over the last five years. So many parties were created here, whose only aim was to destroy the NC. But, God's grace has been on us and those who tried to destroy us, have been decimated in the process,"

Abdullah told reporters here after receiving his winning certificate from the returning officer for the Budgam seat.

He said the verdict has increased the party's responsibilities. PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, while congratulating the NC-Congress alliance for the victory, said the Centre should take a lesson from the decisive verdict of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls and "not meddle" in the affairs of the upcoming NC-Congress government.

She said her party would play the role of a constructive opposition.

"I congratulate the NC leadership for its spectacular win. I also want to congratulate the people of J&K for voting for a stable government and not a hung assembly because the people faced several problems especially after August 5, 2019. A stable and strong government is very important for the redressal of those problems," Mufti told reporters here.

CPI(M) candidate Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami won the assembly election from the Kulgam seat in for the fifth consecutive time, defeating former member of banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) Sayar Ahmad Reshi by more than 7,800 votes.

The counting of votes began at 8 am at 28 counting centres for the 90 seats of Jammu and Kashmir assembly which went to polls in three phases.

### CEO lauds all...

was robust, reflecting a renewed enthusiasm for democratic engagement in the region.

The Chief Election Officer appreciated the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, extending his gratitude to the District Election Officers (DEOs), FSTs, SSTs, VSTs, VVTs, more than 75000 polling staff, Command and Control Room Staff, Nodal officers of all the activities, security personnel done commendable job and most importantly, the electorates. "The successful conduct of these elections is a testament to the dedication of everyone involved and the commitment of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to participate in the democratic process," he stated.

Election authorities ensured that adequate measures were in place to maintain security and facilitate a smooth voting process, addressing concerns that had previously affected voter turnout in the region.

As the counting of votes concludes, the outcomes will determine the political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir for the coming years. The elections not only symbolize a step towards restoring normalcy but also reflect the resilience of the people in exercising their democratic rights.

### We expect PM...

interventions in Parliament, through their representative in the Supreme Court, they have promised restoration of statehood. So I believe it should happen at the earliest. And then obviously our priorities will go forward from there," he added.

In response to a question, Abdullah said the J&K government cannot afford to have an antagonistic relation with the Centre.

"Once the new government is in place, whoever the chief minister of J-K is, I would expect them to travel to Delhi to meet the PM, the home minister and other leaders to impress upon them that the mandate of the people of J-K was for restoration of statehood, was for development and peace and whoever the CM is, I hope they are able to establish a decent working relationship with the GoI.

"There are far too many problems that J-K has and it cannot afford an antagonistic relationship with the Central government. We will have to find a way of working together, and I hope that the Union government will respect the mandate of the people and will work together with the government of J-K to resolve the problems of the people," he added.

Abdullah said the NC legislature party will meet to elect its leader which will be followed by an alliance meeting to decide on the leader of the coalition.

"At the moment, it is for the National Conference legislature party to sit and choose its leader; that has not yet been done. I think that my colleagues deserve at least one day to celebrate their victories in their areas, so tomorrow we will do that," he said.

The NC vice president said in a day or two, he expects party president Farooq Abdullah to call the legislature party meeting.

"The legislature party will elect its leader; then the alliance will elect the leader of the alliance and then once the letters of support are available, then we will stake our claim to form a government to the lieutenant governor. Beyond that, it is not for me to put priorities because none of that has been done yet," he added.

Asked about PDP extending support to the coalition government, Abdullah said it is for that party to decide. "I cannot speak for the PDP. It is for the PDP to decide what to do. We have no channels of communication with the PDP at the moment as far as I know.

"In due course, let's see what the PDP decides. I can understand the circumstances at the moment and are probably looking more at what happened to their electoral prospects. So let the dust settle then we will see," he said.

On the NC performance in the polls, Abdullah said while he expected to do well, he did not expect such a high number of seats. "Speaking for myself, I did not expect these kinds of numbers. I did not expect the National Conference to come with these many seats. Yesterday night somebody messaged me, asking how NC will do.

"I said anything around 30 or above will be a good performance. I feel humbled by the faith people have reposed in me but it is scary because we have to live up to this faith and that is our biggest responsibility now," he said.

Reminded about the "We will be back" tweet after his party's defeat in the 2014 assembly polls, Abdullah said he did not expect to wait for 10 years to be back.

"I did not expect to have to wait 10 years. It has been a long wait, all those 10 years, and since 2018 we have been without an elected government at all.

"So, more than being back, I am happy that democracy is back, that democratic rule is being restored to Jammu and Kashmir. So yes, I would rephrase that tweet and say 'democracy is back'," he said.

### PM Modi's vision...

the National Conference that BJP was rejected for politicizing along communal lines. Chugh said that the fact that BJP received 1.4 lakh more votes than NC is evidence that people trusted BJP's vision of unity and progress.

Chugh also said that the BJP's increased vote share was a clear indication of the people's growing confidence in Modi's leadership and long-term development plans for Jammu and Kashmir.

He thanked the voters for putting their faith in the party and assured that BJP will continue to work towards a prosperous and peaceful future for the region.

### Modi congratulates NC...

partner Congress, which has bagged six seats. "I would like to compliment JKNC for their commendable performance in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections," Modi said in a post on X. NC vice president Omar Abdullah thanked the prime minister and said that his party looks forward to a constructive relationship with the Centre. "Thank you very much for your message of congratulations @narendramodi sahib. We look forward to a constructive relationship in the true spirit of federalism so that the people of J&K may benefit from continued development & good governance," he said.

## J&K polls: NC leaders Abdul Rahim Rather, Ali Mohammad Sagar elected for record 7th time

**STATE TIMES NEWS** SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) leaders Abdul Rahim Rather and Ali Mohammad Sagar were elected for a record seventh term on Tuesday in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections.

Rather, the former finance minister of the erstwhile state of J-K, has represented central Kashmir's Charar-i-Sharief for six terms before this since 1977.

He was elected to the assembly in 1983, 1987, 1996, 2002 and 2008 elections. In 2014 polls, he lost to PDP's Ghulam Nabi Lone.

However, Rather defeated Lone by a margin of over 11,000 votes on Tuesday. Sagar, the general secretary of the NC, also won the assembly election for the seventh time.

He was first elected to the assembly from Batamaloos seat here in 1983. He regained the seat in 1987. Later, Sagar shifted to Khanyar and won the polls from there in 1996. Since then, he has never lost an election from the seat. In fact, the NC general secretary has never lost an assembly election.

Sagar won the Khanyar seat defeating former deputy Mayor of Srinagar Sheikh Imran who contested the polls as

an independent candidate by a margin of 9,912 votes.

Another politician who could have achieved the feat was Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen who has represented Khansahib seat, in Budgam district, six times.

However, he could not win the seventh time and was defeated by NC's Saif ud din Bhat by a margin of 11,614 votes.

NC's Mubarak Gul is another politician who has won his seat several times. Gul won the election from Eidgah here for the sixth time, while CPI(M)'s M Y Tarigami wrested the Kulgam constituency for the fifth time.

## Seven independents emerge victorious

**STATE TIMES NEWS** JAMMU: Seven independent candidates have emerged victorious in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, marking an increase from the 2014 elections when three such candidates had won.

Satesh Sharma, who left the Congress and contested as an independent from the Chhamb seat of Jammu region, won the election by defeating BJP candidate Rajeev Sharma with a margin of 6,929 votes. Satesh Sharma, 42, who is son of two-time MP and former Congress minister Madan Lal Sharma, polled 33,985

votes. Former deputy chief minister and Congress candidate Tara Chand, who had won this seat three times, finished third with 16,449 votes.

In Inderwal, independent candidate Payare Lal Sharma defeated veteran leader Gulam Mohammad Saroori by a narrow margin of 643 votes. Sharma received 14,195 votes, while Saroori, also an independent candidate, secured 13,552 votes. Saroori had previously won this seat twice.

In Bani, independent candidate Dr Rameshwar Singh defeated BJP nominee and former MLA Jewan Lal by 2,048 votes. Singh secured 18,672 votes, while Lal polled 16,624 votes.

In the Surankote assembly segment, independent candidate and National Conference rebel Choudhary Mohammad Akram defeated Congress' Mohammad Shahmawaz by a margin of 8,851 votes. Akram received 34,201 votes.

Muzaffar Iqbal Khan won the Thanamandi seat with a margin of 6,179 votes against BJP candidate Mohammad Iqbal Malik. Khan garnered 32,645 votes.

Khursheed Ahmed Sheikh secured 25,984 votes and defeated Peoples Conference's Irfan Sultan Panditpuri by a margin of 1,602 votes in the Langate assembly seat. Similarly, Shabir Ahmed Kullay defeated National Conference candidate Sheikh Mohammad Rafi by a margin of 1,207 votes in the Shopian seat. A total of 346 independent candidates contested in the J&K Assembly elections, with 339 of them failing to win. Three and four candidates were elected to the J&K Assembly in 2014 and 2008 elections, respectively.

## Caste census report likely to be referred to Cabinet panel or placed in Assembly, says Minister

**STATE TIMES NEWS** BENGALURU: Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday said that the Socio-Economic and Education Survey report, also known as the "caste census", will either be referred to a Cabinet subcommittee or introduced in the legislature, based on what the Cabinet decides next week.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said the caste census will "most likely" be placed before the Cabinet for discussion on October 18.

"We were accused of keeping the caste census in the cold storage after spending so much money. Now when we are saying that we will make it public, they are not able to take it," Parameshwara, a senior leader from the SC community, said, hitting back at the opposition over its criticism.

Speaking to reporters here, he said everyone in the state knows that backward classes, minorities and Dalits are more in number, and in the days ahead for the government to plan and prepare programmes, the caste census will be helpful.

"... shouldn't we prepare and give programmes for those communities. Programmes are planned and made based on the population. That's the reason the Chief Minister has said that the caste census will be placed before the Cabinet on October 18, it will be discussed there," he said.

Depending on the views expressed during the discussion, the Minister said, it will be decided whether to form a sub-committee or to table it in the Assembly.

Asked about Vokkaliga and Lingayat leaders in the Congress not supporting

the implementation of the caste census report, he said, "no, the question of support won't come here. Facts will be placed before the people, how can it be objected to? By spending about Rs 160 crore, a caste census was done, to know the population of various communities."

Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes under its then Chairman K Jayaprakash Hegde had on February 29 submitted the report to the Chief Minister amid objections by certain sections of society and also within the ruling Congress over its implementation.

Vokkaligas and Lingayats -- Karnataka's two dominant communities -- have expressed reservations about the survey, calling it "unscientific", and have demanded that it be rejected and a fresh survey be conducted.

With strong disapproval from the two politically-influential communities, the survey report may turn out to be a political hot potato for the Congress government, as it may set the stage for a confrontation, with Dalits and OBCs among others demanding for it to be made public.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who is also the state Congress president, and a Vokkaliga, was a signatory, along with a couple of other ministers, to a memorandum submitted by the community to the Chief Minister earlier, requesting that the report along with the data be rejected.

All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha, the apex body of Veerashaiva-Lingayats, which has also expressed its disapproval vis-a-vis the survey and demanded conduct of a fresh survey, is headed by vet-

eran Congress leader and MLA Shamanuru Shivashankarappa. Several Lingayat ministers and MLAs too have raised objections.

BJP state President B Y Vijayendra said Siddaramaiah "for political reasons or to save his position or to divert the attention from corruption allegations", was all of a sudden trying to bring the caste census to the forefront.

"Congress leaders are themselves saying that this caste census report is unscientific, not us. D K Shivakumar and Shamanuru Shivashankarappa have said it...it is clear that the Chief Minister who is anxious (because of the MUDA case) is trying to use this (caste census) as a pawn," he added.

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka too alleged that the CM was indulging in all kinds of tactics to cover up the MUDA case, as he noted that the caste census was done about ten years ago and it has now all of a sudden been brought up..

"Population growth and other changes have happened in ten years. Congress never raised it when Siddaramaiah was CM earlier or when he was coordination commission chief during the Congress-JD(S) coalition government, now they are doing it as the MUDA case is discussed nationally, they want to divert attention from it. This is Congress' conspiracy," Ashoka said.

JD(S) leader and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy too on Monday accused Siddaramaiah of playing a "drama" by trying of bring the caste census issue to the forefront, after remaining silent on it for long, aimed at diverting the public attention from the MUDA site allotment case against him.

## CPI(M) leader Tarigami wins Kulgam seat for fifth consecutive time

**STATE TIMES NEWS** SRINAGAR: leader M Y Tarigami won the Assembly election from the Kulgam seat in Jammu and Kashmir for the fifth time by defeating former head of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) member Sayar Ahmad Reshi by more than 7800 votes. Tarigami secured 33634 votes and won the seat by a margin of 7838 votes, defeating his nearest rival Reshi, who received 25796 votes. Reshi was contesting the polls for the first time. The CPI(M) leader has consecutively won from the seat since 1996.

## Modi to visit Laos on Oct 10-11 to attend ASEAN-India, East Asia summits

**STATE TIMES NEWS** NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on a two-day visit to Laos on October 10 and 11 during which he will attend the 21st ASEAN-India Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday. Laos is the current chair of ASEAN.

On the invitation of his Laos counterpart Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister Modi will visit Vientiane on October 10-11, the MEA said in a statement.

During the visit, Modi will attend the 21st ASEAN-India Summit and the 19th East Asia Summit being hosted by Laos as the current chair of ASEAN, it said.

Modi is also expected to hold bilateral meetings on the margins of the two summits, according to the MEA.

"India is marking a decade of the Act East Policy this year. Relations with ASEAN are a central pillar of the Act East Policy and our Indo-Pacific vision," the MEA said.

The ASEAN-India Summit will review the progress of India-ASEAN relations through "our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" and chart the future direction of cooperation.

The East Asia Summit, a premier leaders-led forum that contributes to building an environment of strategic trust in the region, provides an opportunity for leaders of EAS Participating Countries, including India, to exchange views on issues of regional importance," the ministry said.

## Asia's largest imaging telescope inaugurated in Ladakh

**STATE TIMES NEWS** MUMBAI: The Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment (MACE) observatory was inaugurated by Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty, DAE secretary and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, at Hanle, Ladakh, on 4th October 2024," the statement said.

In his inaugural address, Mohanty applauded the collective effort that brought the MACE telescope to fruition. e said the MACE observatory is a monumental achievement for India, and it places the country at the forefront of cosmic-ray research globally. The DAE secretary noted that the telescope will allow scientists to study high-energy gamma rays, paving the way for deeper understanding of the universe's most energetic events. Mohanty emphasised the significant role that MACE project plays not only in advancing scientific research, but also in supporting the socio-economic development of Ladakh.

### Modi lauds air warriors for their courage, professionalism

**STATE TIMES NEWS** NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday lauded Air Force personnel for their courage and professionalism as he greeted them on the Air Force Day. The day is observed to mark the anniversary of the institution and to commemorate the sacrifices made by air warriors. Modi said on X, "Air Force Day greetings to our brave air warriors. Our Air Force is admired for their courage and professionalism. Their role in protecting our nation is extremely commendable."