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Boycotting 2018 Panchayat polls ‘a huge mistake’, says Farooq

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Re-elected National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah on Monday said boycotting the panchayat polls in 2018 was "a huge mistake" and the party must contest every future election in Jammu and Kashmir.

Abdullah also warned the government and the security forces not to interfere in any election process.

The former Union Minister had expressed a desire to step down from the post owing to his health during a recent party meeting. After his re-election, he said though he wanted to step aside and let the younger leadership run the party, he was persuaded to continue as "we are passing through a very difficult phase".

"I want to tell the party that boycotting the panchayat elections (in 2018) was a huge mistake. Remember this, we will not boycott any coming election. Instead (we will) contest and win them,"



Abdullah said while addressing the party's delegate session where he was re-elected unopposed as National Conference (NC) president.

Referring to his son Omar Abdullah's announcement that he would not contest elections as long as Jammu and Kashmir remained a Union Territory, the senior Abdullah said, "As party president, I am telling you (Omar Abdullah) that you have to contest the election."

"Because if we have to fight them, then we all have to jump into the fray and con-

test elections," he added.

The former Union minister said the BJP "will do anything, even make attempts to buy your loyalties, but God will fail all their designs".

Abdullah also warned the security forces and the government not to interfere in the elections in Jammu and Kashmir and said "let people decide whom to vote for".

"Otherwise, there will be such a storm, which you will not be able to control," he said. Abdullah also threatened to launch an

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Farooq Abdullah re-elected NC President

SRINAGAR: Farooq Abdullah was on Monday re-elected unopposed the president of the National Conference (NC), barely a fortnight after the 85-year-old leader announced he would not run for another term.

Abdullah, who has served as NC president for nearly three decades after being elected first in 1981, said though he wanted to step aside and let the younger leadership run the party, he was persuaded to continue as "we are passing through a very difficult phase".

Abdullah was elected the party's chief at the NC's delegate session held here after party leaders offered prayers at the mausoleum of NC founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at Naseem Bagh in Hazratbal on his 117th birth anniversary.

Reacting to the development, the Jammu and Kashmir BJP said Abdullah's reelection as the National Conference chief shows the party is confined to dynasty politics "which has no place in J&K". The last NC presidential

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Azad congratulates Farooq on his re-election

JAMMU: Democratic Azad Party Chairman and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Monday congratulated National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah after his re-election as his party's president.

Azad prayed for the good health of 85-year-old Abdullah and his long spell in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir.

"I congratulate Abdullah for being re-elected as NC president. Since he has again been elected as party president, I am sure Jammu and Kashmir politics will thrive and will expand the democratic space," Azad said in a statement here.

Govt calls All-Party Meet today ahead of Winter Session of Parliament

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The government has convened an all-party meet of floor leaders on Tuesday to discuss the legislative agenda and important issues likely to be discussed in the Winter Session of Parliament beginning December 7.

Separately, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will on Tuesday evening chair a meeting of the business advisory committee ahead of the session. This time he decided to call a BAC meet instead of the customary all-party meet on the eve of the session, sources said.

The BAC discusses the leg-

islative agenda of the House as well as issues on which parties would like to have discussion.

Last week, the government had listed 16 new bills for introduction in the Winter Session.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had recently sent out invites to floor leaders of various parties to attend the all-party meet. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to be present.

The session begins a day before the votes of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly elections,

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Srinagar records season's coldest night

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: At minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, Srinagar recorded the coldest night of the season so far even as the mercury settled below the freezing point across Kashmir, officials said on Monday.

The minimum last night in the city was 2.5 degrees below the normal for this time of the season, they said.

The night temperature was lesser than the famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, which recorded a low of minus 3.2 degrees Celsius.

The officials said mercury at Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district settled at a low of minus 4.4 degrees Celsius.

Qazigund, the gateway town to the Valley, recorded a minimum of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag town, also in South, registered a low of minus 1.4 degrees Celsius.

Kupwara in north

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 23.9°C Min: 8.1°C

Humidity
Max: 75 Min: 70

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 11.3°C Min: -3.4°C

Humidity
Max: 96 Min: 74

Sunset : 17:26 Hours
Sunrise : 07:18 Hours

Suspended Tehsildar trespasses Tehsil office Bahu alongwith former aide in attempt to tamper revenue records

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a bizarre development, former Tehsildar Bahu, Rohit Sharma, currently under suspension in a trap case, late Monday evening visited Tehsil office along with Patwari Bashir Ahmed, who was posted there six months ago.

Sources said that Tehsildar Rohit Sharma and his ex-Patwari Bashir Ahmed had apparently visited the office to rectify wrongs committed by making insertions and deletions in important revenue records that has potential to unveil acts of omissions and commissions during the tenure of the duo.

However, when a word went around about the presence of the suspended Tehsildar Rohit Sharma along with his former aide in Tehsil office in a suspicious manner, some people assembled outside

the office complex.

This created panic about suspicious visitors and as a result they managed to flee before being caught red-handed by the enraged mob.



The suspended Tehsildar is currently under scanner

REPORT

of the ACB for having amassed huge wealth and Benami properties in the shape of plots, shops and houses in Jammu and its peripheries.

Sources said the sleuths of ACB had got credible evidences about former Tehsildar constructing a palatial house over four kanals of land at Chowadi, having bank lockers at Udhampur besides

various other properties in posh Trkuta Nagar area.

On November 26, Government acted swiftly on STATE TIMES' report and ordered suspension of Tehsildar Bahu, Rohit Sharma, who was then in police custody for taking graft.

On November 14, Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) had arrested Tehsildar Jammu City South (Bahu) Rohit Sharma red-handed while accepting bribe. It was alleged that Rohit Sharma demanded Rs 50,000 from a person in lieu of issuing Fard. On Dec 1, Rohit Sharma was granted bail by the High Court.

Reliable resources informed that Bashir Patwari has told the revenue subordinate staffers that Rohit Sharma is soon re-joining as Tehsildar Bahu.

DySP Sachin promoted as SP

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The government on Monday promoted Sachin Gupta, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) as Superintendent of Police (SP).

"Sanction is accorded to the promotion of Sachin Gupta, KPS116065, Deputy Superintendent of Police, as Superintendent of Police, Level-11 (67700-208700) in the Pay Matrix, with immediate effect," read an order issued by Raj Kumar Goyal, Financial Commission/Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department.

PM chairs key All-Party Meet on G-20, seeks cooperation of everyone

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday chaired a meeting of leaders from all parties on India's presidency of the G-20 and sought their cooperation to make it a big success as the government highlighted its year-long programmes to mark the exercise.

G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies.

Some opposition leaders, including Sitaram Yechury and D Raja of the Left, noted that India taking over the presidency was by rotation and said it should not be projected as the government's achievement, sources said.

Modi, in his speech, asserted that it was an occasion for

in the range of 30-51 seats. The Aam Aadmi Party was projected to bag anything between three and 13 seats. The majority mark in Gujarat is 92.

In Himachal Pradesh, the exit polls projected a range of 24-40 seats for the BJP and 26-40 seats for the Congress. The AAP was projected to bag seats in the range of 0-3. The majority mark is 35 seats.

According to the News X-Jan Ki Baat exit poll on Gujarat elections, the BJP was likely to get 117-140 seats, Congress-NCP 34-51, AAP 6-13 and others 1-2.

Republic TV P-MARQ predicted 128-148 seats for the BJP, 30-42 for the Congress-NCP, AAP 2-10 and others 0-3.

TV9 Gujarati forecast that the BJP would get 125-130 seats, Congress-NCP 40-50, AAP 3-5 and

others 3-7.

For Himachal Pradesh, Aaj Tak-Axis My India predicted a close contest between the Congress and the BJP. It said the BJP would get 24-34 seats and the Congress 30-40 seats.

India TV predicted that the BJP would bag 35-40 seats, Congress 26-31 and AAP zero.

News X-Jan Ki Baat survey said the BJP was likely to get 32-40 seats in the hill state, Congress 27-34 and AAP zero.

While Republic TV P-MARQ predicted that the BJP would get 34-39, Congress 28-33 and AAP 0-1, the Times Now-ETG said the average seats BJP was likely to get was 38 and the Congress 28.

For the Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls, most exit polls predicted a huge win for the AAP over the BJP with the Congress a distant third.

Around 43 pc turnout recorded in DDC re-polls in Hajin, Drugmulla

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Around 43 % voting was recorded in the two District Development Constituencies which went to the re-poll in the Kashmir Division of the Union Territory.

53.33 voter percentage was recorded in Hajin -A Constituency in Bandipora District whereas 32.73 % was recorded in Drugmulla Constituency Kupwara District which went to the polls today.

42 polling stations were set up for DDC Drugmulla which recorded a percentage of 32.73. 10724 votes were polled against total elec-

torate of 32768. 5624 Males and 5100 females exercised their franchise. 141 Migrant votes were also cast at Special polling Stations for Kashmiri Migrants set up at GMS Jagti, GGHS Patta Bohri and GMS Model Higher Secondary school Udhampur.

Similarly in Hajin-A, 53.33 % voting was recorded in 57 polling Stations. 8669 Electors out of the total 16313 cast their votes. 4717 Males out of 8565 and 3982 females out of 7748 cast their votes.

The Voting which started at the 7.A.M in morning

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Purpose of charity should not be religious conversion: SC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Asserting the purpose of charity should not be conversion, the Supreme Court reaffirmed on Monday that forced religious conversion is a "serious issue" and against the Constitution.

The court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking direction to the Centre and states to take stringent steps to control fraudulent religious conversion by "intimidation, threatening, deceptively luring through

gifts and monetary benefits". The Centre told the court it is collecting information



from states on religious conversion through such means.

Appearing before a bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar, Solicitor

General Tushar Mehta sought information on the issue.

Mehta sought a week's time from the court which it granted.

"The purpose of charity should not be conversion. Allurement is dangerous," the top court said, and acknowledged that forced religious conversion is a very serious matter.

When a lawyer questioned the maintainability of

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Digitisation of services vital for better public service delivery: CS

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Highlighting that digitisation of services is vital for better public service delivery, Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Monday impressed upon the officers that people should be made aware about online services.

"Any service offered through offline mode is a source of corruption and therefore we should sensitise public about using only online mode for receiving benefits of government schemes", the Chief Secretary said while interacting with the visiting officers (Prabharis), President's and representatives of different Municipal Wards and Councils of Jammu division under My Town My Pride



Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta interacting with Prabharis of Jammu division under MTMP-5 on Monday.

Programme (MTMP) at Civil Secretariat here.

During the interaction, the Chief Secretary held detailed deliberations on different deliverables with the officers and took on spot assessment from them about the partici-

pation of general public in the MTMP.

While interacting with the officers and representatives of Municipal Wards, the Chief Secretary impressed upon them to encourage maximum participation of

general public in the programme so that the prime objective of this festival of development is achieved. He asked them to involve educational institutions in the celebrations of MTMP and organise events under this programme so that a much larger awareness is generated among the public about different government beneficiary schemes.

Dr. Mehta enjoined upon the officers to involve common masses into the MTMP activities and hold events of such nature which create interest and enthusiasm among the public. "People first" is basic policy of J&K Government and we must serve people as per

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairing G20 All Party Meeting in New Delhi on Monday.

the entire country to be proud of and everyone should contribute to its success, they added. The prime minister had spoken on similar lines at a BJP meeting, saying that every citizen should be proud of the development.

TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, who is also the West Bengal chief minister, said at the meeting that the

G-20 presidency was not about one party's agenda but of the entire country, sources said.

TRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao and JD(U) chief Lalan Singh did not attend the meeting. RJD also skipped the meeting.

In a statement highlighting Yechury's comments at

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