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New threats to...

Dogra Sadar Sabha, in his welcome address threw light on the foundation of Dogra Sadar Sabha and the vision behind organising the conference on "Message of Humanity".

Office bearers and senior member of Dogra Sadar Sabha, and prominent personalities of society and large gathering of people from all walks of life were present on the occasion.

Kerala Guv hits...

(ancestors of Syed Ali Geelani) escaped from Gilan to save their lives. "Please tell me what relation he (Geelani) has with Srinagar (Kashmir)?" Khan questioned.

"As per historic texts, they came to Iran and then to Central Asia, where they heard that those people who belong to the family of the Prophet are treated with great respect. That is why they are in majority in India," he said.

Syed Ali Geelani, who died in 2021, was a hardliner and pro-Pakistan separatist leader. He is regarded as the father of Kashmir separatism. He was also a member of Jamaat-e-Islami Kashmir between 1953 and 2004.

"Kashmir is the crown of India and nobody can disintegrate it from India," Khan said, adding India is not a piece of land but a strong thought, which cannot be disintegrated.

Khan spoke elaborately on the message of different religions. He said Secularism has been a core characteristic of India society since ages and organisations like Dogra Sadar Sabha represent the inherent values and traditions of our ancient Indian culture.

Prosperity and growth require unity and oneness. Our nation is home to unity in diversity and it has always welcomed every religion that ever came to this land. Many prominent religions have their deep connections with this land about which many people do not know, he added.

Terming Prime Minister Narendra Modi's slogan Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas' as a vibrant mantra, he said there is a need to arm everyone with knowledge to ensure development.

HC asks J&K...

sought a direction to the JKSSRB not to conduct any examination through Aptech Limited, which has been "blacklisted" in the past.

The board had announced tentative dates from December 5 to December 20 to conduct the recruitment examinations.

The petitioners had further sought a direction to appoint some other agency, which is not previously blacklisted, for conducting such examinations through Computer Based Test Mode (CBTM) involving public employment.

It has been brought to the notice of the court that the matter at presently is being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and recently it had filed a charge sheet in these matters, the court said.

It ordered a probe and directed the government to constitute a high-level committee headed by not less than a retired high court judge to enquire into the conduct of Service Selection Board for its "brazen irregularities and illegalities" in changing the terms and conditions of the tender.

Questioning the process, the court, in the order, said "as to what weighed with them to award a contract to conduct an examination by an organisation which has previously facilitated malpractices in public examinations and accordingly appropriate action be initiated against those found guilty".

"I would like to say that by its own act of omission and commission, the functioning of Board does not inspire confidence in holding public examinations. It has become incumbent on all stakeholders to review the functioning of the Board," the judge observed.

Meanwhile, in an order issued on Thursday, the JKSSB said, "It is hereby notified that the examination (CBT) for the post of Sub Inspector, Home Department advertised vide Notification no. 06 of 2021, scheduled for 9th December 2022, has been postponed. The fresh date of examination shall be notified separately."

Poll results show...

cent votes in Himachal Pradesh, he noted and said his party's win in Kurhani bypoll in Bihar against the combined might of the grand alliance of the RJD-JD(U)-Congress is an indication of the times to come in the state.

In an apparent attack on the Aam Aadmi Party, Modi invoked the Hindi idiom 'Aamdani athanni kharcha rupaiya' and said people have realised that short-term policies will inflict a big harm on the country. What will be the situation if such a policy is followed can be seen in our neighbourhood, he said in reference to financial hardships in countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

The support to the BJP shows people's rising anger against dynasty rule and corruption, he said, noting that the party also won the prestigious Rampur bypoll in Uttar Pradesh.

He said attempts were made to fail the BJP-run municipal corporation in the national capital and people were cheated in the process, a reference to his party's charge that the AAP government in Delhi denied funds worth hundreds of crores owed to it. The AAP has ended the BJP's 15-year-reign in the local body and has also got nearly 13 per cent votes in Gujarat.

"There is no doubt in people's mind that if the country is prosperous, everyone's prosperity is guaranteed," he said, asserting that voters have supported the BJP in the times of crisis as seen in the party's win in polls held during the Covid pandemic and also when it is working to fulfil their aspirations with a vision of developed India.

The ruling party is working to empower the poor, taking all basic facilities to people and, at the same time, building modern infrastructure in sectors like roads, rail, airports and optical fibre, he said.

"I bow to people, their blessing is overwhelming," he said.

"Be it villages or cities, the poor of middle class, youth or women, every section of society has supported the BJP," he said.

The BJP has won 34 of 40 seats reserved for the SCs and STs in Gujarat in a thumping majority, he added.

The prime minister also accused the BJP's rivals of exploiting social faultlines and divisions for political gains in the name of language, region, lifestyle, eating habits or communities.

People, especially the youth, can see through it, he said, adding that his party got support among over one crore young voters in Gujarat who have seen only its rule because they can see its work.

"India's future can be bright not by raising fault lines but by erasing them. Hundreds of reasons exist for fighting but one reason is enough for us to unite, which is our motherland India. We have to move ahead with the goal of 'India First'," he said.

Hailing the verdict in Gujarat, he said the state's affection for the BJP despite it being in power for nearly 25 years is unprecedented.

He noted that he had urged people to make "Bhupendra (Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel) break all records of Narendra" and they have done it.

In a swipe at the BJP's critics, he said the country needs to know the "games" of people who call themselves neutral.

There is no discussion on those who lost their deposits in Himachal and Uttarakhand, Modi said, a likely reference to the AAP's rout in these states after it made tall claims on its prospects there.

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has won his seat by almost two lakh votes which is an impressive margin even in a Lok Sabha election, he said, adding critically that "thekedars" (contractors) have different metrics of evaluating others and the BJP has to advance in the face of these "zulms" (atrocities).

The prime minister said he had seen it all as his every move was savaged after 2002, an apparent reference to the communal violence in the state when he was chief minister, but he benefitted from it by being alert all the time and making positive changes in himself.

Those who are lauded all the time have little chance to correct themselves, he added.

These "zulms" will now rise against him as well as the BJP, he claimed, telling party workers to increase their restraint and spirit of service while continuing to work.

BJP sets record...

government than what he had got while helming the state for nearly 13 years. And it is evident that voters have listened to him.

The Election Commission's data has put the BJP's vote share at around 53 per cent, a historic first for the party. Helped by a split in the Opposition's votes due to the emergence of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the BJP broke the record of 149 seats won by the Congress under Madhavsinh Solanki in 1985.

For those travelling through the western state, it was clear that voters may have certain issues with the BJP, in power in the state since 1998, regarding its local leadership and certain aspects of its administration but, for most, it did not count before the party's larger governance architecture, ideological thrust and, above all, their faith in Modi.

"PM Modi has emerged as a rare leader whose popularity is unaffected by factors like anti-incumbency or the long duration of stay in power:

"In fact, his popularity has risen with time. He was a 'jan-jan ke neta' (a leader of

masses) and is now 'jan-man ke neta' (a leader of masses and their hearts)," Shivanand Dwivedi, who has written and edited four books on the BJP and its leaders, said.

People may have issues with the BJP, its MLAs and its governments but their trust in Modi overrides everything else, added Dwivedi, who is associated with BJP-linked think tank Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation.

While Modi's campaign extensively covered all four regions of the state, there was a special thrust on tribal regions and parts of Saurashtra where the BJP had suffered a drop in tally in 2017 for a variety of issues, including the Patidar agitation. His road shows traversed though most constituencies in cities like Surat, Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar.

The Congress hit rock bottom in Gujarat, winning only 17 seats in the 182-member state assembly

Former BJP president and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said, "The biggest credit for this victory goes to the public's trust in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his popularity and credibility. Congratulations to him and thanks to the public."

State Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, set for a second term, and state BJP chief C R Paatil credited people's faith in Modi as the biggest factor behind the party's historic win.

Victory in Gujarat will make the BJP the only party other than the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to have won seven straight Assembly elections. The CPI(M), which ruled West Bengal for 34 years from 1977 to 2011, had also won seven consecutive elections.

The Congress on Thursday wrested Himachal Pradesh from the BJP winning 40 seats in the 68-member Assembly in the hill state which maintained its tradition of not voting any incumbent government to power since 1985.

According to the results declared by the Election Commission, the BJP won 25 seats, while eight state ministers including Suresh Bhardwaj, Ram Lal Markanda and Surveen Chaudhary lost.

The Independents won from three constituencies and the Aam Aadmi Party, which had contested from 67 seats, failed to open its account.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge hailed the people of Himachal Pradesh and his party leaders as the Congress secured a much-needed win, riding on anti-incumbency and a slew of poll promises including bringing back the old pension scheme and providing jobs to the youth and Rs 1500 to every woman.

Salary of 162...

During the visit, the teams found 162 employees of various Offices either unauthorizedly absent from their duties or reporting late in the Office causing inconvenience to public.

Taking serious note of their unauthorized absence and late office reporting, the Deputy Commissioner has ordered withholding salary of all 162 employees. Further explanation was also sought from the all said employees.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar reiterated that such inspections will continue in future also and dereliction of duty including unauthorized absence and late office reporting will not be tolerated at all.

He also passed strict instructions to the concerned District heads against allowing any employee to remain absent without proper permission. He asked them to adhere to the office timing to avoid inconvenience to the general public.

DDC repoll: Independents...

every political party and people alike. He also complimented all the District Administration for the arrangements that were put in place for the counting process besides ensuring smooth conduct of election process.

In DDC constituency, Drugmulla in Kupwara Independent Candidate, Amina Majeed (election symbol Truck) won the DDC Seat Drugmulla by 39 votes.

According to the results declared by Returning Officer, DDC constituency, Drugmulla, the Independent Candidate, Amina Majeed(election symbol truck) got 3259 votes, followed by PDP candidate Shabnam Rehman (election symbol Pen and Inkpot) 3220 votes

Pertinently, 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 electorate of 32768. 5624 Males and 5100 females exercised their franchise.

In Hajin-A ., Naza Independent (Symbol : Helicopter) won by securing 2706 votes followed by Atiqa Begum of Peoples Conference (Symbol: Apple) who got 2283 votes.

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

Collegium system: Troubled...

enforce the law as it exists today".

The apex court noted Attorney General R Venkataramani submitted a status report before it on December 7 where a reference has been made to the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) for appointment of high court judges.

"Once the collegium in its wisdom or you may think lack of it has said that this is the basis on which it has worked the MoP... there is no up and down which has to take place," Justice Kaul said.

The bench said once the MoP issue is over, the government should not have referred to the views of the two judges of a seven-judge bench in a subsequent judgement to justify the delay.

"Observation of two judges, can that upset the process of the constitutional mandate of five-judges which lays down the procedure of the MoP as the final view which is taken by the collegium," the bench asked.

It said the note placed before it has referred to the July 2017 judgement in which certain observations were stated to have been made by two judges, who were part of the seven-judge bench.

The bench said it has been submitted before it that this gave rise to a thought process in the government that this should be taken note of and there is a need to make improvements in the MoP.

It said the MoP is final but it does not mean that if the government thinks improvements should be made in it, that cannot be looked into.

"But till that happens, the MoP which is existing shall apply," it said.

It said elevation to the bench has always been considered to be an honour.

"However, there has been reluctance on part of successful lawyers to accept the honour and what we have stated in the last order is out of the experience of not being able to persuade such eminent persons to join the bench," it observed.

The bench said one of the factors is the long process of appointment and this has resulted, at times, in people withdrawing their consent to be elevated to the bench.

It said the report placed before it also seeks to highlight the expected vacancies in the next six months.

"There is no hesitation in saying that the high courts must take effective steps to make recommendations in time....," it said.

On the issue of names reiterated by the collegium being sent back by the government, the bench asked the Attorney General as to how under the scheme of law prevalent are reiterated names being sent back.

The bench noted the Attorney General has pointed out that in two earlier cases, in such a scenario, the collegium had decided to drop the recommendations.

The top court observed it is not aware as to the special circumstances in which the names were dropped.

It said another issue which has been highlighted before it is when the recommendations are made by the collegium, the seniority set out therein must be followed.

The bench, which observed that the government should address this issue, said the Attorney General has assured he will have further consultations on these issues flagged by the court.

The top court, which posted the matter for resumed hearing on January 6, said it is necessary that all must follow the law which has been laid down.

"We have penned down a very moderate order..." it observed.

At the outset, the bench observed that the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act passed by Parliament did not pass the muster of the constitutional mandate.

"Till the law is prevalent, it must be followed," it observed.

While hearing the matter on November 28, Justice Kaul had observed it appeared the government was unhappy with the fact that the NJAC Act did not pass the muster, but that cannot be a reason to not comply with the law of the land.

The apex court had in its 2015 verdict struck down the NJAC Act and the Constitution (99th Amendment) Act, 2014 leading to the revival of the collegium system of existing judges appointing judges to constitutional courts.

During the hearing on Thursday, the bench referred to the process of appointment of judges to higher judiciary, including the recommendation by the collegium, and said the government's view is also taken into account.

"There cannot be any undisclosed reasons in a system like this where we can say that after taking the government's view and the court clearance, it is blocked unless there is some facts which have come to light for which the government sends back the recommendations," it said.

The bench said once the name has been reiterated by the collegium after considering the government's view, there is "no other passage" which has been provided by the Constitution bench.

"You have to appoint. This is the position. You are sending names twice over, thrice over," it added.

J&K faces governance...

bedded Hospital at Handwara, 100 bedded hospital at Kralpora, Degree College at Handwara, PMGSY roads worth Rs 200 crores, District Administration complex, Rural Development complex," Azad reminded the people about his golden developmental era during his public rally.

He challenged the political parties and asked them to show what they did during their tenure.

"Things shall be crystal clear for people. Whatever I did for people I mention it today proudly. Other political parties must also come clear with their track record and let's see who stands where," he challenged all political parties without naming any one.

Azad said that now his party has yet another political battle to fight for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"If we are elected to power after the elections take place, we will ensure the jobs and land rights are secured for local people," he said.

"Our fight for the rights of local people will continue but if you are in power, you negotiate from the position of strength. So winning elections will help us to strengthen our resolve to bargain for our people," he added.

Azad said that the economic situation of Jammu and Kashmir is concerning him. When he was the Chief Minister of the erstwhile state, no Kashmiri was forced to go outside for a job, he added.

"But now the trend is upsetting since mostly the labourers don't get jobs here and are forced to migrate to the mainland to earn livelihood. Our economy is in a deep crisis," he said.

DAP chairman said that there is also a governance deficit prevalent on many fronts.

"Hospitals lack facilities, doctors are missing from duties in many hospitals. Teachers are not available to teach students and no one is caring at all. There is a complete governance deficit," he said.

The public meeting was organised by Senior DAP leader Munner Ahmed Mir.

Other DAP leaders present on the occasion included former Minister Peerzada Mohammad Syed, Former Ministers Taj Mohiuddin and G.M.Saroori, Ex MLA Haji Abdul Rashid besides Salman Nizami, Shafiq Shabnam, Javid Mir, Amir Rasool, Adv Rafiq Sogami and others.

'Assembly elections in...

the J-K assembly in 2018. But after it was done, the elections should have followed in six months, he added.

"When it was done, there was no terrorism in the state, there was no tension, and the elections should have taken place within six months. However, almost five years have gone by since then, many things, which were unthinkable, happened," Azad said.

Things like abrogation of Article 370, downgrading of such an old state and its division, which were unthinkable, took place, he added.

Azad said "untoward things" happened in these five years "because of which, the situation in every respect in our state became worse".

"Then, there is no representative, no MLA, no minister, no chief minister, where will people go? There are no doctors, no teachers, no roads, no employment, whom will the people approach. So, every person here is frustrated, be it labourers, youth - who are into drugs after securing high education," he said.

The former Union minister said "to take this state out of an economic and political crisis, the elections should be held in the next six months whenever the weather gets better. 2024 is very far".

Azad said if his party is elected to power after the elections take place, "we will ensure that jobs and land rights are secured for local people".

"Our fight for the rights of local people will continue. But if you are in power you negotiate from the position of strength, so winning elections will help us to strengthen our resolve to bargain for our people," he added.

Azad said development projects approved and executed in Kupwara district during his short tenure as chief minister have changed the infrastructural landscape of the border region.

Since then, no government in power ever could match the development pace and all the benefits people take out of facilities were sanctioned or executed during my tenure only, he added.

Over 11,000 'matters'...

more than 10 years is 11,049," Rijiju said in a written reply.

In order to expedite the trial of court cases, a number of legislative changes have been made in procedural laws, which include provisions for limiting adjournments of court proceedings in criminal and civil matters, he said.

"The government has adopted a coordinated approach to assist the judiciary for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial systems, which, inter alia, involves better infrastructure for courts, including computerisation, increase in the strength of judicial officers and judges, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation, and emphasis on human resource development," Rijiju said.

Mehbooba vacates Govt...

the eight former legislators to have been issued a notice, took her belongings from the bungalow in the morning, officials said.

The former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir and MP from South Kashmir also cleared her rent dues before vacating the premises, they said.

According to officials, she has shifted to her sister's house. However, security agencies have termed the location of the residence unsafe in view of her political stature.

Earlier, Mufti had vacated her high-security official bungalow in Gupkar area here after getting a notice from the authorities.

Congress celebrations by PCC over Himachal victory



Congress workers celebrating party's victory in Himachal Pradesh polls.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Congress on Thursday celebrated its victory in Himachal Pradesh, where it wrested power from BJP. Congress won one of the two states which went to polls, defeating double engine government of BJP.

Led by JKPC President Vikar Rasool Wani along with working President Raman Bhalla and other senior leaders, the Congress activists including, DCCs, youth Congress and NSUI celebrated the victory at Shaheedi Chowk HQs of the party.

Sweets were distributed amidst beating of drums by the Congress leaders and workers over the victory in Himachal Pradesh.

He said that the outcome of the results is that BJP lost one state out of two besides loosing MCD and a by poll in UP, as its double engine campaign failed.

The PCC congratulated the party high command including Sonia Gandhi, Malika Arjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi.

Raman Bhalla congratulated the party high command and central and Himachal state leadership of congress for the victory defeating double engine govt of BJP.

He said that the BJP managed Gujarat by the division of opposition votes as AAP cut into opposition votes. He said although the Gujarat results were already known since PM Modi and Home Minister besides the capitalist friends of BJP are all from Gujarat but congress still got over 30 percent votes share.

Prominent who took part in celebrations include Ravinder Sharma, Yogesh Sawhney, Manmohan Singh, Rajnish Sharma, Indu Pawar, Th Hari Singh Chib, Uday Bhanu Chib, Pranab Shagotra others.

