

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Dr Minu Mahajan...

order issued by Sanjeev Verma, Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department. "Her appointment shall take effect from the date she assumes the office," it added.

Lok Sabha poll...

Nearly 97 crore people are eligible to cast vote in the upcoming polls at over 12 lakh polling stations.

In the last parliamentary polls, the BJP had won 303 seats while the Congress got 52 seats. It could not muster enough numbers to claim the position of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

The 2024 parliamentary polls are being seen as a do or die battle for the opposition INDIA bloc.

According to a News 18 opinion poll, the BJP-led NDA is headed for a "historic mandate" in the upcoming polls.

The opinion poll claimed that the NDA is set to win 411 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha with the BJP alone clinching a record 350 seats.

According to an opinion poll survey by ABP-CVoter, the NDA is projected to secure a commanding lead with a vote share of 45.9 per cent and an estimated 366 seats in the Lok Sabha.

The INDIA bloc together, including the UPA, is expected to claim a 39 per cent vote share and 156 seats, according to the opinion poll.

It suggests a considerable swing in votes since the 2019 Lok Sabha results, with the BJP seeing a positive swing of 3.08 per cent, and the INDIA bloc (UPA in 2019) a rise of 2.5 per cent.

NDA will break...

I have a firm belief that this time all previous records will be broken. I have a firm belief that this time our Kerala will break the vicious cycle of LDF and UDF.

"I have a firm belief that this time Kerala will immensely support the BJP. Modi promises you that he will leave no stone unturned to develop Kerala," Modi said, referring to himself in the third person, while addressing a huge meeting of the BJP-led NDA in this south Kerala town.

His statement came shortly after the Election Commission said it would announce the schedule for the Lok Sabha polls on Saturday.

Reaching out to the Christian community in Kerala, crucial for the NDA's victory in Lok Sabha constituencies classified by the BJP as 'A' category segments, including Pathanamthitta, Thirissur, and Thiruvananthapuram, the Prime Minister recounted his meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican and highlighted his government's successful efforts to rescue a priest from Kottayam who had been captured by ISIS militants in Yemen.

"In 2021 when I met His Holiness Pope Francis in the Vatican, even then I specifically mentioned Kerala there. He was also impressed by the progress being made in India. In the past 10 years, we have worked as hard as possible for every community and region of the country.

"We brought back, through Iraq, our sister nurses who were stranded in the middle of a war. We freed our Christian priests who were in trouble and brought them back safely," Modi said.

He was referring to the rescue of Father Tom Uzhumalil, a Catholic priest from Kerala who was abducted in war-torn Yemen in 2016 and rescued from ISIS captivity after 18 months during a deadly attack on a care home in the port city of Aden.

In 2014, soon after the first Modi government came to power, the government had safely evacuated 46 Indian nurses, including a large number of Keralites, from the then strife-torn Iraq.

Amid criticism from the Congress and the Left in Kerala over recent violence against Christians in Manipur, Modi, in his speech, subtly alluded to the case of a Catholic priest being struck by a vehicle in Poonjar, Kottayam district last month, lamenting, "It's regrettable that even church priests in Kerala are not immune to violence."

In his address, Modi also projected the BJP's prominent Christian face in Kerala Anil K Antony -- son of Congress stalwart and former Union Minister A K Antony -- who is contesting the parliamentary seat of Pathanamthitta, as a symbol of youthfulness.

"This is the kind of freshness that is required in Kerala politics," Modi said, referring to Anil Antony who had left the Congress and joined the BJP last year.

The PM said that since Kerala had given the BJP a double-digit vote share in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, he expects to reach a target of seats in the double digits from the state as well.

"In the last elections, the people of Kerala made us the double-digit vote percentage party. And now, our destiny of double-digit seats here is not so far," he said. "Lotus is going to bloom in Kerala this time."

Modi claimed that the people of the state have endured hardships under the LDF and UDF governments that are allegedly plagued by corruption and incompetence.

He also took a dig at both fronts, raking up the issue of gold smuggling through diplomatic channels under LDF rule and the solar panel scam under the previous UDF rule.

Modi claimed that the people would benefit only if the cycle of consecutive LDF, UDF governments is broken as they are allegedly only focused on vote-bank politics.

The PM also contended that the thinking and ideology of both the LDF and the UDF are outdated and in sharp contrast to the progressiveness and forward-thinking of the people of Kerala.

He also said that both the LDF and UDF governments have turned a blind eye to the struggles of rubber planters.

He said that amid all the efforts by the central government for the development of Kerala, it is also important that the correct views and opinions of the people of the state reach the Centre.

"If we have BJP MPs here, it would be easier for people to communicate their views to the Centre and for the implementation of central projects here. The schemes and projects that the people of Kerala need can be communicated even better to the Centre through the BJP MPs," Modi said.

"It is 'Modiyude Guarantee'," he added.

The Prime Minister began his speech by chanting "Swamiye Saranamayyappa" as the famous hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa in Sabarimala is located in Pathanamthitta district.

The Prime Minister also extended advanced Easter wishes to all. "It reminds us of the principles of Jesus Christ. I wish you all a happy Easter," he said.

"Novruz, a prominent festival of our Parsi brothers, is also coming up. Ram Navami and Holi are also around the corner. The holy month of Ramzan is going on and the biggest festival of democracy is about to start," he said.

In addition to the NDA's Lok Sabha candidates, Padmaja Venugopal, who recently joined the BJP after quitting the Congress, was also present on the stage.

ACB arrests JE...

of village Kunnel Panchayat Halqa Rangpath B Dist. Kupwara was authorized last year by Panchayat to execute two developmental works - Improvement of road from Chainag to Ashoponor, and filling and leveling of grave yard near Jamia Masjid Kunnel and that the complainant had completed both the works for which department initially gave him some amount under Labour Head but full labour payment was not given to him.

It was also found that on completion of the works, the complainant, a contractor, requested J.E concerned to prepare the bill of both the works but he demanded bribe of Rs 5000 as commission and it was also found that GRS was also demanding bribe of Rs 3000 from the complainant as his commission for preparing labour demand. Discreet probe also revealed that both these officials used to take bribe from the complainant through m-pay as well as cash on earlier occasions also and were demanding more bribe for final bill and labour demand. As the complainant was not interested in paying the bribe to these officials, he accordingly approached ACB through helpline number and with written complaint subsequently. Under these circumstances the complainant approached ACB and requested for legal action against both these officials JE as well as GRS for demanding bribe from him, according to a statement by the ACB.

Accordingly on the basis of the findings and recommendation of the Verifying Officer on March 14, 2024, prima facie offence U/S 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 (as amended in 2018) and section 120-B IPC were made out against accused Public servants namely Arshid Ayoub Marazi, JE and GR Suboor Mir both officials of Rural Development Department Kralgund Handwara for demanding and accepting bribe from the complainant for processing and preparing his bill and putting demand for remaining labour payments case FIR No 02-2024 U/S 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 (as amended in 2018) and Section 120-B IPC was registered at PS ACB Baramulla and investigations were initiated.

During the course of investigation a trap team was constituted which laid a successful trap and caught the accused JE red handed while demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 5000 from complainant. The bribe money was later recovered from possession of the accused as well as one shopkeeper to whom he had given the money in presence of independent witnesses. The accused public servants were arrested on the spot after completing all legal formalities. The role of GRS and other officials in the case is being investigated.

Further investigation in the case is going on. The ACB has urged the general public that in case of any information regarding corrupt activities of Govt. officials, please inform us on Toll Free Number 1800 180 7152, Whatsapp Number 9419678060, email ID directorvigilance@jk.gov.in or through

Satrik Nagrik Android Mobile Application.

'Muslims, Hindus from...

been ejected from the scope of CAA.

"The three countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh) which we have included in the CAA are declared Islamic countries," the Union Home Minister said.

On Election Commission making public data received from the State Bank of India (SBI) on electoral bonds, Union Home Minister said the government's aim behind the scheme was to combat black money.

Shah said he and the BJP believed the electoral bonds scheme brought greater transparency in political funding.

"Government brought bonds to combat the menace of black money... it brings transparency in the funding system," he said.

Even as he stated that he respects the ruling of the Supreme Court that struck down the Narendra Modi government's 2018 electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding, Amit Shah said he feared that the menace of black money could return. Shah added that he believed instead of scrapping it, the modalities of the electoral bonds scheme should be improved.

SIA carries out...

backed terror conspiracy case, an official said.

After obtaining search warrants from the designated court in Jammu, SIA teams carried out searches simultaneously at three places in Doda district, two places in Reasi district and one place each in Ramban and Jammu districts in the morning, a spokesperson of the anti-terror agency said.

The raids were conducted at the residential premises of Hasan Babar Nehru and Mohd Irfan of Bhagwah and Sabder Ali of Phagsoo in Doda; Abdul Rashid of Armas and Shamsah Begum of Pooni in Reasi; Abdul Rashid Naik of Khari in Ramban; and Sajad Ahmed alias "Shadi" in the Sidhra area of Jammu.

Several android mobile-phones and incriminating material were seized during the searches, the spokesperson said, expecting some leads from the seized articles to reach the bottom of a deep-rooted conspiracy of terrorist networks.

The official said that the raids were conducted in connection with an ongoing probe into a case registered at the SIA, Jammu, to unravel a criminal conspiracy hatched by the cadre and Over Ground Workers (OGWs) of various terrorist organisations and their affiliates or off-shoots to carry out terrorist and subversive activities.

According to intelligence inputs, the official said, a number of border guides and couriers are active in the hinterland and assist terrorist networks of different outfits by facilitating infiltration of terrorists from across the border, and further guiding them through the tough and treacherous terrain by bypassing anti-infiltration obstacles set up by security forces. Many of them are also in touch with their Pakistani handlers and active terrorists, operating from across the border, through their mobile phones and using different applications, the official said.

India progressing under...

were abrogated and the situation in Jammu and Kashmir improved. Jammu and Kashmir started moving towards an era of peace, progress and prosperity. A glance at the prevailing environment in Union Territory, one can easily claim that the heaven on earth has once again returned to its pristine glory. It has been possible due to the strong leadership, which took effective steps to curb terrorism and restore peace and normalcy."

Chugh said, like other parts of the country, J&K too has been given due share in mega development projects and welfare schemes, which has improved the existing infrastructure of connectivity, power generation, health, and education sector which brought smiles on the faces of poor needy and marginalized class.

He said that the people of the Udhampur constituency have voted Dr Jitendra Singh to Parliament twice and now his work done here speaks that one more chance is needed to serve the people so that the development works continue and complete as per the needs and aspirations of the people.

Tarun Chugh also addressed several other meetings during his visit.

Organized by Bharatiya Janata Party, District Udhampur led by its President Arun Gupta, the public meeting was attended, among others, by J&K BJP Vice Presidents Pawan Khajuria and Chandar Mohan Gupta, Udhampur Parliamentary In-charge Adv Sunil Sethi, co-Incharge Ramesh, former Minister Pawan Gupta, former MLAs Balwant Singh Mankotia and RS Pathania.

348 stranded passengers...

and Kargil, officials said. He said 152 passengers were airlifted from Jammu to Kargil and 19 from Kargil to Jammu, while 141 passengers were airlifted from Srinagar to Kargil and 36 from Kargil to Srinagar.

The IAF operates C-17, C-130 and AN-32 aircraft regularly to airlift stranded passengers between Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh in view of the closure of the 434-km Srinagar-Leh national highway since January owing to heavy snowfall.

Govt teacher dismissed...

which armed gunmen from amongst the mob fired indiscriminately upon the police party.

Manzoor Ahmed Laway as Teacher had the responsibility to guide the students not to indulge in activities directed against the security of the state and when the subject is himself instrumental in fomenting secessionism among the student fraternity, then his role as a teacher does not serve the purpose for which he has been appointed to Government service.

Government has adopted a zero tolerance policy towards anti-national elements who have been taking advantage of being in Government service. Prior to this, 56 government officials have been dismissed by invoking the provisions of Article 311 of Constitution of India.

CS urges H&UDD...

anywhere. He emphasized on the importance of timely completion of all the utility and developmental projects for making the mobility and city dwelling more safer, easier and faster as per the modern standards of urban development world over.

The Chief Secretary directed that all the urban development projects, currently in the pipeline be expedited, placing public welfare as the foremost priority. This directive underlines the government's commitment to not only enhancing the urban infrastructure, but also ensuring that, these developments translate into tangible benefits for the residents of Jammu and Kashmir.

During this meeting the Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur briefed the chair on a spectrum of pivotal developments and upcoming initiatives aimed at transforming the urban landscape of J&K.

Among the crucial topics discussed were - strategies to leverage land as a resource to fuel further urban development, ensuring sustainable and efficient use of urban land. The meeting also discussed introduction of a streamlined and transparent system for obtaining building permissions, aimed at reducing delays and promoting ease of doing business.

The status of water transport service in river Jhelum, in Srinagar, enhancing connectivity and providing eco-friendly transportation alternatives to the people there. It was also made out that this would be an added attraction for tourists visiting this place in greater numbers.

The progress updates and future plans concerning the Jammu Metropolitan Region Development Authority (JMRDA) and the Srinagar Metropolitan Region Development Authority (SMRDA), focusing on comprehensive urban development and planning were deliberated upon. It was given out that these projects would bring in futuristic mobility services to our cities bringing lot of ease to the commuters here.

The meeting also took note of the status of the newly built state-of-the-art, multi-tier parking at Bus Stand in Jammu. It emphasised upon its optimum utilization for bringing ease and employment to public besides realizing revenue for government also.

While addressing the need for modern transportation facilities and managing the growing demand for public transportation efficiently the meeting discussed the utilization of e-buses introduced recently in both the cities here. With respect to the need of such facilities to cater to the growing population here the meeting resolved to make the appropriate facilities to cater to this challenge also.

The meeting took review of the progress in the implementation of crucial sewerage projects across the UT highlighting efforts to improve sanitation and wastewater management. The meeting underscored the government's commitment to foster sustainable urban growth and development, ensuring that the initiatives align with the needs and aspirations of its citizens in the UT.

Three JKAS officers...

hold the charge of the post of Mission Director (MD), Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), in addition to his own duties, till further orders," separate order stated. "The officer shall take over the charge of the post from April, 1, 2024 upon superannuation of Ashok Kumar, JKAS," it added.

According to another order, Basharat Hussain, JKAS, under orders of transfer as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Rajouri, in terms of Government Order No. 823-JK(GAD) of 2024 dated March 13, 2024, has been posted as Additional Secretary, Tourism Department, with immediate effect.

"Further, Fareed Ahmad Kohli, JKAS, General Manager, DIC, Rajouri, holding additional charge of Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Rajouri, shall also hold the charge of the post of Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Rajouri, in addition to his own duties, till further orders," it added.

LG addresses Leadership Engagement programme attended by Heads of Premier Institutions

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday addressed the Leadership Engagement program attended by Heads of Premier Institutions of the country.



LG Manoj Sinha addressing at Leadership Engagement programme attended by Heads of Premier Institutions.

The 5-day program will discuss and debate various themes to achieve the goals of developing effective academic leaders as envisioned in National Education Policy 2020.

The Lt Governor impressed upon the academic institutions to adopt best practices and set new standards in technical education.

Today, it is difficult to predict the future. On one hand we are facing geo-political conflict in some areas of the globe, while on the other technology advancement is reaching its peak. In the last 10 years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has developed rapidly. I am optimistic that India will lead the next big revolution, the Lt Governor observed.

We should not miss this opportunity and develop a futuristic roadmap that will lead the reforms in diverse sectors and establish India as a Knowledge economy. India regaining its old glory should be our prime goal, he said.

He also emphasized on making necessary interventions to meet the needs of the industries. Our focus on the Science and Technology sector will play an important role in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

The Lt Governor also shared the transformation taking place in the education sector in Jammu Kashmir.

Heads of IITs, IISERs, NITs, Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities and other reputed institutions were present.

CS chairs UT level ECM to approve plans for RDD schemes

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday chaired the UT level Empowered Committee Meeting on the schemes of Rural Development Department (RDD) to discuss their annual plans for 2024-25 besides reviewing the performance made so far.

Besides the Secretary RDD the meeting was attended by several Administrative Secretaries, HoDs of RDD and other concerned officers of the Department.

While speaking in this meeting the Chief Secretary remarked that the Department has a vital function of raising the critical infrastructure in rural areas that has a bearing on the lives of the population there. He called on having a greater coordination between the departments to prioritize works that are most emergent in nature and in demand by the locals of the area.

Dulloo further stressed on carrying out studies by the reputed institutions verifying the social impact of such projects on the lives of people there. He asked for carrying out third-party evaluation of such works to get the actual outcomes and benefits accruing to public on ground.

As far as the working of J&K Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) is concerned, the Chief Secretary impressed on providing the quality handholding to the SHGs immediately after their registration. He called on providing them the desirable counselling through social mobilization besides enhancing their capacity to enlarge their enterprises on commercial lines.

The Chief Secretary also took stock of the performance made by the Department in PMAY(G), IWMP and Himayat schemes. He enjoined upon the concerned to meet the targets set under each scheme. He asked them to cover all the beneficiaries eligible under such housing and livelihood generation schemes.

In his presentation the Secretary, RDD, Shahid Iqbal Choudhary gave out the gist of the performance made by the Department under different schemes during the ensuing financial year. He also threw light on the action plans proposed by the Department for the year 2024-25.

The Secretary apprised the meeting that till now around 3.31 crore person days of work had been generated under MGNREGA which is 114% of the target set for the year. It was added that the fund utilization stands at an impressive rate of 97% this year. He further gave out that this year around 1,16,295 works had been completed and 2,95,834 works still going on at different stages of completion.

Regarding the annual action plan 2024-25 for MGNREGA it was revealed that the Department is going to augment the critical infrastructure in rural areas in convergence with this scheme. It was given out that the Department is going to accomplish around 195000 works with around 12000 works under convergence mode.

Moreover the plan will lay focus on District Convergence Plans with extension of providing support to Departments either in augmenting their infrastructure. In addition focus on provisioning of common infrastructure for NRLM complaint SHGs besides empowering CLPs of JKRLM as PLAs in the FY 2024-25 aiming for holistic rural development.

Among other features this year's plan is aiming at allocating 44% of AAP to natural resources management works with an objective of sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Under PMAY (G) the Department has completed 38,440 works and registered an expenditure of over Rs 1344 Cr this year. It was said the Department has completed 62,777 houses under both SECC and Awasplus this financial year aiming to complete 2,00,500 houses cumulatively.

The meeting was also apprised about the performance of NRLM in the UT. It was said that 1.58 lakh lakh houses have been mobilized into SHGs up to January this FY. The department has provided the RF amount of Rs 1080.15 lakhs and CIF to the tune of Rs8949 lakhs till January.

Under IWMP it was said that out of 19 projects sanctioned under WDC-PMKSY 2.0, DPRs of 16 have been prepared and approved by technical committee. While as under HIMAYAT the Department has trained 1247 candidates and has made an expenditure of Rs 12.84 Cr till February this year and is planning to train around 4900 candidates and place around 4000 of them in the year 2024-25, as was given out during this meeting.

SC to hear pleas for stay on implementation of CAA Rules

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear pleas seeking a direction to the Centre to stay the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Rules, 2024 till the pendency of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 before the apex court.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the submissions of senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Indian Union Muslim League, that once the citizenship is granted to migrant Hindus, it cannot be taken back and hence the issues needed an early hearing.

"We will hear this on Tuesday. There are 190 plus cases. All of them will be heard. We will place a full batch with the IAs (Interim applications)," the CJI said. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said there were 237 petitions and in those pending ones, four interim applications have been filed against the implementation of the rules.

The applications were filed after the Centre implemented the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, by notifying the rules four years after the contentious law was passed by Parliament to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014.

The application, filed by the IUMML, which is one of the petitioners who have challenged the citizenship law, has sought the court's direction to ensure no coercive action is taken against people belonging to the Muslim community pending adjudication of the writ petitions.

Muslims cannot apply for Indian citizenship under the CAA.