

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Centre to consider...

emerged around the reservation of SCs, STs and OBCs, Shah said for the first time, the OBCs of J-K have been given reservation by the Modi government and women have been given one-third reservation.

"OBC reservations have been made in the panchayat and the urban local bodies. We have made space for the SCs and the STs. Without reducing the share of the Gujjar and Bakarwals, the Pahadis have been given 10 per cent reservation. And special provisions have been made to accommodate the displaced people from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir," he said.

The Centre is determined to ensure that these benefits percolate to the grassroots level, he said.

Shah claimed that National Conference (NC) leader Farooq Abdullah and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti tried their best to create acrimony on these reservations but the people have understood their intentions now.

He asked why the NC did not give reservation to these people in the last over 75 years.

The home minister claimed Abdullah had left for England when terrorism was at its peak. Both Abdullah and Mehbooba have no right to speak about on the issue, he added.

"The number of fake encounters that took place during their time has never been matched by any other regime," he said.

Shah said in the last five years, not a single fake encounter has taken place. Rather the FIRs have been lodged against the people involved in fake encounters, he added.

"We will have a dialogue with the youths of Kashmir and not with the organisations that have roots in Pakistan. They are responsible for the deaths of 40,000 youths," he said.

He said the Modi government has banned 12 organisations for their involvement in terror activities, designated 36 individuals as terrorists, registered more than 22 cases to stop terror finance and seized properties worth Rs 150 crore.

As many as 90 properties were also attached and 134 bank accounts have been frozen, he said.

"We have enshrined peace, and peace cannot be bought. Whoever wants to have a dialogue has to do so within the ambit of the Constitution," he said.

said the Hurriyat Conference has no place in the process of dialogue. He also made it clear that the BJP and the entire Parliament believe that the POK is an integral part of India.

"The Muslim brothers are also Indians and the Hindu brothers living in POK are also Indians and the land which has been illegally occupied by Pakistan also belongs to India. It is the goal of every Indian, every Kashmiri to get it back," he said.

The home minister said in 2010, there were 2564 incidents of stone-pelting which now is zero.

From 2004 to 2014, there were 7217 terror incidents. That has reduced to 2227 from 2014 to 2023, and this is almost a 70 per cent reduction, he said.

Shah said the total number of deaths from 2004 to 2014 was 2829 and it has come down to 915 during 2014-23, which is a 68 per cent decrease.

The deaths of civilians was 1770 and has decreased to 341, which is an 81 per cent drop. The deaths of security forces decreased from 1060 to 574, which is a 46 per cent decrease, he said.

The senior BJP leader said without the support of the people, such a comprehensive change can never take place.

"The people who talk about Islam should know that 85 per cent of the deceased were our Muslim brothers and sisters," he said.

Shah also asked the youths of J-K to stay away from the conspiracies of Pakistan.

"Today Pakistan is shrouded by the scourge of hunger and poverty and even people there see Kashmir as heaven. I want to tell everyone that if anyone can save Kashmir, he is Prime Minister Modi," he said.

The home minister said the Modi government is boosting the morale of the security forces by giving jobs to the family members of the martyrs.

"Today, not a single martyr's family is left without a job," he said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that under the shadows of Article 370, a separatist ideology was shaped and the youths of Jammu and Kashmir were dragged into terrorism.

"Pakistan misused this situation and in the past 4 decades, more than 40,000 youths lost their lives," the Home Minister said

The Union Home Minister said that the people of Kashmir Valley were given a wrong interpretation of Article 370 which now stands nullified after its abrogation. It was always said that once Article 370 is abrogated, the culture, language and existence of Kashmiriyat will be threatened, he said, adding that it is now five years after the abrogation but nothing such has happened.

"Kashmiris are free today, the importance of the Kashmiri language, and food culture have enhanced and tourists are flocking to the tourist spots of Kashmir," Amit Shah said.

He dwelt in detail on several myths that revolved around Article 370, saying it was being said that lakhs of people would move to Kashmir threatening the very existence of Kashmiriyat that myth too stands busted today.

The Union Home Minister reiterated that Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) is an integral part of India, and both the Muslims and Hindus living there are Indians.

"The BJP and the entire Parliament believe that POK believes the POK is an integral part of India. The Muslims and the Hindus living in POK are also Indians and the land also belongs to India which has been illegally occupied by Pakistan. It is the goal of every Indian, every Kashmiri to get it back", Amit Shah said.

"But today Jammu and Kashmir is heading on the path of progress. Terrorism is seeing its fag end, stone-pelting has completely stopped. An anti-corruption bureau has been formed to stop corruption and people's money is reaching the people," the Union minister added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's massive rally in J&K, Shah said that the goal of the Centre is not to strengthen BJP in the Union territory but to 'liberate' Kashmir from 'the claws of dynastic politics'.

"The three dynastic parties namely the Congress, the National Congress and the PDP have always hindered the percolation of democracy at the grassroots. Until Modi ji became the prime minister, the panchayat elections were not held in Jammu and Kashmir. But today more than 30,000 representatives are participating in the democratic process," he said.

CJ administers oath...

officers of Civil and Police Administration and officers and staff of Registry and Member Secretary, Legal Service Authority, Jammu & Kashmir.

With the elevation, the strength of Judges of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has risen to 16 Judges including the Chief Justice.

Man absconding for...

had a property dispute with victim Madan Lal. So, he along with his associates planned the murder in Jammu and Kashmir and made it appear like a road accident, police said.

After a probe, sections of murder and destroying evidence were amended in the case, they said.

Singh was absconding for the last 14 years but Delhi Police got a tip-off about Singh's presence in Punjab's Mohali and arrested him, Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sanjay Bhatia said.

Four of the seven accused in this case have already been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. One accused was still absconding and one has died, he said.

PDD warns employees...

Rules, 1971 clearly underlines that; no government employee shall resort to, or in any way abet any form of strike in connection with any matter pertaining to his service or the service of any other government employee".

Elaborating further, it said that Vide SRO-160 dated 14-7-1995, the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Recognition of Service Association) Rules, 1995 issued by the General Administration Department prohibit Gazetted officers from making associations.

These rules further provide that recognition of the Service Associations already registered can also be withdrawn if the government is satisfied that such association is violating the service conduct rules, or is not fulfilling the conditions laid down in the rules.

The Circular also mentioned General Administration Department's communication of 2023, warning the government employees to desist from uncalculated demonstrations and strikes, which constitute an act of serious

indiscipline and misconduct.

Quoting a ruling by the Supreme Court in case Appeal (Civil) No.5556/2003 titled T.K. Rangarajan vs Government of Tamil Nadu (SC 2003) the circular instructions read that the employees have no fundamental, statutory or moral right to resort to strike as there is no law regarding it, and also, according to various service and conduct rules, they are prohibited to go on a strike.

"A strike is a powerful weapon; it affects the society as a whole, and the government employees cannot go on a strike affecting society... Government employees cannot claim that they can take the society at ransom by going on strike. Even if there is injustice to some extent, as presumed by such employees, in a democratic welfare State, they have to resort to the machinery provided under different statutory provisions for redressal of their grievances. Strike as a weapon is mostly misused which results in chaos and total mal-administration", it said.

The circular has warned that employees who intend to go on strike or demonstrations, or those found organising such demonstrations shall be dealt with strictly as per law.

Modi gave Gujjar...

of providing a pukka / concrete house to every household regardless of caste, creed or religion. As a result, many Gujjar families which earlier lived in makeshift shelters today own a house of their own.

As for the entire region of Kishtwar is concerned, Dr Jitendra Singh said, from a neglected remote area, it has emerged as North India's power hub and has undergone amazing transformation in the last 10 years which is to be seen to be believed.

Dr Jitendra said today that Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar is all set to emerge North India's major "power hub" generating around 6,000 MW of power after the completion of the ongoing power projects.

During his address and later speaking to the media, Dr Singh said that 6 to 7 major Hydro power projects have come in the region in a short span of 9 to 10 years ever since Narendra Modi took over as Prime Minister.

Elaborating on this, he pointed out that the largest capacity project is Pakal Dul with a capacity of 1000 MW. Its estimated cost, as of now, is Rs.8,112.12 crore and expected timeline of competition is 2025. Another major project is Kiru Hydroelectric project with a capacity of 624 MW. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 4,285.59 crore and the timeline in this case is also 2025, he said.

The Minister further informed that at the same time, 850 MW Rattle project has been revived as a joint venture between the centre and UT of J&K. In addition, the existing Dulhasti power station has an installed capacity of 390 MW, while Dulhasti II Hydroelectric project will have a capacity of 260 MW.

Dr Jitendra said these projects shall not only augment the power supply position thereby making up for the shortage of power supply in the UT of J&K, but the huge investment being made for construction of these projects is also a boost for direct as well as indirect opportunities for the local people.

For six long decades, said Dr Jitendra Singh, the successive governments at the Centre and the State had ignored Kishtwar region because of their vote bank politics. It was only after Prime Minister Modi took over that he changed the work culture and ensured that all neglected regions would be given their due attention and priority so that they may also rise to the same level.

For example, he said, for several years, people here had been agitating and demanding a Degree college for Paddar but Congress and National Conference governments deliberately ignored this demand. It was only after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over in 2014 that a Degree college was sanctioned for Paddar under Centre's scheme RUSA (Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan).

Citing another example, Dr Jitendra said that before 2014, road travel to Kishtwar was cumbersome and on the slightest landslide, the Doda-Kishtwar road got blocked. But today, the road travel time from Jammu to Kishtwar has reduced from over 7 hours in 2014 to less than 5 hours now. Similarly, he said, during these 9 years, Kishtwar has come up on the Aviation Map of India and has been sanctioned an airport under Centre's UDAAN Scheme, which nobody had ever imagined.

Similarly, Dr Jitendra said, three new national highways including Khilani-Sudhmahadev Highway, a series of Degree Colleges, mobile towers enroute Machail Yatra and other remote areas have also come up during the Modi government, he said. As for Machail, Dr Singh said, mobile towers have been set up, multiple toilet complexes constructed and solar plants installed for regular power supply, and all this happened only after 2014. Not only this, the motorable road to Machail is under fast track construction and the day is not far when Kishthwar to Machail travel would be just about 1 1/2 to 2 hours, he added.

Former Minister Sunil Sharma, BJP District President Chuni Lal, Tariq Keen and other local leaders also spoke on the occasion.

There will be...

necessity of defeating those entities that seek to divide people along religious lines, as well as political parties that have failed to address the issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir.

Azad pointed out that in Parliament, both regional parties and the Congress remained silent on J&K matters, saying that it was during his tenure as Leader of the Opposition that he vocally advocated for the concerns of the people.

On ensuring protection of land and jobs for the bonafide residents of Jammu and Kashmir, Azad cited the historical context, mentioning that Maharaja Hari Singh had introduced laws prohibiting outsiders from purchasing land or obtaining employment in the region.

He said "Maharaja Hari Singh was a visionary leader, who deeply cared for his people and instituted the state subject law along with land and job protection. Today, even low-level employees are being hired from outside, while our local youth are left unemployed. We fought for statehood in Parliament, and we must persist in our efforts until we achieve it."

Speaking on the occasion, G.M. Saroori, DPAP candidate stressed the importance of choosing an MP, who is committed to progress and promised to fight for the people's interests.

He said, "My track record is clear. As a three-time MLA, I have consistently served the people and fought for their interests. I promise to address public issues in Parliament. The current MP is disconnected from the people, but I will work tirelessly for the welfare of the people."

"We need to continue the work in the same manner as Azad did as CM and Union Minister. The focus should be on building more schools, colleges, universities, roads, and other infrastructure", he added

Among others present on the occasion included R.S.Chib Gen Secretary, Jugal Kishore Sharma Provincial President, Majeed Wani Gen Secretary, Anita Thakur Gen Secretary, Vinod Mishra Gen Secretary, Ch Haroon Khatana Gen Secretary, Salman Nizami Chief Spokesperson, Ch Gharu Ram Zonal President, Ashok Sharma VP Province, Gh Hyder Malik Vice President Province, Subash Gupta VP Province, Davinder Singh Bindu Sr leader DPAP, Brijeshwar Singh Indu Distt President Kathua, Hira Lal Abrol, Sunita Arora, Gurmeet Kaur, Gaurav Chopra, Gauri Shankar, P.R. Manhas, Ashok Bhagat, Prabha Salathia and others.

Two more candidates on Tuesday filed their nomination papers from the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency for first phase of ensuing parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in Jammu and Kashmir on April 19.

The candidates, including Mohd Ali Gujjar as Independent Candidate, and Ghulam Mohd Saroori from Democratic Progressive Azad Party, filed their nomination papers in the office of Returning Officer Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency.

With filing of nomination papers by these two candidates, the total number of candidates who have filed their candidature for 4-Udhampur PC goes to seven.

The last day for filing of nomination papers is March 27, 2024 up to 03:00 PM.

BRO connects strategic...

will strengthen the defence preparedness and provide a boost to the economic development in the Zanskar valley," the spokesman said.

BRO Director General Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan said in January, when the River Zanskar was frozen, the equipment and personnel were mobilised and the work of establishing the connectivity was completed.

He exuded confidence that the work on black topping the road will start soon. With the construction of the Shinkun La tunnel, the third all-weather axis to Ladakh will be established, he added.

Former BJP MLA joins Congress in Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Former BJP MLA from Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district Durga Dass joined the Congress here on Tuesday, a spokesperson of his new party said.

Dass, who had won the Assembly polls on a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ticket from the Hiranagar constituency in Kathua, joined the Congress along with Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) leader Mohammad Iqbal Dar at a function, the spokesperson added.

He said the new entrants were welcomed into the party fold by Congress in-charge of Jammu and Kashmir Bharatsinh Solanki, All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary Manoj

Yadav, Pradesh Congress Committee president Vikar Rasool Wani and the party's candidates in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls -- Choudhary Lal Singh and Raman Bhalla.

Meanwhile, Solanki released the "Paanch Nyay" (five justices) of the Congress and said his party has provided for justice to every section of the society.

"(Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantees are false and fake, but the Congress will fulfil all these guarantees as already proved in the past elections," Solanki said, adding that former party chief Rahul Gandhi took over the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra across the length and breadth of the country to feel the "pulse of people and fight for justice" to the

common man.

He said the Congress has fielded the best candidates to serve the people and represent them in Parliament as the people of Jammu and Kashmir have "suffered a lot under the Modi regime".

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir have lost their identity, rights and status, and there is no democracy in the Union Territory for more than five years. It is time for the people of the region to teach the BJP a lesson for their better future, restoration of statehood and other rights," Solanki said. He said the Congress, in a coalition with the INDIA bloc constituents and other like-minded parties, shall forcefully fight the upcoming Lok Sabha polls and ensure its victory with the support of people.

Wangchuk ends 21-day-long hunger strike

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LEH: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Tuesday evening ended his 21-day-long hunger strike in support of the demand for statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Earlier in the day, he made a fresh appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil the promises made to the people of the Union Territory and also called upon people to use their franchise in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections "very carefully" in the interest of the nation. "The first phase of the hunger strike is ending today but this is not the end of the agitation," Wangchuk said after taking a glass of juice from a minor girl here amid a massive turnout of people at the protest venue.

The renowned education reformist said the end of the hunger strike is the beginning of the new phase of the ongoing agitation. "We will continue our struggle (in support of our demands). The gathering of 10,000 people at the venue and participation of over 60,000 others over the past 20 days are a testimony of the people's aspirations," he said. He said the struggle is an issue not only concerning Ladakh but the whole country.

Courts can't stop people from engaging in political activities as condition of bail: SC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has quashed the bail condition imposed by the Orissa High Court on a man that he shall not be involved in any political activity, saying it will breach his fundamental rights.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta passed the order on a plea filed by Siba Shankar Das, a former Mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation, against the January 18 order of the high court.

The high court had dismissed his application seeking withdrawal of the bail condition which said that he "shall not create any untoward situation in public and shall not be involved in any political activities, directly or indirectly".

The condition was imposed by the high court while ordering his release on bail in August 2022.

"We find that the imposition of such condition would breach the fundamental rights of the appellant and no such conditions could have been imposed," the apex court said in its March 22 order.

"We, therefore, quash and set aside the condition imposed by the high court, to the extent the same is extracted above," it said.

Das had approached the high court seeking modification of the condition imposed by it in the August 11, 2022 order while directing his release on bail.

His counsel had told the high court that the appellant being a political person may be permitted to take part in political activities in view of the ensuing general election.

The State had objected to his prayer and said that after being released on bail, a murderous attempt was made on him.

"Upon hearing both parties and considering present situation as it remains a fact that he was not only involved in other cases but also murderous attempt was made upon him, it would be unjustified to modify the condition of the bail permitting the appellant to take part in political activities which would be in further deterrence of law and order situation in the locality involving the appellant," the high court had said.

One-day artist camp held

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: 'Project Nailly', an artistic platform, founded by Artist and author Kanav Gupta was invited to the Sunburn Holi festival by the respective organizers to create an artistic environment at the venue. Kanav, who is an alumni of Whistling Woods International, Mumbai and a published author of 2 international books formed a team of 15 artists including himself from homeland Jammu of senior, college and junior level which included renowned Artist Suresh Sharma of JAKFAS, IMFA students Shruti Sharma, Arnavi Sharma, Jasdeep Singh, Shivam Gupta, Satya Prakash Singh, Urvashi Sharma, Ilyas Latief, Deep Shikha, Monika Chauhan, Shazad



Artists during the camp in Jammu.

Ahmed, two budding Artists of 12th std. Prathamansh Sharma & Tejas Dutta. Armaan Ali attended as a volunteer to raise charity for 'Kitab aur Kalam foundation' Jammu, who works for underprivileged children. The event was attended by large crowd. Live paint-

ings and Sculpture was made by team Project Nailly and also a LIVE 'Collaborative Intuitive Nailly art' was created on a 48 square feet canvas by Kanav Gupta in 4 hours with creative participation of art enthusiasts of all age from the crowd present.

LS polls: Shiv Sena (UBT) extends support to Congress in Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Shiv Sena (UBT) on Tuesday announced its support to the Congress candidates fielded from the Udhampur and Jammu constituencies in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Manish Sahni, the president of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) alleged that the leaders of the party are not being provided a security cover in the Union Territory "under a well-planned strategy".

"Keeping in mind the

safety of the leaders, the party high-command has given instructions not to field candidates on both the seats of Jammu division (Udhampur and Jammu). The party will support the Congress candidates in the polls," Sahni said here.

He said all the district units, workers and supporters of the party have been instructed to vote and campaign in favour of the Congress candidates in the two seats.

Udhampur and Jammu will go to polls on April 19 and April 26 respectively.

Sahni said his party will

continue to raise its voice for the restoration of the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and keep reminding the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre of its promises about restoration of statehood, a safe return of Kashmiri Pandits and a peaceful atmosphere.

"Along with this, Jammu and Kashmir is demanding protection of its cultural identity under Article 371 (of the Constitution) and reservation in employment and education for local youngsters, and the party will continue its fight for the same," he said.