

**!! Continuations from Page 1 !!  
10 people killed...**

"Spoke to Ramban Deputy Commissioner Baseer-ul-Haq after learning about the tragic road accident in which a passenger taxi rolled down a deep gorge on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Battery Chashma leading to loss of 10 lives," Singh said.

Democratic Progressive Azad Party chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families.

STATE TIMES Correspondent reports that Deputy Commissioner Ramban Baseer-ul-Haq Chowdhary said that the Tavera, carrying passengers mostly labourers, on way towards the Kashmir valley from Jammu rolled down into a deep gorge approximately 300 meters near Battery Chashma on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

"After getting information about the unfortunate incident rescue operation was started immediately by involving Ramban Police, Civil QRT, SDRF and local volunteers despite challenging terrain and continuous rain in the area. So far, ten bodies have been found," DC added.

"Majority of those dead are non J&K residents, further rescue operation is still going on." DC informed.

**Infiltration chances increase...**

infiltration open after the snow melts. "We have put plans in place to dominate those areas. We have made vulnerability maps and the forces will conduct area domination exercises according to that. The forces are capable to foil any such attempts," he said.

The BSF IG said about 65 companies of the BSF are deployed in the hinterland in Kashmir along with the Jammu and Kashmir Police to make the security grid stronger.

"About 65 companies of BSF are deputed in North, South and Central Kashmir ranges and are making security grid stronger and conducting area domination exercises along with the J-K Police. Whatever we have to do to ensure smooth elections, we will do that," Yadav said.

**Want to fill...**

The prime minister said he used to hear about digital divide in the world and had decided that he will not allow this to happen in India.

"When I used to hear about the digital divide in the world, I used to say, I will not let this happen in my country, that there be a digital divide. And digital public infrastructure is itself a big requirement. Today, I want to bring the digital facilities to villages," he said.

Lauding the "digital government", Gates said India is not just adapting technology but is actually leading the way and some of the digital systems create efficiency by getting rid of the middlemen, which is super beneficial.

"I sometimes say that I want to run such a government, as far as the middle class is concerned, the government should move out of their life, there shouldn't be any need for the government in their life. Where there is a poor person, where the government is needed, there the government should be fully there. But where there is no need, without reason the government keeps doing - bring this, bring that, do this, do that. So, that will stop," Modi said in response.

He said his government wants to allocate funds to scientists for local research in cervical cancer for developing vaccines at a minimal cost to ensure all girls are vaccinated against the serious disease. Modi said should the NDA be voted back to power, his priority will be to invest significantly in this research to safeguard the lives of India's daughters. "In the coming days, I want to allocate funds to our scientists for cervical cancer research targeting young girls. I want to give them budget and encourage them to conduct local research to make vaccines. My goal is to vaccinate all girls in our country at a minimal cost to ensure that they are protected from cancer," Modi said.

**LS polls: More...**

the permitted time. The EC pointed out that at the press conference to announce the Lok Sabha poll schedule, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar had urged citizens to be vigilant and use the app to report Model Code of Conduct violations and distribution of any kind of inducements among voters. The seven-phase polls were announced on March 16 and voting will take place between April 19 and June 1.

**J&K Bank lights...**

philanthropy but an investment in a more inclusive society geared towards an eco-friendly future." "For such empowering initiatives not only bring ease in the living conditions of these economically weaker sections of the society but contributes to the overall progress and well-being of the inhabitants of this place", he added.

"The idea of this project is to engage with the local communities especially those from economically weaker sections and to encourage them to adapt the sustainable and eco-friendly solutions for their day to day problems through collaboration with credible NGOs like MSRTC", he stated. Notably, under the project a few villages around Chountwari belt in the upper reaches of Lar Tehsil of Ganderbal district have been adopted for providing them an eco-friendly means of lighting. With a population comprising of about one thousand families, the subgroup of Scheduled Tribe constitutes about 46% of the population of these villages that mainly engages in agriculture, dairy/poultry & livestock farming, horticulture, bee-keeping etc. The project has facilitated eco-friendly lighting to the community in the region.

**Basohli deliberately neglected...**

identity but the Congress leaders who apparently always claimed to be the protagonists of regional pride did not pursue this cause because they were more concerned about preserving their Ministerial berths, he said.

It is under Prime Minister Modi that Basohli had received a network of road connectivity, as a result of which the travel time between Jammu and Basohli had considerably reduced bringing a lot of relief and convenience to daily commuters and ease of business for the industry.

Dr Jitendra said that Basohli richly deserve the status of being designated as the "Heritage Town" for which the initiative has already been undertaken. He said, there is a proper procedure laid out for being conferred the status of Heritage Town and the recognition of status has to come from accredited agencies which will also happen under the Modi government.

Dr Singh said, BJP had been in favour of a separate hill district comprising Basohli and Billawar regions and we had taken up this cause even when we were in opposition. The evidence of this is that in the BJP organisational structure, Basohli-Billawar enjoys the status of a separate hill district and we have a separate BJP District President for Kathua and a separate one for Basohli.

Considering the vast area of district Kathua, Dr Jitendra said, there are logistic and practical problems faced by the inhabitants of this region to reach out to various administrative offices located or based in Kathua part for the people living in remote villages and upper reaches of Basohli.

Dr Singh said, whenever the next District Reorganisation Committee is constituted under the NDA government, this long standing demand of separate districts will also be addressed.

Under Prime Minister Modi, Dr Jitendra said, for the first time this region has started getting its equitable share of both development as well as resources.

Those accompanying Dr Jitendra Singh in whirlwind election tour of the region included DDC Chairman Col(Retd) Mahan Singh, BJP President Darshan Singh, DDCs Narayan Dutt Tripathi and Dr Shweta, former Chairman Municipal Council Shammi Sapolia, BJYM President Udit, Sonu Gupta, Shailendra, Tejinder, Jagdish Sapolia and several other PRIs and prominent leaders of the area.

**Congress likely to...**

Congress' poll symbol of hand -- on social media platforms, they added.

The sources said that the party had to postpone the launch of its poll campaigns due to Income Tax notices for penalties to the tune of Rs 1,800 crore for alleged discrepancies in tax returns.

The Congress has accused the ruling BJP of indulging in "tax terrorism" and crippling it financially ahead of the Lok Sabha elections and alleged that this poses a threat to democracy and would lead to the "murder of democracy".

Meanwhile, senior Congress leaders are likely to participate in the INDIA bloc joint rally in Delhi on March 31 to highlight the issue of the "threat to democracy" posed after tax notices to it and after the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said this is the second major INDIA group rally after Mumbai where the alleged "threat to democracy" will be highlighted.

"This will be a political rally of INDIA bloc parties meant to highlight the authoritarianism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Ramesh said.

**No exit poll...**

including results of any opinion poll or any other poll survey, in any electronic media, would be prohibited during the 48-hour period ending with the time fixed for the conclusion of the poll.

Besides Lok Sabha polls, assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim are going for elections.

Separately, bye-election to 25 assembly constituencies in 12 states are also being held in this period.

**General, Police Observer chair high-level meeting on election preparedness in Udhampur PC**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
KATHUA: General Observer, 4- Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency (PC) Dheeraj Kumar, along with Police Observer, Daljeet Singh on Friday convened a meeting with district election officers, SSPs and AROs of 4 Udhampur PC here in the VC room of DC office complex.



Observers, Returning Officer, AROs and Nodal officers unveiling attractive Voter Invitation Card.

Returning Officer, Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency, Dr Rakesh Minhas (District Election Officer Kathua); SSP Kathua, Shivdeep Singh Jamwal; ARO Hiranagar, ARO Kathua, ARO Jasrota, ADC Kathua attended the meeting. DEO Udhampur, Saloni Rai; DEO Doda, Harvinder

and demography from the concerned District Election Officers, the Observers discussed in length key aspects of the training, security and transport plans. They laid stress on devising a workable plan keeping in mind the local topographical constraints.

General Observer, Dheeraj Kumar underlined the role of sector Magistrates in handling exigencies especially related to EVMs malfunction or for any other reasons and adopting swift procedures to address the issues in real time basis. He called upon the need for visiting of polling stations by sector Magistrate before the polling dates to get them well versed with the locations.

Regarding the communication plan, the general observer opined that the dry run of all adopted communication channels in advance can help in making the plan robust and workable.

The meeting also deliberated the need of early preparedness in establishing

minimum assured facilities in polling stations, mapping and deployment of polling staff and security personnel besides focusing on achieving timely enrolment of service voters so as to ensure they can cast their vote while discharging their duties.

Later, as part of ongoing SVEEP campaign, the Kathua Election Cell gets creative and in a ceremonial gesture, the Observers, Returning Officer, AROs and Nodal officers unveiled the attractive Voter Invitation Card inspired by the marriage cards to invite voters to participate in the celebration of democracy by casting their vote on April 19, 2024.

**DLSA conducts Awareness programme at GGHS, Shalbugh**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
GANDERBAL: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal Friday organized an awareness program on the ill effects of Child Marriage, Child Labour, Save Girl Child and Child Labour, Prevention of Child Abuse and Prevention of Drug Abuse at Government Girls High School (GGHS), Shalbugh Ganderbal.



DLSA official speaking during the programme.

The programme was held under the chairmanship of Ritesh Kumar Dubey, Chairman DLSA (Pr. District & Sessions Judge), Ganderbal and under the supervision of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary/Sub-judge, DLSA Ganderbal.

On the occasion, Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel, Tanveer gave a detailed description of topics. In his address, he emphasized the ill effects of Child Marriage; adding that girls who marry at a younger age lack maturity are often subjected to domestic violence, lack access to education and future career opportunities.

He explained the importance of creating a safe and nurturing environment for children. He briefed the participants on the topic 'Child Labour'.

He said that child labour is the exploitation of children through any form of

work that interferes with their ability to attend schools regularly, or is mentally and physically harmful for them.

He highlighted the legal provisions related to child marriage, child labour, and child abuse and emphasized the severe consequences of violating these laws. He urged the participants to report any instances of child marriage, labour, or abuse to the authorities.

Panel Lawyer, Irfan Rashid Mir while speaking on the subject briefed the participants about the dangers of 'Drug Abuse'.

He educated the participants on the risks associat-

ed with drug abuse, which include declining mental health, sudden fluctuations in weight, sleep disturbances etc.

The program aimed to raise awareness about the legal rights of children and the role of DLSA in providing legal assistance and protection to them.

The program was attended by the teachers and students of the said School, Resource persons and Para Legal Volunteers of DLSA, Ganderbal. They pledged to work together to combat the evils of child marriage, labour, and abuse and to create a better future for the children.

**Staff imparted training on handling of ETPBS at Kathua**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
KATHUA: A comprehensive training program on handling of Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) was on Friday conducted for polling staff in the VC hall of the District Electoral Officer (DEO) here.

Led by Nodal Officer for ETPBS, Riaz Ahmed, the session provided detailed insights into the pivotal role and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in facilitating smooth polling through the Postal Ballot system. The event particularly addressed individuals engaged in election duty and essential services, as designated by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Participation in the training was robust, with Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) representing all 18 assembly segments of the 4-Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency actively engaging in the discussions.

Key directives included the timely submission of the list of service voters by AROs to the respective DEOs of the constituent districts of the 4-Udhampur PC, ensuring meticulous compilation for onward submission to the

Returning Officer. Dr. Rakesh Minhas, Returning Officer for the 4 - U d h a m p u r P a r l i a m e n t a r y Constituency, emphasized the importance of inclusivity, urging AROs to ensure that all eligible voters are informed and empowered to exercise their right to vote through the postal or Election Duty Certificate (EDC) preference channels outlined by the ECI.

Dr. Minhas highlighted the need to adhere to ECI guidelines in providing adequate provisions for voters aged 85 and above, underscoring the commitment to inclusivity and accessibility in the electoral process.

The training session was attended by Nodal Officer for ETPBS, Sideswar Bhagat (DIO NIC Kathua), Nodal Officer Postal Ballot, Varun Chaudhary, Deputy DEO Nagesh Singh, and other stakeholders.

In addition to discussions on the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System, the training also delved into meticulous planning for election counting and Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) management, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of all facets of the electoral process.

**Army provides stationery, furniture, sports items to border area schools**



Army officials along with students during the event.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
NOWSHERA: Under Operation Sadbhavana a program was organized by Indian Army's Kalal Battalion in Government Lower High School, Kalal, Nowshera. On this occasion the Indian Army presented study material as well as sports goods and furniture to the school. Senior Army officials, school teachers and school students were present during the program. School teachers said that under Operation Sadbhavana, the Indian Army has provided Volleyballs as well as other essential items to the school by providing tables, benches, water coolers, easel boards for children, book shelves and chairs for teachers. He said that the army is working with the people to uplift the level of education under Operation Sadbhavana. We thank the Indian Army from the bottom of our hearts for providing every facility to the school students studying near the border area. We are proud of our Indian Army. For the last several years, the Army has been providing all kinds of facilities by visiting the schools of this

border area village. From time to time, the army provides desks and other necessary facilities to various schools. He said that a few days ago, the army had organized a similar program and provided study material as well as sports equipment. Along with protecting the borders, the Indian Army makes efforts to provide every basic facility to the people living in the border areas and students.

**SDM flags off SVEEP Van to promote electoral awareness**



SDM Ramnagar, Rafiq Ahmad Jaral, flagging-off SVEEP Van on Friday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
UDHAMPUR: In a significant move to enhance voters participation in upcoming Lok Sabha Elections, SDM Ramnagar, Rafiq Ahmad Jaral, flagged off SVEEP Van, on Friday.

The Van has been under the guidance of District Election Officer, Udhampur, Saloni Rai, under the aegis of SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation), which aims to

reach out to the remote villages and hamlets of the Ramnagar Constituency.

The van, adorned with flexes displaying the messages on voting and the boys wearing mascots, dancing on the beats of election songs made its inaugural journey through Ramnagar Town before hosting a major gathering at the Ramnagar Bus Stand.

Around 300 individuals were present at the event addressed by the SDM

Ramnagar, who called on the citizens to participate actively in the election process by casting their votes.

The people overwhelmingly welcomed the SVEEP van as the message of democratic participation resonated at their doorsteps. As the Lok Sabha Election approaches, the SVEEP van will continue to play a pivotal role in educating and motivating the electorates in Ramnagar and beyond.

**H&H Dept kick-starts exhibition at Emporium Building, Srinagar**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS  
SRINAGAR: The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir today organized a calligraphy Exhibition at the Government Arts Emporium, Srinagar to spotlight the remarkable craftsmanship of Solih Alhajjari, a well known figure in the calligraphy field. The opening reception attracted a large audience, with visitors relishing the artistic displays and interacting with the talented artists.



Speaking at the event, the Joint Director of Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir, Parvaz Sajad Ganie reiterated the department's commitment to providing a platform for local artisans to showcase their talents and boost sales.

Such initiatives, he emphasized, play a crucial role in preserving the legacy of handicrafts and providing exposure and livelihood support to local artisans.

The department plans to organize many more such exhibitions throughout the valley to connect artisans with both local and global markets.