

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Came with hope...

During the next five years, three crore new houses will also be constructed for the poor, he said.

"The NDA government believes in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and ensures that each citizen gets the benefits they are entitled to without any discrimination", he added.

Referring to the abolition of 'triple talaq', Modi said this has freed the Muslim women. "We made a law against it which benefited not only the Muslim sisters, but their entire family as triple talaq had destroyed the lives of many women and their families," he added.

He said Muslim women in Assam have also benefited from the law.

"Assam has also witnessed unprecedented development during the last ten years and when the intentions are right, the results are also good", he said.

"Congress for its own benefit had deliberately neglected the region so that they could indulge in corruption and loot. This situation has, however, been changed and the region is reaping the benefits of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', he claimed.

Recently, the Prime Minister had laid the foundation of a semiconductor testing facility in Assam which will provide over 15,000 jobs to the youth.

"This has been a historic and unprecedented step. Assam will soon be recognised as a semiconductor hub", Modi said.

The electricity bill of the people will also come to zero as they will be provided with solar panels while over 3 crore women associated with SHGs will be made 'Lakshmi Didi's', he added. All the promises made in the manifesto will be fulfilled and these will benefit the poor, deprived, dalits, farmers and the tea garden workers.

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers has been raised in Assam and they will continue to get the benefits of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.

"For me, your dreams are my promises. Each moment is dedicated to you, your dreams and the country", he added.

Modi was here to campaign for NDA candidates of three constituencies - Asom Gana Parishad's Phani Bhushan Choudhury who is contesting from Barpeta, United People's Party, Liberal (UPPL)'s Jayanta Basumatary from Kokrajhar and BJP's Bijuli Kalita Medhi of Guwahati, who all were present at the rally.

Two terror suspects...

Hand Grenade and other war-like stores," Srinagar-based Chinar Corps of the Army posted on X. The Army said further investigation is in progress.

Major breakthrough' ahead...

by the police, CRPF and Rashtriya Rifles in the forest area of Sanai-Gursai in the Mendhar sub-division, the officials said.

They said the bomb disposal squad later destroyed all the three IEDs in a controlled explosion, scuttling terrorists' plan to carry out blasts in the Union Territory.

"We received an input about the likely hideout and suspicious movement in the upper Sanai at 4 am and subsequently launched a joint 'search and destroy' operation with the Special Operations Group (SOG) of Jammu and Kashmir Police and Rashtriya Rifles. "Three IEDs, one weighing 15 to 20 kgs, second eight to 10 kgs and third three to five kgs, having two mechanisms for initiating charge were recovered and destroyed," CRPF officer Rajnesh Yadav said.

Yadav, who is second-in-command of the 246th battalion, said the seizure of the IEDs foiled terrorists' plan to carry out an attack.

"This is an election time and terrorists are always on the lookout to disrupt elections by carrying out any sensational act," he told reporters at the scene.

The officials said no one was arrested during the operation which concluded with the safe disposal of the seized IEDs.

Stage set for...

Assembly Segments namely Udhampur West, Udhampur East, Chenani and Ramnagar; boasts 419,854 electors which included 219890 male and 199964 female electors. Kathua district, with six Assembly Segments of Bani, Billawar, Basohli, Jasrota, Kathua and Hiranagar will see a robust participation of 503,227 registered voters comprising 263948 male, 239273 female and 6 third gender electors.

To facilitate seamless voting, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has set up 2,637 polling stations across the constituency, including 405 in Kishtwar; 529 in Doda, 348 in Ramban, 654 in Udhampur and 701 in Kathua District.

In line with the commitment towards fair and transparent elections, the ECI has deployed 3,658 Ballot Units, 3,570 Control Units, and 3,636 VVPATs (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) to ensure the accuracy and integrity of electoral process. Moreover, 1,472 polling stations will be equipped with webcasting facilities to further enhance transparency in the democratic process.

Azad will not...

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti and National Conference senior leader Mian Altaf are contesting from the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary seat.

"Azad will not contest the elections (from Anantnag-Rajouri seat)," Bhat told reporters in Anantnag.

"A meeting took place with Azad and it was decided that advocate Saleem Parry will be the DPAP candidate for the Anantnag-Rajouri seat," he added.

The DPAP leader said Azad has some reasons not to contest -- without divulging those reasons. "He gave some reasons (in the meeting) and then we took a decision on fielding Parry from the seat," Bhat said.

On April 2, the DPAP announced that Azad will contest from the Anantnag-Rajouri seat. "Today the core committee of DPAP met and we have decided that (party president) Ghulam Nabi Azad will contest the Anantnag-Rajouri seat," DPAP leader Taj Mohiuddin had said.

Worker from Bihar...

a worker from Amritsar in Punjab, at the Shalla Kadal locality in the Habba Kadal area of the city here.

Another non-local worker, identified as Rohit Mashii, who also hailed from Amritsar, sustained injuries in the incident and succumbed a day later.

On April 8, a non-local cab driver, identified as Dilranjeet Singh was shot and injured by terrorists in Shopian district.

Meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha has condemned the terror attack in Bijbehara, Anantnag. He has conveyed his condolences to the family of the martyred civilian Raja Shah, a resident of Bihar. I convey my heartfelt condolences to the family of the innocent civilian martyred in this cowardly attack. Entire nation stands in solidarity with the family in this hour of grief.

The Lt Governor said: No words are strong enough to condemn the heinous terrorist attack in Bijbehara, Anantnag, targeting Raja Shah, a resident of Bihar. I convey my heartfelt condolences to the family of the innocent civilian martyred in this cowardly attack. Entire nation stands in solidarity with the family in this hour of grief.

We have full faith in the unparalleled valour of J&K Police and security forces, and I assure the people that terrorists responsible for this barbaric act will have to pay a very heavy price. We will hunt down the perpetrators and crush those elements, who are aiding

and abetting the terrorists.

The Anantnag attack was condemned by political parties with National Conference president Farooq Abdullah asserting that such incidents will hinder peace.

"JKNC President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and VP @OmarAbdullah express shock and sadness at the news of Rajshah Ji's death, who succumbed to grievous injuries after being shot at in Bijbehara today. They vehemently condemn the attack, emphasizing that such acts of terror hinder peace in J&K," the NC posted on X.

Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti called it a "senseless act of violence".

"My deepest condolences to his family," she added.

BJP's Jammu and Kashmir spokesperson Altaf Thakur also condemned the killing.

"Such acts reflect frustration of adversaries and these acts will in no way revive election boycott politics in Kashmir. Urge police to track down the killers of this innocent man and punish them sternly," he said.

Democratic Progressive Azad Party chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad said people must stand together against such an act.

"Strongly condemn the tragic Bijbehara attack in which a non-local named Raja Shah of Bihar lost his life in this senseless act of violence... This must end, people want peace but militants don't want peace. We must stand together against this act!" Azad said on X. Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone denounced the "senseless violence" and said such acts of brutality have no place in a civilised society.

Ram Lalla honoured...

an elaborate apparatus involving mirrors and lenses that directed sun rays into the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, and onto the deity's forehead.

The Ram idol was consecrated in a ceremony led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22.

In the middle of his Lok Sabha election campaign, Modi watched the event on his computer tablet.

"After my Nalbari (Assam) rally, I watched the Surya Tilak on Ram Lalla. Like crores of Indians, this is a very emotional moment for me. The grand Ram Navami in Ayodhya is historic. May this Surya Tilak bring energy to our lives and may it inspire our nation to scale new heights and glory," he wrote on X.

He also shared pictures of him watching the 'Surya Tilak'.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also shared a video of the 'Surya Tilak' on his official handle on X.

"The grand 'Surya Tilak' adorned on the forehead of Suryakal Bhushan Shri Ram Lalla is today illuminating the entire nation with its eternal glory. Jai Jai Shri Ram!," he wrote.

Temple spokesperson Prakash Gupta said, "The Surya Tilak was done for around four or five minutes when the sun rays were directed focused on the forehead of the Ram Lalla idol."

"The temple administration prevented the devotees from entering the sanctum sanctorum at the time of the Surya Tilak to avoid overcrowding," Gupta said.

Udhampur, Kathua, Doda...

Passport offices, Radio Station at Udhampur, etc. Not only this, as Prime Minister Modi mentioned during his address at the Udhampur rally on 12th of this month, the Congress led UPA government halted the Shalpur-Kandi Project, which would benefit the twin districts of Kathua and Samba and the project was revived only after Prime Minister Modi came to power.

Taking a dig at the opposition leaders, Dr Jitendra said, on the one hand, the Congress leaders and its allies say that there are no roads constructed, on the other hand, while driving through this constituency they are invariably using the 9½ Kms Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel from Chenani to Nashri in order to cut down their travel time by 1½ hours. If these leaders have any conscience, let them at least not use these facilities provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Similarly, he said, even during the election campaign, these leaders travelled up to zero line on the International border on the roads constructed in the last ten years. He added, if they have any conscience, they could have avoided travelling by road and walked on foot as was being done before 2014. Dr Singh added that in the last ten years, while three Medical Colleges came up in the constituency there were at least 20 Degree Colleges and nearly a dozen Kendriya Vidyalayas opened in this constituency. He said, those opposition leaders and critics who say that this has not happened and there are no such institutions should at least have the conscience not to get their children admitted in these colleges and schools.

The double speak of opposition leaders has become so evident, said Dr Jitendra Singh that even family members of these Congress leaders now have decided to vote for Modi because the benefits of toilets and Gas Cylinders have reached even their households and changed the destiny of their women folk. Similarly, he said, the children of the Congress leaders are using all the benefits of the StartUp and Digital India initiatives introduced by Prime Minister Modi and therefore, they will also cast their secret vote for Modi.

Appealing to voters to cast their vote in 100%, Dr Jitendra said, we have no opponent and our competition is with ourselves. We have to prove before ourselves that we have put up a better performance than in 2019 when we registered a record margin in J&K by more than 3 Lakh 58 thousand votes. He said, it is a foregone conclusion that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be sworn in as Prime Minister for the third term in June 2024 with 400 plus mandate, but we have to prove to ourselves and to others that this Udhampur-Kathua-Doda constituency also made a substantial contribution in making up the figure of 400 plus.

NC, Cong cutting...

hard to uphold. I would have never allowed this in Congress."

Such deviation from the party's principles is regrettable and undermines the legacy we strive to maintain, he added

Azad said, Omar Abdullah is campaigning in the Chenab Valley against DPAP, not BJP and he has been tasked to divide secular votes.

"Omar Abdullah did nothing for his own constituency; I gave district status to Genderbal, which is the family constituency of Abdullahs. I provided them with colleges, hospitals. What has Omar done for his home constituency? He only exploited and harmed the people", Azad said.

He raised concerns about the Congress party's approach to addressing public issues, particularly in BJP-ruled states.

He criticized the party for what he sees as a reluctance to engage in direct confrontations and a tendency to seek out safe seats where minority populations are stronger. He questioned the party's commitment to fighting the BJP on the ground, highlighting its preference for safe seats, notably in states like Kerala, over contested battlegrounds.

Azad said, "Why is Rahul Gandhi hesitant to contest in BJP-ruled states?" He noted that while Gandhi claims to be fighting the BJP, his actions suggest otherwise. "Why fly from BJP-ruled states and seek refuge in minority-dominated ones?" he added

Azad referred Rahul Gandhi and Omar Abdullah as "spoon-fed kids" rather than politicians. He pointed out that they have not made personal sacrifices in life and are merely enjoying political legacies inherited from figures like Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah. "Both have done nothing of their own," he added.

Azad reiterated his commitment to development, urging the public to distance themselves from exploitative politicians. He emphasized the importance of supporting candidates dedicated to addressing public issues.

Azad urged people to rally behind G.M. Saroori in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, highlighting Saroori's dedication to raising and addressing pressing public concerns.

Omar has 'habit of humiliating people', says Lone

STATE TIMES NEWS

KUPWARA: People's Conference (PC) chief Sajad Gani Lone on Wednesday said National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah has a "habit of humiliating people and he needs to get out of the habit of labelling his opponents adversely".

The PC president slammed Abdullah's assertion that his fight in north Kashmir's Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency -- "where Abdullah and Lone are pitted against each other -- is against Delhi and not against any specific candidate.

Lone questioned the implications of labelling his supporters as "agents of Delhi or manipulated by agencies".

"Omar has a habit of humiliating everyone. I want to ask him that are the people supporting us mere agents of



Delhi? Are they manipulated by agencies? Why do you habitually demean and insult the people of Kashmir? Do you hold a license to label and question people's choices, humiliating them in the process?" Lone said.

He also addressed a block meeting with workers from Qaziabad in Langate assembly segment.

"These are the Kashmiri people, standing with us out of genuine love and affection.

Our party has been repeatedly victimised by our alliances with Delhi, whether in 1983, 1987, or thereafter. We are the party that genuinely represents the aspirations of victimised Kashmiris," he said.

Lone said the Abdullahs (Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah) and the NC have been "pleading" the BJP for their support.

"You, yourself, have been pleading and begging the

BJP eyes hat-trick as Congress mounts challenge in Udhampur and Jammu

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The BJP has gone full-throttle with a high-voltage campaign, while the Congress seems to have adopted a subdued approach as the parties gear up for a three-cornered contest -- scheduled on April 19 and 26 -- in the Udhampur and Jammu constituencies.

In both the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the ruling BJP secured the Udhampur and Jammu seats with Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh and Jugal Kishore emerging triumphant, respectively.

Now, seeking a hat-trick of wins in the two constituencies, the saffron party is vigorously working to fortify its support base. It, however, faces stiff competition from the Congress, which has nominated two-time MP Lal Singh in Udhampur and its working president Raman Bhalla in Jammu.

Campaigning for the first phase draws to a close on Wednesday.

The BJP's campaign in Jammu and Kashmir included rallies by top party leaders, such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Minister Anurag Thakur, and senior leader Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain.

In contrast, the Congress had only former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan Sachin Pilot and actor-turned-politician Raj Babbar addressing two rallies in the region since the announcement of the polls.

The BJP is banking on the 'Modi factor' and its promises delivered, including the abrogation of Article 370, the passage of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, and the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, along with various welfare schemes and infrastructure projects, to bolster its narrative of development.

Modi, while campaigning for Dr Jitendra Singh in Udhampur on April 12, said that assembly elections will be soon held in Jammu and Kashmir and the statehood will be restored.

The Congress, on the other hand, is focusing on the issues of unemployment and safeguarding secularism besides restoration of statehood.

The grand old party is being backed by the National Conference (NC) with former chief ministers of the erstwhile-state of Jammu and Kashmir Dr Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah campaigning for the INDIA bloc candidates Lal Singh in Udhampur and Raman Bhalla in Jammu.

"Your vote will have a bearing for the next five years, so you have to choose wisely. Don't allow votes to get divided," Omar had said in Doda.

Pilot, who campaigned for Congress candidates in R S Pura and Kathua on April 16, criticised the saffron party for allegedly destroying the state, saying, "Under the rule of the Lieutenant Governor, outsiders are encroaching on lands. Lands that are being cultivated are being snatched from the people and given to outsiders." Lal Singh is expected to give a tough battle to BJP's candidate and Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh in the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency, which was once a Congress bastion.

His campaign has focused on the "identity" of J&K, which he alleges has been

BJP for recognition. Farooq Abdullah resorted to public begging in a TV interview for BJP's audience. Show some shame before questioning the loyalty of the Kashmiri people," he further said.

On the issue of abrogation of Article 370, the PC chief further said the NC's attempt to "deceive" the public again on the issue is "disgraceful".

"What moral grounds do they hold to claim the restoration of special status to J-K, a cause they willingly relinquished and now seek to exploit emotionally? They had three sitting MPs when Article 370 was abrogated. What have they achieved in the last five years?" he asked.

However, he said, if the party is serious, they should prepare a roadmap for achieving their objectives and secure assurances from its alliance partners.

eroded by the BJP government at the Centre. He has been vocal in attacking the Modi government, accusing it of "destroying J&K during its 10 years of misrule." Lal Singh was elected as MP from the Udhampur Lok Sabha seat in 2009 and 2014 on a Congress ticket. He was also elected to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly as an MLA in 1996, 2002, and 2015, and served as the Minister in the PDP-Congress and PDP-BJP governments.

"It is a tough battle for the Union Minister this time, considering the popularity of Congress candidate Lal Singh among voters in the constituency. He is also backed by the National Conference as an alliance candidate of the INDIA bloc," political analyst Dr Tej Krishan said.

The Democratic Progressive Azad Party chief Ghulam Nabi Azad is campaigning for his party candidate and former minister G M Saroori, who is contesting from Udhampur. Azad has been criticising regional political parties like the NC, Congress and PDP.

Modi Govt will eliminate Naxals in very short period of time: Amit Shah

STATE TIMES NEWS

AHMEDABAD: The Narendra Modi government will eliminate Naxals from the country in a very short period of time, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted on Wednesday.

The central government has been conducting incessant operations against terrorism and Naxals, he said in a statement, a day after security forces gunned down 29 Maoists in Chhattisgarh.

"I can say with conviction that operations against Naxals will continue in the times to come, and under the leadership of Modi, we will uproot Naxalism from our nation in a very short period of time," Shah said.



The home minister said since the formation of a BJP government in Chhattisgarh three months ago, more than 80 Naxals have been eliminated, more than 125 arrested and more than 150 have surrendered.

Shah said a large number of camps of security forces have been set up in Maoist-affected areas since 2014. Since 2019, as many as 250 such camps have been set up, ending the security vacuum, he said.

In the biggest ever encounter in Chhattisgarh, security personnel on Tuesday gunned down 29 Naxalites, including some senior members, in Kanker district. This was the highest fatalities suffered by Maoists in a single encounter in the history of the state's fight against Left Wing Extremism.

Since the start of 2024, as many as 79 Naxalites have been killed in separate gun-battles with security forces in the Bastar region, a Maoist stronghold. Three security personnel also suffered injuries in the fierce gun-battle and a large quantity of weapons was seized from the spot, officials said.

Lok Sabha election a fight between two ideologies: Rahul Gandhi

STATE TIMES NEWS

MANDYA (KARNATAKA): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday termed the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as a battle between two ideologies -- INDIA bloc "fighting for Constitution" on the one hand and BJP, which wants to "abolish constitution and democracy," on the other.

He said if the INDIA bloc is voted to power, it will be "a government of ordinary citizens, farmers, labourers and traders", while highlighting his party's manifesto for the polls.

"This is a fight between two ideologies. There is Congress and INDIA bloc on one hand, which fought for the Constitution, gave Constitution and democracy to the country. On the other hand there is BJP, which wants to abolish the Constitution and democracy and is placing their people in all the institutions," Gandhi said, addressing an election rally here.

While the BJP-government "belonged to 22 to 25 rich people", Congress will give a government which will work for the ordinary citizens, farmers, labourers

and traders, he said.

He alleged that the BJP-led government at the Centre ran "Hafta Bazi" (extortion scheme) as he called the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme as the biggest ever extortion scam in the world.

Gandhi asked people to Google and watch Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interview on electoral bonds to see how his hands were shaking.

"You must have seen Narendra Modi's interview. In that interview he spoke about electoral bonds. It was an hour-long interview where he tried to clarify on electoral bonds.

"Just do one thing. Go to Google and see the interview, you will notice that his hands are trembling because the electoral bond is the biggest ever corruption in India," he said.

"On the street it is known as extortion and 'Hafta Bazi'. Usually these works are done by petty goons. They bully and extort money. Electoral bonds are the biggest ever extortion scam of the world. That was the reason that the Prime Minister's hands were shaking while explaining it," Gandhi alleged.

This is his first visit to Congress-governed Karnataka after the election schedule was announced a month ago.

In Mandya, the Congress is facing JD(S) which is BJP's alliance partner. There is a direct contest between JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy and Congress' Venkataramane Gowda, popularly known as 'Star Chandru' here.

The Congress had secured only one seat in the 2019 general elections in Karnataka, which has a total of 28 constituencies. BJP had bagged 25 while an independent candidate backed by the party had also emerged victorious. JD(S) which fought the elections in alliance with the Congress, won in one segment.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said the party will win 15 to 20 seats in the state this time around. Mandya will vote in the first of the two phase elections in Karnataka.

While 14 constituencies in the southern part of the state are going for election on April 26, the second phase voting for the northern districts will be held on May 7.