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**Srinagar PC records...**

each Assembly Segment are tentative as postal votes polled during home voting, through EDC, Postal ballot, ETPBs and migrant votes polled at special polling stations are not added.

The CEO attributed the great success behind this hugely increased polling percentage to improved security and law and order environment in last 4-5 years, mobilization by 24 candidates and political parties, election awareness executed by Deputy Commissioners and CEO office through SVEEP activities and more importantly voters strong belief that it is the ballot which can lead to sustainable development (Aman, Tarraki and Khushali).

The polling took place in 2,135 polling stations across the Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency with live webcasting at all the polling stations with voting started at 7 am across the PC with long queues of enthusiastic voters waiting to cast their votes.

Demonstrating the spirit of democracy, the voters of all the districts showed up in record numbers to cast their votes in a significant show of their faith in the election process. Since beginning of the poll at 7.00 am, the voters were seen queuing up at many polling stations across the all 5 districts. Elderly, ladies and youths were seen enthusiastically exercising their right to vote in a peaceful environment.

The Chief Electoral Officer monitored the progress of voting across the Parliamentary Constituency from the Union Territory-level Command and Control Center established at ICC- HMT, Bemina and CEO Office, Srinagar. It is pertinent to mention here that the Command and Control center has been working 24x7 at Srinagar as well as Jammu since 16 March to ensure free, fair and inducement-free elections.

The highest ever poll percentage since the eruption of terrorism in Kashmir was recorded in year 1996 with 40.94 per cent But in 1996 the geographical boundary of Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency was smaller (only Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal districts), however, now with addition of districts and increase in size of PC we can say it is the highest for Srinagar PC in today's size, added the CEO.

More than 8,500 polling staff has performed poll duty and actual polling continued till 6.00 pm on conclusion of the polling, whichever is later. At every polling station, basic minimum facilities of water, electricity, toilet, ramp, verandah/ waiting room etc were made. The wheelchairs and volunteers were provided as and when required. In order to ensure inclusive voting, 20 number of polling booths managed by women (also called as pink polling stations), 18 polling booths managed by specially abled persons and 17 polling stations managed by youths were established. Also to spread the message about environmental concerns, 21 green polling stations were set up. To facilitate voter identification, apart from EPIC card, other documents such as Adhar card, Bank Passbooks, Driving License, PAN Card, Govt employee ID card etc documents were also allowed as per Election Commission of India's directions. Media facilitation was done through special passes for more than 600 journalists.

The democratic spirit has won over any kind of apprehension in the mind of the average Kashmiri voter. As per guidance of CEC, Rajiv Kumar, the meticulous planning and execution of SVEEP activities was done which ultimately resulted in a significant increase in the voter turnout. Every nukkad natak, street play, painting competition and rally has translated into an increase overall voter turnout. The spirit of democracy has triumphed and not even a single incident of stone pelting has been reported.

The enthusiasm among the political parties, who are an important stakeholder in the democratic process can be gauged from the fact that a record number of applications regarding various permissions had been received on the Suvidha portal. The General Elections to Lok Sabha in PC- SRINAGAR has been violence free and has witnessed historic participation from the voters of Kashmir.

There were 17140 Kashmiri migrants electors in Srinagar who opted for voting at 26 Special Polling Stations established at Jammu (21), Udhampur (01) and Delhi (04). At these 26 special polling stations, there was voter turnout of 39.09 per cent. A total of 6700 migrant voters exercised their voting right, out of which, 213 voted at Delhi, 160 at Udhampur and 6327 exercised their voting right at Jammu. It is also for the first time that the migrant community has turned for vote in such a large numbers.

The Chief Electoral Officer extended gratitude to all the voters for their historic participation in the festival of democracy. He also appreciated the Polling personnel including security staff, police officers, ARO, RO and District Election Officers for their contribution in making the ongoing elections successful.

**Mohammad Ashraf started a new chapter in life on Monday when he got married and his first stop was a polling station in this Jammu and Kashmir constituency to cast his vote - complete with sherwani, colourful turban and mehndi on his hands.**



As Ashraf, the cynosure of much attention, spoke of the importance of voting, others in Jammu and Kashmir, voting for the first time in parliamentary polls since the abrogation of Article 370, also went the extra mile to make sure they exercise their franchise. Among them were centenarians, people in wheelchairs, the ailing and first-timers, the elderly and the young united in their enthusiasm for Election 2024.

There was a flutter of sorts when Ashraf entered the polling station at the Boys Higher Secondary School at Kangan in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, which is part of the Srinagar parliamentary constituency. People and poll officials were pleasantly surprised. And the groom had a message for the public too.

"Today is voting day. I came here to cast my vote for someone who will do good for our state and the country," Ashraf said, asking people not to waste their vote and exercise their right to franchise.

"A vote has a huge value. It helps us to choose our representatives who frame policies for development and employment for us," he added.

**Greater Kailash Murder...**

at Greater Kailash. The SSP Jammu, Dr Vinod Kumar, had ordered the suspension of incharge Police Post (IC/PP) Greater Kailash PSI Puneet Sharma and attachment of SHO Inspector Harmohinder Singh.

The deceased Avtar Singh son of Balbir Singh of Kaluchak was attacked by a group of goons when he objected to forcible possession of a plot he had allegedly purchased long back.

**KPs flock to...**

township in Kashmir."

Anurodh Kaul, a first-time voter, expressed concern over the brain drain in the region and demanded restoration of peace in the valley so that youths don't feel the need to escape.

"We voted to urge the government to take such steps promptly so that the community returns and grows back with peace and our civilization is saved. They should also ensure economic and political empowerment and create job opportunities in the valley," Anurodh said.

Most of the Kashmiri Pandits said they have seen a change for good in the valley, which is seeing less militants and more tourists now.

"We have not received much from this government as a community. But we are happy to see Kashmir changing from the home of terrorism to a paradise for tourism for some time now. We hope that terrorism will be completely eradicated," said Karan Zutshi.

Meanwhile, scores of Kashmiri Pandits were unable to vote due to their names missing from the electoral rolls.

"I came to the polling station with three members of my family to cast our votes despite such heat. We carried our EPIC (Voter ID) cards too. But we found our names missing from the electoral roll. It is a denial of our right to vote," Veena, a resident of Jagti camp and a migrant from the erstwhile Habbakadal area of Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, said.

She said what's the use of the voter ID card if that is not enough.

"They (EPIC) should be cancelled by ECI. The government wants us to vote but at the same time has a process that denies us the right to exercise our franchise."

Avinash Raina and four of his family members, who hail from erstwhile Budgam area of Srinagar LS seat, also had to return without exercising their franchise.

"We came here to vote. We don't figure in the voting list. What do we do now? Nobody is here to listen to us and resolve the issue," he said.

Kuldeep Kumar and scores of electors from his colony too had to return without voting from a special polling station set up at the Agriculture office in Talab Tillo.

"We found here that over 20 people were barred from voting as their names were absent from the voter list. Despite having EPIC cards, they were denied voting. There should be a probe into it," he said.

As many as 52,100 Kashmiri migrants are registered as voters from the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency and there are 24 candidates in the fray.

Of the total voters, 25,760 are male and 26,340 are female, Assistant Electoral Returning Officer (AERO), Migrants, Dr Riaz Ahmed said.

**Rahul didn't visit...**

while addressing a campaign rally at Vasai near Mumbai.

"Rahul Gandhi didn't visit the Ram Temple inauguration because he feared losing his vote bank, the vote bank of Bhandi Bazar," Shah said while campaigning for Hemant Savara, the BJP nominee from Palghar Lok Sabha constituency, who is pitted against Bharti Kamdi of Shiv Sena (UBT).

Shah alleged the "Sonia-Mannohan Singh government" was involved in corruption amounting to Rs 12 lakh crore.

"But there is no such allegation against the Narendra Modi government (in the last 10 years)," he said.

"I want to ask Uddhav Thackeray whether he is comfortable to sit with people who were soft on (Pakistani terrorist) Ajmal Kasab. The Congress is against UCC, but we will introduce it for sure. This government will not run as per the Sharia Law," the Home Minister added.

Earlier in the day, Shah addressed a campaign rally in Dhule district for BJP's Dhule Lok Sabha seat candidate and former Union minister Subhash Bhamre.

Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi not only helped in the resolution of the Ram temple issue but also facilitated its construction.

Shah also targeted Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and Congress ally Uddhav Thackeray on Rahul Gandhi opposing the abrogation of article 370.

The Congress did not remove Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir because of the appeasement politics, the senior BJP leader alleged.

He claimed Rahul Gandhi and Congress insulted (Hindutva ideologue) Veer Savarkar. "What does Thackeray have to say about it?"

"I also want a clarification from Uddhav Thackeray. One of the constituents of the opposition INDIA bloc is DMK led by M K Stalin, and his son Udhayanidhi Stalin has insulted Sanatan Dharma. Does Uddhav agree with them?" Shah said.

**DPAP will ensure...**

political posturing. He condemned the MPs of both parties for their alleged failure to vocally oppose the revocation of Article 370 in Parliament, accusing them of betraying the trust of the people they represent. He characterized their current actions as an attempt to deceive the public with false narratives and diversionary tactics.

Azad said: "Let me clarify, it was not me who served as a Minister in the BJP government; it was Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti. Omar Abdullah enjoyed six years of Chief Ministership, courtesy to my support and that of my MLAs. However, his tenure was marred by failure, pushing Kashmir backwards into a cycle of violence and stagnation instead of progress. The people of Kashmir are well aware of their rule, and they will not be fooled again. Their style of politics revolves around exploitation. Today, the people are suffering due to the skyrocketing electricity fees. We must address these pressing issues and prioritize the welfare of the people over political gamesmanship."

He said: "I have a track record of delivering tangible results. I established medical colleges in Anantnag, Kulgam district, and even in Ganderbal, where the NC traditionally held sway, I prioritized development. My agenda has always been centered on progress and development. I have never misled the people; I speak the truth and stand by my convictions. My commitment to the welfare and advancement of the people remains unwavering."

Ghulam Nabi Azad strongly criticized the current government's failure to effectively govern, particularly in managing the complexities of such a sensitive 'state' and garnering the support of the people.

He emphasized the need to win the hearts of the people through genuine engagement and responsive governance.

Azad outlined key priorities for his party, stating that if they were to form the government, their focus would be on addressing the pressing needs of the people, such as job creation, development initiatives, and ensuring reliable electricity and power supply as crucial areas for attention.

He said: "If we are entrusted with forming the government, our foremost priority will be to win the hearts of the Kashmiri people, who have long felt alienated. We are committed to providing opportunities through job creation, business schemes, and implementing developmental projects. The desire for change and progress resonates deeply among the people, and we are uniquely positioned to deliver on these aspirations, given our clear track record of effective governance and meaningful progress."

Among others present on the occasion included, Adv Saleem Parray candidate, Mohd Yousef Gorsl Chairman DDC, Salman Nizami Chief Spokesperson, Shubly Jaan and others.

**Girls outperform boys...**

percentage in the Class-12 exam saw a marginal increase of 0.65 percentage points from last year to 87.98.

In the Class-10 exams, girls have done better than boys by 2.04 percentage points. While 94.75 per cent girls cleared the exams, 92.71 per cent boys managed to pass the exams.

In Class 12, girls have done better than boys by 6.4 percentage points. The pass percentage for girls stood at 91.5 per cent while that of boys was 85.12 per cent.

CBSE officials attributed the rise in the pass percentage to the increase in the number of competency-based questions in the exams this year. The CBSE revamped its assessment practices for the academic session 2023-24 by introducing more competency-based questions in the papers and reducing the weightage given to short and long answer-type questions.

A similar trend was witnessed in the number of students who scored above 90 per cent and 95 per cent marks.

In Class 12, a total of 1.16 lakh students scored above 90 per cent and 24,068 above 95 per cent. Among the students who scored above 90 per cent, 262 are from the Children With Special Needs (CSWN) category. Forty-three students from the CSWN category scored above 95 per cent.

Last year, 1.12 lakh students scored above 90 per cent and 22,622 above 95 per cent.

In Class 10, more than 47,000 students scored above 95 per cent and over 2.12 lakh above 90 per cent. Last year, 1.95 lakh students scored above 90 per cent and 44,297 above 95 per cent.

Congratulating the "Exam Warriors", Prime Minister Narendra Modi reminded the students that board exams are just one milestone in their journey.

"To the brilliant students who believe they could have achieved more in their Class XII exams -- remember, this is just one milestone in your journey. Your future holds limitless possibilities. Focus on what excites and drives you. Your unique talents will lead you to success and fulfilment. Keep pushing, keep pursuing!" the prime minister wrote on X.

In category-wise performance, the overall pass percentage among general students in Class 12 was 90.06, for students in the Scheduled Caste (SC) category, it was 85.51, for Scheduled Tribe (ST) students, it was 77.73 and for Other Backward Classes (OBC), it was 86.1.

In Class 10, the overall pass percentage of general category students was recorded at 94.74, for SC students, it was 91.21, for ST students, it was 81.43 and for OBC students, it was 93.92.

The CBSE has announced that there will be no merit list to "avoid unhealthy competition". Officials said the board has also decided to scrap awarding first, second and third divisions based on the students' scores.

"According to the earlier decision of the board to avoid unhealthy competition among students, the CBSE has not published the merit list. However, the board will issue merit certificates to 0.1 per cent of students, who have scored the highest marks in the various subjects," said CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj.

The CBSE also announced that it will conduct the board exams for Classes 10 and 12 for the 2024-25 academic session from February 15 next year.

**Under Modi's leadership...**

the Congress. Whatever Congress looted, AAP wants to do the same corruption in a few months", Chugh added.

He said that by talking about industries, AAP has opened a shop for making fake videos. Even after coming to power, AAP is not ready to write off the Congress's old scams and as soon as AAP came, double tax was imposed on the people. Before the elections, the Shehzada of Congress, who claimed to have opened the shop of love, is now spreading hatred and poison in the society.

He said those taking Tukde Tukde Gang on their shoulders are now talking about breaking the country. The Advisor of Shehzada is describing the people of south as Africans.

Referring to the growth of the nation under the Prime Minister, Chugh emphasised that India is now a digital power; India is now a fintech power; India is now a start-up power; India is now the 5th largest economy; India is now a space power.

He said that the track record of the Congress is of loot, appeasement, dynasty first, and softness towards terrorists. There is nothing for the middle class in the Congress manifesto. But they are talking about distribution of the income of middle class in their vote bank after X-raying the middle class income. There is racism in every nerve of Congress, the guide philosopher of Shehzada is call their own people as Chinese, Africans, he added.

Chugh described Narendra Modi as only person standing like a rock against the

agenda of development and anti-nationalism. He said Modiji gets strength, from the love and votes of the people.

Chugh appealed to the people to make the local Lok Sabha candidate victorious by heavy margin of votes and to form a BJP led government for the third time."

**INDIA bloc leaders...**

The Prime Minister said unlike his opponents, who were concerned about promoting their children, "I have no 'waaris' (successor). The common people are my waaris".

He reiterated the charge that parties like the Congress and RJD will "give away reservations" to Muslims "to pursue their vote bank politics", but added that as long as "I am alive, I will not let this happen".

"Kidnapping and extortion flourished during the RJD rule in Bihar.. NDA fights for social justice, 60 per cent Union ministers from OBC/SC/ST categories," he asserted.

"It has been several days since I challenged the Congress-led opposition to give it in writing that it will not give reservations on religious lines. They are yet to respond," Modi said.

"The PM also alleged that the opposition had plans to impose the "inheritance tax" but "Modi would stand like a wall in their way, thwarting attempts to rob people of their wealth".

He accused the opposition parties of "deliberately hurting people's sentiments by making obnoxious statements about the Ram temple in Ayodhya".

"Targeting RJD leaders Lalu Prasad and his son and their apparent Tejashwi Yadav, mentioning neither by name, Modi referred to the fodder scam, the 'land for jobs scam' and 'attempts to take credit for work done by our ally (Chief Minister and JD(U) president) Nitish Kumar'.

Speaking on a day when the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections was underway, he urged the people to turn out in large numbers and vote for the NDA to enable the formation of a strong government.

During his election rallies, Modi also touched upon his government's track record on development, citing the construction of highways at a rapid rate and underscoring commitment to social justice and empowerment, while accusing the opposition of trying to put hurdles in the way of measures like women's reservations. Ahead of the rallies, the Prime Minister visited Takhat Sri Harimandir Ji Patna Sahib in Patna City. Wearing a Sikh turban, he bowed his head in Darbar Sahib and also served 'langar' (food) to devotees at the Gurdwara. "Prayed at Takhat Sri Harimandir Ji Patna Sahib this morning. Felt truly blessed to experience divinity, serenity and rich history of this sacred place. This Gurudwara has a close link with Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Our Government had the honour of marking his 350th Parkash U'tsav in a grand manner. May the teachings of the Sikh Gurus continue to inspire and guide us all," PM wrote in a post on X. "Sikhism is rooted in the principles of equality, justice and compassion. Central to Sikhism is seva. This morning in Patna, I also had the honour of taking part in seva as well. It was a very humbling and special experience," PM said.

**Inspire Team from DIET Kud visit different schools of Zone Kulwanta, Dudu**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: Team constituted by Principal DIET Kud Udhampur visited different schools in far flung Zone Kulwanta and Dudu of District Udhampur for providing logistics and technicalities under the flagship scheme of Inspire Award Manak being run by Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India across the country.

In this scheme students of Classes 6th to 10th are being considered for innovative ideas of various issues and problems.

For selection EVERY idea will be rewarded with Rs 10000 each for making prototypes in District level exhibition. District Coordinator, Farooq Shaan, Sr Lecturer is laying great emphasis over the wider participation of students.

Rashpal Singh Sr lecturer, who is also working as Assistant DNO IAM, accompanied with District Technical Coordinator S.K Mansotra and Zonal level Coordinator Satish Kumar Master have extended their fully Support to all the institutions for better participation in forthcoming DLEPC -2024.

Moreover Principal DIET Kud Bharat Bhushan is expecting all the selected institutions will take part in the entire Process of Exhibition.

Students and teachers were made fully aware recording the process of Inspire Award by the visiting team.

**Three generations of Abdullah family cast vote in Srinagar**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Three generations of the Abdullah family on Monday cast their vote in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, with National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah appealing to people to turn out in large numbers to exercise their franchise.

NC president and former J-K chief minister Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah and his two grandsons and first-time electors Zahir and Zamir" cast their vote at the polling station at the Burn Hall School here.

"We have two first-time voters with us. It is for the first time that three generations of our family are voting together," Omar Abdullah, also a former chief minister, said. It is for the first time since 1998 that no member of the Abdullah family is contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Srinagar. The only loss the NC suffered on this seat was in the 2014 general elections.

While the BJP, which is in power at the Centre, is not contesting any of the three Lok Sabha seats, including Srinagar, in Kashmir, the party is confident that the elections in the Valley will end the domination of the NC and the PDP in the region. Supported by the INDIA bloc, the NC has fielded influential Shia leader and former minister Aga Ruhullah Mehdi while the PDP has named its youth unit president Waheed Para as its candidate. Even though the Srinagar seat was expected to witness a virtually head-on contest between Mehdi and Para, Apni Party's Mohammad Ashraf Mir and DPAP's Amir Ahmad Bhat are also in the fray along with 20 others, including two women.

**Muslim family donates land for approach road to ancient temple**

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: Setting an example of communal harmony, a Muslim family has donated six kanals of their cultivable land for construction of an approach road to an ancient temple in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Ghulam Rasool, one of the four brothers in the family, said their decision to voluntarily hand over the land for constructing road for the Gupt Kashi Gauri Shankar temple was warmly welcomed by both the communities.

"We have been living together in peace and brotherhood for centuries... It is our responsibility to understand each other's compulsions, extend support and always maintain brotherhood for progress and development of our country," Rasool, a former deputy sarpanch, said. Located at a distance of 10 km from the Reasi district headquarters, the Shiv temple -- known as Chhota Kashi -- at the Kashi Patta village was built by Dogra ruler Maharaja Gulab Singh on the banks of the Chenab river in the eighteenth century. A cremation ground is also present within the temple complex.

The only approach leading to the temple was a trek passing along a stream through the fields. Besides Rasool's family, several other Hindu families also donated their land for the construction of the road. "Some years back, I saw a devotee returning without paying obeisance at the temple due to the overflowing stream during monsoon. I felt very bad and decided to do something to ensure a proper road to the temple," Rasool, who worked in a local court for over 15 years, told PTI. He said even as nobody from the temple management or the Hindu community approached them, he discussed the issue within the family and they voluntarily decided to give a portion of their land for the construction of the road a few years ago. "We wished to keep it a secret but somehow people recently came to know and shared the information on social media. I am happy to note that everyone, especially the people from our community, lauded our decision," Rasool said, adding that many influential Muslim leaders also called him to congratulate the family. He said he has learnt a lot from lawyers Kuldeep Kumar and Madhav Lal Nanda, with whom he had worked in the court for years together. "We were like a family, having a lot of concern for each other... Hindu-Muslim unity is the identity of Jammu and Kashmir, which needs to be protected for eternity. I am proud of our brotherly relations with Hindu neighbours," he said. Rahul Kumar, a local resident, said the community is all praise for the Muslim family for their generosity, which paved the way for the construction of the road. "Half of the approximately 1200 meter long road to the temple from the main road has been completed," he said, expressing hope that the rest of the road will be macadamised by the administration on priority.