

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !!

### Lok Sabha Elections...

parties, election awareness done 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 aur Khush-hali).

The communique stated that the Polling took place in 2,103 polling stations across the Baramulla Parliamentary constituency with live webcasting at all the polling stations. Voting started at 7 a.m. across the PC with long queues of enthusiastic voters waiting to cast their votes. Demonstrating the spirit of democracy, the voters of Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora and Budgam showed up in record numbers to cast their votes in a significant show of faith in the Election Process. Since beginning of the poll at 7.00 AM, voters were seen standing in long queues at many polling stations across the all 4 districts. Elderlies, ladies, youths were seen enthusiastically exercising their right to vote in a peaceful environment.

**Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir, Pandurang. K. Pole monitored the progress of voting in Phase -V across the Parliamentary Constituency from the Union Territory-level Command and Control Center established at IOCC- HMT, Bemina and CEO Office, Srinagar.**

It is pertinent to mention here that the Command and Control center has been working 24 x 7 at Srinagar as well as Jammu since 16 March to ensure free, fair, and inducement-free elections. Actual Poll started at 7.00 AM and after two hours of polling, 7.70%(it was without Sopore Assembly segment, as the AERO couldn't upload it in time, however it was included in next two hourly reporting time at 11.00 am) polling was recorded in the constituency at 09:00 am; at 11.00 AM 21.56 per cent of voting, at 01:00PM 35.08 per cent voting; at 3:00 PM 45.22 per cent voting was recorded. By 5:00 pm 54.57 per cent polling was recorded in the constituency. Assembly segment wise highest poll percentage was observed in Handwara with around 72.00 per cent and lowest in Guru with 40.82 per cent. At the time of closing of Polling, the Assembly Segment wise tentative voter turnout in Baramulla PC is as under:

These figures against 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. Around 17,37,865 lakh electors were enrolled for casting their vote. More than 8,000 polling staff performed poll duty. Actual Poll continued till 6.00 pm and at few polling stations of Trehgam, till voting by last voter standing in queue.

At every polling station, basic minimum facilities of water, electricity, toilet, ramp, verandah/ waiting room etc were made. Even wheelchairs and volunteers were provided as and when required. Effort was made to give better experience to voter. In many polling station premises, it was seen that even small kids were accompanying their parents and playing in the premises. Polling stations were full of festivity.

During his visit to Jammu and Kashmir on 12- 13 March, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, had stressed to ensure inclusive election and effort was made ensure the same. Youths, especially first time voter, women, elderlies and specially abled persons were seen in large numbers at all PS and required basic facilities were provided at all polling stations. Additionally, in order to ensure inclusive voting, 18 number of polling booths managed by women (also called as pink polling stations),17 number of polling booths managed by specially abled persons and 18 number of polling stations managed by youths were established. Also to spread the message about environmental concerns, 18 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. 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: Despite terror incidence of Pahalgam and Shopian, which happened just two days ago, voters seen coming in large numbers to vote. Anti-national elements failed to deter voters from exercising their constitutional rights. Meticulous planning and execution of SVEEP activities was done and it ultimately has resulted in a significant increase in the voter turnout. SMS Blast on mobile though telecom companies, hoarding, flex, nukkadnatak, street play, painting competition, various sports competitions, rally etc has translated into an increase overall voter turnout.

The spirit of democracy has triumphed and not even a single incident of stone pelt-ing or any kind of violence has been reported on poll day. 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 per-missions have been received on the Suvidha portal and they were facilitated to hold public meetings/ rallies etc in all nook and corner of the constituency.

The campaigning in Baramulla PC have been violence free and has witnessed his-toric participation from the voters. There were around 21,000 Kashmiri migrants electors in PC- Baramulla who opted for voting at 26 Special Polling Stations estab-lished at Jammu (21), Udhampur (01) and Delhi (04). At these 26 special polling stations, there was voter turnout of 32 per cent at Jammu and around 50 per cent at Udhampur and Delhi. It is also for the first time that the migrant community has turned for vote in such a large numbers.

The Chief Electoral Officer Jammu and Kashmir, in his message, congratulated all the voters and expressed gratitude towards all those voters who came in large numbers to cast their votes. He also appreciated work done by all the Polling per-sonnel, including security personnel deployed in the election process, Police officers, ARO, RO and District Election Officers for their service in making the ongoing elec-tions successful.

### Will restore jobs...

resonated strongly with the people, many of whom expressed their frustration over the current economic and social challenges.

Azad assured them that under his leadership, the DPAP will prioritise job crea-tion and the restoration of land rights, aiming to bring stability and prosperity back to the region.

Azad further stated that his primary focus is on development, contrasting the DPAP's goals with the actions of other parties.

"Other parties have only fooled people with false promises. They didn't speak up in parliament when the current government revoked Article 370 and statehood. Their MPs were silent, and today they haven't repeated those MPs because they know they couldn't represent the people's interests in parliament," Azad said.

He expressed deep concern over the rising drug problem among the youth, criticis-ing regional parties for their exploitation.

He assured that his party is committed to ending unemployment and reinstating the Roshni Scheme, which primarily benefited the poor.

Azad emphasised that the mountains and land of Jammu and Kashmir belong to its people, affirming their inherent right to these resources.

He reminded the public that when the current government attempted to evict res-idents through a land eviction order, it was his party that took a stand and success-fully halted the process.

He highlighted that no other party opposed the order, showcasing his party's ded-ication to protecting the rights of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Azad further stated that those who accused his party of being backed by the rul-ing party have now been exposed. "Now everyone has seen the reality of who is with them and who was with them," he said.

He pointed out that first it was the NC and then the PDP who enjoyed power with the ruling party.

"I am Azad and I will remain Azad," he affirmed.

Among others present on the occasion included Adv Saleem Parray candidate, Salman Nizami Chief Spokesperson, Mir Altaf Provincial Gen Secretary, Distt President Ganderbal Jin Kaiser, LS candidate Sgr Amir Bhatt and others.

### Cong didn't revoke...

on May 25. Addressing the gathering in Karnal, Shah told the crowd, "Tell me, is Kashmir ours or not? Say it loudly, your voice should reach Kharage."

"Kharage sahab, you are 80-year-old but you do not understand the country. Haryana's youth can give their life for Kashmir," Shah said hitting out at the AICC president.

Shah was alluding to the AICC president's recent remark on why the prime min-ister spoke about the abrogation of Article 370 during a rally in Rajasthan and not the issues plaguing the state.

The home minister also slammed Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's atom bomb remark that has sparked a political row.

"I want to tell Rahul (Gandhi) baba from this land of Karnal, listen with open ears, this is the BJP government, PoK belongs to India, will remain ours and we will take it back," he said.

In a purported video clip that has gone viral on social media, Aiyar is heard say-ing India should give respect to Pakistan as it is a sovereign nation and engage with it as it also possesses the atom bomb. He indicated in the video that if a "mad per-son" comes to power there and uses the atomic bomb, it will have its effect in India too.

Shah also asked the Congress and particularly, its party leader B S Hooda why they let the Ram Temple issue linger for 70 years.

He highlighted that all the major developments regarding the temple took place in

Modi's second term -- the 'bhoomi puja' of the temple land, the victory of the Hindu side in the Ram Jannabhoomi case, and the idol consecration on January 22.

The BJP leader also pointed fingers at the Congress leadership, particularly Kharage, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi for not taking part in the "Ram Utsav (consecration) which was happening after 500 years as they feared about their minority vote bank".

"They just spoke about the poor, but did nothing for the poor," the Union minister said slamming the Congress.

He praised Modi on the occasion for making India prosperous and bringing the country's economy from the 11th to fifth spot.

In Modi's third term, the nation's economy will reach the third spot, he added.

Asserting that the BJP will retain power in the Lok Sabha polls and Modi will become the prime minister for the third time, the BJP leader asked who was the prime ministerial candidate of the INDIA bloc.

"...Is there any name? Can Sharad Pawar become (the PM), can Mamata Banerjee become, can Stalin become, can Arvind Kejriwal become, can Uddhav Thackeray become? Can Rahul Baba become,? Why did you laugh, he is a big leader of the Congress. Can they become (the PM)?!. These people neither have any leader nor policy," he told the gathering.

The home minister claimed the INDI Alliance has said they will have five differ-ent prime ministers on a rotational basis.

But Rahul Gandhi does not understand this is not a grocery shop, this is a coun-try of 130 crore people. India nation needs a strong prime minister who can give a befitting reply to Pakistan and take back PoK, one who can keep the country safe during a pandemic like the Covid, who can bring the Uniform Civil Code and end naxalism, he added.

Everybody knows that only Modi can keep the country safe and make it self-reliant, prosperous, and technologically advanced, said the union minister.

Comparing the the Modi government's initiatives for the farming sector with that the previous Congress regime, Shah said earlier, the agriculture budget used to be around Rs 22,000 crore, which the BJP government has raised to Rs 1.25 lakh crore.

The present government broke all records of paddy purchase. Paddy is now pro-cured from 1.22 crore farmers, against the previous procurement from 76 lakh farmers, he said. The minister also mentioned several developmental projects under-taken in Haryana during the previous Khattar regime.

### Spl Tribunal dismisses...

Rule 5 (Dafa 5) of Shamlat-deh. In para 7 the Vendor declares that Vendor and Vendee both belong to Agriculture class, hence there is no impediment on transfer of aforesaid land.

The Tribunal questioned the change in the land use and the transfer of land and its registration in by Sub-Registrar court quoting the Section 20-B and Section 21 of J&K Big Landed Estate Abolition Act Svt 2007 prohibiting the Transfer of land classified as 'Arak' in revenue records

It is worthwhile to mention here that in a significant development, the Jammu Development Authority had ordered demolition of an 'illegally' constructed bung-a-low of former Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader, Dr Nirmal Singh at vil-lage Ban in Nagrota on the outskirts of Jammu.

A notice in this regard had been issued by the Building Operations Controlling Authority, JDA, to Nirmal Singh and his wife Mamta Singh, who is owner of the land on which this 'illegal' bungalow has been constructed without valid permission from the competent authority as prescribed under law.

Mamta Singh approached the J&K Special Tribunal to invalidate the JDA Notice in an appeal and the then Special Tribunal bench pending decision, in the mean-while, directed the parties to maintain status quo on spot till the next date of hear-ing and later set aside the JDA Notice on Technical grounds with a liberty to JDA to proceed afresh in the matter in accordance with law.

Subsequently, the JDA on July 28, 2023 issued a fresh demolition notice to Mamta Singh, wife of Dr. Nirmal Singh which she again challenged. The fresh appeal was preferred by her before the Special Tribunal, which has been dismissed and imposed a fine Rs 10 lakh. Sources close to Nirmal Singh said, "we are approaching higher court for stay on this order."

### Iranian President Ebrahim...

to power four years later in a vote carefully managed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to clear any major opposition candidate.

His election came at a time when relations between Tehran and Washington were particularly tense following US President Donald Trump's 2018 decision to unilat-erally withdraw America from a nuclear deal aimed at limiting Iran's uranium enrichment in exchange for sanctions relief.

While Raisi said he wanted to rejoin the deal with world powers, his new adminis-tration instead pushed back against international inspections of nuclear facilities, in part over an alleged sabotage campaign that Tehran blamed on Israel. Talks to restore the accord remained stalled in his government's first months.

"Sanctions are the US' new way of war with the nations of the world," Raisi told the United Nations in September 2021. "The policy of maximum oppression" is still on. We want nothing more than what is rightfully ours."

Mass protests swept the country in 2022 after the death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been detained over her allegedly loose headscarf, or hijab. The months-long security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and more than 22,000 others were detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

Then came the current Israel-Hamas war, in which Iran-backed militants target-ed Israel. Tehran launched an extraordinary attack itself on Israel in April that used hundreds of drones, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. Israel, the US and its allies shot down the incoming fire, but it showed just how intense the years-long shadow war between Iran and Israel was.

Born in Mashhad on December 14, 1960, Raisi came from a family that traces its lineage to Islam's Prophet Muhammad, as signalled by the black turban he would later wear: His father died when he was 5. He went on to the seminary in the Shiite holy city of Qom and later described himself as an ayatollah, a high-ranking Shiite cleric.

On Monday, state-run media referred to Raisi as being "martyred while serving the nation." Khamenei said Raisi "did not believe in tiredness." Others cited the detente reached last year with Saudi Arabia as a major milestone.

But activists abroad, like the New York-based Centre for Human Rights in Iran, described his presidency as seeing "a stunning escalation of state repression and violence against peaceful dissent in Iran."

"Raisi presided over a country suffocated by a regime that fears its own people," said Hadi Ghaemi, the centre's executive director. "He was merely one boot on the necks of the Iranian people; others can easily take his place."

In 1988, at the end of Iran's long war with Iraq, Raisi served on what would become known as "death commissions," which handed down death sentences for political prisoners, militants and others. International rights groups estimate that as many as 5,000 people were executed.

After Iran's then-Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini accepted a UN-brokered cease-fire, members of the Iranian opposition group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, heavily armed by Iraq's Saddam Hussein, stormed across the Iranian border in a surprise attack. Iran ultimately blunted their assault, but the attack set the stage for the sham retrials.

Some who appeared were asked to identify themselves. Those who responded "mujahedeen" were sent to their deaths.

Raisi was defiant when asked at a news conference after his election about the exe-cutions.

"I am proud of being a defender of human rights and of people's security and com-fort as a prosecutor wherever I was," said Raisi, who also served as Iran's attorney general for a time.

In 2016, Khamenei appointed Raisi to run the Imam Reza charity foundation, which manages a conglomerate of businesses and endowments in Iran. It is one of many bonyads, or charitable foundations, fuelled by donations or assets seized after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

These foundations offer no public accounting of their spending and answer only to Iran's supreme leader: The Imam Reza charity, known as "Astan-e Quds-e Razavi" in Farsi, is believed to be one of the biggest. Analysts estimate its worth at tens of billions of dollars as it owns almost half the land in Mashhad, Iran's second-largest city.

At Raisi's appointment to the foundation, Khamenei called him a "trustworthy per-son with high-profile experience." That led to analyst speculation that Khamenei could be grooming Raisi as a possible candidate to be Iran's third-ever supreme leader, a Shiite cleric who has final say on all state matters and serves as the coun-try's commander-in-chief.

Though Raisi lost his 2017 campaign, he still garnered nearly 16 million votes. Khamenei installed him as the head of Iran's internationally criticised judiciary, long known for its closed-door trials of human rights activists and those with Western ties. The US Treasury in 2019 sanctioned Raisi "for his administrative oversight over the executions of individuals who were juveniles at the time of their crime and the torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of pris-

oners in Iran, including amputations."

By 2021, Raisi became the dominant figure in the election after a panel under Khamenei disqualified candidates who posed the greatest challenge to his protege. He swept nearly 62 per cent of the 28.9 million votes in that election. Millions stayed home and others voided ballots, resulting in the lowest turnout by percentage in the Islamic Republic's history. Raisi is survived by his wife and two daughters.

### LG condones demise...

Abdollahian. We pray to almighty to give families strength & fortitude to bear their loss at this time of great sorrow. We stand with people of Iran in this hour of grief".

### J&K wins 11...

region's commitment towards skill development. The Jammu and Kashmir con-tingent excelled in 20 skills with 22 participants, bringing home three Gold Medals, two Bronze Medals, and six Medallions of Excellence. Standout performers includ-ed Gowher Bilal from Government Polytechnic Anantnag, who won Gold in Plastering and Dry Wall Systems, and Mohsin Nasir and Mustafa Suhaib from DPS Srinagar, who both clinched Gold in Autonomous Mobile Robotics.

Other notable achievements included Faheem Javaid's Bronze in Graphic Design, Joo Murtaza's Bronze in Web Technologies, and Umar Akbar's Bronze in Drone Film Making. Medallions of Excellence were awarded to Mayank Salaria for Cyber Security, Asif Ahmed Tandoli for Carpentry, Sunil Singh for Plumbing and Heating, Mohammad Hammad for Cloud Computing, Mir Sharayar for Electrical Installations, and Gowhar Nazir for Electronics.

Secretary Skill Development, Rajiv Ranjan, congratulated the winners and said "The outstanding achievements of our young talents in the India Skill Competitions 2024 are a testament to their dedication, hard work and the unwavering support from our educators and mentors.

These successes not only highlight the potential within Jammu and Kashmir but also inspire a brighter future where skill, innovation, and excellence drive our progress. Let this be a motivating force for all our youth to pursue their passions with determination and to believe in their ability to make a significant impact."

Director Skill Development, Sudershan Kumar, appreciated the efforts of mentors and their commitment towards fostering talent and equipping our youth with the skills needed for a dynamic future. "Their achievements are not just individual tri-umphs but a beacon of inspiration for all aspiring professionals. Together, we are building a foundation of excellence that will propel our region to new heights," asserted Kumar.

The India Skill Competitions serve as a premier platform for young professionals to exhibit their skills, creativity and innovation, contributing significantly towards nation's workforce development. The remarkable performance of Jammu and Kashmir participants underscores the region's dedication towards empowering youth with practical expertise.

The contingent was accompanied by Leena Padha, Mission Director, Zia ul Haq, Tabasum Geelani (OSD), and Hilal Ahmed from the J&K Skill Development Mission.

### CS holds open...

industry on Monday, including hoteliers, transporters, traders, houseboat owners, eco-tourism and adventure tourism promoters of J&K.

Jammu based stakeholders participated virtually.

Addressing the participants, Chief Secretary maintained that tourism is mainstay for large section of the population and livelihood of thousands of our citizens is asso-ciated it. He remarked that it is our primary duty to give due priority to this sector for its promotion as well as exponential growth.

Dulloo further expressed that J&K is known world over for its unparalleled hospi-tality and natural beauty, reiterating that our tourism players had retained this tag by their sheer professionalism and warm attitude. He called upon all the partici-pants to play their role in promoting tourist destinations by attracting tourists nationally and internationally through participation in tourism festivals and holding regular promotion campaigns.

He also called upon tourism department to maintain close coordination with all the stakeholders and extend them every support to promote this industry in the J&K.

The Chief Secretary, during the session, also listened to suggestions and demands of the representatives for better development of this sector. He encouraged them to come up with their ideas for making J&K the best tourist destination for all seasons of the year.

He further assured the stakeholders of all possible assistance from the govern-ment, underlining that tourism sector is the focal point of current dispensation.

The tourism representatives, during the session, also expressed their gratitude to Civil and Police administration for ensuring peaceful tourist seasons post Covid-19 pandemic. They acknowledged that it is the fruit of peace and progress that has given them the overwhelming chance of doing their business for past couple of years.

During the session, all the tourism players unequivocally condemned the recent terrorist attack in which a tourist couple from Rajasthan got injured. They assured of extending best possible hospitality and support to the tourists coming to J&K.

### LS polls: 60.09 pc turnout recorded in fifth phase

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The fifth phase of the Lok Sabha elections registered a voter turnout of 60.09 per cent till 11.30 pm, which was 4.07 percentage points lower than the cor-responding phase in the 2019 parliamentary polls.

The Election Commission noted on Monday that this was an "approximate trend" as data from some polling stations takes time to arrive and this trend does not include postal ballots. It said the figures will continue to be updated by the field-level officers as polling parties provide more data.

In the evening, the EC lamented that constituencies in various cities such as Mumbai, Thane, Nashik and Lucknow have continued the trend of "urban apathy" as noticed in the 2019 parliamentary polls.

On Sunday too, the poll panel pointed out that Mumbai, Thane and Lucknow have shown apathy towards voting in the past and asked these city dwellers to turn up at polling booths in higher numbers.

It was noted that in the past, these cities have "suffered" from urban apathy in vot-ing.

"The Commission especially calls upon these city dwellers to erase the stigma by turning out in higher numbers," it had said.

On May 3, while referring to the voter turnout in phase two, the EC had said it was "disappointed" with the turnout level in some metropolitan cities.

With the end of polls in the fifth phase, voting has been completed in 25 states and Union Territories and 428 constituencies. Two more phases -- on May 25 and June 1 -- remain.

In the fifth phase of the 2019 elections, when 51 seats across seven states went to polls, the turnout was 64.16 per cent.

According to the Election Commission, the voter turnout in the fourth phase stood at 69.16 per cent, 3.65 percentage points higher than the corresponding phase in the 2019 parliamentary elections.

The updated voter turnout figures for the third phase of polling in the Lok Sabha elections was 65.68 per cent. In the third phase of the 2019 elections, the turnout was 68.4 per cent.

In the second phase of the 2024 elections, the turnout was recorded at 66.71 per cent as against 69.64 per cent in the second phase of the 2019 polls. In the first phase of the ongoing general elections, a 66.14 per cent turnout was recorded. In the 2019 polls, the turnout in the first phase was 69.43 per cent.

The poll panel said the final turnout will only be available after the results, with the counting of postal ballots and its addition to the total voting percentage.

### Biggest allegation I have faced is owning 250 pairs of clothes: Modi

#### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BHUBANESWAR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the biggest allegation he faced in his political career was that he owned 250 pairs of clothes.

In an interview to PTI, Modi said the allegation was levelled by Congress leader and former Gujarat chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary and which was countered by him at a public meeting.

"I asked the people whether they wanted a chief minister who stole Rs 250 crore or one who had 250 pairs of clothes. The people of Gujarat responded in one voice that a chief minister with 250 pairs of clothes will be fine," Modi said, adding that the opposition never garnered any courage to level accusations.

Recollecting the incident during his tenure as Gujarat chief minister, Modi said he accepted Chaudhary's accusations at a public meeting but asserted that the former chief minister had got his numbers wrong.

"That day I had a public meeting, where I said that I accept this accusation, but either the zero (in 250) is wrong, or the number two is wrong. Still I accept the accu-sation," Modi said. Over the past decade, the Prime Minister's sartorial choices have drawn criticism from the opposition. Recently, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took a swipe at Modi's sartorial choices claiming that he has been wearing expensive clothes while earning a salary of Rs 1.6 lakh per month.