

After Northeast, 'Lotus' to bloom in East: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
KOLKATA: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh said here today that after the Northeast, "Lotus" is all set to bloom in the East.

Addressing an election meeting of Serampore Lok Sabha constituency, Dr. Jitendra Singh, said that when Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over in 2014, there was not a single State in the Northeast, which was ruled by BJP either singly or in coalition with any other Party.

At that time, it was unimaginable for most of the critics and commentators to believe that one day the entire Northeast will turn saffron, he recalled.

But in course of time, said Dr Jitendra, as people got awakened to the fast-track development agenda of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and equitable fair deal being met out to every section of society, one after the other, each of the Northeastern States started voting for BJP and



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing a BJP election meeting of Serampore Lok Sabha constituency on Monday.

its allies and finally, all the eight States of Northeast have governments of which BJP is a part.

Similarly, Dr. Singh predicted that the vicious cycle of corruption, high handedness and violence unleashed by the Mamata Banerjee led TMC is also coming to an end and people are wary of it. He expressed confidence that both the major States of East India, namely West Bengal and Odisha will return the maximum number of seats to

BJP in the ongoing general Parliamentary election.

On the 4th of June, predicted Dr. Jitendra, when the result of Lok Sabha election is declared, the whole world will be a witness to see that within 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule, "Lotus", that marked the arrival of BJP in the Northeastern States, has also arrived in West Bengal to herald the arrival of BJP in a territory which was at one time considered to be a

citadel of Leftist Communism.

The reason why the Modi-led BJP is finding unanimous pan-India support, said Dr. Jitendra, hailed that Modi has raised the benchmark of political practice and introduced a culture of justice to all and appeasement to none.

With the passage of time, he said, every section of society, every religion or caste and every region have gradually realised that they

would be beneficiaries of whatever was required or whatever was the need, regardless of whichever Party they had voted for in the past.

While heading towards the target of 400 plus, Dr. Jitendra said, it is important for each of the BJP Karyakartas to realise that the common masses have made up their mind to help Modi reach this target and now it is up to us, the Modi's team of BJP Karyakartas, to cooperate with the common masses to realise this dream which has virtually assumed the proportion of the national dream of 2024, he added.



Keep suspicious elements proving any support to terrorists under surveillance: DGP

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police RR Swain on Monday stressed the need to enhance security in vulnerable areas and keep suspicious elements providing support to terrorist activities under surveillance.

The Director General of Police (DGP), J&K, R.R Swain visited the home of martyr Village Defence Guard SPO Mohammed Sharif at Ponara area of Basantgarh today. The said VDG was martyred in a terror attack at Chochoo Gala area of Basantgarh.

The DGP was accompanied by Additional Director General of Police, Jammu Zone Anand Jain, DIG U-R Range Rayees Mohammad. Bhat, SSP Udhampur Joginder Singh, and other senior Police officers of District Udhampur.



DGP J&K, R.R Swain consoling with martyr VDG SPO Mohammed Sharif at Ponara.

The DGP met the family members of the martyr and expressed his heartfelt condolences on behalf of J&K Police.

While interacting with the family of the martyr, he assured that the Jammu and Kashmir Police department stands united in solidarity with the bereaved family and shared their grief and sorrow, and further promised that every support would be provided to the

family of the martyr:

The DGP also handed over a cheque of amount Rs 5 lakh to the martyr's family.

Later in the afternoon, the DGP visited Police Station Basantgarh, where he reviewed the functioning of the police station and also inspected the crime records.

While interacting with the jurisdictional police personnel, the DGP stressed the impor-

tance of adopting comprehensive counter measures to tackle terror crime incidents, adding that securing the lives of people is department's prime responsibility.

He stressed the need to augment security in vulnerable places to prevent terror crime incidents.

He directed the officers to further strengthen communication within the ranks and augment the security grids in their respective areas for the safety and security of the people.

The DGP said that all suspicious elements providing any kind of support to terrorist activities should be kept under radar to foil their attempts.

This should be backed with stringent action against all kinds of elements found involved in unlawful activities.

Rana lauds philanthropic endeavours in providing shelters to needy

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana on Monday lauded the philanthropic and voluntary efforts of providing shelter to shelter-less, especially in a city like Jammu, which needs such facilities in view of scorching summers, chilling winters and life threatening monsoons at times.

"Rehan Basera endeavour is indeed an appreciable community service that takes care of those who need something over their heads during harsh weather conditions", Rana said, while speaking at a function to observe the death anniversary of Shri Shahu Ji Maharaj, a reformist and a philanthropist, who has been closely associated with such significant initiatives.

"Shahu Ji's involvement underscores the importance of private individuals and organizations in addressing social issues and providing assistance to those in need", Rana said, adding that his efforts reflect a commitment to compassion and community welfare, making a positive difference in the lives of countless individuals.

Devender Rana said the philanthropic efforts by the visionaries like Shahu Ji serve as inspiration for all those who want to contribute towards community welfare. Rehan Basera facility has attained added significance as a large number of people, especial-



Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana paying tributes to Shri Shahu Ji Maharaj.

ly from the marginalized segments of the society, throng to urban areas from the rural pockets in search of sustenance for their families. The shelter facility indeed goes a long way in facilitating such segments to pursue various vocations, he said, hoping that people would come in a big way and contribute to such initiatives. He called for ensuring assistance like community kitchens, beddings, drinking water, power supply and health cover by government agencies and non-governmental organizations at such facilities.

Devender Rana said the best tribute to Shahu Ji Maharaj is to work with compassion for the needy and try to make a change in the lives of the poor and needy.

Among others who were present on the

occasion included Madam Veena Bakshi, Subash Gupta (Retd Judge), Advocate Chander Mohan Sharma, Sanjeev Sharma, Dr. Parveen Yogrjaj, Lokinder Singh Ravi, Som Nath Khajuria Ex Corporators, Sucha Singh, Ashok Singh Manhas, Sham Lal Basson and others.

Later, talking to reports on the side-lines of the homage giving ceremony, Rana described the Constitution bestowed to the nation by Baba Saheb Dr B.R Ambedkar, as the best safeguard for the country.

He said the BJP under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is implementing the Constitution in letter and spirit to steer the nation towards progress, prosperity and inclusive development.

Apni Party will change J&K scenario for a brighter future: Bukhari



Apni Party President, S.M.A Bukhari addressing public meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: Apni Party President, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, on Monday, said that "Apni Party will change the scenario of Jammu and Kashmir for a brighter future." He said that "people have maintained peace and tranquillity in J&K for four years, and I am sure they will reap the economic and political advantages of this peace."

He made these comments while addressing a party public rally at Tral, in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, on Monday.

Addressing the gathering, Bukhari applauded the role of the people in maintaining peace and tranquillity in the valley for the past several years, especially after the August 5, 2019.

He said, "The entire Jammu and Kashmir has suffered due to the long phase of violence here. We have seen deaths and bloodshed everywhere in Jammu and Kashmir during the past more than three decades, but Tral is one of those places that suffered the most. However, I congratulate the people who contributed their efforts to peace and tranquillity here during the past few years, especially after August 5, 2019. And, I am sure that people will reap the economic and political benefits of peace."

"Apni Party will change the scenario of Jammu and Kashmir for its brighter future, as we are committed to ensuring political and economic empowerment of the people," he added.

Advisor Bhatnagar addresses two-day Amrit Kaal Lecture Series 2024 at JU

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar on Monday underscored the importance of drawing inspiration from India's rich legacy as a knowledge hub and global leader, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach in finding solutions.

Advisor Bhatnagar was speaking during the Amrit Kaal Lecture Series- 2024 under theme 'Dissolving Boundaries Evolving Education' at Brigadier Rajinder Singh Auditorium, University of Jammu.

The Advisor hoped that the lecture series would inspire forward-thinking and urged everyone to step out of their comfort zones.

Recognizing the pivotal role of teachers in shaping students' futures, he encouraged continued efforts towards positive change within oneself and the broader ecosystem.

Underscoring the shift towards knowledge- and technology-based society, Advisor Bhatnagar urged the audience to acknowledge India's abundant talent and heritage rather than constantly looking to the



Advisor Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar in a programme at JU.

West.

Vice Chancellor University of Jammu, Prof. Umesh Rai, in his address emphasized the importance of adopting a multidisciplinary approach in academia. By encouraging students to explore diverse fields of study, he advocated for breaking down traditional boundaries that confine learning within rigid disciplinary lines.

A highlight of the event was the felicitation of Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman of the Higher Education Council, J&K, and former Vice-Chancellor of University of Delhi.

Prof. Singh was honored with the prestigious "Bhartiya Pragna Bhushan Samman" in recognition of his exemplary contributions to the field of education. The citation was read by

Prof. Anju Bhasin, Dean Academic Affairs, University of Jammu, and Formerly Vice Chancellor of Cluster University of Jammu.

The keynote address was delivered by Padmashree Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman, Higher Education Council, Government of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory who captivated the audience with his enlightening discourse titled "From the Indus Valley Civilization to Srinivas Ramamjan: The Fascinating History of Indian Mathematics," shedding light on the rich heritage of Indian mathematics.

The Guest of Honour, Prof. Sudhish Pachauri, formerly Pro Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University, delivered an insightful address that enriched the gathering. Reflecting on the

theme of the lecture series, he praised its uniqueness, emphasizing the multitude of boundaries present in India, ranging from religious and ego-driven boundaries to those in subjects and knowledge. He discussed the similarities among different literatures such as Urdu, Hindi, English, and Sanskrit, suggesting that they share common elements. Prof. Pichauri specifically addressed how language segmentation can create barriers between people and emphasized the need to break down these boundaries through a collective spirit of unity across various fields of study.

Former Pro Vice Chancellor, DU, Prof. Sudhish Pachauri, Director ISTRAC, B. N. Ramakrishna, Director MMTTC, University of Jammu, Prof. S. K. Pandita, Co-chairperson, Campus Cultural Committee, Prof. Sarika Manhas among other also addressed the event on their respective topics.

A cultural evening was also organized which showcased the Kathak Performance by Shivam Shukla, "Lear", a devised performance based on William Shakespeare's "King Lear".

After long silence, significant change in political atmosphere in Srinagar

■ MASROOR AHMAD
SRINAGAR: The residents of Srinagar city have been silent on the election process for the last three decades. People were not ready to pay attention to the election process. Three decades ago, when the people of Srinagar city were enthusiastically participating in elections, due to the unrest in Valley people remained silent on the both Parliamentary and State Assembly elections and many areas of Srinagar recorded zero percents voting during the election. And there are hundreds of people who have not cast vote in

their lives till date.

This silence mostly affected political leaders who could not reach out to the general electorate during the process and it was not possible to hold such a large election rally within the downtown areas during this ling period, especially in the heart of Srinagar city.

After nearly three decades, the bustle for polls has returned in both uptown and downtown areas of Srinagar. There is a significant change in the political atmosphere and political scene in Srinagar; the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir in this Lok Sabha polls, the first major electoral exercise in J&K after Article 370 abrogation.

Contesting candidates are openly holding poll rallies and corner meetings in the sensitive downtown areas which, in past, used to be no-go areas for the mainstream leaders. Today the Apni Party hold road showat Khanyar Srinagar. The party president Altaf Bukhari and Srinagar Lok Sabha seat candidate Ashraf Mir paid obeisance at Dastgeer Sahab Shrine and Later visit Historical Jamia Masjid Nowhatta along with party workers and supporters.

Earlier the National Conference and PDP have been holding election campaigns in both the uptown and sensitive downtown areas of

Srinagar.

The Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, which is spread over five districts - Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal in central Kashmir and Pulwama and Shopian in south Kashmir; will go to polls on May 13.

A total of 24 candidates are in the fray for the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat but the main contest is between NC's Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, PDP's Waheed-ur-Rehman Para and Apni Party's Mohammad Ashraf Mir. Unlike the past when poll campaigning used to be a very low key affair, this time the poll fever has gripped the summer capital as well. The parties and the contesting candidates are freely canvassing both in the uptown and volatile downtown areas to garner public support.

Former J&K Chief Minister and NC Vice President Omar Abdullah addressed a well attended poll rally in Hawal area of downtown Srinagar. The party workers and participants were waving the NC flags. Hawal is part of volatile downtown Srinagar and many encounters and militancy incidents had taken place in the past in the area.

It is not the only rally addressed by Omar or NC leader in downtown Srinagar in this election. "We have held a series of poll rallies both in uptown and downtown

Srinagar, NC spokesman Imran Nabi Dar said.

"There is great enthusiasm among the people and they are eager to cast their votes. People are not able to vent their anger over Article 370 abrogation and they want to show their anger through their votes," Imran said. The venue of every poll rally or corner meeting is decorated with buntings and flags of political parties and posters of contesting candidates and their leaders.

"There is no fear among the contesting candidates this time. The candidates are openly canvassing without any public rallies, corner meetings and door to door campaigns. They campaign even during the evening hours," said PDP secretary. "People are welcoming us wholeheartedly. We held poll rallies in Haba Kadal, Zadibal, Chanapora and some other areas of Srinagar," he said. Due to boycott politics, Srinagar LS seat had recorded only 15.6 per cent turnout in 2019 polls with Srinagar spread over 8 Assembly seats recording only 7.7 per cent polling. However, political leaders said due to enthusiasm among the people, they are expecting greater participation of people in polls this time. Both say the voter turnout will be higher than previous years.

KPS for returning and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits to their homeland

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Executive Committee of the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha (KPS) Jammu, chaired by President K. K. Khosa, convened on Monday to address pressing issues concerning the community and strategize for their urgent resolution.

The committee unanimously decided to appeal to all political parties, particularly those in the Kashmir Valley, to articulate their policies and proposals regarding the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits to their homeland.

Expressing concern, the members noted that none of the political parties, whether regional or national, have included the



KPS Jammu President K. K. Khosa chairing a meeting.

return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits in their manifestos, despite their repeated assurances of prioritizing the issue.

This lack of action was deemed disappointing and contrary to the promises made regarding

the integral role of Kashmiri Pandits in the valley's cultural fabric.

Furthermore, the committee expressed disappointment over the unaddressed pressing issues despite numerous appeals and memorandums submitted to

both the Union Territory Government and the Government of India.

This neglect has resulted in the continued dispersal of the community to other parts of the country in search of livelihood opportunities. The committee highlighted the stagnant relief amount for many years, which has caused physical and mental trauma to a section of the community. Additionally, the vulnerability of numerous temples and shrines in the absence of a statutory board, a demand voiced by the community for over two decades, remains a concern. Despite a significant number of eligible voters among Kashmiri

Pandits in all three Kashmir parliamentary constituencies, the committee lamented the absence of any nominations from the minority community to contest from the Valley. This omission fails to acknowledge the inalienable right of Kashmiri Pandits to resettle in their ancestral land.

The meeting was attended by prominent members including Deepak Dhar (Sr. Vice President), Ashwani Kaul (Vice-President), S. L. Bagati (General Secretary), G. J. Kampasi (Secretary), Ashok Kher, B. B. Gosnai, V. K. Bakshi, Satish Khoda, Vinod Bhat, V. K. Mukhi, R. K. Ganjoo, and B. L. Rawal.