

!! Continuations from Page 1 !!

Two tourists rescued...

rush of tourists to the area, they said.

The officials said that two tourists and a local person were trapped under the broken ice mass. While the two tourists were rescued by the tourist police and guides, the local man could not be traced as rescuers believe that he might have been washed away by fast moving stream under the glacier. Further details are awaited, the officials said.

NHAI hikes tolls...

was deferred due to the Lok Sabha elections.

"The new user fee will come into effect from 3.6.2024," a senior NHAI official said on Sunday. The change in toll fee is part of an annual exercise to revise the rates that are linked to the changes in the wholesale price index (CPI)-based inflation.

There are around 855 user fee plazas on the national highway network on which user fee is levied as per the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008. Out of these, around 675 are public-funded fee plazas and 180 are operated by concessionaires.

Nine counting centres...

Anantnag-Rajouri in the valley recorded VTR of 38.49 per cent, 59.1 per cent and 54.84 percent respectively, which has been highest in the last three decades. The other two constituencies in the UT, namely Udhampur and Jammu in the Jammu region, recorded 68.27 per cent and 72.22 per cent voter turnout respectively.

The counting of votes in Udhampur constituency where Union minister Jitendra Singh is seeking his third consecutive term will be held at government degree college, Kathua.

Apart from Singh, there are 11 other candidates that includes Lal Singh, also a two-time former MP, and GM Saroori in the fray. Seven of the candidates are independents.

The counting of votes in Baramulla constituency will be held in Government Degree College (Boys), Baramulla. Omar Abdullah is pitted against 21 candidates in the constituency, prominent among them being Lone and Rashid. Among the 14 independents who are contesting in the seat, two are women.

In Anantnag-Rajouri constituency, divided by the mighty Pir Panjal range, officials said the counting of votes will be held at Government Degree College (Boys) Anantnag and Government PG College Rajouri. Mehbooba Mufti is seeking a victory from this constituency and is facing a major challenge from NC's Mian Altaf.

There are also 10 independents and eight other candidates, including the B-JP-supported Apni Party's Zaffar Manhas.

The counting of votes in Srinagar parliamentary constituency, which has the highest number of 24 candidates, including 16 independents, will take place at Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Cent (SKICC) along the banks of Dal Lake. NC's Ruhullah, Mir of Apni Party and PDP youth leader Waheed Para are the strong candidates from the constituency.

Counting of votes for the Jammu constituency, where B-JP's Jugal Kishore is eyeing a hat-trick of wins, will be carried out at the premises comprising Government Polytechnic College and Government MAM college. Raman Bhalla, the working president of the J&K unit of Congress, is among the 21 other candidates in the fray from the seat.

Officials said counting of Kashmiri migrant votes will take place at Government College for Women Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Udhampur and J&K House, New Delhi.

J-K Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Pandurang K Pole had a comprehensive review of preparedness of the districts ahead of the final counting of votes at Nirvachan Bhawan here on Saturday, they said.

The meeting was attended by all the District Election Officers along with the concerned Assistant Returning Officers (ARO) and ARO Migrants (Jammu, Udhampur, and Delhi).

The Returning Officers apprised the CEO of the arrangements in place for counting of votes, particularly the issuance of passes, security arrangements at the centres, welfare provisions for polling personnel and arrangement of facilitation centres for the media as well as contesting candidates and their counting agents, officials said. Stressing the need for a smooth and incident-free counting process, the CEO directed the districts to properly train and sensitise the personnel involved in counting so that proper discipline and decorum at the counting centres is maintained.

He also asked the districts to ensure installation of CCTV cameras besides making appropriate arrangements for videography at the counting centres.

People who kept...

state into Union territories in August 2019, the three Lok Sabha seats in the Valley - Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag-Rajouri -- recorded their highest-ever voter turnouts in the last three decades.

Director General of Police (DGP) Swain commended the security forces for their efforts in monitoring potential threats from external elements particularly "proxies of Pakistan" who intended to disrupt the democratic process.

Speaking to PTI after the completion of the poll process, Swain stressed the positive impact of the high voter turnout and said "I, my colleagues in J&K Police and the wider administration of J&K's UT government, see it as an enabling environment where you have freed the people from fear."

He also drew attention to the campaigning activities that were held in the middle of night, besides roadshows and door-to-door campaigns conducted "without the lurking threat of the Pakistani gun".

"Security forces kept tabs on their (Pakistan) proxies and agents who once had this huge nuisance value of keeping a tab on all those who would think about bringing back democracy and electoral politics in its original form, the way it happens in the rest of the country," the DGP said.

Swain also acknowledged the past role of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami in monitoring and targeting individuals involved in electoral politics. He, however, noted a potential shift within the outfit, saying some of its members publicly participated in the recent elections which indicated a possible change in their approach.

"The regime of intimidation works in two ways. It is not only the threat of the gun but as I said the lurking threat that somebody is watching, somebody is keeping 'hisab kitab' (accounts), somebody is trying to note who all are actually showing the tendency of participating in anything even remotely connected with electoral politics.

"It was Jamaat-e-Islami essentially in the villages, small towns and cities who had kind of worked as eyes and ears of the enemy to quietly note down who these persons were and then profile them and then have them harmed....," the police chief said.

"So when this very organisation, which scrumptiously was pulling the strings, had a change of mind by way of making certain public statements and then coming out themselves and voting, I am sure the common man must have taken notice of it," he added.

The participation of previously wary individuals and organisations like the Jamaat-e-Islami in the electoral process reflects a changing dynamic in the region, offering a hope for a more open and democratic future, Swain said.

He also suggested a growing confidence among the populace as it embraces political participation without fear of reprisal from external forces.

The J&K police chief discussed efforts to counter attempts aimed at disrupting the polls, emphasising the importance of deterring intimidation tactics used by adversaries. He also highlighted the use of legal measures rather than kinetic actions to address the challenges, noting the significant success achieved in maintaining law and order.

"... it was also to counter and tell them that the tactics and the strategies which they (Pakistan) have traditionally employed to browbeat would be paid back in the same coin," Swain said.

The DGP said he would not like to accuse any particular societal institution but added that Pakistan and its proxies had succeeded "in hijacking and taking over many of our institutions which existed for the good of the society".

In the last three-and-a-half years, "we did not use kinetic actions to control and handle these bullies. We used law, the force of law and the rule of law, and I think we succeeded to a substantive extent", Swain said.

On the progress made so far in achieving peace, the police chief said while the situation was a work in progress and substantial achievements have been made, there was a need for continued efforts.

"I think this is best described as a work in progress. If the question is what percentage of road has been covered, it would slightly be difficult to quantify it but I must say that to a sizable extent....," he said.

Swain emphasised the government's responsibility to maintain security and provide a sense of peace for its citizens, indicating a collective endorsement of these efforts by the public through their actions such as rejecting calls for strikes.

Overall, the police chief expressed a cautious optimism about the current state of affairs and acknowledged the need to further strengthen governance and security in the region.

"When calls for bandhs used to come from across, the way people refused to respond to it... if anyone says they were doing it under compulsion, I think it would be a lie. So to that extent, I think we have travelled a distance and we need to travel the whole hog, the full length of it," Swain added.

Launch pads across...

in the region. While acknowledging some success in countering these attempts, Swain said that the threat remains and sustained efforts are required to further reduce the "enemy's ability to destabilise the area".

"I would say the enemy's intent is very much there, the capability certainly degraded,

but the ability to occasionally rock the system and unsettle you is there," he said.

"At any given point of time, perhaps you would have about 60-70 persons in groups of five or six at different places waiting to be pushed into our side," Swain said, asserting that together with the Army, paramilitary forces and the Jammu and Kashmir Police, "we are absolutely determined that we will make it absolutely hard for the adversary to succeed".

On the issue of drone droppings, Swain said these activities pose a significant challenge as they enable the smuggling of arms, ammunition, explosives, cash and narcotics.

Although progress has been made in countering this threat, the police chief highlighted the need for continued vigilance to fully eliminate these activities.

"We have made progress... For example, in narcotics, you know one can reverse the cycle but it would take quite a bit of effort for some more time to be able to conclusive say that we have been able to plug it for good," he added.

Swain also underscored the importance of collective efforts in safeguarding the border region, saying the police, Army and other security forces were resolutely committed to making it increasingly difficult for the adversary to succeed in their nefarious activities.

Over 1.5 lakh...

also known as "mini Kashmir". The Padri and Guldanda meadows are some of the most sought-after tourist destinations.

"We came here to camp at Jaie Meadow to escape the unbearable heat wave in Jammu. A dip in the refreshingly cool and crystal clear Neel Ganga River made our trip memorable," Rohan Verma, a tourist said.

The arrival of tourists has brought cheer to the tour operators, hoteliers and others associated with the tourism industry.

"After Guldanda attracted a record number of visitors during winters, Bhaderwah, with its water bodies, has now emerged as a favourite destination," said Manish Kotwal, a leading Hotelier in Bhaderwah.

2 dies, 16 injured...

outskirts of Jammu on Sunday. The deceased was identified as Sunny Kumar (25), a resident of Gurha Jagir, while the injured Ankur Kumar (23) was shifted to hospital, officials said.

Murder accused arrested...

relevant sections of law of the Ranbir Penal Code and the Arms Act stands registered against him, he added. He will be produced before the court for trial in the case, the spokesman said.

Modi asks officials...

instructed officials that proper drills for preventing and handling incidents of fire must be undertaken on a regular basis, according to an official statement.

He also said that regular drills for the maintenance of fire lines in forests and productive utilisation of biomass must be planned.

Modi was briefed that as per forecasts, the heatwave is likely to continue in parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Monsoon this year is likely to be normal and above normal in most parts of the country and below normal in parts of peninsular India, the statement said.

In the meeting to review the post-Cyclone Remal situation, another official statement said, Modi was briefed about its impact in the affected states, including the loss of lives and damage to houses and other properties due to landslides and floods in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have carried out evacuation, airlifting and road clearance operations, it said, adding the Union home ministry is in regular touch with state governments.

BJP sweeps elections...

the party's win in the state," Khandu asserted.

The development witnessed in Arunachal Pradesh under the B-JP-led central government is a major factor for the party's win in the state, the chief minister asserted.

"The BJP has started its winning streak from the 'Land of Rising Sun' (Arunachal) and this trend will spread throughout the country which the people will witness on June 4. The party will sweep the Lok Sabha polls with a huge margin and Narendra Modi become the Prime Minister for the third term," he told reporters.

While the BJP's vote share is 54.57 per cent, as many as 14 party candidates including Education Minister Taba Tedi, were defeated this time. The minister was defeated by NCP nominee Toko Tatung, a greenhorn, in the Yachuli constituency.

A total of 20 first-timers tasted victory in the northeastern state. Eleven of them are from B-JP, four from NPP, two each from PPA and NCP and one independent.

The opposition Congress which fielded 19 candidates in the 60-member assembly managed to bag only one seat, Bamang, where former state home minister Kumar Waii won by a slender margin of 635 votes defeating BJP's Doba Lamnio.

State Congress president Nabam Tuki said the party was "disappointed but not demoralised" by the election results.

"We will introspect about the causes of the defeat and work on the organisation in the coming days," he added

The National People's Party (NPP) which won five seats, annexed 16.11 per cent while the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) gained a vote share of 10.43 per cent and won three seats.

The regional People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) which managed to win two seats had a vote share of 7.24 per cent.

Kiren Rijiju, Union minister and Lok Sabha poll candidate from Arunachal Pradesh, said the credit for this assembly polls results goes to the people of the state, the BJP workers and the leadership of PM Modi.

The opposition Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), which ruled the state for 25 years in a row till 2019, could manage only one seat, while its president and former CM Pawan Kumar Chamling, who is Tamang's mentor-turned-adversary, lost in the two seats he contested.

The 73-year-old eight-term legislator will not be seen in the assembly for the first time since 1985.

Tamang, however, won from two seats, and his party bagged 58.38 per cent of the votes polled. The SKM had won 17 seats in the 2019 assembly polls.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed Tamang and the SKM for the victory.

"Congratulations to SKM and CM @PSTamangGolay for their victory in the Sikkim Assembly Elections 2024. I look forward to working with the State Government to further the progress of Sikkim in the coming times," Modi said in a post on X.

Responding to the Prime Minister's post, Tamang thanked him.

"We are committed to continuing our efforts towards the development and prosperity of Sikkim. We look forward to collaborating with you to achieve our shared goals for the betterment of our state.

"Your unwavering support has been a driving force for us, and we look forward to your continued guidance and blessings," Tamang said in an X.

Modi also thanked all who voted for the B-JP in the Sikkim assembly elections. The saffron party contested in 31 seats but failed to win any of them. The party bagged 5.18 per cent of the total votes polled.

Sikkim B-JP president Dilli Ram Thapa, a sitting MLA, also lost to SKM nominee Kala Rai in the Upper Burtuk constituency by a margin of 2,968 votes.

"I also appreciate the efforts put in by our Karyakartas. Our Party will always be at the forefront of working towards Sikkim's development and fulfilling people's aspirations," Modi said in a post.

After the landslide win, Tamang congratulated the party workers and the voters of Sikkim.

"Tamang won by over 7,000 votes in both Rhenock and Soreng-Chakung constituencies. "I also want to thank the opposition as it is because of them that our party became stronger and more organised," said the president of the SKM which had won 17 seats in 2019. "This win is not just ours; it belongs to the youth, students, and every Sikkimese who dreams of a bright future for our children and a prosperous, inclusive society," he said.

Like the B-JP, the Congress also failed to open its account and secured a paltry vote share of 0.32 per cent which is even less than that of NOTA (0.99 per cent).

Tamang asked the party workers to maintain calm in the aftermath of the landslide victory: Tamang's wife Krishna Kumari Rai won from Namchi-Singthang by defeating SDF's Binal Rai by a margin of 5302 votes.

Of the nine ministers of the Tamang government, all but Lunga Nima Lepcha won. The Speaker Arun Kumar Upreti won from Arithang constituency by 2729 votes against the SDF's Ashish Rai.

Legendary footballer and the SDF vice-president Bhaichung Bhutia lost from Barfung constituency against the SKM candidate Rikshal Sirjee Bhutia by a margin of 4348 votes. Party supporters who gathered in large number near counting centres celebrated the victory by bursting firecrackers. Elections to the assembly were held simultaneously with the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls on April 19.

Heat wave persists...

He said Katra, the base camp for pilgrims visiting Mata Vaishno Devi shrine atop Trikuta hills in Reasi district, recorded a high of 38.8 degrees Celsius and a low of 24.8 degrees Celsius.

Srinagar, on the other hand, recorded a maximum of 30.3 degrees Celsius against 27.5 degrees Celsius the previous day, the spokesperson said, adding the day temperature in the city was four degrees above normal.

The minimum temperature in Srinagar was 13 degrees Celsius.

Crackdown on illegal mining continue, 14 vehicles including 2 excavators seized

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBA: Continuing crackdown on illegal mining in successive day, Police has seized nine more vehicles including two excavators across the district which were being used for illegal transportation/mining of the construction material.

Police teams headed by SHO Police Station Vijaypur, Incharge Police Post Rakh Amb Tali(Police Station Samba) and Incharge Police Post Rajpura (Police Station Ghagwal) while performing patrolling duty in its jurisdictional areas, have seized two excavators (JCB) bearing registration No. JK02CH-0192 & without registration no., four dumpers bearing registration Nos. JK02CK-0835, JK02BT-3469, JK02CJ-6469, JK21D-0617 and three tractor trolleys without registration No. for illegal transportation/mining of the construction material in the area.

The above mentioned vehicles have been seized by Samba Police and handed over to Geology & Mining Department, Samba for further action.

In a drive against illegal mining and to tighten noose against the violators, Jammu Police has initiated strict action against the criminals involved in illegal mining & minting money out of the public resources.

In a surprise operation which was carried out at different locations in rural zone of District Jammu.

Police Post Sidhra detained Two Tippers bearing registration no. JK02DJ-6160 & other tipper bearing registration NO.JK02DG-4328, both loaded with sand without Form A. Police Post Chowki Choura detained one Dumper bearing No.JK02CH-0763 found loaded with sand and without Form A.

Police Post Pouni-Chak detained Two tractor trolleys,one bearing engine No.PY 3029H041409 and other tractor trolly bearing Reg.No.JK02DA 8854,both found loaded with sand and without Form A.

After detaining of these vehicles District Mining Officer was informed for necessary legal actions.

2 missing ladies traced, reunited with families

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAMBAN: Ramban police traced two missing women and reunited them with their families.

An information was received at Police Station Batote about the missing of a lady (name Withheld) resident of Batote whose missing report was entered at PS Batote on 19-05-2024 vide DD No.20.

Acting upon this, a police team of PS Batote by putting strenuous efforts and with the help of technical assistance as well as human intervention traced out the missing lady and after completing all legal formalities the said lady has been handed over to her legal heirs. Accordingly missing report has been closed.

In another instance a complaint was received at Police Station Chanderkote regarding missing of a girl namely (Name withheld) resident of Chanderkote whose Missing Report was entered at PS Chanderkote on 31.05.2024 vide DDR NO.18

Police team of PS Chanderkote by making the best possible efforts traced out the missing girl and reunited her with family by absorbing all legal formalities required under law.The missing report has been closed as traced.

SSP Ramban Anuj Kumar said that Ramban Police will continue to strive hard and trace all the missing persons by making the best possible efforts in each and every case leaving no stone unturned.

Police's prompt action saves precious life

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a commendable display of swift response and vigilance, the Gharota police successfully intervened to save the life of a person attempting to commit suicide in the River Chenab. The incident began when the SHO of Paeca Danga received information that a person from the Janipur area, following a heated argument with family members, had rushed towards Akhnoor with the intent of committing suicide.The SHO Paeca Danga promptly apprised the SP Rural Jammu on phone,who then coordinated with SHOs Kanachak, Gharota, and Akhnoor, putting all nakas on high alert. The alert team from PS Gharota lead by SHO Gharota effectively intervened and apprehended the individual on the cement bridge, preventing the tragic incident.The general public has applauded the swift and timely response of the police, acknowledging their role in saving a precious life. The family members of the individual are jubilant and have expressed their sincere gratitude to the police department for their decisive action.

Two held with over two kg heroin

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: Two suspected narcotic smugglers were arrested along with over two kg heroin worth over Rs 10 crore in the international market from Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Rajouri, officials on Sunday said.

Sajad Hussain of Thandi Kasi village and Fateh Mohd of Chitti Bakri were arrested with the contraband substance from Parran village in Chingus sector by a joint team of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday evening, they said. The two arrested are border residents and have previously worked as porters with the security forces, the officials said. They are well-versed with the region's topography and were under the security agencies' radar for their alleged involvement in narcotic smuggling, they said.

Multiple bovine smuggling bids foiled, 112 bovines rescued

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: Continuing special drive against the bovine smuggler under Operation Dhenu, Reasi police foiled bovine smuggling at Chillad Thuroo area. An information through reliable source received at Police Station Arnas that some bovine smugglers have carried bovine animals from Chillad Thuroo towards Kashmir for selling purpose. Soon after the receipt of the information, the police party reached on the spot and bovine smugglers namely Nisar Ahmed, son of Mohd Rafiq, resident of Hunder Tehsil Arnas and Ibrar Ahmed, son of Sultan Mohd, resident of Thuroo Tehsil Thuroo who were found carrying 08 bovine animals without any valid permission of the concerned authority, was apprehended as well as seized Vehicle bearing Regd No JK20A 2322 by the Police party. On this, Case FIR No. 43/2024 U/S 188 IPC 11 (1) PCA Act stands registered at P/S Arnas and investigation initiated to unearth the forward and backward linkages.

Police team of Police Post Manwal led by PSI Manoj Raina foiled 03 bovine smuggling bids,rescued 24 bovines from Nadal and Jeda area. Police Post Manwal received an information in wee hours regarding Smuggling of bovine in Manwal area. Police Team swiftly acted on the information and foiled the bovine smuggling bids in which 24 bovines were rescued from the bovine smugglers who were transporting these bovines through different vehicles bearing registration No. JK08E-5524, JK14C-5380 and JK14G-9887 towards Kashmir valley. Accused persons were arrested on spot.

In this regard three FIR Nos.137,138,139/2024 have been registered at Police Station Jhajjar Kotli under the relevant sections of law. Further investigation in all cases are in progress.

Udhampur Police also rescued 80 Bovines and seized 08 vehicles used for bovine smuggling. Team of Police Station Udhampur led by its SHO rescued 64 bovines from six different vehicles bearing registration number JK08B-8665, JK02AL-5292, JK11D-2445, JK08A-0047, JK02AF-7527, JK03J-3738 from routine nakapoint Jakhani, NHW. 06 bovine smugglers namely Muzamil Hussain, son of Zakir Hussain, resident of Pouni, Reasi; Istiaq, son of Abdul Rashid, resident of Anantnag; Usman, son of Jamal, resident of Anantnag; Amzad Ali, son of Anzav Hussain, resident of Anantnag; Khalad Hussain, son of Mohd. Yousuf, resident of Jakhani Udhampur and Mohd. Ashraf, son of Dil Mohd., resident of Thathri, Kishtwar got arrested.

In this regards 6 cases FIR No. 281/2024, 282/2024, 284/2024, 285/2024, 286/2024 and 287/2024 under relevant sections of law stands registered in Police Station Udhampur. Another bovine smuggling attempt foiled in which police team of Police Post Tikri led by its ICPP rescued 16 more bovines from two different vehicles bearing registration number JK03N 6850 JK02AJ 4071 at naka point Tikri. The driver of the vehicle (JK02AJ 4071) disclosed his identities as Shabir S/O Gulam Rasool R/O Talwara, Reasi got arrested while the driver of the vehicle JK03N 6850 fled away from the spot after leaving behind his vehicle on road. 16 bovines were rescued and both vehicles seized.

In this connection, two cases FIR No. 136/2024 and 137/2024 under relevant sections of law stands registered in PS Rehambal and further investigation of both the cases are underway.