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Hope EC soon...

about the EC's visit, the date of the polls, and the earlier concerns raised by political parties regarding the conduct of elections as per the apex court's directions.

"I would like to take you back to when Article 370 and 35A were abrogated. On that day, the home minister stated in Parliament that the sequence (of action) would be delimitation first, followed by assembly elections, and then statehood at an appropriate time. There has been no change in this stance from that day till today," he said.

"The assembly size was increased, and following that, the Delimitation Commission, chaired by Justice Ranjana Desai, worked on setting new boundaries. This was a time-consuming process. The Delimitation Commission also visited Jammu and Kashmir, consulted all stakeholders, and completed the delimitation process," he explained.

Clarifying the government's intentions regarding elections in the union territory, Sinha maintained that both Shah and Modi have consistently stated that the assembly polls would be conducted at the earliest possible.

"When the Prime Minister visited Srinagar on June 20 for Yoga Day, he reiterated this in a public programme," he added.

The recent visit of the Election Commission was the first major exercise for preparing the grounds for holding the maiden Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution on August 5, 2019.

The visit of the three-member EC team led by Kumar comes ahead of the September 30 deadline given by the Supreme Court for the completion of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

However, opposition parties, including the National Conference and Congress, have raised concerns that the government might delay the elections in Jammu and Kashmir due to the recent surge in terror attacks.

LG Sinha pointed out that the Lok Sabha elections in the union territory were successful, with an overall 58 per cent voter turnout. Over 50 percent voted in the valley alone, he said.

"This is significant, as it marks the first time in 35-36 years that such a large number of people, including youngsters, women, and elders, voted in the valley. It clearly shows that people have faith in democracy. Earlier, only 11-12 per cent of voters used to participate," he told PTI during the interview at Raj Bhavan here.

Addressing concerns raised during previous elections in Jammu and Kashmir, he remarked that, except for one or two instances, all past elections were questioned by people who said the polls were unfair but the recent Lok Sabha elections were "conducted peacefully and in a completely fair manner".

"The administration is fully prepared for the assembly elections, and I am confident that they will be completely peaceful and fair," he added.

Responding to criticism from some political parties regarding jailed leader Engineer Rashid's election to the Parliament and how it could lead to increased separatism in democratic politics, Sinha asserted that people's decision in a democracy is supreme. "It is true that such elements have reached Parliament. The country knows them, and we know them too. I urge voters, who have total freedom in a democracy, to make decisions with the national interest in mind," he said.

He further stated that the Jammu and Kashmir administration would take all necessary steps to prevent such people from advancing in politics.

Addressing criticism regarding the recent notification by the Centre empowering him, Sinha said this is not a new development. "There is no amendment. The State Reorganisation Act of October 31 included it, and the notification was issued before the elections," he added.

The LG also expressed confidence that the Supreme Court of India has endorsed the Parliament's decision regarding the abrogation of Article 370, 35-A, and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act.

"Those who speak about the Constitution and democracy should keep this in mind," he said, calling the abrogation of Article 370 "historic".

Sinha remarked that several people raised the issue before the top court.

"The full bench of the Supreme Court upheld the decision taken by the Parliament of India. Responsible individuals in India should not have raised this issue again," he concluded, responding to criticism from some political circles regarding Article 370 abrogation and the downgrading of the state to a union territory.

Pak pushing highly...

Kashmir and the country that these incidents will definitely be controlled. The neighbouring country will not succeed in its evil designs."

"Pakistan is the birthplace of terrorism, it emanates from there. India and the Jammu and Kashmir administration are making concerted efforts to counter it, with several other countries also contributing to these efforts," he told PTI.

The L-G exuded full faith in the Army, CRPF and Jammu and Kashmir Police in controlling the situation, and said, "You will see a big change in the coming three months."

"The neighbouring country is pushing in foreign terrorists to spoil the situation here. Considering previous incidents, security forces and the administration have formulated a strategy. Redeployment of forces has started... Deployment of army, CRPF, and police personnel has increased," Sinha said.

He further said the security forces have completed their preparations and are moving forward to tackle these incidents of terror. "The (Union) home minister has reviewed the strategy. I feel better results will be seen in the region in the coming days," he said.

Asked to comment about Pakistan's continuance in fomenting trouble in Jammu and Kashmir, he said, "We seem to be unaware of the internal situation in Pakistan. The country cannot even provide food to its own people. Because of this, Jammu and Kashmir has become a favourite subject for them."

"The country fails to accept that India defeated it in wars; hence, it continues to attempt to destabilize the region. On the international front, there has been an increase in support for India. Even during the abrogation of Article 370, some countries, whose viewpoints differed from ours, acknowledged it as India's internal matter," the L-G said.

To a question about claims that men trained by the Pakistan Army's Special Service Group (SSG) were being infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir to engineer terror incidents here, Sinha accepted that highly trained foreign militants have infiltrated into the region.

"It is a sensitive issue. Speaking about these issues in the press is not appropriate. It is not necessary to disclose everything publicly. However, those who have infiltrated into this side are indeed highly trained," he said.

Asked about specific inputs regarding the infiltration of SSG men into the region, he said, "The information you mentioned is partially true. Intelligence agencies have more information. Despite whatever the neighbouring country tries, they will not succeed in their designs."

"With a comprehensive strategy, those who have infiltrated will be eliminated. The security grid is being strengthened, thereby bringing about a complete change in the situation. The security forces are implementing their strategies on the ground in keeping with the topography."

Recalling the security deployments during the peak of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, the L-G said, "There used to be operational and minority pickets... Their strength was high. But when the situation became better, the strength was decreased."

While asserting that the Jammu region was peaceful for the last 15 to 16 years, Sinha said, "Our neighbour is not peaceful."

"If elections are held peacefully (here) and people vote in large numbers, it naturally causes pain (for Pakistan). Statistically, if you compare figures of security personnel or civilians killed, there has been a significant decrease.

"Top commanders of any named organization are no longer alive. I consider it a major achievement that local recruitment (by terror groups) has almost ceased. Now, the neighbour wants to worsen the situation by infiltrating terrorists here," the L-G said. He said that in the recent past, three or four terror incidents have occurred in the Jammu region. "It is very unfortunate and cannot be condemned enough," Sinha added.

Amarnathji Yatra suspended...

urgent repair and maintenance works are required to undertaken on the Baltal Axis of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra route. In the interest of safety of the yatis, no Yatra will be allowed tomorrow from the Baltal route also. Further updates will be issued in due course of time", the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri said. The requisite repair and maintenance works are already being carried out on Pahalgam route of the Yatra.

2 criminals arrested...

him, a police spokesperson said. The motorcycle was seized and a case under relevant sections was registered against the arrested criminal, he said.

Another wanted criminal Lyiqat Ali alias Bulla, a 33-year-old son of Alif Din, resident of RS Pura at present Belichearana was arrested from the Kanachak area on

the outskirts of Jammu, the spokesman said.

The accused was wanted in connection with Case FIR No. 47/2023 under sections 307, 353, 323, 336, 147, 148, 188, and 382 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), registered at Police Station Kanachak and bovine smuggling, he added.

Lyiqat Ali is known for his involvement in several criminal activities, including an attack on a police party in Kanachak, making him a notorious figure in the area, he said. In addition to this, Lyiqat Ali has been implicated in bovine smuggling, further establishing his reputation as a dreadful criminal.

There are number of Criminal cases registered against said person in various Police Stations of District Jammu, he said.

The accused is currently in custody, and further investigation is underway.

The Jammu Police remains vigilant and will continue its efforts to combat criminal activities in the region.

Anantnag encounter: Anti...

forest area of the Anantnag district is at an altitude of 10,000 feet.

The firefight started last evening during a cordon and search operation that was initiated by the security forces based on intelligence reports indicating the presence of terrorists in the remote belt.

According to the officials, a group of terrorists opened fire at the joint search parties comprising Army personnel, including para commandos, and local police.

In the ensuing gun battle, six Army personnel and two civilians were injured, officials said, adding the injured soldiers were promptly taken to a nearby hospital where two succumbed shortly after arrival.

The martyred army personnel are Havildar Dipak Kumar Yadav and Lance Naik Praveen Sharma.

This encounter is a grim reminder of a similar operation in the general area of Kokernag last September, during which four security personnel, including Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Ashish and Deputy SP Humayun Bhat were martyred in the week-long engagement with terrorists.

Two terrorists, including a senior commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), were also neutralised during that operation.

Security forces have ramped up their efforts in the woods of Kokernag after an encounter in the Doda district on July 15 that resulted in the martyrdom of four soldiers, including a captain.

It is believed that the terrorists involved in the recent Anantnag incident may have crossed over from Kishtwar district after escaping the confrontation in Doda.

Giving details of the current operation, a Srinagar-based defence spokesperson said that on August 5, it was confirmed through human and electronic means that terrorists responsible for atrocities in the Doda region in July have sneaked across the Kishtwar range into the Kapran-Garol area in south Kashmir.

"The Rashtriya Rifles and the Jammu and Kashmir Police have relentlessly tracked these terrorists and precise operations were launched on the night of August 9 and 10 in the mountains in the east of Kapran where these terrorists were reportedly holed up," the spokesperson said.

Suspicious movement was observed around 2 pm on August 10, he said, adding and when security forces challenged them the terrorists responded by indiscriminate, desperate and reckless firing in which two Army personnel and two civilians in the vicinity were injured."

He said the terror antecedents of the injured civilians are being ascertained.

"The area is at an altitude of above 10,000 feet, has thick undergrowth, large boulders, nullahs and re-entrants that pose a serious challenge to operations. Security forces are moving deliberately and are in the process of hunting down the terrorists," the spokesperson said. The situation remains tense as security forces continue their pursuit of the terrorists in the area.

Annual Shree Machail...

extension of the road up to Chashoti, which has significantly reduced the trekking distance, making the journey less arduous. The availability of 4G connectivity, helicopter services, and online registration has further streamlined the pilgrimage, allowing devotees to focus on their spiritual journey with ease.

These enhanced facilities have been widely appreciated by the devotees, who have praised the administration for its outstanding arrangements.

The Administration has also prioritised the comfort and well-being of the pilgrims by ensuring clean and hygienic accommodation facilities.

In addition, the Health Centres, and Ayush Department Kishtwar's efforts to set up a medical camp at Machail and enroute and at Base camp is providing patient care to the pilgrims. The administration has also appealed to the Yatis to adhere to the guidelines and remain informed by visiting the official website, <https://shri-machailmatayatra.com>, for online registration and updated information for a smooth and safe pilgrimage.

NDA eyes majority...

will take the NDA past the half-way mark to 122 seats in the 245-member house. Four seats from Jammu and Kashmir in the Upper House are vacant as the Union Territory is yet to get its first legislative assembly. This reduces the effective strength of the Rajya Sabha to 241.

Ten Rajya Sabha seats fell vacant as the sitting members, including Union ministers Piyush Goyal, Sarbananda Sonowal, and Jyotiraditya Scindia, were elected to Lok Sabha.

Bypolls are also being held for two seats in Telangana and Odisha.

K Keshava Rao from Telangana resigned recently from the House after quitting the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) to join the Congress while Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Mamata Mohanta resigned from her Rajya Sabha seat and primary membership of the party. She has joined the BJP.

Besides Goyal, Sonowal and Scindia, the other Rajya Sabha members who won the parliamentary polls and became members of Lok Sabha are Kamakhya Prasad Tasa (BJP), Misha Bharti (RJD), Vivek Thakur (BJP), Deepender Singh Hooda (Congress), Udayanraje Bhosle (BJP), K C Venugopal (Congress) and Biplab Kumar Deb (BJP).

The BJP's allies in the Upper House include AIADMK, JD(U), NCP, JD(S), RPI(A), Shiv Sena, NCP, RLD, NPP, PMK, Tamil Manila Congress, UPPL.

SEBI says all...

Hindenburg on Saturday alleged that SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani - the elder brother of group chairman Gautam Adani - to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices.

Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch in a joint statement strongly denied the "baseless allegations and insinuations made in the report", saying the charges were "devoid of any truth".

SEBI too defended its chairperson. In a two-page statement, it said Buch had made relevant disclosures from time to time and she "had also recused herself in matters involving potential conflicts of interest."

Adani group too denied any commercial dealings with the SEBI head, while wealth management entity 360ONE - formerly called as IIFL Wealth Management - separately said Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch's investment in IPE-Plus Fund 1 was less than 1.5 per cent of the total inflows and that it did not make any investments in Adani Group shares.

The investments were made in 2015, well before her appointment as a whole-time member of SEBI in 2017 and the subsequent elevation as chairperson in March 2022, and in capacity as "private citizens living in Singapore", Buchs said.

According to the statement, investment in the two funds was made on advice of Dhaval's childhood friend, Anil Ahuja - the person which Hindenburg report identified as the founder and Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of the Mauritius-based IPE Plus Fund.

The Adani group also in its statement said Ahuja was a nominee of 3i Investment Fund in Adani Power (2007-2008) and served as a director of Adani Enterprises for three terms spanning nine years ending in June 2017.

SEBI in October 2020 began a probe into 13 opaque offshore entities that held between 14 per cent and 20 per cent across five publicly traded stocks of the conglomerate to determine if the foreign investors are genuine public shareholders or acting as fronts for the promoters.

Citing "whistleblower documents, Hindenburg on Saturday stated that the SEBI chairperson and her husband invested in offshore entities that were allegedly part of a fund structure managed by India Infoline and in which Vinod Adani also had investments.

It said the Bermuda-based Global Opportunities Fund, which allegedly was used by entities connected to Adani Group to trade in shares of group companies, had sub-funds. Buch and her husband were investors in one of these sub-funds in 2015.

Hindenburg claimed SEBI has "shown a surprising lack of interest in Adani's alleged undisclosed web of Mauritius and offshore shell entities."

Buchs said Hindenburg has been sent a show cause notice for "a variety of violations in India."

In the June 26 show cause notice, SEBI charged Hindenburg of "deliberately sensationalising and distorting certain facts" in its January 2023 report that accused Adani Group of pulling "the largest con in corporate history" by using a web of companies in tax havens to inflate its revenue and manipulate stock prices, even as debt piled up.

"It is unfortunate that instead of replying to the show cause notice, they have chosen to attack the credibility of the SEBI and attempt character assassination of the SEBI chairperson," the statement by Buchs said.

SEBI said the proceedings in the showcase to Hindenburg are ongoing and "the same is being dealt with in accordance with established procedure and in compliance with the principles of natural justice."

Buchs further said they have no hesitation in disclosing any and all financial documents, including those that relate to the period when we were strictly private citizens, to any and every authority that may seek them.

The statement however did not talk on the questions Hindenburg raised over the incomplete SEBI probe against Adani.

Separately, Adani group companies in identical regulatory filings called the allegations by Hindenburg as "malicious, mischievous and manipulative selections of publicly available information to arrive at predetermined conclusions for personal profiteering with wanton disregard for facts and the law."

"The Adani Group has absolutely no commercial relationship with the individuals or matters mentioned in this calculated deliberate effort to malign our standing," it said. "We remain steadfastly committed to transparency and compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements".

Rejecting the allegations, it said they were nothing but "recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be baseless and already dismissed by the Supreme Court in March 2023."

"It is reiterated that our overseas holding structure is fully transparent, with all relevant details disclosed regularly in numerous public documents," Adani group said adding Anil Ahuja was a nominee director of 3i investment fund in Adani Power (2007-2008) and, later, a director of Adani Enterprises until 2017.

"For a discredited short-seller under the scammer for several violations of Indian securities laws, Hindenburg's allegations are no more than red herrings thrown by a desperate entity with total contempt for Indian laws," it added.

Hindenburg said Buch and her husband may have first opened their account with IPE Plus Fund 1 on June 5, 2015, in Singapore. IPE fund is a small offshore Mauritius fund set up by Adani director through India Infoline (IIFL), a wealth management firm with ties to the Wirecard embezzlement scandal.

"Vinod Adani, brother of Gautam Adani, used this structure to invest in Indian markets with funds allegedly siphoned from over-invoicing of power equipment to Adani Group," claimed Hindenburg.

Latching on to the Hindenburg allegations, Congress said the revelations only reinforced its demand for setting up a "joint parliamentary committee to investigate the full scope of the Adani mega scam" while the Trinamool Congress said the SEBI chairperson must resign.

11 Bangladeshi nationals...

people from minorities communities in Bangladesh.

The South Bengal Frontier of the force headquartered in Kolkata said in a statement that its eastern command head, Additional Director General (ADG) Ravi Gandhi, chaired an operational conference on Saturday to review security along the 4,096-km-long India-Bangladesh border "amid the current unrest in Bangladesh" and the upcoming Independence Day on August 15.

It said, "11 Bangladeshi nationals have been apprehended on border while infiltrating into India. Two each were nabbed from West Bengal and Tripura borders while seven were apprehended from Meghalaya border."

"They are being questioned and will be handed over to state police for further legal action, he said.

The spokesperson said BSF ADG (eastern command) Ravi Gandhi chaired a meeting on Saturday to review security all along this border.

"Detailed deliberations were held to further enhance border control, security and management. Besides, it was decided to continue the close collaboration with counterpart Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)," he said.

J&K Police, BSF...

new level of difficulty for the enemy," Swain said.

The Director General of Police along with Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier, D K Boora, Additional Director General of Police, Jammu zone, Anand Jain, DIG, Jammu-Samba-Kathua range, Sunil Gupta and SSP, Samba Vinay Sharma visited border village Rajpura in Samba and held meeting with VDGs.

The DGP said it was a good interaction and both sides heard each other.

"We will strengthen the synergy, equip them with weapons and night vision devices, and also reward them suitably," he said.

The police chief said that the work of the VDG is voluntary service, but the police are open to accommodate them as special police officers or constables in the force using special powers, based on demonstrative conspicuous gallantry.

He said the VDG would continue to work in the "depth areas" with border police posts. "The BSF on noticing any suspicious movement will raise an alert and the police along with VDGs will respond in a well-coordinated manner."

Later, the DGP also visited the Arnia sector in the outskirts of Jammu to meet the VDGs.

In response to a question on the ongoing anti-terrorist operation in Kokernag woods in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, the DGP said, "We still expect that we will be able to get them and take the operation to its logical conclusion."

Two army personnel and a civilian were killed and five others including a civilian were injured in a fierce gunfight in the forest area when security forces launched a search operation following information about the presence of terrorists on Saturday.

Bridge partially washed...

is crucial to facilitate the movement of devotees.

The ADC has appealed to the people not to pass through the bridge till the completion of the repair work.

"As long as the bridge is being repaired, everyone should go through the adjacent Bandichechan bridge only," he said.

Heavy rains lashed several parts of the Jammu region overnight, resulting in a rise in the level of water bodies.

According to the Meteorological Department, the Kathua district recorded 77 mm of rainfall, Jammu 71 mm and Samba 59.6 mm during the last 24 hours, ending 5.30 pm. Katra, the base camp for pilgrims visiting the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, received a rainfall of 51 mm during the same period, the MET Department said. The weathermen have predicted wet weather in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir till August 18 with intense showers for brief periods with the possibility of flash floods or landslides in vulnerable places.

They said there will be an increase in rainfall in the Jammu division from August 14 onwards.

In dynamic higher...

are aligned with NEP 2020 to achieve full human potential so that higher educational institutions can contribute in nation building and developing an equitable and just society.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor paid tributes to Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and recalled his significant contribution to India's education system.

Malaviya Mission - Teachers Training Programme to focus on implementation of NEP recommendations, quality teaching, equity, online education, technology use, Indian language promotion, vocational education, and multidisciplinary education, he observed.

Dedicated to the ideals of Mahamana, the mission is aiming to transform higher education by integrating Indian values and ethos into teaching, research, publications, patents, and institutional development, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor called upon the higher educational institutions to improve the quality of education by infusing quality and excellence in teaching methods. We must ensure continuous professional development and building capacities and leadership skills of teachers, he said.

The Lt Governor also commended the University of Jammu for initiating innovative educational programmes and giving dedicated focus on important aspects like critical thinking, creativity, innovation and collaboration with focus on Lifelong Learning and 21st Century Skills Framework in accordance with the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020. Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Meena Sharma, Dean Planning and Development; Prof. Sundeep Pandita, Director; MMTTC, Jammu University, teachers and faculty members of the University were present. Anand Jain, ADGP Jammu; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Man crushed to...

was arrested within two hours due to hectic efforts by police. The truck was also seized and a case under relevant sections of law was registered against the culprit.

Drugs worth Rs...

under Sections 8/20 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) and 3/25 Arms Act has been registered at Police Station Railway (GRP) Jammu and investigations initiated. No arrests have been made so far, the official said.