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Modi to lead BJP's election campaign in poll-bound J&K

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the BJP's campaign in the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the first such democratic exercise after the erstwhile state was downgraded to Union Territory in August 2019.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP national president J P Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were also included in the list of 40 star campaigners submitted by the party to the Election Commission for the first phase of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Manohar Lal Khattar, G Kishan Reddy, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Jitendra Singh and former union ministers Anurag Thakur and Smriti Irani and Gen (Retd.) V K Singh

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| PM Narendra Modi | Gen V K Singh (Retd) |
| Jagat Prakash Nadda | Ravinder Raina |
| Rajnath Singh | Ashok Kaul |
| Amit Shah | Dr Nirmal Singh |
| Nitin Gadkari | Kavinder Gupta |
| Manohar Lal Khattar | Sunil Sharma |
| G Krishan Reddy | Devender Singh Rana |
| Shivraj Singh Chouhan | Sukhnandan Choudhary |
| Jai Ram Thakur | Sham Lal Sharma |
| Dr Jitendra Singh | Trilok Jamwal (HP) |
| Yogi Adityanath | Arun Prabhat Singh |
| Bhajan Lal Sharma | Neelam Langeh |
| Ram Madhav | Ranjodh Singh Nalwa |
| Tarun Chugh | Sarabjit Singh Johal |
| Ashish Sood | Dhananther Singh Kotwal |
| Jugal Kishore Sharma | Sangita Bhagat |
| Ghulam Ali Khatana | Haji Javed Zargar |
| Dr Narinder Singh | Sofi Yusuf |
| Anurag Thakur | Mohammad Anwar Khan |
| Smriti Irani | Sanjita Dogra |

besides Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur are other prominent faces who will visit Jammu and Kashmir during the campaigning.

The three-phased assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are scheduled for September 18, 25 and October 1. The counting of votes will be taken up on October 4.

In a letter addressed to the Election Commission, BJP national general secretary and in-charge headquarters Arun Singh said the list of the 40 star campaigners of the party may be treated as valid for the remaining phases "unless we forward an amended list" within the prescribed time limit.

The list also included former BJP General Secretary and recently appointed election in-charge for

3 of family missing after cloudburst

STATE TIMES NEWS
RAMBAN/JAMMU: A woman and her two children were reported missing following a cloudburst in a remote area in Ramban district on Monday, officials said.

Deputy Commissioner, Dhraman and Halla and rescue teams are on the spot as Panchayats Kumate, Chaudhary said the cloudburst occurred in Panchayats Kumate, Dhraman and Halla and rescue teams are on the spot as district administration is mobilizing all available resources to assist



Shri Krishan Janamashtami celebrations at ISKCON Temple in Jammu on Monday.

Ladakh gets five new districts

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday announced the creation of five new districts in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

In a post on 'X', Shah said in pursuit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to build a developed and prosperous Ladakh, the Union

Step towards better governance, prosperity: PM
NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed the creation of five new districts in Ladakh as a step towards better governance and prosperity.

Zanskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang will now receive more focused attention, bringing services and opportunities even closer to people, he said, congratulating them.

He said on X, "Creation of five new districts in Ladakh is a step towards better governance and prosperity."

Home Ministry has decided to create the five new dis-

tricts.

"The new districts, namely Zanskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang, will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorsteps by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny," he said.

The home minister said the Modi government

SC directs states, UTs to provide complete information on open prisons

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has directed several states and Union Territories (UTs) to provide complete information with regard to the functioning of open prisons within four weeks.

Semi-open or open prisons allow convicts to work outside the premises during the day to earn a livelihood and return in the evening. The concept was introduced to

assimilate the convicts with society and reduce psychological pressure as they faced difficulties in leading normal lives outside.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan was informed by senior advocate K Parameshwar, who is assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in a matter related to congestion in jails, that several states and UTs

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I also want to contest elections, lest I resign

Jammu and Kashmir is in the peak of election season. The poll warriors—the Facebook activists, the Instagram stalwarts, the coffee shop analysts, the regular visitors to the offices of political outfits—they all are in top gear; seeking nominations, expecting big tickets and even threatening to resign if refused the mandate, no matter whether they enjoy the support of even their own family members.

Astonishingly, in certain cases, their threats are working also. Raising one or two slogans in a street corner and getting slight limelight in the media entitles them to contest elections and dictate

terms.

The case of a self-styled Advocate and a lower rung Congress activist is a pointer to the growing trend of brow-beating and blackmailing leaders. Accused of allegedly having committed rape, the Congress activist has been seeking a mandate for the upcoming elections, notwithstanding dubious record and boorish attitude. When asked how a rape accused can even be considered for candidature, the advocate-activist reportedly retorted back,

'where this morality had gone when a Pradesh President, other leaders and ex-ministers, did not only get plump positions but ministerial berths again' despite having remained in jail for their involvement in the infamous Srinagar Sex Racket!'

Some of the top leaders of Jammu and Kashmir in some event, marriage party or a social get together. They keep shouting from root-tops about their 'political standing'. Surrounded by a couple

of hired buffoons, they even brag about their influence to decide the fate of a dozen, half-dozen constituencies.

In this election season, visit any street or Mohalla, the people can be heard murmuring that so and so vendors are running for the contest or the guy having proximity with the barber of a senior leader is also in the race. And, they all are girding their loins, having conviction that this part of the country is ready for their brand of leadership.

Democracy has lost its meaning and definition—the government of the people, for the people and by the

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah, who had vowed not to participate in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections till restoration of statehood, Monday dropped major hints on his likely participation in the polls for the Union Territory assembly, saying he cannot expect people to vote for his party if he himself does not accept the legislative body.

Speaking to media after the NC and Congress announced the seat-sharing arrangement, Abdullah said he does not want to send out a

"wrong signal" by asking his party colleagues to contest and the people to cast their votes for an assembly "that I may be suggesting that I look down upon".

"I am conscious of one thing which I had not thought over fully, which is my mistake. If I was not ready to contest election for an assembly, how can I get the people ready to vote for that assembly?"

"How can I hope that my colleagues will seek votes for an assembly which I am not ready to accept or may be suggesting that I look down upon? It has put a



SPECIAL REPORT

Centre cuts public grievances redressal time to 21 days

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The Centre has reduced redressal time of public grievances, raised on a dedicated portal, to 21 days, from the existing 30 days.

In an order mentioning revised guidelines, the government also suggested appointment of dedicated officers to handle complaints and emphasised "whole

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Four persons detained in Kathua for roaming near Army camp

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Four persons were detained for questioning after they were found roaming near an Army camp in the Kathua district on Monday, officials said.

All the four detained persons were unarmed and were seen moving suspiciously near the Army camp at Billawar, the officials said.

They said security forces immediately intercepted them and they were taken into preventive custody

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 35.0°C Min: 26.0°C

Humidity
Max: 86 Min: 82

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 31.7°C Min: 19.0°C

Humidity
Max: 77 Min: 60

Sunset : 19:03 Hours
Sunrise : 06:01 Hours

PM Modi's vision gives new sunrise to Ladakh: Chugh

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, who is also party in-charge for J&K and Ladakh on Monday hailed the Centre's decision of creating new districts in Ladakh as a historic and path breaking step.

Chugh said, "On behalf of the people of Ladakh, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister, Amit Shah for their visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to the development of this region. The announcement of

creation of five new districts: Zanskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang, marks a significant milestone

establishing these new districts, the Modi government has ensured that the benefits of development reach every corner of this beautiful Ladakh region. This move will undoubtedly enhance administrative efficiency, improve infrastructure and provide greater access to essential services for all residents," he added.

Chugh said the BJP was confident that this step will pave the way for a brighter future for Ladakh, fostering economic growth, social development and cultural preservation. The

in our journey towards better governance and prosperity."

"This historic decision reflects the government's dedication to bringing services and opportunities closer to the people of Ladakh. By

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APSCC outfit to contest three seats

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: A Sikh organisation on Monday announced that it would contest assembly polls from three seats in Jammu and Kashmir.

The All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee (APSCC) said in a statement that it has decided to field S Pushvinder Singh from Tral in Pulwama district.

However, the candidates from Central Shalteng in Srinagar and Baramulla will be announced later on, it said.

APSCC chairman Jagmohan Singh Raina

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NC, Congress finalise division of seats for J&K assembly polls

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: The National Conference (NC) and the Congress Monday agreed to contest 51 and 32 seats respectively for the assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

The party in a post on X said the list was approved by NC president Farooq Abdullah.

The party named its former MP from Anantnag, Justice (Retd) Hassnain Masoodi, as its candidate from Pampore and former legislator Mohammad Khalil Bandh from Pulwama.

The NC announced the name of Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din Mir from Rajora, Shovkat Hussain Ganie from Zainpora, Sheikh Mohammad Rafi from Shopian and former minister Sakina Ittoo from DH Pora.

contest 51 seats in J-K and the Congress 32.

They also said there will be a "friendly contest" on five

seats of the Union Territory. The leaders said the list of seats each party will be

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

J&K ELECTIONS: BJP releases first list of 44 candidates, trims it to 16 amid internal rumblings

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI/JAMMU: The BJP on Monday named 16 candidates for the first phase of elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to be held on September 18.

The party had earlier released its first list of 44 candidates but put out a revised one a few hours later, withdrawing names for the second and third phases, amid disgruntlement among a section of party cadre over a few names in the original list.

While Jammu and Kashmir BJP President Ravinder Raina downplayed the resentment over the initial list, a group of party workers held a protest at its headquarters in Jammu and claimed "parachute candidates" were picked over hardworking workers.

The list of 16 candidates for the first phase includes three former MLAs and a woman candidate, Shagun Parihar, whose father Ajeet Parihar and uncle Anil Parihar were gunned down by terrorists in Kishtwar district in November 2018. The

Parihar brothers were affiliated with the BJP.

The initial list covered 36 segments in the Jammu region and eight in the Kashmir Valley. It included nearly a dozen prominent leaders, including several former ministers, who have joined the party in the last five years.

Ten former MLAs, including ex-Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh and ex-Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Sat Paul Sharma, have been dropped.

Sharing the revised list of candidates, the BJP said the names for the second and third phases should be considered withdrawn.

In the Jammu region's Chenab Valley, the BJP has fielded former ministers Sunil Sharma (Padder-Nagseni constituency) and Shakti Raj Parihar (Doda-West), former MLA Daleep Singh Parihar (Bhadrawah), Shagun Parihar (Kishtwar),

- ▶▶ Er. Syed Showkat Gayoor Andrabi -Pampore
- ▶▶ Mohd. Rafiq Wani -Anantnag West
- ▶▶ Arshid Bhat -Rajpora
- ▶▶ Javed Ahmad Qadri -Shopian
- ▶▶ Adv. Syed Wazahat -Anantnag
- ▶▶ Sofi Yousuf -Srigufwara Bijbehara
- ▶▶ Veer Saraf Shangus-Anantnag East
- ▶▶ Tariq Keen -Inderwal
- ▶▶ Shagun Parihar -Kishtwar
- ▶▶ Sunil Sharma -Padder-Nagseni
- ▶▶ Daleep Singh Parihar -Bhadrawah
- ▶▶ Gajay Singh Rana-Doda
- ▶▶ Shakti Raj Parihar-Doda West
- ▶▶ Rakesh Thakur-Ramban
- ▶▶ Salim Bhat-Banihal
- ▶▶ Choudhary Roshan Hussain Gujjar -Kokernag

(Doda), Rakesh Thakur (Ramban) and Salim Bhat (Banihal).

The BJP's Neelam Kumar Langeh had won the Ramban constituency in the 2014 elections but was dropped this time. In the Kashmir Valley, the BJP has fielded its Vice President Sofi Yousuf (Srigufwara-Bijbehara), Syed Showkat Gayoor Andrabi (Pampore), Arshid Bhat (Rajpora), Javed Ahmad Qadri (Shopian), Mohd Rafiq Wani (Anantnag West), Syed Wazahat (Anantnag), Veer Saraf (Shangus-Anantnag East) and Choudhary Roshan Hussain Gujjar (Kokernag-ST).

Some angry BJP workers from different assembly constituencies staged a protest at the party headquarters over the leadership "ignoring" hardworking workers and giving the mandate to "parachute candidates".

"I have been associated with the party for the past 18 years and have worked day and night to strengthen it but the mandate was given to a person who joined

the party only a few days back," said BJP Scheduled Caste Moreha President Jagdish Bhagat. Welcoming the withdrawal of the initial list, he said, "We hope that party leaders would be given the mandate instead of those who have done nothing for the party." "If they ignore us, there will be serious consequences. We will not allow any wrongdoing and will protest against this injustice within the party," Bhagat said.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Raina, however, said the party is like a family where it does not matter who gets the mandate as "we believe in nation first, party second and self last".

Speaking to reporters at the BJP headquarters, he said the list of the 16 candidates for the first phase was released by the Central Election Committee after a long discussion and subsequent lists for the second and third phases will follow shortly.

"The BJP is fully prepared for the elections. We work like a family and thousands of our workers are ready to make their contribution to the

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