

Satish files nomination as independent candidate for Chhamb constituency, thousands rally in support

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CHHAMB: In a significant political development, Satish Sharma, son of former Member of Parliament Madan Lal Sharma, has officially filed his nomination as an independent candidate for the Chhamb constituency. This move comes after the Congress Party's decision to deny him the party mandate, a decision that has sparked widespread public discontent. Thousands of supporters, carrying national flags and placards featuring images of both Madan Lal Sharma and Satish Sharma, gathered in a massive show of support. The rally, filled with emotional speeches and chants, highlighted the deep connection between the Sharma family and the people of Chhamb, underscoring a long legacy of public service. In a further blow to the Congress Party, there has been a wave of mass resignations in the Khour block following the announcement of the Chhamb ticket being given to former Deputy Chief Minister Tara Chand by the



Independent candidate Satish Sharma during public rally.

All India Congress Committee (AICC). After the recent delimitation and rotation exercise, the Chhamb seat was opened to the general category, and a contest for the Congress ticket had emerged between Tara Chand and Satish Sharma. The AICC struggled to decide between the two leaders, but with the nomination deadline approaching on 12th September, the party ultimately awarded the ticket to Tara Chand. This decision, however, caused widespread discontent among party members, many of whom believed that Satish Sharma was the rightful candidate.

In response, hundreds of Congress office bearers resigned in protest, demonstrating their support for Sharma. Addressing the crowd, Satish Sharma voiced his disappointment with the Congress Party, stating, "I have dedicated years of service to the Congress Party, but due to internal pressures from certain leaders, I was denied the mandate. This decision disregards the will of 80% of the people in the Chhamb constituency." He emphasized that after 28 years of reservation, Chhamb is finally open to the general category, yet the Congress Party failed to represent the majority's choice.

Sharma spoke at length about his father's contributions to the development of Maira Mandrian, Chowki Choura, Khrah Balli, and Khour, pledging to continue his father's legacy. He assured the youth of Chhamb that, if elected, he would prioritize recruitment drives and focus on the development of all blocks in the constituency. He made a heartfelt appeal for the support of the people of Khour, asking for their blessings if they believe in the work his family has done over the years. Supporters at the rally expressed their anger over the Congress Party's decision, with one stating, "Eighty percent of Chhamb's population belongs to the general category, who were supposed to get the mandate after 28 years. We will not only vote for Satish Sharma, but we'll also support him with our time and resources." Many others echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing their loyalty to the Sharma family and their determination to secure his victory. The rally demon-

strated the strong support for Satish Sharma, and as the election draws nearer, it is clear that his candidacy has injected fresh energy into the political landscape of Chhamb. The overwhelming turnout and emotional speeches signal that the race for Chhamb is far from decided.

Prominent individuals present at the program included:

Kuldeep Verma, Jagdish Sarpanch, Davinder Sarpanch, Uttam Singh Chib, Jagar Nath, Buru Mal Pardaana, Dalbar Singh, Baopan Singh, Dayan Singh, Surjeet Singh, Gurdev Singh, Capt Bajan Singh, Capt Daljit Singh, Bachan Singh, Raj Singh, Kulbir Singh, Jai Singh, Rano Devi, Prem Singh, Parbu Singh, Sham Lal Verma, Mahaveer Singh, Pritam Kumar, Deewan Singh, Satpal Singh, Behari Lal, Kaku Ram, Kuldeep Raj, Joginder Pal, BDC Rahul Sharma, Pulla Sharma, Vijay Singh, Ch Neka Alam, Kuda Bakasah, Adlat Khan, Nekk Alam, Nur Alam, and Angeru Ram.

Assembly elections 2024: polling from home facility started in Bhaderwah

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
BHADERWAH: Voting for the first phase of Assembly Elections 2024 started today with 'Polling from Home' initiative of Election commission of India (ECI) for senior citizens and differently abled people to elect their next Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA).

Like other parts of Chenab Valley, the polling from home through ballot papers also begin at Bhaderwah Assembly constituency AC-51 on Thursday morning.

ADC Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar RO in presence of other officials flagged off polling staff for home voting of PwDs and Voters above 85 years through Postal Ballot across AC-51 Bhaderwah to ensure inclusive voting in a smooth and secure way.

It is notable that Election Commission of India (ECI) has decided to extend the home voting facilities to senior citizens and differently abled people. The people aged over



ADC Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar RO and other officials flagging off polling staff for home voting.

85 and persons with disabilities are eligible for the facility.

Meanwhile people appreciated the initiative to facilitate senior citizens and persons with disabilities to cast their vote from home for the development of their areas.

ADC Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar said that polling parties have been sent to visit all voters falling under 'Polling from Home' initiative so that they can cast their vote from their respective residences without any inconvenience and

ensure everyone's participation in this festival of democracy.

"Total 19 polling parties have been sent, who will cover a total 172 voters under this category across Bhaderwah Assembly AC-5,"ADC added.

Meanwhile, senior citizens Mohd Eesa Sheikh and Ghulam Nabi Butt of Chakka area of Bhaderwah casted their vote of Bhaderwah Assembly Constituency AC-51 from their Home availing postal ballot facility for the Assembly Elections 2024.

Border District Poonch organises bike rally under SVEEP

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POONCH: To encourage first-time voters to exercise their franchise, General Election Observer Solai Bharathi Dasan and District Election Officer Vikas Kundal flagged off bike rally from Dak Bungalow, Poonch, to village Kanuayan. The rally, organized under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative, saw hundreds of enthusiastic first-time voters participating with zeal. The Observers and DEO led from the front riding alongside the participants.



Participants during the bike rally.

The rally aimed to create awareness about the importance of voting and the role of youth in shaping the country's future. District Election Officer, Vikas Kundal emphasized the importance of the initiative, stating, "This rally is part of our SVEEP initiative to educate and raise awareness among the public. Our goal is to ensure that every eligible citizen understands the power of their vote. It's

inspiring to see such a large turnout of first-time voters participating with enthusiasm." Atul Kumar Sharma, a first-time voter, shared his excitement: "As a young citizen, I feel it's my responsibility to contribute to the country's growth and development. Voting gives me a sense of empowerment, and I'm eager to have my say in shaping India's future. I'm proud to be casting my vote for the first time, and I urge

all my fellow first-time voters to register and vote. Let's make our voices heard and create a positive change!"

The rally was organized in collaboration with local youth groups and educational institutions. The SVEEP initiative, launched by the Election Commission of India, aims to educate and encourage voters, especially first-time voters, to participate in the electoral process. The bike rally is one of many initiatives undertaken by the District Election Office, Poonch, to promote voter awareness and participation.

The rally was also attended by Tahir Mustafa Malik (ADC Poonch), Qadir ul Rehman (RO Haveli Constituency), Lal Hussain (CEO Poonch and Nodal Officer SVEEP) and other senior officers of the district.

Jharokha Yatra marches through Samba to promote voter awareness

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
SAMBHA: In a vibrant display of civic responsibility and cultural pride, a Jharokha Yatra was organized today from Main Bazaar Samba to the historic Samba Fort to raise awareness about the upcoming Voting Day on 1st October 2024.

The unique event, aimed at sensitizing the urban population, attracted a large gathering from the bustling marketplace, ensuring maximum outreach. The event was led by District Election Officer (DEO) Rajesh Sharma along with SSP Vinay Kumar and Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Jagdish Singh. Organized by District SVEEP Nodal Officers Kewal Krishan and Ekshu Sharma, along with AC Nodal Officer Sheetal, the event featured a combination of cultural per-



Students along with faculty members and other officials taking out march.

formances, informative sessions, and interactive activities to inspire greater civic engagement among voters in the region.

The Yatra was made even more memorable by the participation of the JK Police Band, which played rhythmic tunes that energized the crowd. Participants from various student groups, including NCC and NSS cadets, marched with

enthusiasm, contributing to the spirit of the event.

One of the highlights was the involvement of young girls dressed in traditional attire, who serenaded the audience with folk songs that carried a powerful message of responsibility and the importance of voting. Their heartfelt performance served as an encouragement for citizens to actively engage in the democratic

process.

This collaborative effort, involving local authorities and cultural groups, is part of a broader voter education campaign aimed at ensuring high voter turnout on Election Day. As the 1st of October approaches, the Samba District continues to prioritize civic engagement through such creative and engaging initiatives.

PC candidate seeks blessings from Swami Vishwatma Nand Saraswati



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POONCH: Rydham Preet Singh Sudan, the Peoples Conference candidate from Poonch Haveli constituency, paid obeisance to Swami Vishwatma Nand Saraswati Ji at Krishna Ghat (KG). He sought the revered saint's blessings for success in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Singh, accompanied by his supporters, offered prayers and received the

Swami's blessings. This visit is seen as a significant move to connect with the spiritual sentiments of the people in the constituency. Swami Vishwatma Nand Saraswati Ji, known for his spiritual guidance, blessed Singh and wished him success in his electoral endeavors. Singh expressed his gratitude and commitment to serving the people of Poonch Haveli.

Rajouri ignites voter enthusiasm with dynamic SVEEP activities across constituencies

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RAJOURI: In a powerful display of civic engagement, Rajouri has embarked on an ambitious voter awareness campaign under the leadership of District Election Officer Abhishek Sharma and District Nodal Officer (SVEEP) Bishamber Dass. The campaign, part of a broader initiative to prepare for the upcoming J&K Legislative Assembly elections, has seen a series of innovative and community-focused activities across various constituencies.

In Assembly Constituency 86-Budhal, a pivotal voter awareness lecture was delivered by Arif Wiqar of the SVEEP Cell at Government High School Keri themed "Importance of a Vote in a Democracy." The highly impactful speech captivated the students and

emphasized the critical role of each voter in shaping the nation's future. The event was further enriched by the insights of Headmaster Mohd Shabir Lone, who urged students to advocate for voter participation among their eligible relatives.

Adding a unique twist, the SVEEP Cell organized a friendly cricket match at GDC Budhal, using the sport as a platform to engage players and spectators on the importance of voting. Prof. Nodal Officer SVEEP Tahir Nadeem, encouraged all attendees to vote for the progress and development of the nation.

Parallel to these events, awareness activities were conducted at polling stations No. 113 Panjnara Keri, No. 60 Targain B, and No. 34 Kandi B. The SVEEP Cell also prepared for the Mega Plantation

Drive scheduled on 14th and 15th of September 2024. The SVEEP team also held a creative demonstration of a dummy EVM made from thermocol by local students.

The SVEEP team of Assembly Constituency 87-Thannamandi innovatively engaged local police officers in an awareness campaign, underscoring the importance of voting even amid their demanding duties. The campaign also included a painting competition at GHSS Panjgrian, promoting creativity alongside civic participation.

Similarly, Nodal Officer Rakesh Kumar Sharma led an engaging program at local Government High School in Assembly Constituency 85-Androlla, which included a pledge ceremony, signature campaign and door-to-door outreach. The event, attended

by about 110 students and 60 locals, aimed to boost voter enthusiasm and participation. A simultaneous plantation drive at Boys Model HSS Rajouri highlighted the community's commitment to environmental and electoral responsibility.

Assembly Constituency 83-Kalakote-Sunderbani hosted a vibrant poster campaign at GHSS Sunderbani, where Principal R.C. Sharma and Nodal Officer Babu Singh motivated students to spread the SVEEP message among young voters. The event saw active participation from staff, students and the SVEEP team. Finally, Assembly Constituency 84-Nowshera held a drawing and painting competition at GMHSS Lamberi, further engaging the youth in the electoral process under the guidance of Nodal Officer JP Singh.

NSS SMVDU raises funds in support of Indian Association for the Blind

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KATRA: The NSS unit of SMVDU, Katra organized a donation collection drive in support of the Indian Association for the Blind

(IAB), located in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. The IAB is dedicated to empowering visually impaired individuals to become self-sufficient by offering comprehensive rehabilitation, education, and employment opportunities. The organization particularly focuses on supporting visually challenged children and adults from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, especially those from rural areas.To raise funds for this noble cause, NSS SMVDU volunteers sold badges and flags provided by IAB. The university's stu-

dents, staff, and faculty showed tremendous enthusiasm and generosity, actively participating in the drive. Over three days, the volunteers successfully raised Rs.



15,000, which was then donated to the IAB.NSS Coordinator Dr. Rajiv Kumar and Co-Coordinator Dr. Kamaldeep commended the volunteers for their dedication and efforts in organizing this drive. The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Pragati Kumar, also lauded the NSS team for their commendable initiative and contribution to this meaningful cause.

Nukkad Natak under SVEEP held at Poonch

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POONCH: Students of Government Girls Higher Secondary School Poonch presented a thought-provoking Nukkad Natak at Pritam Park, Poonch, today, highlighting the significance of voting and the impact it has on the country's future.

The event was held under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative.

The Nukkad Natak, titled "Voting: The Power of Democracy", conveyed the mes-

sage that every vote matters and encouraged the audience to exercise their franchise. The students' energetic perform-



ance was well-received by the audience. District Nodal Officer SVEEP, Lal Hussain was the chief guest on the occasion. He applauded the students for their outstanding performance. One of the student performers, Rifat Jahangir, said, "We are proud to be a part of this initiative. Through this Nukkad Natak, we want to convey the message that voting is our right and our responsibility.

The Nukkad Natak was followed by a voter pledge, where attendees were encouraged to cast their votes on 25th of September.

The school Principal, Anjuman Shaheen, ZEO Kanuayan Anwar Hussain, ZEPo Poonch Vijay Kumar, Ravinder Singh and other members of the SVEEP team were also present on the occasion.

General Observer inspects polling stations in Assar Sub-Division

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DODA: In line with the preparations for the upcoming Assembly Elections 2024, General Observer for Assembly Constituencies AC-52 Doda and AC-53 Doda West, Aditya Negi conducted an extensive inspection of polling stations in Assar Sub-Division today.

The visit was aimed at ensuring the smooth conduct of the electoral process and verifying the preparedness of polling stations to meet all required standards for the upcoming elections.

Aditya Negi meticulously assessed the arrangements at each polling station, including accessibility, security measures, and the overall infrastructure. He emphasized the need for a seamless voting experience for all voters, particularly the elderly and differently-abled and directed the concerned officials to ensure

that all polling stations are fully equipped with essential facilities.

Later, Aditya Negi also took part in a plantation drive organized at the polling stations in Assar.

Saplings were planted at several polling locations to promote environmental sustainability and add a green touch to the electoral process. This initiative aligns with the broader goal of fostering a more eco-friendly environment and raising awareness about the importance of greenery in public spaces.

Aditya Negi commended the efforts of the Administration and encouraged officials to continue working diligently to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections.

He also interacted with polling staff and urged them to adhere strictly to the guidelines provided by the Election Commission of India.

Gambhir Company hosts finals of Volleyball tournament

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: Gambhir Company operating under Romeo Force, hosted the finals of a Volleyball tournament at Gambhir Coy COB, named after Sheikh Mohammadin which began on August 29, 2024 played between teams katarmal strikers and kakora strikers. The tournament was attended by 08 Volleyball teams amounting to 70 local players including youngsters and locals incl Sarpanch Abdul Qayoom, panachs of AOR, sports referee and 30 army personnel from Gambhir Coy.

The event saw a vibrant gathering of local talent, with eight teams from the region competing fiercely. This tournament was more than just a competition; it was a testament to the strong bond between the army and the local community.

The tournament was a vibrant display of local talent



Officials along with players posing for photograph.

and camaraderie, reflecting the strong community ties between the army and the local populace. The matches were fiercely contested, showcasing a high level of skill and sportsmanship from all participating teams. The final match, which drew considerable attention and excitement, saw the Katarmal Strikers emerge victorious. Their performance throughout the tournament was exceptional, earning them the champi-

onship title.

To celebrate their achievement, the winning team, Katarmal Strikers, was awarded a series of accolades. The prizes included monetary rewards, trophies, and medals, recognizing their hard work and dedication. The event not only provided an opportunity for local players to shine but also strengthened the bond between the military and the community it serves.

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