

08 PM Modi's rally on Sept 28 in Jammu, Reddy, Sood review preparations at MA Stadium

09 Congress denied reservation in J&K, BJP gave it: Dr Jitendra

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J&K Polls Phase-II today: Omar Abdullah, Ravinder Raina, Tariq Karra among 239 candidates in fray

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Over 2.5 million voters will decide the fate of 239 candidates in the fray for 26 Jammu and Kashmir assembly seats in the second phase of the election to be held in the Union territory on Wednesday.

These assembly constituencies are spread over six districts - three in the Valley and as many in the Jammu division.

"To facilitate smooth and hassle-free electoral participation, the Election Commission of India has established 3,502 polling stations in these segments. There are 1,056 urban polling stations and 2,446 rural polling stations," an official said.

All polling stations will

have webcasting facilities as part of the Election Commission's efforts to ensure transparency, according to officials.

"To enhance voter participation, 157 special polling stations have been established for the second phase - 26 'pink polling stations' managed by women, 26 polling stations manned by specially abled persons, 26 polling stations manned by youths, 31 border polling stations, 26 green polling stations and 22 unique polling stations," the official said.

Voting will take place from 7 am to 6 pm.

Key names in the fray for this phase are former chief minister Omar Abdullah, JKPC president Tariq Hamid Karra and BJP J-K

chief Ravinder Raina.

Abdullah is contesting from the Ganderbal and Budgam seats, while Karra is contesting from Central Shalteng. Raina will be trying to retain his Nowshera seat in Rajouri district which he won in the 2014 assembly polls.

The second phase will be watched keenly as jailed separatist leader Sarjan Ahmad Wagay alias Barkati is hoping to repeat Engineer Rashid's Lok Sabha poll feat against the National Conference leader.

Barkati is contesting from the Beerwah and Ganderbal segments.

Popularly known as Rashid Engineer, Sheikh Abdul Rashid contested the parliamentary polls held earlier this year from Tihar jail and

still managed to defeat Abdullah by a margin of more than two lakh votes from the Baramulla constituency.

Other key candidates in this second phase of assembly polls are Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari (Channapora), former ministers Ali Mohammad Sagar (Khanyar), Abdul Rahim Rather (Chrar-i-Sharief), and Choudhary Zulfikar Ali (Budhal) and Syed Mushtaq Bukhari (Surankote).

Choudhary Zulfikar Ali and Syed Mushtaq Bukhari are contesting on BJP tickets this time.

An estimated 61.38 per cent of the electorate cast their ballots in the first phase of polling on

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J&K youth shunned terrorism: Chugh

"Abdullahs, Muftis trying to keep it alive with Pak support"

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh on Tuesday said that the Jammu and Kashmir youth have turned their backs from terrorism and are all looking for new job opportunities and avenues to grow.

Addressing an election meeting, Chugh said the steep decline in incidents of terrorism is a testimony to the fact that the locals have decisively turned their back on violence and terrorism.

"It is only Pak-sponsored terrorism supported by the Abdullahs, the Muftis and the Congress, which is creating trouble", Chugh said.

He said the Modi government has



BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh addressing gathering at Srinagar.

given a new vision and optimism to the youth in J & K and soon there would be great results to see.

He said J&K had remained a beleaguered territory due to divisive and

selfish politics of the feudal families of Abdullah and Mufti. Making an appeal to the people to vote for the BJP, Chugh called for an end to the era of Abdullahs and Muftis.

Reddy hits out at Rahul over his remarks against PM Modi

"If Gandhi wants to know about Modi's fear, he should ask terrorists, separatists, corrupt, Pakistan, anti-national forces"

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Taking on Rahul Gandhi for his comments on the prime minister, Union minister G Kishan Reddy on Tuesday said the leader of opposition will have to talk to India's farmers, soldiers, scientists, youth and women to understand where Narendra Modi's confidence comes from.

Hitting out at the Congress leader, Reddy also said that if



Gandhi wished to know about the fear of Modi, he should ask terrorists and separatists, corrupt people,

neighbouring Pakistan and anti-national forces. "They will know what Modiji is," he told reporters here.

The BJP leader was reacting to the Congress leader's remark attacking Modi that the INDIA bloc "broke his psychology" after the Lok Sabha elections. "He (Modi) used to boast about a 56-inch chest but he is not the same person anymore,"

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Two dead as vehicle with poll official falls into gorge

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA/JAMMU: Two people, including a policeman, were killed when their vehicle carrying a zonal magistrate on poll duty, plunged into a deep gorge in the Reasi district on Tuesday, officials said.

The zonal magistrate Ajay Kumar, however, escaped with minor injuries as he jumped from the vehicle before it rolled down into the 100-metre deep gorge

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Rahul Gandhi cannot become voice of J&K in Parliament; he's no mandate to do so

At a time when Jammu and Kashmir is rewriting history, embracing democracy in its realistic form, the Congress has taken upon itself to wreck the narrative of development and future of this place which has suffered numerous atrocities for decades. As an opposition party, it has all the right and claim to counter what the ruling party says and claims, but that should be on facts not on the imagined speculations.

Rahul Gandhi surprised the audiences in J&K on Monday when he said that he would represent them in the Parliament. This is an anomaly. How could he represent the people of Jammu and Kashmir when they have already given their mandate to five MPs they elected in the Lok Sabha elections - two of them, Dr. Jitendra Singh MoS in PMO and Jugal Kishore from BJP, two others from National Conference, the pre-poll ally of Congress and one independent. This is against the norms of democracy and violative of the verdict that people have given in favour of their elected representatives.

There is an established role for MPs. It also is a fact that the MPs can speak for all the people of the country, but primarily they are responsible for the constituencies from where they get elected. In Rahul Gandhi's case he is representing Rae Bareilly constituency of Uttar

Pradesh. As he is also Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, he can talk about all the states and union territories in the House. So far so good.

Rahul should explain in what manner he wants to represent and become the voice of the people of J&K? He is pitching for the restoration of the statehood.

It's a fact that the demand for the restoration of the statehood across J&K is widespread. It is heard from all corners. All parties are unanimous on this issue. National Conference, Congress, PDP, Apni Party, People's Conference DPAP have placed this demand prominently in their manifestoes. They have

vowed to fight for the restoration of statehood. This is a common knowledge that the erstwhile state, which had special status under Article 370, with a separate constitution and flag, was divided. Ladakh was carved out of the state, and a large chunk of the geographical area went to the region that had been asking for the UT status for decades. J&K's status as state was demoted to the UT.

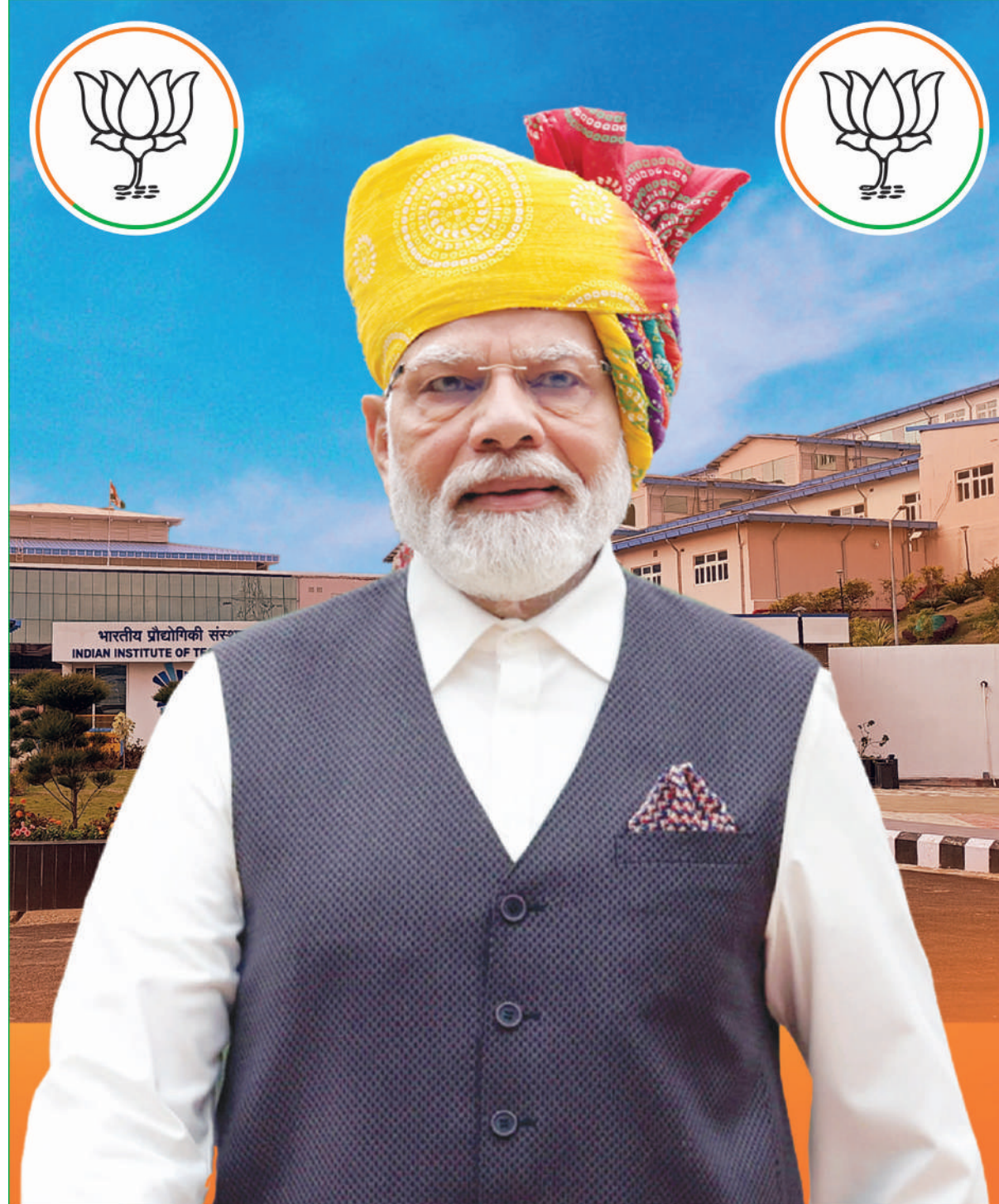
This was a point of irritation. Union Home Minister Amit Shah knew that it would provoke some kind of irritation, so at the same very moment he had promised that the statehood would be restored at an appropriate time. Anything spoken on the floor of Parliament automatically assumes the status of a national commitment.

The only thing that had some disconcerting notes revolved around the delay

in returning the statehood to this UT. The wait has stretched on to five years, and it is natural for the people who were in a vast and high-profile state for centuries to get impatient. The political parties took advantage of it and manipulated this issue in such a fashion as if this was a permanent loss and the statehood would never come back to J&K unless they raised this demand. The political parties have the right to demand so but they should have known their limitations too. Could they get the statehood restored unless or until the Centre was on board. No! The BJP is aware that it has responsibility toward the people of J&K; fulfilment of the promise on statehood is a commitment that cannot be left to uncertainty.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was very categorical in stating that J&K would get the statehood and that would be granted by the BJP government alone. PM has fulfilled many a promises, including the commitment to restore peace to J&K at a time when it sounded unthinkable and unimaginable. Today that is a reality. There is both operational and functional peace in Kashmir. Terrorism is down, peace is up.

So, Rahul Gandhi, as Leader of Opposition, should have known that by seeking to appropriating role of others to himself is not good politics, putting it mildly. Let the democratic process get completed. The people are certain that PM and Home Minister will honour their promises and commitment. Rahul Gandhi should relax and plan a trip to some foreign country.



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