

Allies hail decision, JD-U calm

Modi anointed BJP Poll Panel Chairman, calls for India free of Congress

PANAJI, June 9:

Ignoring perceived opposition from veteran L. K. Advani and some other senior leaders, BJP today anointed Narendra Modi as its Election Campaign Committee Chairman for the 2014 polls, just short of making him the Prime Ministerial candidate.

Modi, considered a polarising figure after the post-Godhra riots in 2002, was handed over the responsibility of the party's election campaign at the two-day meeting of the National Executive from which Advani kept away citing ill health as did some other leaders including Jaswant Singh, Uma Bharati and Shatrughan Sinha.

"I want to give you a significant information. ...I have announced (at the National Executive) that Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi as Chairman of the BJP Election Campaign Committee, keeping in mind the challenge of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and to achieve victory in the polls," party President Rajnath Singh told the media at the conclusion of the deliberations.

The announcement, which was received with a huge round of clapping and standing ova-



BJP President Rajnath Singh presenting a flower bouquet to Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi on his election as Chairman of the Election Campaign Committee for the 2014 Lok Sabha election in Panaji on Sunday. (UNI)

tion in the meeting, was made in a terse statement by Singh who was flanked by Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley, former President M. Venkaiah Naidu, General Secretary Ananth Kumar among others. No questions were taken at the media interaction.

"Whatever has happened has happened on the basis of consensus," Singh said without elaborat-

ing the claims of Advani, so far considered tallest party leader after Vajpayee.

Shortly after his anointment, Modi declared at a public meeting that Goa has been lucky for him as in 2002 he had got the "licence" to run Gujarat.

"I am confident that I will complete the task that has been entrusted to me by Rajnathji," he said to a thunderous applause from the party cadre.

In his 45-minute address, he referred to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee but did not once take the name of Advani, who is said to be having reservations over his elevation in the party. But he had earlier tweeted that he had talked to Advani and "got his blessings".

"Ironically, it was Advani who is said to have intervened in Goa in 2002 for Modi when Vajpayee wanted his resignation in the aftermath of the post-Godhra riots.

The public meeting, which was attended by Singh, Arun Jaitley among others, was skipped by senior leader Sushma

Swaraj. At the meeting, he launched the party's campaign for the next year's polls attacking the Congress, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi accusing them of "non serious" governance. He promised to carry forward the "unfinished agenda" of Vajpayee.

Earlier, anointing Modi, Singh said all parties view elections as a challenge and BJP also viewed the coming Lok Sabha elections as a challenge and Modi's elevation was done keeping in mind the need to achieve victory.

"We are absolutely sure that the Congress-led UPA Government has lost the confidence of the people and are confident that the BJP will be voted to power in the 2014 elections," he said.

Modi said in a tweet that Advani has given his "blessings" to him after Singh's announce-

"Spoke to Advaniji on the phone. He gave me his blessing. (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

The decision to plump for Modi in a crucial role came after two days of deliberations and dilemma in a virtual gamble to galvanise the cadre

'CHC, quota availability main requirements'

Conditional on spot registration of yatris at 3 places in Jammu

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, June 9: In a significant decision aimed at benefiting the pilgrims of Shri Amarnath ji shrine, reaching directly here without compulsory registration, the administration has decided to open three registration counters at the lodgment centres within the City limits.

However, the authorities have made it clear that the on spot registration would be conditional—one that the quota for the dates sought by the pilgrims should be available and second the yatris must produce the Compulsory Health Certificate (CHC) from the designated doctors.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the authorities had identified Vaishnavi Dham at Railway Station, Sangam Community Centre at Railway Station and Ram Mandir at Purani Mandi for on-spot registration.

The Ram Mandir has been kept for registration exclusively for Sadhus while two other registration centres—Vaishnavi Dham and Sangam Community Hall would be open for all.

According to sources, the pilgrims would get on spot registration only for the dates for which the quota was available. "The registration would be denied to the pilgrims if the quota of 15,000 registration per

day had already exhausted," they said. Moreover, they added, the pilgrims would have to fulfill all formalities for the registration, prescribed by Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) including production of CHC, which would be valid from the doctors authorized by the SASB only.

The SASB has fixed the quota of 15,000 registration of pilgrims per day for annual Amarnath yatra starting June 28 till August 21. Of registration quota, 7500 yatris would be registered per day for each route of shorter Baltal track and traditional Chandanwari track.

The pilgrims visiting the

Ministers from Jammu mute spectator to people's grievances PDD's sub-transmission, distribution network reaches saturation point

*Integrated planning never received required attention Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, June 9: The sub-transmission and distribution network of the Power Development Department has reached the saturation point during the prevailing scorching heat in the absence of augmentation work during the past quite long time. The situation has assumed such an alarming proportion that even if the Government purchases additional power it would not be able to supply electricity to the people in view of its weak system. Astonishingly, the Ministers from Jammu district have maintained 'criminal silence' despite being aware of the prevailing situation and difficulties faced by the people.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that in the absence of sufficient augmentation works Janipur, Canal and Miran Sahib Grid Stations have become over-loaded during the prevailing scorching heat while as power evacuation from the Pouni Chak Grid Station was not up to the mark due to inadequate transmission lines network.

"Whatever excuses being given by the Power Development Department are lame as the fact is that the sub-transmission and distribution network in major parts of Jammu district has become very weak due to failure of the department to carry out timely and adequate augmentation of system during the past several years", they said.

Though paper work was carried out a number of times yet the strengthening of the system remained confined to the official files due to lack of integrated approach among the top brass of the department, sources said, adding "inadequate transmission lines network at the Pouni Chak Grid Station is the testimony of the fact that ensuring coordination among various wings never received required focus of those at the helm of affairs".

In response to a question,

sources said, "the present sub-transmission and distribution network in major parts of Jammu district is not capable of providing more electricity supply to the people even if the Government comes forward to purchase additional power from the Northern Grid".

Disclosing that even last year additional power purchased during scorching heat could not be supplied to the people due to weak system, sources said, "it is a matter of serious concern as to how the

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Father-son among 5 killed, 4 injured in mishaps

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 9: Five persons including father-son lost their lives while as four others sustained injuries in different incidents.

Reports said that 40-year old Gurmeet Singh, son of Ram Krishan of Haryana, an employee of Jai Prakash Associates engaged in the construction of Stage-II of the Baglihar Hydroelectric Project, and his four year old son namely Gurpreet Singh lost their lives when they accidentally fell into a deep gorge at Ghagwal under the jurisdiction of Ramban Police Station.

Gurmeet Singh was holding the hand of his son when he suddenly had a slip from the hillock resulting into both falling in the deep gorge. On getting information about the incident, police party swung into action and recovered the bodies of father-son from the nullah.

The bodies were handed over to the family members after last rites.

Meanwhile, two brothers were killed and four others sustained injuries when a vehicle, they were travelling in, skidded off the road and rolled down into gorge in Doda district.

According to the police, the ill-fated tempo bearing registration number JK14A-5247 was on its way from Marmat to Doda when it met with accident near Nathi Nullah due to the negligence of the driver.

The driver reportedly lost control over the speeding vehicle while negotiating a sharp curve as a result of which the vehicle rolled down into 650 feet deep gorge. On getting information a police party

rushed to the spot and started rescue operation.

After hectic efforts, all the occupants of the ill-fated vehicle were brought out of the gorge and rushed to hospital where one of them was pronounced as brought dead. Later, one of the injured succumbed to injuries raising the toll in the accident to two.

The deceased have been identified as Jagdish Kumar and Joginder, sons of Jameet Ram of Sarva. The injured are Koshal Kumar, son of Kunj Lal, his son Bani Lal, Bansil Lal, son of Jagat Ram and driver Niku Ram, son of Beli Ram, all the residents of village Saroua. The condition of injured was stated to be out of danger when reports last came in.

The incident has once again brought to fore that there was no check on rash and negligent driving in the Doda district and vehicle operators have been fearlessly playing with the lives of the commuters.

Reports said that a middle-aged woman and half a dozen goats/sheep were killed while a man was injured in thunder storm and lightning in Budhal area of Rajouri.

During heavy rain and thunder-storm in Jaglanoo area of Kandi-Budhal a strong beam of flash light from the sky hit a woman taking shelter under a tree along with sheep and goats. Another nomad from the same family, namely Mohd Taqoob, was also grazing his cattle and came under the impact and sustained injuries.

Due to sudden lightning the woman, Sakina Begum, widow of Jamal Din and about half a dozen goats were killed on the spot while others sustained injuries.

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—Excelsior/Rakesh
A beekeeper checks a beehive full of honeybees at a farm on the outskirts of Jammu.

No law to set up NCTC: Shinde

NEW DELHI, June 9:

The much talked-about NCTC may be a non-starter but the Government has rejected the demand of non-Congress Chief Ministers for a law to set up the anti-terror body.

Home Minister Shushilkumar Shinde said his Ministry was not exploring the option of bringing a bill in Parliament for the purpose.

"No, we have no such proposal," Shinde told reporters when asked about the possibility of bringing a law for setting up National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC).

Asked whether the

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Rs 642 cr spent on PM's air travel

NEW DELHI, June 9:

A sum of over Rs 642 crore has been incurred on Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's air travels abroad in the last nine years.

This information has been made public by the PMO as part of obligations under the mandatory proactive disclosure clause of the Right to Information Act. The information reveals that Singh undertook 67 travels since 2004 when he took over

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Patrolling intensified on LoC

SRINAGAR, June 9:

Pakistani troops were using different methods, including firing on Indian forward posts, to help militants to infiltrate into J&K, a senior Army officer said here today.

A large number of trained militants are waiting across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistani occupied Kashmir, waiting an opportunity to sneak into this side, GOC Northern Command Lt General K T Parnaik said on the sideline of a function here.

However, he said, troops are already on high alert to foil any infiltration bid from PoK.

He said troops have intensified foot and night patrolling all along the LoC, keeping a close vigil with the help of sophisticated

Arms, ammunition recovered

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, June 9: Army today said that it recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition near the Line of Control (LoC) in Macchil sector of district Kupwara.

Srinagar based Defence spokesman said here today that based on tip off provided a cache of warlike stores was found near Line of Control, by an Army column of Rashtriya Rifles Battalion after they launched a search operation in general area Lashdat Nar in Macchil Sector yesterday.

The spokesman said that the search party discovered a natural opening in the hollow of a tree trunk. "Search of the opening

8 houses damaged in fire

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, June 9: Eight residential houses were damaged in different fire incidents across the Valley, police today said.

Fire broke out in the residential house of Kulwant Singh son of Omkar Singh of Gadorpa, Tral, in which the house was damaged, police said. Fire tenders, they said, were pressed into service to control the fire.

Two houses were damaged partially at Nishat when fire broke out in the residential house of Ghulam Ahmad Bhat son of Abdul Salam resident of Akhoun Mohalla, Brein, Nishat, police said.

The fire engulfed an adjacent house of Manzoor Ahmad son of Mohammad Akbar Rather. Police said the fire was brought under

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