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5 Assembly polls from Mar 27, counting on May 2

already in power, as well as in West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry where the saffron party has been pushing hard in recent years.

Elections in Assam will be conducted in three phases on March 27, April 1 and April 6, while polling in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry will take place in a single phase on April 6.

Elections for the West Bengal Assembly will be held in eight phases, up from seven last time, beginning with polling for 30 seats on March 27.

Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said while announcing the poll schedule.

The second phase of West Bengal's Assembly elections has been scheduled for April 1 and will cover 30 constituencies, followed by the third phase on April 6 for 31 seats, the fourth on April 10 for 44 constituencies, the fifth on April 17 for 45 seats, sixth for 43 seats on April 22, seventh

phase on April 26 for 36 seats and last and eighth phase on April 29 for 35 seats, Arora said.

The Election Commission will appoint two special observers for West Bengal and a third can also be sent if required, Arora said in response to queries on whether enough arrangements are in place for the polls in the state, where many have been raising questions about political violence.

Arora also said everyone on election duty for the upcoming polls will be vaccinated against COVID-19 before polling day.

Voting will take place for 126 seats in Assam, 234 in Tamil Nadu, 294 in West Bengal, 140 in Kerala and 30 in Puducherry.

Arrangements will be put in place for candidates to file their nominations online. Voting will be allowed for an additional hour, keeping in mind COVID-19 safety guidelines, he said. (PTI)

Copters to airlift CRPF men on way to leave to avoid IED attacks

well.

The step has been taken for the safety of jawans considering the threat from IEDs and Magnetic IEDs and it will avoid convoy movement by road, which came under target in the Pulwama attack.

The service will be given thrice a week which can be used by jawans to get transport through a CRPF helicopter.

An official said that sticky

COVID guidelines extended till March 31

force till March 31.

In a statement, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said while there has been a substantial decline in the active and new COVID-19 cases, there is need to maintain surveillance, containment and caution so as to fully overcome the pandemic.

The States and Union Territories have also been advised to speed up the vaccination of the target population so as to break the chain of transmission and overcome the pandemic.

Accordingly, Containment Zones continue to be demarcated carefully; prescribed containment measures strictly followed within these zones; COVID-appropriate behaviour promoted and strictly enforced; and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) prescribed in respect of various permitted activities followed scrupulously, the Home Ministry said.

Therefore, the focussed approach on surveillance, containment and strict observance of the guidelines and SOPs, as envisaged in the guidelines issued on January 27 need to be enforced strictly by States and Union Territories, it said.

The MHA issued an order today extending the existing guidelines for surveillance, containment and caution and they will remain in force up to March 31, the statement said.

As per the existing guidelines, cinema halls and theatres

WEATHER

JAMMU:
Possibility of light rain/Thundershowers
TEMPERATURE
Max: 28.3 Degree C
Min: 16.3 Degree C
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
RH-I (Morning): 35.0 per cent
RH-II (Evening): 41.0 per cent
Sunset on Saturday: 06:27 p.m.
Sunrise on Sunday: 07:01 a.m.
SRINAGAR:
Possibility of light rain/Thundershowers
TEMPERATURE
Max: 15.2 Degree C
Min: 8.0 Degree C
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
RH-I (Morning): 72.0 per cent
RH-II (Evening): 79.0 per cent
LEH:
TEMPERATURE
Max: 7.9 Degree C
Min: -2.7 Degree C

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New J&K Assembly may have 18 seats reserved for SCs, STs

Chairpersons of the District Development Councils (DDCs), Rajouri and Poonch districts were reserved for Scheduled Tribes. DDC Poonch was reserved for ST Woman.

"Seven seats to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes will be different in the next Assembly," sources said, adding that previously reserved seats are likely to be de-reserved and new seats with maximum Scheduled Caste population will be reserved.

Seven seats which were reserved in the last Assembly for Scheduled Castes include Chhamb, Domana, RS Pura, Samba, Hiranagar, Chenani and Ramban.

"The seats to be reserved for Scheduled Tribes could also be based on population," according to sources.

While splitting Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories through the Reorganization Act, the Union Home Ministry had increased Assembly seats of Jammu and Kashmir by seven taking total seats to 114-24 of which are reserved for Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) while election will be held for 90 seats.

Erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir had 111 seats including 24 reserved for PoK while elections were held for 87 seats. With creation of Ladakh as Union Territory, four seats of the region were

reserved and the Assembly was left with 83 seats. However, with increase of seven seats, J&K UT will have an Assembly of 90 seats. Two Women MLAs will be nominated to the House, which was the position earlier also.

In the previous Assembly, Kashmir had 46 seats, Jammu 37 and Ladakh four.

Delimitation of the Assembly constituencies was last held in 1994-95 during the President's Rule when seats of the erstwhile State Assembly were raised from 76 to 87. Jammu region's seats were increased from 32 to 37, Kashmir's from 42 to 46 and Ladakh's two to four. However, the delimitation was freed in 2002 by the then National Conference Government headed by Dr Farooq Abdullah in lines with the decision taken by then Central Government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Elections to the Legislative Assembly will be held only after delimitation of Assembly constituencies is completed.

According to sources, there can be altogether different Assembly constituencies with different boundaries as it will not be binding on the Delimitation Commission to stick to the segments, which existed in erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly.

Will make J&K winter sports hub: PM

communities. When a woman from north-east Mary Kom wins a medal, the entire country celebrates. Sports and culture are soft powers of a country," he said in his address.

"Last time we had announced 100 small Khelo India centres here. We have already approved 40 of them and the rest will be approved in the coming financial year," he revealed.

"We have also decided to give Mata Vaishno Devi Sport Complex a Khelo India Academy accreditation," he added.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha also during inaugural ceremony of the mega event at world famous winter sports destination - Gulmarg.

From February 26 to March 2, more than 600 athletes from all over the country are participating in different winter-sports disciplines including Alpine Skiing, Nordic Ski, Snowboarding, Snow Mountaineering, Ice Hockey, Ice Skating, Ice Stock and Snow Shoe.

Speaking on the occasion, Sinha called upon the participating sportspersons to spread the message of peace, unity, goodwill, love and empowerment.

"Let us share this experience of unifying power of sports with the world," he remarked.

Gulmarg has been acknowledged as a promising winter-sports destination in the international circuit. Khelo India Winter Games is not merely an event, it is a mission to bring together the youth from all over the country and showcase our sporting talent to the world," the Lt Governor observed.

He said that the mega event is one of the many efforts aimed at engaging the youth in constructive and positive activities.

Expressing gratitude towards the Central Government for taking several measures for the development of the sports sector in J&K, Sinha observed that the Government of India under the able leadership of the Prime Minister is providing state-of-the-art sports infrastructure, world class coaching and modern resources for promotion of sports in J&K.

Underscoring the significance of sports, he said that 'Unity in Diversity' is the beauty of sports that makes us stronger. It is a powerful medium to spread peace and building a better society, he main-

tained.

The Lt Governor said that organizing winter games in the UT would promote the local talent and popularize the winter sports among the youth.

Highlighting measures taken by the UT Government for bringing a revolution in the sports sector of J&K, Sinha said that the Sports Department and J&K Sports Council have been working with great commitment to engage more youth in sports activities.

"We are taking sports to the panchayats and villages of J&K. Within a year, every panchayat in the UT will be equipped with modern sports facilities. This will give further push to the Fit India Movement," he observed.

The Lt Governor reiterated the Government's commitment to provide best quality facilities to the sportspersons so that they can bring laurels at different national and international platforms making J&K and the nation proud.

During the Back to Village-3 programme, all the 4290 Panchayats of the UT have been provided with sports kits worth Rs 20,000 each as per the local requirements, he added.

For encouragement of sports talent, the Lt Governor said that the Government is providing sustained hand-holding to budding sports talent at grassroots level and experienced coaches are being roped in to hone their skills.

The Government has signed an MoU with Suresh Raina Cricket Academy to develop promising cricketers of J&K to National & International levels with a comprehensive training programme at a professional level, he added.

Addressing the sportspersons, the Lt Governor advised them to showcase the sportsman spirit and learn from each other to enhance their skill sets.

You are role models for what the country and Jammu & Kashmir wants to see in today's heroes. This is your moment in Gulmarg and over the next 5 days, not just Jammu & Kashmir but India will be looking to you for inspiration," Sinha asked the sportspersons.

Speaking on the impact of winter games on tourism, he said that the winter games would give a further boost to tourism sector in J&K, besides giving a fillip to the socio-economic development of the region.

holding additional charge of Administrative Secretary, Tourism and Culture Departments was transferred and posted as Administrative Secretary, Tourism Department. He will also hold the charge of Administrative Secretary, Culture Department, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Syed Sehrish Asgar Director Information, J&K has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Information Department relieving Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah of the additional charge of the post.

Rahul Pandey, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department was posted as Additional Secretary in the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat. He will also hold the charge of Director Information, J&K, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Krittika Jyotsna, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as Chief Executive Officer, Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKE-DA), relieving Bipul Pathak, Principal Secretary to the Government, Science and Technology Department of the additional charge of the post. She will also hold the additional charge of Secretary, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, relieving Munir-ul-Islam, Director, Archives, Archaeology and Museums, J&K of the additional charge of the post.

Athar Aamir UI Shafi Khan, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department was posted as Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

Akshay Labroo, awaiting orders of adjustment in the



Arms and explosives recovered in Mahore, Reasi (left) and Balakote, Poonch (right) on Friday. -Excelsior pics by Romesh Mengi & Rahi Kapoor

Arms, explosives haul in Poonch, Reasi

militants, who is already in police custody.

Recoveries include four grenades, 15 pistol bullets and 10 AK-47 bullets.

Another hideout was busted by Police, Army and 126 battalion of CRPF at Upper Sildhar between Ranhati and Rousowali Tops in Mahore area of Reasi district during a search operation conducted today.

Seizure include one AK-47 rifle with two magazines and 150 cartridges, one rocket launcher, 16 UBGL grenades, four hand grenades and two VHF radio sets with antennas.

With busting of two hideouts, the terror strikes have been averted, sources said.

Retired from RS but not politics: Azad

sions as well."

"Agar Muje BJP Mein Jana Hota, Tau Mein Kab Ka Chala Gaya Hota," Azad asserted while putting all the public speculations to rest.

Azad said that the aim and effort of every Congressman should be to strengthen the party, especially in these tough times. He said that it's time to work more with close co-ordination in the wake of challenges before the party.

The veteran leader asserted that he shall continue his efforts to strengthen the party throughout the country including Jammu and Kashmir by whatever way it is possible.

Referring to his long innings of 42 years in the party and the legislative experience, Azad said he had worked with many Prime Ministers right from Indira Gandhi to Dr Manmohan Singh and remained Union Minister for several terms. He said the present time is more challenging and every Congressman shall have to put concerted efforts.

He said that difference in the Congress ideology and the BJP is that Congress believes in uniting the society by respecting the diversity in our country, while the latter creates hatred and division.

Azad ruled out any differences within the party at any levels and said that there could be some differences of perceptions but not the goal. The aim is to suggest ways to strengthen the organization, in view of his experience and to promote talent in the party at various levels.

The former Chief Minister remembered those partymen who lost their lives during COVID, especially former Member Parliament Madan Lal Sharma and former Minister Mohd Sharief Niaz. He also cautioned the party leaders and workers to take all pre-

cautions against fresh COVID wave.

Earlier, Azad was accorded rousing reception at Jammu airport and later in the Congress office this evening by the J&K Pradesh Congress Committee, on his arrival from New Delhi today afternoon.

Led by JKPCP chief GA Mir, senior leaders of PCC including former Ministers/Legislators, Corporators and leaders of frontal wings, DCC presidents and DCC Urban and Rural accorded rousing reception to Azad. Amidst raising of slogans, he was welcomed in the party office by large number of senior leaders of the party.

JKPCC president presented a shawl to the visiting leader on behalf of the party as a token of respect and felicitation of his role and contribution at the national level and as Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha.

Azad thanked the PCC leaders for the hearty welcome at the party headquarters.

While speaking on the occasion, PCC chief GA Mir lauded the role played by Azad through out his long public life and termed him as a great ambassador of Jammu and Kashmir at the national level for over four decades.

Referring to his contributions in various capacities, Mir hoped that Azad would continue to guide the J&K Congress unit to work more vigorously for the strengthening of the party in Jammu and

3 OGWs, 2 youth on way to cross LoC held

to meet him.

They have been identified as Mohammad Rameez Rather, 27, mechanic by profession, Javid Ahmad Rather, 22, and Aijaz Ahmad Sofi, 27, mechanic by profession, all residents of Kupwara.

Police registered a case (FIR no 48/2021) at Police Station Kupwara under relevant sections of law and started further investigation.

In the meantime, security forces today arrested two Over Ground Workers (OGWs) of militants in Bandipora area of North Kashmir.

Police said that acting on specific information, Bandipora police along with 13 RR and 45 Battalion of CRPF apprehended two militant associates of proscribed LeT, in a joint operation at Bonikhan Mohalla area of Hajin Town and recovered arms, ammunition from their possession which includes two live hand grenades and eight live rounds of AK 47 rifle.

They have been identified as Ghulam Mohidin Khan son of Nazir Ahmad Khan of Paribal Hajin and Riyaz

Ahmad Bhat son of Abdul Ahad Bhat of Bonikhan Mohalla Hajin in Bandipora.

"On preliminary enquiry, it was revealed that the accused were associated with LeT and were providing shelter, logistics and other material support to LeT militants in Sumbal and Hajin areas of Bandipora district", police said.

Police have registered a case (FIR No. 16/2021 under relevant sections of law) in Police Station Hajin and further investigation are going on.

In the meantime, police and CRPF today conducted surprise checks and search operations in several parts of Srinagar. They cordoned off Goni Khan and Hari Singh High Street area of Srinagar and conducted checks of vehicles and frisking of people. Those wearing Pheran were asked to remove it.

Surprise naka checking was also done at several places including Amira Kadal, Jehangir Chowk and Bypass. The vehicles at these places were stopped and people were frisked and vehicles checked.

One dies of COVID, 85 test +ve

district.

Total Corona cases in the Jammu region have gone up to 51958. Among them, 184 are active while 51049 have recovered from the virus and there have been 725 casualties in the region.

Meanwhile, Kashmir reported 69 cases of COVID-19 today.

One person died of Corona in Kashmir today taking the death toll of COVID-19 patients in J&K to 1596.

Those who tested positive include 47 from Srinagar, 8 Baramulla, 1 Budgam, 3 Pulwama, 2 Kupwara, 3 Anantnag, 2 Bandipora, 1 Ganderbal, and 2 from Shopian.

The number of positive cases in Kashmir division have reached 74,328 including 72,478 recoveries and 1,231 deaths.

The number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir are 803 including 619 from Kashmir division.

With 101 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached 123,527, which is 97.82 percent of the total cases.

Meanwhile, the UT of Ladakh today reported two new COVID positive cases, both in Leh district.

The UT now has 54 active positive cases.

9 officers adjusted, shifted

General Administration Department has been posed posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Srinagar (West), vice Hamida Akhter, who will report in the office of Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir.

Gazanffer Ali, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation was transferred and posted as Additional Inspector General of Registration, Kashmir.

Gulzar Ahmad Dar, Additional Inspector General of Registration, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, against an available vacancy.

Kashmir, where Congress is the only hope of the people.

He referred to the historical role of Congress party, especially the special bonds of relationship of Nehru-Gandhi family with the people of Jammu and Kashmir all through from pre 1947 till date. He lauded the efforts and the role played by Azad at the time of crisis, especially since August 5, 2019 and said that people are highly appreciative of his contributions and look forward to him for his guidance and leadership.

Earlier, senior Congress leaders Mula Ram, Raman Bhalra, Ravinder Sharma, Yogesh Sawhney, Th Balwan Singh and Manmohan Singh spoke on the occasion in his honour, while prominent others present included, Taj Mohi-Ud-Din, Kanta Bhan, Rajneesh Sharma, Ashok Sharma, Shabir Ahmed Khan, Th Balbir Singh, Mohd Amin Bhat, Shah Mohd Choudhary, Ashok Dogra, Th Hari Singh Chib, Krishan Lal Bhagat, Farooq Katoch, Udhay Bhanu Chib, Gurdarshan Singh, Vinod Sharma, Suresh Dogra, Sunny Parihar (NSUI), KLGupta, HL Abrol, Vandana Sharma, Nadeem Niaz, Imran Zaffar, Corporators-Dwarka Choudhary, Ritu Choudhary, Bhanu Mahajan, Sobat Ali, Qayoom Mir (DCC Member), Pawan Raina, Shashi Sharma, Sanjeev Sharma, Thomas Khokhar, Rashid Choudhary, Kapil Singh, Rajveer Singh, Rajiv Saraf, Sahil Sharma, Dr Karan Bhagat and Ricky Dalotra.



‘G23’ Congress leaders in Jammu on Friday. ‘G23’ leaders in Jammu

the Gandhi Global Family, has invited the ‘G23’ (known as Group of 23 who had shot off a letter to Sonia Gandhi seeking changes in the Congress) to Jammu for the function.

The ‘G23’ leaders who reached Jammu today include Bhupinder Singh Hooda, former Haryana Chief Minister, Kapil

Sibal, Anand Sharma, Akhilesh Prasad Singh and Vivek Tankha, all MPs. Rajya Sabha and Manish Tiwari, MP Lok Sabha besides former MP Raj Babbbar.

They have been specially invited to the function to be held in Jammu tomorrow. They will return to the Union capital after the function.

US, UN, EU welcome India, Pak ceasefire agreement

WASHINGTON/UNITED NATIONS, Feb 26:

The US, the UN and the EU have welcomed the announcement by the militaries of India and Pakistan to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir and other sectors, and hoped that it would lead to greater peace and stability in South Asia.

In a significant move to ease tension, India and Pakistan on Thursday said they have agreed to strictly observe all agreements on the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors.

Reacting to the development, the US said it viewed the ceasefire agreement as a positive step towards greater peace and stability in South Asia.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that the President Joe Biden administration remains closely engaged with a range of leaders and officials in the region, including those in Pakistan.

At the United Nations, the

spokesman for the UN chief, Antonio Guterres said the Secretary General welcomed the move of India and Pakistan and hoped that it will provide an opportunity for further dialogue.

"The Secretary-General is encouraged by the joint statement issued by the militaries of India and Pakistan on their agreement to observing the ceasefire at the Line of Control in Kashmir and engaging through established mechanisms," Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN chief, said at the daily press briefing on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) on Friday welcomed the ceasefire agreement reached between India and Pakistan.

Nabila Massrali, Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, EU, on tweeted: "The EU welcomes the agreement between India and Pakistan to observe a strict ceasefire at the Line of Control in Kashmir and to engage through the established mechanisms. (PTI)

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
REVENUE DEPARTMENT
CIVIL SECRETARIAT, J&K JAMMU.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Facilitating Registrations for General Public.

For the convenience of the citizens and to decrease the waiting period of slots, the Department of Revenue has initiated the process of Re-scheduling of appointment slots for Registration, coupled with increase in the number of Registration Slots from 20 to 25 and also notifying Saturdays as Registration days.

Through the medium of this notice, those who have booked their slots for registration from 20.03.2021 to 21.05.2021 can re-schedule the same by contacting their jurisdictional Sub Registrar Offices by or before 01.03.2021. No re-scheduling request will be accepted thereafter as the remaining slots will be opened for fresh Registrations from 02.03.2021. The contact details of the SROs are as under:

S.No	SRO	Jurisdiction	Name	Contact No.	Mail id
1	Jammu North	Niabat Mishriwala	Mr. Farukh Qazi	9419157491	srojammunorth@gmail.com
2	Jammu North I	Niabat Muthi	Ms. Kusum Sharma	94192330099	kusumsharma792@gmail.com
3	Jammu North II	Tehsil Bhalwal	Mr. Pawan Kotwal	7006860978	sdmjammunorth@gmail.com
4	Jammu South I	Tehsil Bahu Tehsil Mandial	Mr. Surinder Bhagat	9419196955	subregistrarjammysouth@gmail.com
5	Jammu South II	Tehsil Bishnah Tehsil Arnia	Mr. Abhishake Abrol	9419664077	abhisshake.abrol@gmail.com
6	Jammu South II	Tehsil Jammu South	Mr. Khalid Hussain	9419668528	khalidwafa725@gmail.com
7	Srinagar Khaas	Tehsil Chanagora, Tehsil Pantha Chowk	Mr. Sandeep Singh Bali	9419067456	balisandeep@rediffmail.com acnazoolsg@gmail.com
8	Srinagar Khaas I	Tehsil Srinagar South	Mr. Owais Mushtaq	9419005717	owais.mushtaq@jk.gov.in
9	Srinagar Khaas II	Tehsil Eidgah	Ms. Hameeda Akhter	9682666597	subdivisionalmagistratewst@gmail.com

This is a special measure initiated by the department in these offices to decrease the waiting period.

DIP/J-12495/20
Dt. 26-2-2021

Sd/-
Additional Secretary to the Government