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NC, Cong enter into pre-poll alliance for Kargil Council

The Chairman will be rotated for two and half years while the two parties will have two Executive Councilors each (who have rank of the Minister).

In 2018 elections, NC and Congress had contested elections to the Council separately but joined hand post poll to form the City Government due to hung verdict.

NC leader Feroz Khan is Chairman of the Council for almost five years now.

The leaders of Congress and National Conference said the decision to have pre-poll alliance was to keep BJP and its like-minded parties, especially RSS, at bay.

"Time has come for secular parties to stand united against BJP and its like-minded parties to safeguard the Constitution and democracy," working president of Ladakh unit of Congress Asgar Ali

via the Pahalgam route of the yatra. "I first went to Mata Vaishnidevi and from there to Amarnath cave shrine.

"It was my wish to walk carrying the national flag. I wanted to see that people say the situation in Kashmir is bad, but I did not feel anything like that. The situation is good," Sharma said.

Sharma, however, took the Baltal axis, in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, to come back from the cave shrine. He has

UP priest walks 700 kms to reach Amarnath cave

now set out to walk to the other Lord Shiva temple -- Kedarnath - in Uttarakhand.

"After August 2019 development (when J&K was bifurcated into two Union Territories and its special status was revoked), we have learnt a lot of lessons and the time demands us to come together to fight for our future," he said.

Roohiyas clash with police, demand release from Hiranagar 'holding centre'

Bengali-dialect speaking Muslim minority in Myanmar. Following persecution in their country, many of them entered India illegally through Bangladesh and took shelter in Jammu and other parts of the country.

Many political parties and social organisations in Jammu have been urging the Centre for the deportation of Roohiyas and Bangladeshi nationals, alleging that their presence is a "conspiracy to alter the demographic character" in the region and a "threat to peace".

More than 13,700 foreigners, including Roohiyas Muslims and Bangladeshi nationals, are settled in Jammu and Samba districts of Jammu and Kashmir, where their population has increased by over 6,000 between 2008 and 2016, according to Government data.

Meanwhile, DDC member, Hiranagar Abhinandan Sharma has demanded that the Government should take immediate steps for deporting the Roohiyas and Bangladeshis from the UT of J&K.

Sharma told Excelsior that they are becoming a law and order problem in the UT and before it takes a critical turn the Government should frame a policy to deport them to their own country.

He said J&K has been in the grip of turmoil for last 35 years and lodging Roohiyas and Bangladeshis here in holding centres can also aggravate situation further. He said it is not understood why the Government is not taking a concrete decision on them and deporting them to their country.

16,000 pay obeisance at holy cave, number mounts to 2.67 lakh

from both the tracks. The yatriys who performed darshan at cave shrine today included 11,155 male, 4085 female, 475 children, 300 Sadhus and one Sadhvi.

Officials said that the chopper services also plied normally during the day, adding 17,453 pilgrims were staying at Baltal base camp during last night while 20,501 left the base camp for their home.

Officials said 10,138 pilgrims reached Baltal base camp after performing darshan at cave shrine. There were 7958 pilgrims staying at Panchtami, the last transit camp on way to holy cave while 11,903 left Panchtami for darshan towards holy cave.

Officials said that 8,425 pilgrims were staying at Sheshnag during the last night.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of 6,225 pilgrims left Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas here for the twin base camps of Nunwan-Pahalgam in South Kashmir and Baltal in Central Kashmir under tight security arrangements early this morning in a cavalcade of 217 vehicles.

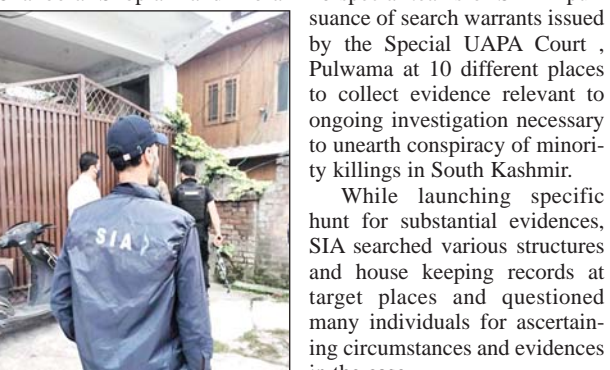
Among them 3714 pilgrims preferred the traditional and longest Nunwan-Pahalgam track while 2511 preferred shortest Baltal track.

They included 4335 male, 1748 female, 25 children, 105 Sadhus, and 12 Sadhvis.

The 62-day yatra will culminate on Shrawan Purnima coin-

SIA searches 10 places

These included residential houses of three active militants of LeT Danish Hamid Thoker alias Khalid, Ubaid Padder both from Chakoora Shopian and Abrar



The State Investigation Agency (SIA) Kashmir during raids at South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday.

-Excelsior/Sajad Dar
Farooq Wani of Heff Shirmal. SIA is investigating a case FIR No 14/2023 under relevant Sections of law of Police Station, Litter, Pulwama which pertains to killing of Sanjay Sharma, Bank ATM guard, dur-

MHA seeks from J&K details of employees occupying sensitive posts beyond 3 years

so that the same is forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, for further action in the matter," read the communication of the General Administration Department.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has mentioned in the communication that delay in such matters is viewed seriously by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and Department of Personnel and Training.

It is pertinent to mention here that in a meeting taken by the Cabinet Secretary on 10.08.2015 with senior officers of different Ministries on mechanism to ensure probity among Government servants, it was emphasized that rotation needs to be carried out in respect of sensitive posts and non-sensitive posts and review and screening of officers under Fundamental Rule 56(J) within the Ministries. The DoPT shall monitor implementation and obtain compliance from all Ministries in this regard.

Accordingly, all Ministries/Departments were requested to look into the matter and carry out rotation in respect of sensitive and non-sensitive posts.

Sources in the J&K administration told EXCELSIOR that no doubt there may be certain cases where continuation of some officers/ officials on particular posts beyond three years becomes imperative due to compelling circumstances/ technical grounds but this practice cannot be allowed to persist as the same amounts to giving sufficient chances for the development of vested interests of the officials concerned".

It is worthwhile to mention here that Chief Secretary has from time to time issued instructions to all the departments to ensure rotation of staff from sensitive to non-sensitive and vice-versa and even asked the Administrative Secretaries to ensure strict compliance of the same.

Amarnath Ji pilgrims at a registration counter in Jammu on Tuesday.



Amarnath Ji pilgrims at a registration counter in Jammu on Tuesday. -Excelsior/Rakesh

coiding with Raksha Bandhan festival falling on August 31.

The rush of pilgrims is picking up day by day as thousands of yatriis also reached here from different parts of country to proceed towards holy cave today.

The yatriis are in jubilant mood and they want to come every year for darshan.

Sonika, a teenager, who had come for the first time for darshan from Indore, MP along with a group of her family members including her grandfather, said she was very much pleased to see the hospitality of the people in Jammu and the arrangements made by Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) and the administration.

She said that if Lord Shiva willing she would come for pilgrimage of Bhole Baba every year.

Similar were the views of Ramnik Yadav from Lucknow, UP who had visited holy cave three earlier. He said his urge of visiting the holy shrine resting in the lap of Himalayas will never end and he wants to visit every year to bow in the feet of Lord Shiva at cave shrine.

He said since he visited the holy cave first time before the dreaded COVID gripped the world, he saw a complete transformation in his life and this all has happened with the grace of Bhole Nath. "I found solace while reaching the cave shrine so I want to visit again and again," he added.

4 Pak militants gunned down in Surankote, involvement in Mendhar attack not ruled out

"Special Forces (para comandos) were also used in the encounter at Surankote to eliminate four trapped militants," the officials said.

They added that survival of the militants was threat to civilians as they were in possession of sophisticated weapons and could have carried out terror attacks anywhere in Rajouri and Poonch districts to disturb peace.

"With their elimination, people have heaved a sigh of relief," they said. In fact, the officials strongly lauded cooperation of people in killing of the militants.

The killing of four militants comes a day after security forces foiled a major infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Krishna Ghati Sector of Poonch on the intervening night of July 16 and 17.

Earlier in the day, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu zone, Mukesh Singh confirmed the killing of Pakistani marking besides large quantity of magazines and ammunition.



Brig MP Singh and SSP Poonch Vinay addressing a press conference in Surankote on Tuesday.

"This joint action by Indian Army and Jammu Kashmir Police has resulted in saving the lives and contributed towards maintaining peace in the region. The relentless efforts by security forces in past few months have started

that the operations against militants would continue with renewed vigour to make the region terrorism-free.

The officer lauded the cooperation of the security forces as well as the locals and said the people played a key role in the successful operation which speaks volumes about the love for their nation and maintaining peace.

Referring to the recent killing of militants on the LoC while attempting to sneak into this side from across the border, Brigadier Singh said, "It shows the neighbouring country (Pakistan) not stop and make continue attempts to disturb our region. We will not stop and eliminate all terrorists who are hiding in the area."

SSP Poonch Vinay Sharma said the successful operation is the glaring example of the synergy between the Army and the police in the fight against terrorism.

"The joint operation against militants will continue," Sharma said, adding security forces and police are committed to make Poonch free of militants.

An official statement issued by the Army on Surankote encounter said the Indian Army along with JKP and other sister agencies will continue their operations with renewed vigour to flush out remaining militants in the areas.

"Recent contacts on the LoC, particularly in Sarla and Nowshera sectors, allude a bigger game plan of spreading instability in the region," the statement said.

Army and police strongly appreciated the cooperation rendered by local people in making operation against the militants successful.

2 labourers buried alive, 6 injured as landslide hits construction site

Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur Sachin Kumar Vaishya, SSP Udhampur, Dr Vinod Kumar, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Joginder Singh Jasrotia, Tehsildar Udhampur Amit Verma and other officer also reached the spot and monitored the rescue operation, which continued for more than five hours.

The injured labourers were shifted to District Hospital Udhampur for the treatment and their condition was stated to be stable.

The deceased were identified as Anirudh Kumar Nayak (42), son of Nand Kishor, resident of Nayak Muhalla (Madhya Pradesh) and Rakesh Kumar (22), resident of Ghordi.

The injured persons have been identified as Devi Din Kushwah (18), son of Ishwar Dayal of MP A/P Near CEO office Udhampur; Shoket Ali (25), son of Mohd Qasim of Dandyal; Druvish Sharma (18), son of Bishan Sharma of Saillan Talab; Master Mian (45), son of Khilab Mian of Bihar A/P Saillan Talab; Shamiya (30) wife of Balram of Jofara Talab and Thakur Dass (25), son of Payare Lal of MP A/P Saillan Talab.

The under construction building, where the mishap took place, is purportedly owned by one Vijay Kumar of Rannagar, who is a contractor by profession. It was not clear whether he had taken permission for construction of the building or was it being constructed as per the approval.

Some locals alleged that complaints were made to Municipal Committee Udhampur officials against 'illegal' cutting of the hillock thus posing danger to the nearby houses, but no action was taken.

26 Oppn parties form INDIA to unitedly take on NDA in 2024

While Kharge evaded a direct reply on who would be the face of the new alliance, earlier in his opening remarks at the meeting, he said the Congress is not interested in power or the post of prime minister.

"Our intention in this meeting is not to gain power for ourselves. It is to protect our Constitution, democracy, secularism and social justice," he said. Addressing the joint press conference with other leaders, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said they have decided to prepare an action plan where they will talk about their ideology and programmes.

"The fight is against the ideology of the BJP and their thinking, they are attacking the country, unemployment is rampant, and the country's wealth is being taken away from millions and handed over to a few of the friends of the BJP and the Prime Minister," Gandhi said.

"We are defending the Constitution, the voice of Indians and the idea of India. You know what happens to anyone who wants to fight the idea of India... This is a fight between INDIA and the BJP, it is a fight between INDIA and Narendra Modi," the former Congress chief said.

Kharge said the second meeting of the opposition bloc after the Patna conclave was a very important one for saving democracy and the Constitution in the interest of the country's people.

"Our alliance will be called Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA)," Kharge said.

According to multiple sources, the name of the opposition front was suggested by TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and there was a lot of discussion on the full form of the term, INDIA. Kharge also said that "there are some differences between us but we have put that behind... We are together in the interest of the country... We'll fight the 2024 Lok Sabha elections unitedly and we will come out with great success."

Kharge also launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Modi, saying he is now trying to bring together parties that had splintered and this shows that "he is afraid of opposition parties".

His remarks came just ahead of a meeting of 38 members of the NDA (National Democratic Alliance), including some new entrants. Taking a swipe at Modi, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said some people say "we are fighting for family", they should know that "the country is our family and we are fighting for our country".

The Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) party chief also asserted that the opposition parties' fight is not against a person but against "dictatorship". "People are feeling afraid as to what will happen, we want to say to them that there was a movie 'Main Hoon Na', so they should not worry, 'Hum Hain Na,'" Thackeray said. One person and one party is not the country, he said.

Kharge and Thackeray's remarks came after Modi, earlier in the day referred to the Bengaluru meeting as a "conclave of the corrupt" and alleged that the opposition's mantra was "of, by and for the family".

In her remarks at the presser, Banerjee, while acknowledging all leaders present, referred to Rahul Gandhi as "our favourite".

Referring to the name of the alliance adopted, Banerjee said, "BJP, can you challenge INDIA?"

IAS, JKAS officers transferred; given addl charge

Secretary to the Government, Skill Development Department.

Yasha Mudgal, Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Cooperatives Department, shall hold the charge of Administrative Secretary, ARI and Trainings Department, in addition to her own duties, till further orders.

Deepika Kumari Sharma, Secretary in the Jal Shakti Department, holding additional charge of Executive Director, Mubarak Mandi Heritage Society, was transferred and posted as Custodian General, J&K, against an available vacancy. She shall continue to hold the additional charge of the post of Executive Director, Mubarak Mandi Heritage Society, till further orders.

Sandesh Kumar Sharma, Special Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Poonch.

Maikzada Sheraz-ul Haq, Additional District Development Commissioner, Poonch was transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Culture Department.

Gurmukh Singh, Joint Transport Commissioner has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Forensic Science Laboratory, Jammu, against an available vacancy.

Vinay Samotra, Additional Secretary in the J&K Public Service Commission was transferred and

We love our motherland, we are the patriotic people of the country, we are for farmers, Dalits, we are for the country, for the world."

"The only job the regime at the Centre does today is to buy and sell Governments, she alleged.

"INDIA will win, our country will win and BJP will lose," Banerjee said. She said the opposition bloc has imposed section 420 on the ruling alliance with today's announcements. While section 420 of the Indian Penal Code deals with cheating cases, Banerjee did not elaborate on her remarks.

Gandhi said the fight was not between the opposition parties and the BJP, but it was a "fight for the idea of India that was being attacked". Asked about who would be the face of the alliance, Kharge did not give a direct answer and said the coordination committee and a convener will be named in Mumbai.

Later, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh tweeted "Article 1 of the Indian Constitution. India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States. This is the spirit behind the INDIA announced by 26 political parties in Bengaluru today".

In his remarks at the presser, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said Prime Minister Modi got the opportunity to do a lot for the country in nine years, but no development has happened in any sector. While most leaders, including Sharad Pawar, were present at the presser, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad and Bihar Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav had left before the press conference as they had to catch a flight.

The 26 opposition parties are -the-Congress, TMC, DMK, AAP, JD(U), RJD, JMM, NCP (Sharad Pawar), Shiv Sena (UBT), SP, NC, PDP, CPI(M), CPI, RLD, MDMK, Kongunadu Makkal Desia Katchi (KMDK), VCK, RSP, CPI-ML (Liberation), Forward Bloc, IUML, Kerala Congress (Joseph), Kerala Congress (Mani), Apna Dal (Kamerawadi), and the Manithaneyya Makkal Katchi (MMK).

In their 'Samuhik Sankalp (joint resolution)' released after the meeting, the opposition parties demanded the implementation of the caste census while asserting that they have come together to defeat the "hated and violence being manufactured against minorities" as well as "rising crimes against women, Dalits, tribals and Kashmiri Pandits". They also expressed "grave concern" over the "humanitarian tragedy" that has "destroyed" Manipur.

"There is a deliberate attempt to weaken the federal structure of our polity. The role of governors and LGs (lieutenant governors) in non-BJP ruled States has exceeded all constitutional norms," they said in the resolution. They also alleged that the "brazen misuse" of agencies by the BJP Government against political rivals is undermining democracy.

The 26 parties have a combined strength of about 150 seats in Lok Sabha, as against over 330 of the NDA, and are in power individually or in alliance in Delhi and 10 States. Top opposition leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, and former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Akhilesh Yadav along with presidents and leaders of several parties attended the meeting. The leaders also held informal deliberations at a dinner meeting on Monday. (PTI)

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