

Arms, ammunition seized by CBI during search operation in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali

P-7

Divyanka Tripathi reflects on selective role choices, says, 'I don't disrespect myself anymore'

P-10



Board exams twice a year from 2025

The Ministry of Education has asked the CBSE to work out logistics for conducting board exams twice a year from the 2025-26 academic session, according to sources.

The plan for introduction of a semester system has been ruled out, they said. The ministry and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will hold consultations with school principals next month for conducting board exams

Cont. on P9 >

H&UDD nominates Katoch as Nodal Officer

The Housing and Urban Development Department (H&UDD) has nominated a new Nodal Officer for undertaking IEC activities.

A government order says that H&UDD has nominated Yoginder Katoch, Joint Director, Planning, as Nodal Officer for the implementation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities undertaken by the department.

Meanwhile, the department also cancelled the attachment of 16 officers/officials ordered by CEOs/EOs of the Municipal Councils and the Committees of Kashmir division.

Separatist ideology 'dead' in J&K: Sajad Lone

Separatist-turned-mainstream politician and People's Conference chief Sajad Lone today said that the ideology of separatism was "dead" in Jammu and Kashmir as people had realised it was futile.

"India is our land and there is no ambiguity about that," he said and called for an end to violence.

Asked if the separatist ideology was dead and buried in J&K, Lone said, "I think yes, it is. I think it

Cont. on P9 >

Process initiated to dismiss CRPF DIG in sexual harassment case

NEW DELHI, Apr 26: The Union Government has initiated the process of dismissing a DIG ranked former chief sports officer of the CRPF on charges of sexual harassment levelled against him by some women working in the paramilitary force, official sources said Friday.

A notice for dismissal has been issued against Deputy Inspector General Khajan Singh after the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) accepted the recommenda

Cont. on P9 >

Use of school goes in poll campaign by Mufti, NCPDR seeks probe

NEW DELHI, APR 26: The apex child rights body NCPDR has asked the Election Commission to initiate a probe into the alleged use of schoolgoing children for election campaigning by PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti in the Rajouri-Anantnag parliamentary constituency.

The action followed a report received by the Commission indicating that children were involved in political activities related to Mufti's campaign.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) in a com

Cont. on P9 >

Phase 2 of LS polls

Jammu constituency records impressive 71.91 pc turnout

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, APR 26

Amid multi-tier security arrangements, voters turned up at polling stations in plains of Jammu & on the higher reaches of Reasi to exercise their right to franchise in the Jammu parliamentary constituency which went to polls today in the second phase of general elections in the country, recording an impressive turnout of 71.91 pc.

The voting in Jammu constituency started at 7 am on a dull note but it picked up later. Long queues of voters were witnessed at the polling stations across the constituency. There was no report of any untoward incident from anywhere in the constituency and the voting passed off peacefully, according to officials.

The voting process went



underway at 2,416 polling stations at 7 am and culminated at 7 pm.

Across various assembly segments of the parliamentary constituency, voters, especially youth and first time voters, were seen standing in queues much ahead of the scheduled time for polling.

The Election Commis-

sion had put in place all necessary arrangements to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process.

As per the final official data, the constituency witnessed an overall polling percentage of 71.91.

As per earlier reports, Akhnoor (SC) recorded 74.03 pc, Bahu 62.34 pc, Bishnah (SC) 71.33 pc,

Chhamb 71.06 pc, Gulabgarh (ST) 71.47 pc, Jammu East 66.11 pc, Jammu North 67.29 pc, Jammu West 62.82 pc, Kalakote Sunderbani 66.40 pc, Marh (SC) 73.00 pc, Nagrota 71.39 pc, RS Pura Jammu South 68.11 pc, Ramgarh (SC) 69.76 pc, Reasi 71.65 pc, Samba

Cont. on P9 >

Congress manifesto bears imprint of Muslim League: Modi

NEW DELHI, APR 26: Reiterating that the Congress manifesto bears the imprint of Muslim League, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said that youth and women voters had been powering the strong NDA support.

After voting for the second phase of Lok Sabha elections concluded this evening, he said the unparalleled support for the NDA was going to disappoint the Opposition even more.

"The Congress manifesto bears the imprint of Muslim League," Modi said and added that the party's "injustice towards Hindus



stands exposed". "I say poor people have the first claim on the country's resources. Congress, RJD and their allies say the first claim is of their vote bank. They want to steal your belongings, even mangalsutras of women", alleged the Prime Minister. "The Congress people do

Cont. on P9 >

Apex Court seeks EC reply on NOTA

NEW DELHI, APR 26: In a significant development amid the ongoing general elections, the Supreme Court on Friday asked for a response from the poll panel on a PIL seeking framing of rules to nullify an election and order fresh one if NOTA (none of the above) option gets majority over other candidates.

The top court issued notice to the Election Commission on the PIL filed by author, activist and motivational speaker Shiv Khera.

The NOTA option is provided to the voters in the elections in pursuance of the 2013 apex court verdict. The top court, in its 2013 judgement, had held that "a

Cont. on P9 >

61 pc turnout in phase 2 of polls; Tripura records 78.53 pc

NEW DELHI, APR 26: Nearly 61 per cent polling was reported today in the second phase of Lok Sabha elections, covering 88 seats across 13 states amid few complaints of EVM glitches and bogus voting in some states.

Voters in some villages of Uttar Pradesh's Mathura, Rajasthan's Banswara and Maharashtra's Parbhani were boycotting the polls over various issues but were later persuaded by authorities to cast their franchise.

Polling for the second stage of the seven-phase elections started at 7 am and ended at 6 pm. Several states experienced intense heat conditions. The first phase of polling was held on April 19 in 102 seats across 21 states and Union territories.

The Election Commission (EC) said polling remained largely peaceful. The tentative figure at 7 pm of voter turnout of 60.96 per cent is likely to go upwards when reports from all polling stations are obtained, the EC said, adding

voters reaching polling stations till the end of polling hour are allowed to cast their vote.

The National Democratic alliance (NDA) under Prime Minister Modi is seeking a stronger majority for a third consecutive term, while the constituents of the opposition INDIA bloc are hoping for a rebound after facing reverses in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

Election Commission data showed the highest voting percentage was recorded in Tripura which registered 78.53 per cent polling, followed by Manipur at 77.18 while the turnout was in Uttar Pradesh at 53.71 per cent and Maharashtra 53.84 per cent.

Polling was held in all 20 seats of Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, 8 seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, 6 seats in Madhya Pradesh, 5 seats each in Assam and Bihar, 3 seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and 1 seat each in Manipur, Tripura and

Jammu and Kashmir.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar and actor-turned-politician Arun Govil, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's brother DK Suresh (Cong), and former Karnataka chief minister HD Kumaraswamy (JDS) are among the key candidates while BJP's Hema Malini, Om Birla and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat seeking a hat-trick of wins from their respective constituencies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the morning urged people to cast their votes in record numbers and said a high voter turnout strengthens democracy. Stressing on the importance of each vote, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi issued impassioned appeals asking people to step out and exercise their franchise in the second phase of the Lok Sabha election.

After the end of polling, Modi in a tweet said,

Cont. on P9 >

Land sinks at Ramban; 50 houses, power infra damaged

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, APR 26

Due to sinking of land at Pernote in Ramban district of Jammu, more than 50 houses, four electricity towers, a receiving station and a main road were damaged.

The houses started developing cracks and the road connectivity between Gool and Ramban was snapped last evening, following the sudden 'sinking of land' in Pernote village, prompting several families to move to safer places.

There was, however, no report of any casualty, offi-



cially said.

Ramban Deputy Commissioner Baseer-ul-Haq Choudhary visited Pernote, 5 km from the district headquarters, this morning and assured assistance to the affected families and restoration of essential services, including electricity.

"This is a natural disas-

ter and being the head of the district, I take full responsibility for providing food and shelter to the affected families," he said.

"The authorities have summoned experts from geology & mining department to know the cause behind the sinking of the

Cont. on P9 >

Sgr boat tragedy: Minor boy's body recovered after 11 days

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, APR 26

The body of a minor boy, who drowned after a boat capsized in Jhelum at Gandbal in Srinagar 11 days ago, was recovered from the river today near Raj Bagh.

Officials said the body of Farhan Waseem Parray, son of Waseem Parray of Gandbal, was retrieved near Old Zero bridge at Rajbagh, Srinagar. It was fished out by rescue teams

Cont. on P9 >

2 top terrorists killed in Sopore gunbattle

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, APR 26

In an encounter that broke out in Check Mohalla of Nowpora in Sopore area of the valley's Baramullah district yesterday, two top terrorists were today shot dead by security forces. Two soldiers and a civilian also sustained injuries.

Officials said a joint team of Army's 22 RR, police & CRPF laid a cordon & search operation in Nowpora village of Sopore, following credible input about

the presence of terrorists in the area.

As the joint team approached the suspected spot, the hiding militants opened fire which was returned. While the intermittent exchange of fire was in progress, a civilian, who was identified as Farooq Ahmad Dar, was caught in cross-firing, the officials added.

Dar, who sustained a bullet injury in his shoulder, was admitted to hospital and his condition was stated to be stable.

While intermittent ex-

change of fire continued throughout last night, forces foiled every attempt of the holed up terrorists to flee under the cover of darkness. Two terrorists were gunned down by the forces this afternoon, the officials added.

One of the slain terrorists was identified as Saifullah while the identity of the other was being ascertained, officials said.

Two Army personnel were also injured in the gunfight. Both of them were shifted to a hospital,

Cont. on P9 >

SC rejects plea for full VVPAT-EVM tally; upholds EVM usage

NEW DELHI, APR 26: As the country voted in round two of Election 2024, the Supreme Court on Friday rejected pleas seeking complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) and said "blindly distrusting" any aspect of the system can breed unwarranted scepticism.

Weighing in on the intensely debated issue that has long divided parties, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta delivered two concurring verdicts and dismissed all the pleas in the matter,

including those seeking to go back to ballot papers in elections. It also maintained that "democracy is all about striving to build harmony and trust between all institutions".

The Supreme Court's long anticipated verdict quickly found echo in the political landscape with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying at a rally in Araria in Bihar that it was a "tight slap" on the Congress-led opposition which now must "apologise" for committing the "sin of creating distrust" against electronic voting machines.

The Congress on its part

said in a post on X that it will continue with its political campaign on greater use of VVPATs to increase public trust in the electoral process.

The apex court issued two directives on the matter. Pronouncing his verdict, Justice Khanna directed the Election Commission to seal and store units used to load symbols for 45 days after the symbols have been loaded to electronic voting machines in strong rooms.

The apex court also allowed engineers of the EVM manufacturers to verify the microcontroller of the ma

Cont. on P9 >

People tasted 'real democracy' under Modi: Jitendra



Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, APR 26

Union minister Jitendra Singh today said that people of the country, especially those in Jammu and Kashmir, had tasted "real democracy" under the leadership of Prime Minister

Cont. on P9 >

Cong wanting to give quota meant for SCs, OBCs to Muslims: Nadda

NEW DELHI, APR 26: Bharatiya Janata Party president J.P. Nadda on Friday accused the Congress of seeking to snatch the rights of SCs, STs and OBCs to benefit Muslims, alleging that it is the hidden agenda of the opposition party.

Continuing with the BJP's attempts to project the Congress as a party championing interests of Muslims at the cost of traditionally deprived Hindu groups, Nadda said the opposition party has long been making the grounds for the minority community to be de-



clared as SCs and give them reservation.

He issued a video statement as the second phase of the Lok Sabha polls got underway. Nadda cited the then prime minister Manmohan Singh's 2006 statement of minorities, especially Muslims, having the

first rights on the country's resources and added that he made similar comments in April 2009.

The Congress has accused the BJP of selectively quoting Singh and claimed that the ruling party has resorted to spreading falsehoods and communal division for polarisation during the elections due to a lack of public support for it in the ongoing polls.

Nadda, however, noted that the Congress has in some states tried to provide reservation to Muslims, in

Cont. on P9 >