

## PM Modi gave Suvidha...

here, Singh, who is the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) candidate from Udhampur in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, said most of the Centre's schemes are women and youth-centric, without any terms and conditions or mortgage, and the only guarantee is "Modi ki guarantee".

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given suvidha (facility), swasthya (healthcare facilities) and samman (respect) to women. In other words, he has provided facilities for the convenience of women, thereby also taking care of their healthy well-being and, at the same time, according them the respect and esteem that they deserve," he said.The Union minister of state for personnel recalled that in his very first Independence Day address after taking over as prime minister, Modi had given a call for building toilets.

"The impact was so magical that within the first year itself, more than four Lakh toilets were built and it turned into a mass movement. In doing so, Modi not only provided a facility to deprived women but also gave them a dignified and healthy option," Singh said.Similarly, he said, when the prime minister provided gas cylinders under the "Ujjwala" scheme, there was no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed and religion or even vote-bank consideration.

"The pucca houses being constructed are given to the deserving families without any political consideration and by doing so, Modi has introduced a new political culture in this country," Singh said.He said it was the Congress government and its allies who gave a 4 per cent reservation to youngsters along the Line of Control (LoC) but denied the same to those along the international border of Hiranagar because they did not find their vote bank here.

"There can be no greater inhuman injustice to youngsters," he added.Singh said the Modi Government has undone all these anomalies and given equal justice to all."Today, roads have been constructed up to the zero line international border and all this has happened only in the last 10 years," he said.The BJP leader said 60 to 65 per cent of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) road projects allotted to Jammu and Kashmir this year at a cost of more than Rs 3,700 crore benefit the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency.He said several far-flung areas have been connected with all-weather roads for the benefit of the people living in these locations."Work is underway in full swing to complete the remaining projects," the Union Minister added.

## J&K sees rise...

families.The last checklist of birds was made in 2020 for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and that had put the number of birds as 555.

"This time 592 species have been found only in J&K and does not include Ladakh. The data shows clear improvement from the previous checklist," said Intesar Suhail, Wildlife Warden North, and one of the authors of the report.The other authors of the reports include Muzaffar A Kichloo, Neeraj Sharma, Parvaiz Shagoo and Parmil Kumar.

The comprehensive checklist of bird species found in Jammu & Kashmir, the report said, is based on a meticulous collection of ornithological literature, specimen collections, online and published sources with photographic evidence, call recordings, and sight documentation supported by detailed ?eld notes. "We report 592 species in 21 orders and 88 families, of which 555 are supported with media documentation, 326 have been either examined in hand or deposited in museums across the world, and six species have been accepted based solely on documentation considered credible. 586 species have been validated either through specimens or photographs, and 564 species are listed on eBird, accounting for 95% of all the birds reported from Jammu & Kashmir," the report said.

The study found that 25 species are class?ied as globally threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.The study reveals that the areas that remained unexplored for a long time have lately emerged as the top bird watching destinations in Jammu & Kashmir. These include the north and central Kashmir Valley, the Shiwalkils and parts of the Lesser Himalaya, and the southern plains of Jammu Division.

## J&K Govt orders...

government said that the information Technology Department has time-and-again issued instructions to all the Administrative Departments/Heads of Departments/Deputy Commissioners/Managing Directors of various PSUs/Boards/Corporations etc. to ensure security audit of their websites/applications periodically, at least once a year, in compliance with security policy, guidelines, and procedures, laid down by the CERT-In and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India. Notwithstanding the instructions, the government noted that a "large number" of websites hosted on State Data Centre by different departments are still un-audited resulting in increased risk of cyber attacks as also reported by the CERT-In."Keeping in view the criticality of the matter, it is enjoined upon all Administrative Departments/Heads of Departments/Deputy Commissioners/Managing Directors of various PSUs/Boards/Corporations to ensure security audit of their departmental websites/applications through CERT-In empanelled agencies within a period of one month, to protect the Government entities against cyber threats," the circular. In case of failure, the government said that the application from State Data Centre shall be discontinued/shut-down, for which the concerned "Head of the Department shall bear the responsibility."

## Centre mulling revocation...

want people to support this leadership and strengthen it," Shah said.

The Union Home Minister also indicated that BJP has no immediate electoral goals in Kashmir. "Our intent is not about strengthening the BJP in Kashmir. We don't have any such immediate electoral goal," he said.No talks with Hurriyat, highest number of fake encounters have taken place in NC, PDP rule. Union Home Minister Amit Shah clarified that discussions would be held with Kashmiri youth but not with organizations affiliated with Pakistan. "There will be no talks with Hurriyat and Pakistan agents," Shah said,Shah said that highest number of fake encounters have taken place in NC and PDP rule.

"Check the data yourself and you will find the highest number of fake encounters have taken place in their tenure," he said, adding that they have ensured that FIRs are lodged against the persons responsible for one or two such incidents in the BJP rule.He added that in order to curb terror related activities in Kashmir, the union government has banned 12 organizations, 36 individuals have been declared as terrorists, Rs 150 crore worth properties have been seized, 90 properties have been attached and 134 bank accounts have been frozen.Shah also clarified that the BJP and the entire Parliament believe that the POK is an integral part of India. "The Muslim brothers are also Indians and the Hindu brothers living in POK are also Indians and the land which has been illegally occupied by Pakistan also belongs to India. It is the goal of every Indian, every Kashmiri to get it back," he said.

Regarding opposition's "misconceptions "about Article 370, the Home Minister highlighted that despite initial concerns about its abolition, the past five years have shown positive outcomes. He pointed out that Kashmir has experienced increased freedom, with the Kashmiri language and cuisine gaining prominence. Additionally,he said, the region has seen a surge in tourism. Shah debunked the misconception that the abolition of Article 370 would lead to the destruction of Kashmiri identity, noting instead the progress and development that have reached every household in Jammu and Kashmir. "There are more Muslims in Gujarat than in Jammu and Kashmir. There are more Muslims in UP than in Jammu and Kashmir. Everyone is living peacefully. Therefore, it must be understood that there is no harm in living in harmony.The Home Minister noted that opposition parties including Congress, National Conference and PDP had consistently spread misconceptions regarding Article 370 in the valley.

Shah emphasized that many had previously claimed that abolition of Article 370 would lead to the destruction of Jammu and Kashmir's culture and language. However, it has been five years since its abolition, and no such outcomes have occurred, he said. "There was a fear psychosis created that the lands and jobs of people will go away. The culture will be devastated. Five years have passed and Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti must answer how much land has been taken away. All this was being done by the opposition parties so that they could safeguard themselves from getting punished for the plethora of graft charges they are involved in," Home Minister Shah said.

The Home Minister said that from 2564 incidents of stone pelting in the year 2010, the number has gone down to zero in 2023. "From 2004 to 2014, the number of terror related incidents were 7217 and in the last 10 years, they have decreased to about 70 percent and were recorded to be merely 2227. Also total deaths due to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir from the year 2004 to 2014 was 2829 and from 2014 to 2023, the number has decreased to mere 915 which means 68 percent of reduction. And

please know that those who have died in Jammu and Kashmir due to militancy, 85 percent of them were Muslims. Those who are propagating terror must be asked about their motives."The Union Home Minister also talked about reservation given by BJP-led Union Government to Paharis and Other Backward Classes without affecting the share of Gujjars.He said for the first time, the OBCs of Jammu and Kashmir have been given reservation by the Union government.

"OBC reservations have been ensured in the Panchayats and the urban local bodies. Without reducing the share of the Gujjar and Bakerwals, the Paharis have been given 10 percent reservation. Further, special provisions have been made to accommodate the displaced people from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir," he said.Shah said in Modi 3.0 regime, Dal Lake is going to be the most beautiful lake in the entire world and Srinagar's Tatoon ground is going to be turned into DisneyLand where at least a tourist would spend 3-4 days to explore it to the fullest. "You will find Gulmarg like Davos and there will be tourist home stay facilities. The filmmakers will make a beeline to Kashmir. All this is going to happen in the next two to three years. You will see a complete transformation in the coming three years. The Prime Minister has a vision for Jammu and Kashmir and its Kesar (saffron), Pashmina and apples will be most sought after entities across the world," Shah said.

Shah noted that the recent rally of Prime Minister Modi in Srinagar was the most successful rally any Prime Minister has conducted in the history of Jammu &Kashmir. Furthermore, said Shah, 34 thousand people provided with government jobs and seven new mega hotels are opening in Kashmir which are going to give a boost to the tourism in the region. "We have provided licenses to 10 thousand tourist taxis, 90 thousand crores are being spent on infrastructure. The total GDP of Kashmir has risen from one lac crore to 2.23 lac crores. More than 250 crores have been earned by the tourism sector in Kashmir."

Two former chief ministers Wednesday welcomed the proposed revocation of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from Jammu and Kashmir, but expressed fears that it might be just a poll promise of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.Former chief minister and National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah said the promise of revoking the AFSPA has been made in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls as he feared that the people here would be cheated just like those in Ladakh were on the promise of the Sixth Schedule.Another former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti welcomed the Shah's statement but hoped it would not be a "Jumelbaazi" like the BJP promise of providing two crore jobs in the country every year.

Both the leaders were reacting to local media reports that quoted Shah as saying that the BJP-led Centre will surely consider revoking the AFSPA from Jammu and Kashmir in the future."I am waiting for this day since 2011. We made a lot of efforts to remove the AFSPA (when he was the chief minister) as well, but I fear that the people of Jammu and Kashmir will be misled and cheated like the people of Ladakh were misled and cheated on the promise of the Sixth Schedule as elections are here," Abdullah told reporters in Budgam district.

The NC leader said the law, which gives widespread powers and immunity against prosecution to security forces in disturbed areas, should be revoked right away in view of the statements made by central leaders about restoration of normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir."As far as revoking the AFSPA is concerned, start from today. When they say the situation is normal and militancy has ended and there is no separatist thought left, then what are they waiting for?" he asked.Private television news channel -- Gulistan News -- quoted Shah as saying that "the situation is getting normal and we are speedily considering revoking the AFSPA from Jammu and Kashmir and a state of change is being considered".

The Lok Sabha polls are scheduled to be held in seven phases starting April 19.Meanwhile, in a post on X, PDP chief Mufti said, "As a first step, the Central government can release journalists and Kashmiris languishing in jail 'without any charges.'""PDP has consistently demanded the revocation of draconian AFSPA along with a gradual removal of troops. It also formulated an important part of our Agenda of Alliance wholeheartedly agreed upon by BJP. Der aaye durust aaye."Better late than never but only if it isn't jumlebaazi like generating two crore jobs every year or empty promises of depositing 15 lacs into bank accounts," Mufti said.

The former J-K chief minister hoped that the government would fulfil its commitment in case of AFSPA revocation as it would bring relief to the people of the Union territory."One can only hope that they fulfil their commitment at least in this case since it would bring a huge relief to the people of J&K. To walk the talk perhaps MHA can start by releasing journalists & thousands of young Kashmiri boys currently languishing in jails without any charges or prosecution," she added.Mufti's daughter, Iltija Mufti, who is her media advisor, said the party welcomes the announcement and it is a good start.

"We welcome it because the PDP's approach and its manifesto has always stood for the revocation of AFSPA which is a draconian law. The PDP also stands for withdrawal of armed forces from civilian areas," Iltija Mufti told reporters here.Terming the announcement as a good start, she, however, said whenever the PDP president states the same thing, "she is dubbed as anti-national." "If the Home Minister really wants to do it, then as a goodwill gesture before the Eid, hundreds of young Kashmiris and journalists who are in jails under UAPA and PSA should be released," she added.

Iltija Mufti said the party, however, has an apprehension that this should not be a "Jumelbaazi" because the BJP knows that their position in J-K and Ladakh is not good and it does not look like they will perform well electorally.Asked about the Shah's other statement that the government has plans to pull back troops in the UT and leave law and order to the Jammu and Kashmir Police alone, the media advisor to the former CM said the BJP does not do what they say.

"First, they should revoke the AFSPA and withdraw the Army, then we will see who they empower. There is a slip between the cup and the lip. As far as the BJP is concerned, the distance between the cup and the lip is huge, they do not do what they say," she said.Jammu and Kashmir unit of BJP said the UT has witnessed a transformation after August 2019, when the Centre abrogated Article 370."NC is the party which implemented laws like AFSPA, but the BJP is a party which is in the process of revoking it as the situation has improved in J-K," BJP's J-K spokesperson Altaf Thakur said.

He said J-K is moving towards peace and prosperity and the time has come to revoke AFSPA.Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone said the proposed removal of AFSPA was an excellent step."Removal of AFSPA will be an excellent step. People of Kashmir will welcome it. Let us take the HM for his word and let us hope he honours his word," Lone said in a post on X.In an apparent jibe at the NC and the Congress, Lone said to those Kashmiri leaders who ruled J-K and their national partners who brought in AFSPA and never took it back "can u please have the decency of shutting up".

## Working to ensure...

this assertion in a telephonic conversation with Amrita Roy, a member of erstwhile royalty and BJP candidate against TMC's Mahua Moitra in Krishnaganj Lok Sabha constituency, BJP leaders said.

"PM Modi told 'Rajmata' Amrita Roy that he is exploring legal options to ensure that the money looted from the poor goes back to them through whatever assets and money the ED has attached from the corrupt," a BJP leader said.Modi said on the one hand the BJP is committed to uprooting corruption in the country and on the other all the corrupt have come together to save each other, BJP leaders said.He expressed confidence that West Bengal will vote for "Parivartan" (change) in the State.

The alleged corruption of the State's ruling Trinamool Congress leaders is one of the main planks of the BJP in the State, as it has highlighted the arrest of some of them, including former minister Partha Chatterjee, and recovery of large amounts of money and other assets from them to target its rivals.The BJP had won 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the State in 2019 in what was seen as a surge in its fortunes and it is looking to boost its tally this time round.

## Kashmir braces...

minimum of 9.5°C against 5.4°C on the previous night and it was above normal by 34°C for the summer capital of JK for this time of the year.Qazigund recorded a minimum of 8.0°C against 4.4°C on the previous night and it was 3.3°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said. Pahalgam recorded a low of 4.7°C against 0.7°C on the previous night and it was 3.3°C above normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir.Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of 7.7°C against 6.6°C on the previous night and it was 3.5°C above normal, the official said.Kupwara town recorded a low of 7.7°C against 3.3°C on the previous night and it was 3.2°C above normal there, the official said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 3.0°C against 2.8°C on the previous night and it was above normal by 3.8°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.Jammu, he said, recorded a minimum of 18.0°C and it was above normal by 1.4°C for the winter capital of J&K.Banihal recorded a low of 10.2°C, Batote 13.5°C and Baderwah 9.0°C, he said.

"From March 27th evening to 28, generally cloudy weather is expected with light rain (in plains)/snow (higher reaches) at many places."On March 29, the MeT official said, partly cloudy weather with light rain/snow is expected at isolated places.From March 30-31, he said, partly to generally cloudy weather with intermittent light rain/snow is expected at a few places.

## Vice President Dhankhar...

opportunities, breaking down barriers and amplifying the voices and achievements of women, "we create a society that is not only fairer and more just, but also prosperous and sustainable".He said economic nationalism was as essential as nationalism as it would help the country save millions in foreign exchange.One must not yield to the temptation of making a quick buck at the cost of the country by importing the same goods which are being manufactured in India, the vice president said, adding that he felt that by importing such articles, employment of lakhs of local manufacturers was being snatched.

## All major parties...

were purchased as per the prevailing law at that time.

"It was passed by Parliament and based on the law, bonds have bought and encashed by all parties but one... Everyone has received from everybody, every donor has given everybody."The very party which now says well this is a scam, this is a scandal, had also taken money through the bonds. Tell me what moral authority anyone has to speak because it was the law then... it went lawfully. It was a step better than what prevailed earlier," Sitharaman said.On what the new government can do in this regard, she said there is a need to understand how to better the system, which has been rejected now.

The system of electoral bonds was still better than the previous system, "which is what we've gone back to now. We need to do something better, but a lot more work is required", she added.Last month, a five-judge apex court bench, headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, said the electoral bonds scheme violates the right to information and the freedom of speech and expression under the Constitution.

She also rebutted the allegations of connections between ED (director-ate of enforcement) raids and bond purchases, stating the raids have happened even on those companies that donated to the BJP through electoral bonds."ED raids still happen, it did not give them (companies) any immunity," she added.The minister added that the law enforcement agencies are not acting with any political agenda as law pursues those who disobey it."Stop making political arguments over them," Sitharaman said.

On why the BJP is welcoming tainted politicians, she said the "doors are open for all". "If people see work happening... and a party is making a difference, they obviously would want to come and join. But the BJP has value systems and the way in which the party runs under certain leadership. I don't think there is ever a compromise on that," Sitharaman said.Replying to a question on Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinat'e comments against BJP Lok Sabha candidate Kangana Ranaut, she said it is "outrageous" and "abhorrent".

She added that Shrinat'e should have tendered an unconditional apology.A controversial comment was posted on social media platforms from Congress leader Shrinat'e's accounts against Ranaut, the Bollywood actor who has been fielded by the BJP as its candidate from the Mandi Lok Sabha constituency in Himachal Pradesh.Following a row, Shrinat'e removed the controversial remarks from all of her social accounts, claiming that they had been posted not by her but by someone else who had access to her accounts. The finance minister refused to call the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal a case of political vendetta.

The chief minister had not complied with number of summons sent by the ED, she said, adding that the governance has gone down the drain in Delhi as well as Punjab, the two states ruled by AAP.Welcoming the minister, Times Group Managing Director Vineet Jain said from the political arena to the global economic stage, from diplomatic corridors to military frontiers, India is making its mark and shaping the future of the world.

"In the realm of politics, India's vibrant democracy has long stood as a beacon of hope and inspiration. With each election cycle, the citizens of India exercise their democratic rights, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their choices respected," he said.He added that geopolitically, India is forging new partnerships and strengthening old alliances, cementing its position as a global leader."Through partnerships with countries across Asia, Africa, and beyond, our nation is expanding its influence and playing a pivotal role in shaping regional and global affairs. On the economic front, India's trajectory is nothing short of remarkable," Jain added.

## Transporters in Jammu...

said that government and transporters have done an agreement to run e-buses on uncovered and less congested routes, but the administration unilaterally violated the agreement and start operations of e-buses in all busy routes, causing hardships to private transporters. He said earlier during introducing e-rickshaws, the government failed to address the issue of Auto owners, which rendered them unemployed.

He said they have purchased their vehicles through loans, but as their livelihood gets affected, they won't be able to pay the monthly installments. Another transporter said, "e- Buses are meant for uncovered areas of city, and if they want to play on overpopulated route, the government should think about our livelihood too. This issue has severely affected our livelihood, and we are hardly earning bread and butter for our families".The bus operators said that around 80 of their buses have been affected due to the issue and appealed Lieutenant Governor led administration to look into the issue.

## Blast in Poonch...

town late Tuesday night, causing panic among locals.

"We have received information of a suspected small intensity explosion-like sound from an area near Poonch hospital. Necessary investigation into the matter has been set into motion to ascertain the exact nature of the blast," a police spokesman said.He said the blast was apparently caused by a handmade crude substance.Officials said two suspected persons were detained for questioning in connection with the explosion.

## Even in jail, Kejriwal...

BJP office (Udhampur). Later in the evening, Shri Anurag Thakur visited IIM Jammu followed by participating in the Vikas Bharat Ambassador program organized at the Radisson Blu Hotel. Citing the example of RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav, Shri Anurag Thakur highlighted a parallel in the case of Arvind Kejriwal. Shri Thakur pointed out that during Lalu Yadav's involvement in the fodder scam, Rabri Devi used to speak on his behalf, eventually assuming his position, the same is happening in Kejriwal's case. Kejriwal, once an advocate for morality and anti-corruption efforts, finds himself embroiled in corruption allegations today, with his party, the Aam Aadmi Party, deeply entangled. Despite being in jail, Kejriwal's ambition for the CM position remains steadfast, with his corruption allegations breaking records. Furthermore, Shri Thakur criticized CM Mamata Banerjee, stating that despite being a woman herself, she has failed to safeguard women in her state and instead she is offering protection to corrupt individuals and rapists.

Shri Anurag Thakur further added, "Arvind Kejriwal used to say that I am against corruption and will not enter politics. However, he now finds himself and his Aam Aadmi Party entangled in the web of corruption. This is the same individual who once staged protests against the Congress. Today, Kejriwal and his party have plummeted into the depths of corruption, with their Deputy Chief Minister, Education Minister, Health Minister, MP, Councilor and now CM Kejriwal, the Kingpin of liquor scam himself behind the bars. His reign of anarchy and corruption has led him to this fate.

Targeting the Congress, Anurag Thakur said, "Today, the Congress must introspect, have they sold their conscience too? Arvind Kejriwal earlier used to demand the arrest of Sonia Gandhi, but all the corrupt forces are in cahoots today. The question is what prompted this drastic change? Why is Congress aligning today with Kejriwal's corruption? Where are the Congress leaders who, until recently, advocated for legal action in the liquor scam? Today, they are rallying in support of someone who has shattered all corruption records. Does Congress perceive Arvind Kejriwal as innocent?"

## Climate activist Sonam...

highlight ground realities, including alleged encroachments by China.Wangchuk, who is part of the Leh-based Apex body that comprises social, religious and political organisations, said they are adopting the Gandhian approach in their agitation, which is vital to safeguard the fragile environment of the region and the indigenous character of its population.

"We are followers of (Mahatma) Gandhi's Satyagraha. We are demanding the fulfilment of the promises made to us by this (BJP) government through its manifestos which led its candidates to win parliamentary polls (in 2019) and hill council polls in Leh (2020)," he told a gathering here.The activist ended his 21-day-long hunger strike in support of the demand for statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution on Tuesday evening.

"The first phase of the hunger strike will be followed by a chain hunger strike by women, youths, religious leaders and elders. On April 7, we will launch a march to Changthang (in the east of Leh along the border with China) like Gandhi's Dandi March under the Civil Disobedience Movement," Wangchuk said.He said the Leh-based Apex body will lead the march to highlight the ground realities of Ladakh. Wangchuk alleged that nomads were losing prime pasture land to huge industrial plants to the south and Chinese encroachments to the north.

"The Changthang grazers, famous for producing Pashmina wool, are being forced to sell their animals because over 20,000 acres of grazing land was taken by industrialists to set up their plants... we do not want solar energy at the cost of our people's livelihood and dislocation," he claimed."They are taking away our land because there are no safeguards available..." Wangchuk alleged.

He said if the government has nothing to hide, "we will be allowed to proceed but if they stop us from undertaking the march, we will launch a 'jail bharo andolan' which will be followed by a non-cooperation movement."Accusing the BJP of backtracking from its promises to the people of Ladakh, Wangchuk said the representatives of the Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) were left shocked when the Union home ministry straightway rejected their demands on March 4.

"We are seeking our rights and fulfilment of the promises. Parliamentary polls have been announced and the BJP is again making various guarantees to the people but who is going to buy these promises this time," he said, expressing hope that the government will reconsider its decision and announce statehood to Ladakh.Wangchuk added that he was ready to go on a hunger strike once again if the demands of the people of Ladakh were not met as "we are fighting for our future and the children".

He also questioned claims of pumping large amounts of money and demanded an inquiry into where the money is being spent. The Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), separate groupings of various political, social and religious organisations, are jointly spearheading the agitation to demand statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule, and have held five rounds of talks with the home ministry.The Sixth Schedule contains provisions related to the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram through autonomous district councils.

## Higher Edu Deptt...

that the Higher Education Department may be advised as to whether assigning of the look after charge to the senior most faculty members in the respective colleges can be made by the department during the currency of the Model Code of Conduct in the interest of administration and students. "The Higher Education Department has received select lists from the JKPCSE for the appointment of Assistant Professors in respect of various subjects, which may also involve their postings in the department," it reads.It also said that the Department is receiving the character and antecedents verifications from CID. "The Election Commission of India in a communication regarding enforcement of MCC, Dos and Don'ts, wherein Point No. 22 allows regular recruitment or appointments or promotion through the UPSC, State Public Service Commissions or the Staff Selection Commission or any other statutory authority can continue," it reads.The communique further reads that the recruitment through non statutory bodies will require prior clearance of the Commission. "In this regard, the Department may kindly be advised as to whether the appointments on the recommendations of the JKPCSE could be effected.""The Higher Education Department may be advised whether the placement of the eligible Assistant Professors to the next higher grades under Career Advancement Scheme could be considered or otherwise, during MC or not," it reads.

## Udhampur Lok Sabha...

around 12 pm after which he straight away drove to Ramlila ground Kathua where he and other Congress leaders addressed a rally.

Singh was accompanied by All India Congress Committee (AICC) General Secretary and incharge party affairs for Jammu and Kashmir Bharatsin Solanki, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Vikar Rasool Wani, AICC co-incharge J&K Manoj Yadav and other party leaders.Thousands of people attended the rally who had come from the length and breadth of the constituency which is spread from Lakhampur in Kathua district to Jawahar tunnel in Banihal and Marwah and Warwan areas of Kishtwar district. Addressing the rally, Singh said that he always stands for justice and will never back off. "You will find people from every community in my rallies. Be it Gujjars, Bakarwals, Giddis, Poonchis, Mirpuris, Kishtwaris, Bhaderwahis and Dogras, everybody becomes part of my rallies," he said.He was critical of the present government for not addressing the issues of the common people. The filing of nomination papers by Choudhary Lal Singh marked the beginning of the direct fight between the two national parties Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and Congress. From BJP side Dr. Jitendra Singh had filed his nomination papers on March 21 whereas Congress candidate filed it today. Besides, BJP and Congress, another high profile candidate is Gulam Muhammad Saroori from Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) who is banking on the good work done by him during his tenure as MLA Inderwal and on the work done by DPAP chairman and former Chief Minister Gulam Nabi Azad. By end of the date for filing of nomination papers, a total of 12 candidates have filed their papers with returning officer (DC Kathua) including covering candidates of BJP and Bahujan Samaj Party. Tomorrow the scrutiny of papers will be done and March 30 is the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers.This constituency will go for polls on April 19 in the first phase and the counting of votes is on June 4.

## Lok Sabha polls...

erstwhile state into two Union territories, NC vice president Omar Abdullah said on Wednesday."The upcoming general election provides us an opportunity to show our rejection for GoI's (Government of India's) August 5, 2019 actions," Abdullah said while addressing a party function in central Kashmir's Budgam district.

He said while the party would come up with a road map to address the "mounting public woes" in the upcoming assembly elections "when they are held in August and September later this year", the Lok Sabha election is about showing the country and the world that "the people of J-K did not approve of the August 5, 2019 decisions"."We will come up with a manifesto to ease administrative discomfort, address soaring unemployment, sky-rocketing electricity bills during the run-up to assembly elections. This time it's about making our stance clear to powers in Delhi and the world that we didn't approve of the decisions of August 2019," Abdullah added.

The National Conference (NC) leader said the reason why the BJP and its subsidiary parties in J-K have united against the party is because it has not accepted the actions of August 5, 2019."These strange bedfellows were forced to club together despite their differences. There is nothing in common between them. They don't look into each other's eyes. Yet they were forced to club against us," he said, apparently referring to the reports of an alliance between various regional political outfits like the Democratic Progressive Azad Party, the Apni Party and the Peoples Conference.

The former J-K chief minister said it was not the first time that New Delhi is "pitching" parties against the NC."We have outlived such situations successfully in the past as well. 1977 elections witnessed how New Delhi propped up a massive alliance of politicians, religious leaders and other organisations against us. But, the people outright rejected them. Today also, the people are with us, and as long as we have the peoples' support, no power on earth can harm us," Abdullah said.