

**"Don't let yesterday take up too much of today."**

—Will Rogers

*Inking the Truth*

## WB records above 92.4% voter turnout

**KOLKATA:** West Bengal's high-stakes assembly elections ended on Wednesday with a massive voter turnout of 91.66 per cent in the second and final phase, capping one of the most intense electoral contests in the recent years and setting the stage for a far-reaching verdict on whether chief minister Mamata Banerjee will continue her dominance or the BJP will break the TMC's hold in the state.

With 91.66 per cent at the closing of the voting, and reportedly lakhs of voters still waiting in queues to cast their ballots, the second phase of polls across 142 constituencies in South Bengal looked poised to match the first phase's record voter participation of 93.19 per cent.

The metropolis of Kolkata recorded a turnout of around 87 per cent at that time, with Purba Bardhaman district topping the chart at 92.46 per cent.

A communication from the Election Commission said 91.66 per cent turnout was recorded in the second phase of polls till P11

## LG Sinha reviews security situation, Shri Amarnathji Yatra arrangements



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday reviewed the security situation and preparedness for the upcoming Shri Amarnathji Yatra at a meeting here, official sources said.

The security review was held ahead of the annual 'Darbar Move', with the secretariat scheduled to close in the winter capital Jammu on April 30 and reopen in Srinagar on May 4.

The meeting was attended by Atal Dullo, Chief Secretary, Nalin Prabhat, DGP, Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary Home Department, S.J.M.Gillani, Spl DG Coordination PHQ,

Nitish Kumar, ADGP, CID, Dr. Mandeep Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, M Raju, Commissioner/Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department, Sarmad Hafeez Commissioner/Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner/Secretary School Education Department, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, IGP Jammu, DIGs, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs from Jammu Division.

During the meeting, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs apprised the Lieutenant Governor of the law and order and security scenario in their respective districts. They also gave details on the progress of 100 days cam-

paign of the 'Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyan' and preparations regarding the conduct of different pilgrimages in their respective districts including Shri Amarnathji Yatra, Shri Kausar Nag Yatra and Shri Budha Amarnathji Yatra. It focused on law and order management and coordinated security arrangements, they said.

According to sources, deliberations were also held on maintaining a high degree of alertness, enhancing coordination among security forces and strengthening security measures across the Union territory.

The L-G also reviewed the ongoing 100-day-long 'Nasha Mukh Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan' and stressed the need for intensified action against narcotics along with sustained awareness initiatives, officials said.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the DCs and SSPs for ensuring seamless coordination between the Police, Civil administration and the security forces. He further P11



**100-DAY  
NASHA MUKT  
JK ABHIYAAN**

**DAY 19** The EARTH NEWS joins with the campaign launched by Honourable Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Ji to eradicate drug menace from union territory of J&K.

## Shikara rally organised at Manasbal



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**GANDERBAL:** Continuing its sustained efforts under the "Nasha Mukh Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan", Ganderbal Police, in collaboration with the Manasbal Development Authority, organised a Mega Shikara Rally at Manasbal to raise awareness against drug

abuse. The event witnessed the presence of senior officers including CEO Manasbal Development Authority, ACR Ganderbal, and Dy SP Headquarters Ganderbal.

The Rally saw enthusiastic participation from Students of Government Degree College Ganderbal, Sainik School Manasbal, and Government Boys High School

Kondbal, reflecting strong community involvement in the anti-drug campaign.

Moreover, multiple anti-drug programmes were conducted across the district, including at Igra Model Public School Nagbal, Government Middle School Ramwari, Sadiq Memorial Public School Rampora, and Government High P11

## Medical shop inspections ramped up

**BARAMULLA:** In continuation of its sustained efforts to combat drug abuse and ensure public safety under the ongoing Nasha Mukh J-K Abhiyan, Baramulla Police carried out a series of enforcement and awareness activities across the district.

At Palhalan, joint inspection drives of medical shops were conducted in coordination with officials of the Health and Medical Education Department. During the P11

## Vande Bharat launch today over Jammu-Srinagar route

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw will flag off a 20-coach Vande Bharat Express train between Jammu and Srinagar on April 30, while the services for the general public will commence on May 2.

The direct train services between Srinagar and Jammu will reduce the travel time between the twin capitals of Jammu and Kashmir, and boost tourism besides providing an all-weather surface transport link.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first direct train service between Ka-

tra and Srinagar on June 6 last year. This service is now being extended up to the Jammu Tawi railway station.

The work on the Rs 43,780-crore rail project, linking Kashmir to the rest of the country, began in the late 1990s with the first train operating in the Kashmir valley in October 2008.

While the train services had reached Udhampur in 2005, the treacherous terrain through the mountainous Pir Panjal range made it tough to link the valley with the rest of the country till 2025.

"The modern 20-coach Vande Bharat train will journey its maiden journey from Jammu Tawi P11

## Bad weather cancels CM Omar's Bani visit

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Chief minister Omar Abdullah's visit to inaugurate development projects and address a public gathering in Kathua district's Bani area was cancelled on Wednesday due to inclement weather conditions.

"Due to bad weather and rain, the Chief Minister's programme had to be cancelled, which has left us quite disappointed. The people are also very disheartened," Bani MLA Dr Rameshwar Singh told reporters.

He said the chief minister, along with Education and Health Minister Sakina Itoo, was scheduled to visit Bani-Lohimalan, where many peo-

ple had gathered with high expectations.

"All of us, along with the entire public of the area, had high hopes for this programme. Many people were very enthusiastic about the chief minister's visit," Singh said.

He said many people turned up at the venue despite heavy rain.

The MLA said the chief minister was scheduled to interact with locals, address a public gathering, lay the foundation stones of several projects, and inaugurate others.

He, however, said the cancellation was unavoidable. "This is nature, and there is little we can P11

## 18% fare hike for public transport in J-K; Govt fixes rates for e-rickshaws

■ ARSHID ALI

**SRINAGAR:** In a move set to impact thousands of daily commuters across Jammu and Kashmir, the government on Wednesday announced an 18 per cent hike in fares for various categories of public transport, including buses, taxis, and auto-rickshaws.

The decision was formalised through a notification issued by the Transport Department, Civil Secretariat, under S.O. 126, invoking provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. The order directs the Transport Commissioner, J&K, to implement the revised fare struc-

ture with immediate effect.

Officials said the hike will be applicable over and above the existing fare rates notified in 2021, covering a wide range of commercial passenger vehicles. These include big buses, mini and medium buses, taxi and maxi cabs across base, medium and premium segments, as well as petrol-operated auto-rickshaws and Tata Magic vehicles.

An official in the department indicated that the revision was necessitated due to maintenance, and overall operational expenses, which had put pressure on transport operators.

"The fare revision has

been made after considering the demands of transporters and the prevailing economic conditions," the official said, adding that the aim is to ensure sustainability of public transport services.

In addition to the fare hike, the government has also standardised fares for electric vehicles, a sector that has witnessed rapid growth in recent years.

As per the notification: E-rickshaws will charge Rs 15 per kilometre. E-autos will charge Rs 25 for the first kilometre and Rs 20 for each subsequent kilometre

Transport stakeholders have largely welcomed the decision, saying it P11

## 1,785 police personnel promoted

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday promoted 1,785 personnel to their next ranks, a police spokesman said.

A departmental promotion committee, constituted under the chairmanship of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir V K Birdi, assessed the suitability of eligible head constables, selection grade constables, and constables before approving the promotions, he said.

The promoted personnel include 300 head constables, 1020 selection grade constables and 465 constables, who have been elevated P11

## Admin demolishes illegal properties of drug peddlers built on State Land

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**ANANTNAG:** In a major operation against NDPS Act violators, the District Administration Anantnag along with the Police, today carried out a massive demolition drive against the illegal properties built by the drug peddlers in Sangam, Bijbehara.

The action was part of the intensified 100 Days Nasha Mukh JK campaign launched recently to eradicate the drug menace from the society.

During the crackdown, revenue authorities led by SDM and Tehsilidar Bijbe-



hara, supported by a district police team led by SDPO Bijbehara, identified several commercial structures viz

Kashmir Restaurant, Taj Restaurant, and MIR Restaurant that had been illegally raised on State Land

and found to be owned and operated by individuals involved in narcotics trafficking. Several FIRs P11

## 'Celebrate Op Sindoor as military victory day'

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leader Indresh Kumar on Wednesday appealed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the country to celebrate 'Operation Sindoor' as a 'military victory day'.

Describing it as a symbol of India's indigenous strength and success, Kumar said the observance should also serve as a moment of pride and boost morale of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"I appeal to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the entire country to celebrate 'Operation Sindoor' as a military victory day and as a symbol of India's indigenous

strength and success. Let it also serve as a moment of pride for the morale of Jammu and Kashmir," he told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

Referring to an incident in Pahalgam a year ago, he said India had faced a "highly inhumane and heinous act of terrorism led by Pakistan," adding that the Indian armed forces responded in the interest of humanity and justice.

He said within four days of continuous operations, including a brief period of intense action, Pakistan's airports were destroyed, terrorists were neutralised, Turkish drones were shot down, and several military installations were P11

## LG Manoj Sinha launches book chronicling Dr Razdan's journey

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, on Wednesday launched the book, "Healer in Exile: The Untold Story of Dr. Sushil Razdan" authored by his son Sachin Razdan.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said that Dr. Sushil Razdan stands among India's leading neurologists and his contributions in the medical field remain unmatched.

"The story of Dr. Sushil Razdan's life conveys a significant lesson of committing yourself to the selfless service of others. It is a sacred duty to place the needs of the person before you above your own and see society not merely as a city



or village, but as a community of responsibilities, where true fulfilment lies in dedicating one's strength to the care of its most vulnerable population," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said

that the central message of this book is profound and what makes a doctor truly exceptional is not only skill in treatment, but the ability to serve with compassion.

Today, some experts in healthcare claim that artificial P11

## Exit polls predict BJP win in Assam, edge in Bengal

**NEW DELHI:** Several exit polls on Wednesday predicted a thumping victory for the BJP in Assam and a clear edge for the party over the ruling TMC in West Bengal, while projecting a return of the DMK government in Tamil Nadu and a comeback by the Congress-led UDF in Kerala after 10 years.

However, some pollsters predicted a big win for the TMC in West Bengal and a hung House in Tamil Nadu with actor-turned politician Vijay's TVK emerging as a spoiler for the DMK.

Almost all forecast a return to power for the AINRC-led NDA government in Puducherry.

In West Bengal, while most exit polls predicted a BJP win, two poll-

sters -- People's Pulse and Janmat polls -- predicted a big win for Mamata Banerjee-led TMC. People's Pulse predicted that the TMC would get 177-187 seats, BJP 95-110, Left Front 0-1 and the Congress 1-3. The Janmat polls forecast 195-205 for the TMC and 80-90 for the BJP plus and 1-3 for the Congress.

Most polls gave the BJP an edge or a victory in West Bengal. Matrice said it is likely to get 146-161 seats, while the TMC would get 125-140 seats.

P-Marq predicted 150-175 for the BJP and 118-138 to the TMC.

While Poll Diary forecast 142-171 seats to the BJP, 99-127 to the TMC and 3-5 of the Congress, Praja Poll predicted a big win for P11