

PURPOSE OF MAR 4-5 TRIP Take a call on the possibility of holding Jammu & Kashmir and general elections together

LS Poll Dates Soon After EC Team's Valley Visit

J&K administration conveys it is ready to hold assembly elections but demands additional security personnel

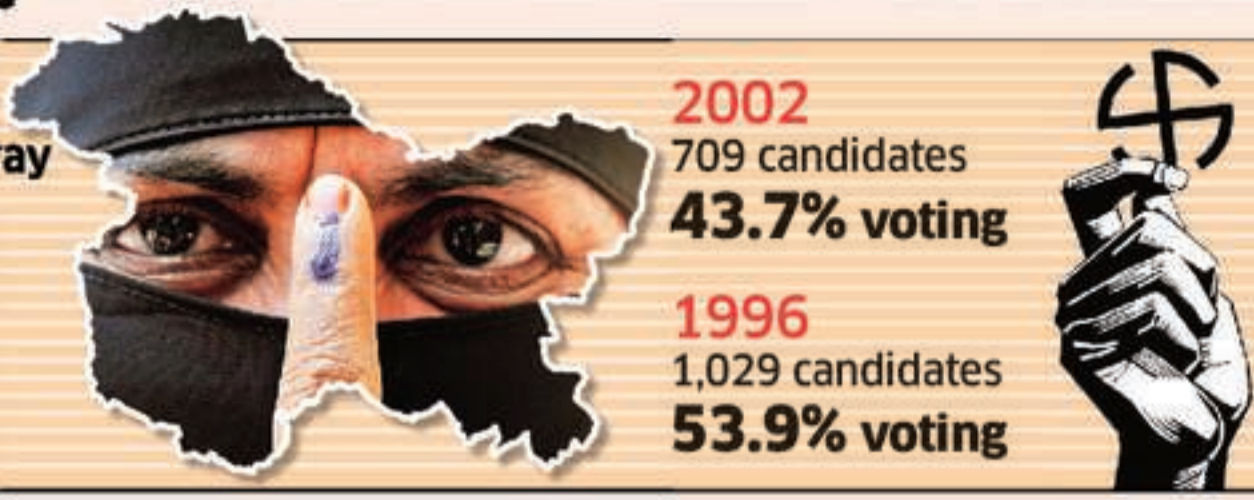
87 Assembly Constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir

2014
831 candidates in fray
65.9% voting

2008
1,354 candidates
61.42% voting

2002
709 candidates
43.7% voting

1996
1,029 candidates
53.9% voting



ACTION TIME: Security personnel in Srinagar on Sunday — AP

LS Year	LS Polls Conducted	J&K Assembly Year	Elections Conducted
1967	February 1967	1967	February 1967
1971	March 1971	1972	June 1972
1977	March 1977	1977	June 1977
1980	January 1980	1983	Nov 1983
1984	December 1984	1987	March 1987
1989	November 1989		
1991	June 1991; LS polls not conducted in Jammu & Kashmir		
1996	April-May 1996	1996	September 1996
1998	February 1998		
1999	October 1999	2002	Sept-Oct 2002
2004	April-May 2004	2008	Nov-Dec 2008
2009	April 2009		
2014	April-May 2014	2014	Nov-Dec 2014

2 'security requirement' scenarios have been shared with the EC and the home ministry

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New Delhi: The Election Commission of India (EC) will visit J&K on March 4-5 and take a final call on the possibility of holding state elections either along with the Lok Sabha polls or soon after it. The EC will reach J&K after visiting Maharashtra and UP, and is likely to announce the Lok Sabha election schedule and its decision on J&K polls soon after the visit. ET has learnt that the state administration has conveyed that it is ready to hold assembly elections provided adequate security personnel are brought in. Two 'security requirement' scenarios have been shared with the EC and the home ministry — of holding

assembly polls along with the Lok Sabha elections or of holding it soon after the Lok Sabha elections are completed and before the President's rule in the state ends on June 20.

Meanwhile, the home ministry is learnt to have indicated that it may be possible to bring in heavier security deployment to enable multi-phase

FOR MULTI-PHASE POLLS

MHA indicates it may be possible to bring in heavier security deployment to enable multi-phase polls

polls in J&K. The state is learnt to have estimated that 800 companies of paramilitary forces may be required for conducting assembly elections along with the Lok Sabha polls in the state. It is assessed that about 200 companies of additional forces will be needed for the assembly polls alone as security requirements will increase with more candidates in the fray.

Over 80% of the polling stations in the Valley are already designated as hyper sensitive. This could rise following recent incidents like Pulwama and necessitate more paramilitary presence.

The first move has already been made with 100 companies of central paramilitary force moving into the state over the weekend. Over 400 additional companies are already in the state since the panchayat elections which concluded recently. During 2014 assembly polls, about 400 companies were deployed. The 2009 polls had seen deployment of over 600 companies.

The EC is bound by the 2002 SC verdict that states that whenever a House is dissolved prematurely the EC is required to initiate steps to hold elections to constitute the assembly "on the first occasion and in any case within six months from date of premature dissolution".

While six months of dissolution of J&K assembly ends on May 20, the President's rule ends on June 20 and will require an extension by the next Lok Sabha. However, when the state government has indicated its readiness for polls, the possibility of delaying elections diminishes considerably.

RUMOURS ABOUT CURFEWS SHOULD NOT BE BELIEVED: MALIK

Guv Admin has Urged SC to Adourn Art 35 (A) Hearing: Principal Secy

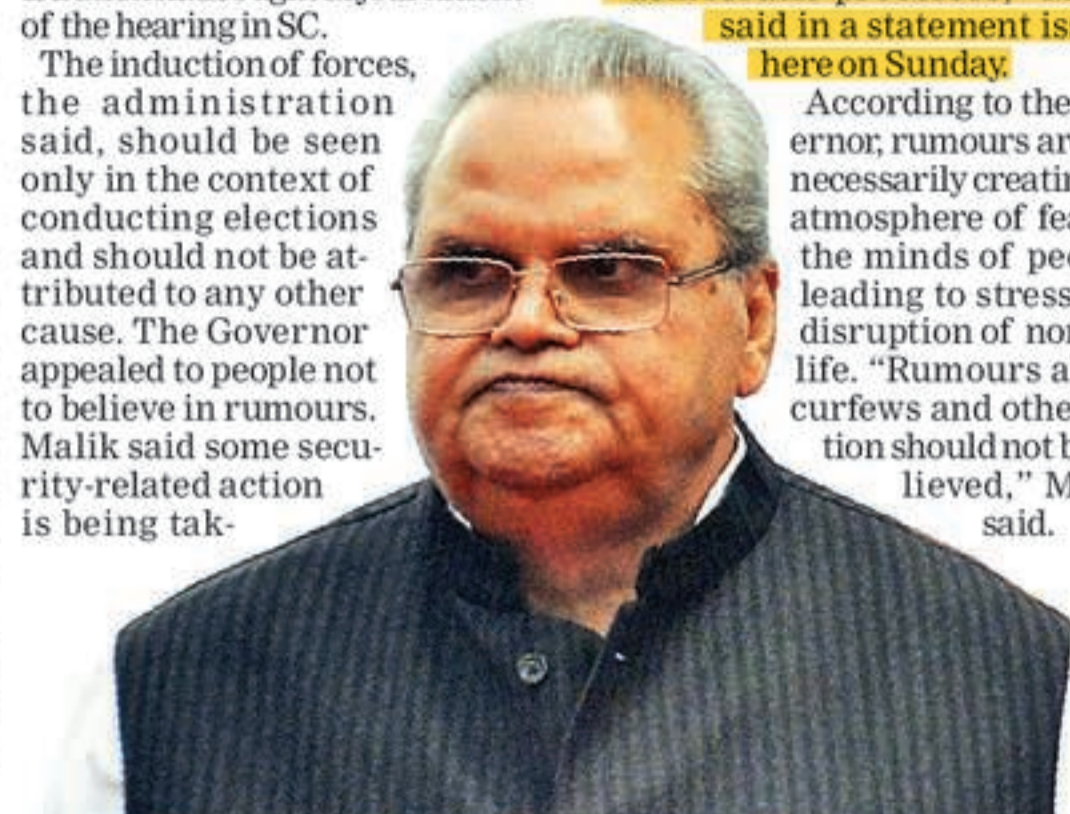
'Induction of forces should be seen in the context of conducting elections'

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Srinagar: The J&K government on Sunday clarified that the governor's administration has urged the Supreme Court to adjourn the hearing on Article 35 (A) and asked the people not to pay heed to rumours. Governor Satya Pal Malik also chaired an informal meeting of the State Administrative Council following the recent terror attack on CRPF men in Pulwama. The mobilisation of an additional 100 companies of paramilitary forces into the Valley and the arrest of several Jamaat-e-Islami and Hurriyat members have triggered panic.

Principal secretary (planning, development and monitoring) Rohit Kansal urged the people not to pay heed to rumours as most of these are based on unsubstantiated or exaggerated pieces of information. While answering a question regarding Article 35(A), he said that the administration had sought adjournment of the hearing in SC. The induction of forces, the administration said, should be seen only in the context of conducting elections and should not be attributed to any other cause. The Governor appealed to people not to believe in rumours. Malik said some security-related action is being taken by the forces, which is purely related to the Pulwama attack. "The response of the security forces is guided solely by the need to counter both the impact and any further action that may be taken by terrorist groups who are still out to disrupt our country and its democratic processes," Malik said in a statement issued here on Sunday.

According to the governor, rumours are unnecessarily creating an atmosphere of fear in the minds of people, leading to stress and disruption of normal life. "Rumours about curfews and other action should not be believed," Malik said.



Police Officer, Jawan, 3 Jaish Terrorists Killed

SRINAGAR: A deputy superintendent of police, an Army jawan and three Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists were killed in an encounter in Kulgam district of south Kashmir on Sunday, officials said. The encounter took place in the Turigam area of Kulgam after the police got an intelligence input about the presence of a group of terrorists in the area, they added. The approaching police party was fired upon, DSP Aman Thakur got seriously injured in the neck. He succumbed to his injuries later. — PTI

SECOND LETTER TO THE UNSC IN A WEEK

Afghanistan Writes to UN, Alleges Pak Interference

'Pak fired 28,849 artillery shells into Afghanistan between 2012 and 2017'

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New Delhi: Afghanistan has written to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) complaining to the multilateral body about Pakistan's "interference", including belligerent moves of its army, in the country's internal affairs.

In a letter written on February 22, the Afghan government raised the issue of "consistent violations of Afghanistan's territory" by Pakistani forces and called on the UN to initiate "necessary measures to address the matter at hand in an effective manner".

According to the letter, Pakistan fired 28,849 artillery shells into Afghanistan between 2012 and 2017, resulting in deaths of at least 82 people and injuring 187 others. This was Afghanistan's second



INCREASE IN FREQUENCY

Afghanistan alleged that the violations dated back to 2012 but had increased in frequency since 2017

letter to the UNSC in a week. The first letter was about a planned meeting between Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and Taliban representatives in Islamabad. In that letter, the Afghan government

said the meeting "undermines" the Afghan peace process and "violates Afghanistan's national sovereignty". The Taliban called off the meeting saying they were unable to travel because of the UN and US travel restrictions on them.

The development comes amid reconciliation efforts with the Taliban, a process in which Pakistan envisages itself as a power broker.

"The nature of these violations mainly includes persistent shelling of Kunar and Nangarhar provinces; violation of Afghan air space by Pakistani military aircraft, as well as construction of military posts, barbed wire fence and barriers inside Afghanistan's territory, most recently in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar," Nazifullah Salarzai, Afghanistan's deputy permanent representative to the UN, wrote in the letter.

Afghanistan alleged that the violations dated back to 2012 but had increased in frequency since 2017. The letter said that since the beginning of 2018, the number of violations by Pakistan in Afghanistan stood at 161 while 6,025 artillery shells were fired into Afghan territory.



PULWAMA ATTACK Indo-Pak Ties Pushed to a New Low, says Chinese Media

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New Delhi: The Pulwama terrorist attack was carried out by 'Mohammad Army' (as Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammad is referred to in Chinese language) and it pushed lukewarm Indo-Pakistan ties to a new low, creating tensions in South Asia after the Wuhan Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping had helped stabilise the situation, said a state-run daily that reflects the views of the government in Beijing.

"In response to this attack India wants to expand its influence. The Indian government said it had irrefutable evidence that Pakistan was involved in the attack. This can be serious. It accuses a country of participating in such an attack," said a translated version of a report published last week in the Chinese daily 'Sina International'. The report claimed that the

forthcoming general elections in India had forced the Modi government to adopt a tough stance on the attack. "Modi is trying every way to get re-elected. In this case, he is likely to choose a radical approach," it said.

Any action by Pakistan against 'Mohammad Army' will be very difficult in the absence of mutual trust between India and Pakistan, the report said. "However, Western countries such as the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Australia all stood by the Indian side. Obviously, the West wants to pick up the India-Pakistan conflict and create something around China".

How the situation evolves depends on the attitude of India and the political goals the Modi government wants to achieve," it said. The attack will not have much impact on India-China relations and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor if the situation subsides after the initial tensions, said the report.

OTHER NEWS OF THE DAY

Govt Enhances Risk, Hardship Allowance for Paramilitary



NEW DELHI: Paramilitary troops deployed in Jammu and Kashmir will get enhanced risk and hardship allowance every month, with the special benefits for the lower ranks increased by ₹7,600 and higher officers by ₹8,100. The decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs came a week after 40 CRPF jawans were killed in a terror attack in Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir. The enhanced allowance will be applicable to all paramilitary personnel deployed in Jammu and Kashmir and Naxal-hit areas. The decision has been pending since August 2017. — PTI

Separatist Leader Shabir Shah Fit & Fine: Home Ministry



NEW DELHI: The central government has said that separatist leader Shabir Ahmad Shah was absolutely "fit and fine", as were other inmates from Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan lodged in Delhi's Tihar jail. The Ministry of Home Affairs released a statement following rumours over the health of the separatist leader lodged in the Tihar jail since his arrest on July 25, 2017, in a case related to the recovery of huge amount of cash. Tihar prison authorities have denied occurrence of any untoward incident or mishap involving Shah, the government statement said. — PTI

AFTER 50 YEARS 'Friendly country of India has been named as the guest of honour'

India's 'Global Stature' and 'Islamic Component' Help it Get OIC Invite

Bangladesh and Turkey suggest India should play a bigger role in the organisation

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New Delhi: India overcame a five-decade-old hurdle to get itself invited to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meet through deft diplomatic moves, back-channel negotiations and widening engagement with the UAE and other Islamic countries.

While the UAE, as the host of March 1-2 OIC foreign ministers' meet, felt that India's global stature and strong Islamic component should be honoured, Bangladesh, backed by Turkey, suggested India should play a bigger role in OIC.

"The friendly country of India has been named as the guest of honour in view of its great global political stature as well as its time-honoured and deeply rooted cultural and historical legacy, and its important Islamic component," the UAE government said on Saturday, announcing an invite to India for OIC foreign ministers' meet. At the OIC foreign ministers' meet in

Spheres of Influence

Indonesia, Syria & Algeria have been opposing moves by Organisation of Islamic Conference during its annual meets to issue strong statements on Kashmir

India has worked overtime to increase its stakes in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt

Central Asian states, which are also OIC members, are seeking deeper ties with India

Dhaka in 2018, Bangladesh joined Turkey to seek reforms of the 57-nation grouping. At that meet, Bangladesh succeeded in pushing a declaration to this effect with the help of Turkey. Turkey's stand is interesting as it has been maintaining close ties with Pakistan since its inception. But in recent years, it has been willing to engage with India, both in economic and cultural spheres.

Addressing the OIC foreign ministers' meet as a host last year, the then Bangladesh foreign minister AH Mahmud Ali had said: "A number of countries — not OIC members — have a large number of Muslims as their citizens. Muslims may be a minority in those countries, but in terms of numbers they

often exceed the total population of many OIC member countries." While Bangladesh has been categorical in seeking observer status for India in the OIC, several other members have offered their tacit support, sources familiar with the issue told ET. The world's biggest Islamic country Indonesia, besides Syria and Algeria have been opposing moves by OIC during the body's annual meets to issue strong statements on Kashmir.

Besides, India has worked overtime to increase its stakes in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. While secular Central Asian states, which are also OIC members, are seeking deeper ties with India, Delhi, despite pressure from the US, has continued to engage with Iran, another OIC state.

'Saudi to Make India Hub for Oil Supply'

NEW DELHI: Saudi Arabia is looking at making India a regional hub for supply of crude oil and will invest billions of dollars in the country to build storage facilities and strengthen refineries, Saudi foreign minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir has said. Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, will also invest in downstream assets in India besides helping the country boost its infrastructure in the petrochemical sector, Al-Jubeir said. The foreign minister, who was part of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's delegation here, said his country looked at India as a rising economic power and was very bullish about its potential to grow further. "We are looking to make India a hub (for crude oil supply) in the region." — PTI

THIRD EYE



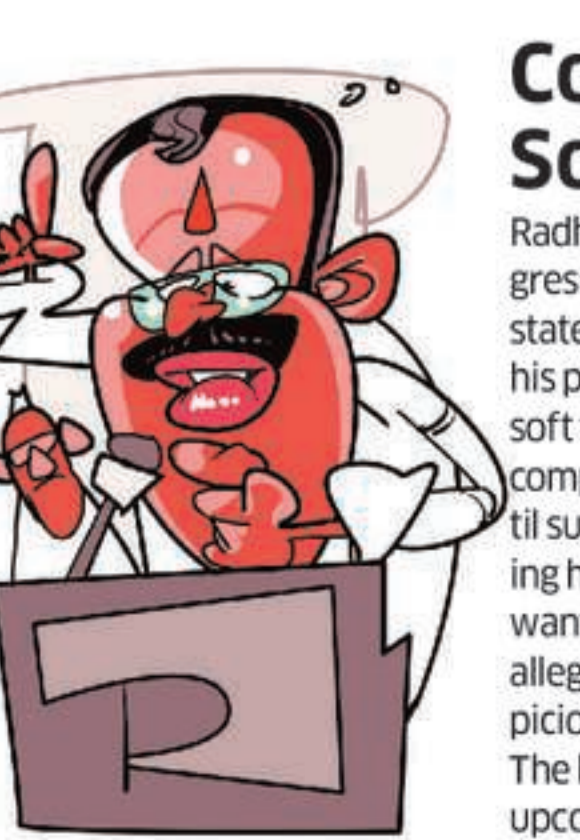
Taking a Roll Call of Officials

CJI Ranjan Gogoi, fed up with delays in listing of cases, is now taking a roll call of officials in his court room. The delays have made mentioning for early hearing a necessity in his court. Seasoned registry officials are being called in daily to attend the proceedings to see for themselves the problems being faced by litigants and lawyers. Officials are obviously unhappy over being schooled by the CJI in the court craft.



Sena MLA Mulls 'Joining' Congress

Arjun Khotkar, a Shiv Sena MLA from Jalna and a minister in Maharashtra's Devendra Fadnavis government, has disapproved of the just-concluded BJP-Sena alliance, which has robbed him of an opportunity to contest against state BJP chief Raosaheb Danve. But Khotkar's public posturing hasn't gone down well with the Sena leadership and his attempt to meet party chief Uddhav Thackeray has been snubbed by the leadership. Now, it is learnt that Khotkar is mulling joining the Congress.



Cong Feels Patil Soft on Fadnavis

Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, Maharashtra Congress MLA and the opposition leader in the state assembly, is in the spotlight because of his party's belief that he has fared too soft towards the Fadnavis government. As complaints against him piled up in Delhi, Patil suddenly began attacking the CM, claiming he was involved in corruption. He even wanted the AICC to back him and play up the allegations on the party platform, but a suspicious Congress brass ignored his 'charges'. The buzz is that Patil's son may contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls on a BJP ticket.

Poliloquy R PRASAD



Mulayam critical of SP-BSP alliance. I'm creating a Margdarshak mandal for Netaji!