

Voting for two Rajya Sabha seats in Haryana ends

BJP candidate Sanjay Bhatia, Cong's Karamvir Singh Boudh and Independent candidate Satish Nandal are in the fray. The BJP is backing Nandal, who had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Assembly polls as its nominee

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CHANDIGARH

POLLING for the two Rajya Sabha seats in Haryana ended at 4 pm on Monday. While the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), which has two legislators, abstained from voting, the Congress MLAs, who were shifted to Himachal Pradesh returned shortly after the polling began at 9 am and cast their votes.

In the fray are BJP candidate Sanjay Bhatia, Congress's Karamvir Singh Boudh and Independent candidate Satish Nandal. The BJP is backing Nandal, who had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 assembly polls as its nominee. Meanwhile, Minister Krishan Kumar Bedi told reporters that the BJP has complained to the Election Commission pertaining to "violation of vote secrecy" of

two Congress MLAs. "Two Congress MLAs did not have their ballot folded as it should have been, thus violating the secrecy of their vote. We have complained to the Election Commission," Bedi said. The results are expected to be declared later in the evening. INLD abstained from voting, with party leaders Abhay Singh Chautala and Aditya Devi Lal saying that the decision was taken

keeping in view the people's sentiments. "People are fed up with both the BJP and the Congress," INLD MLA Aditya Devi Lal told reporters. In the 90-member Haryana assembly, the BJP has 48 MLAs, the Congress has 37, the INLD has two MLAs and three legislators are Independents. Two candidates would require 31 votes each to make it to the Rajya Sabha.

Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, who is an observer for the Rajya Sabha polls in Haryana, told reporters it was sad the way the Congress moved its MLAs to Himachal Pradesh and kept a close watch on their movements. "Seeing the condition of Congress MLAs as reported in the media, as a public representative, I feel very sad. The way they were restricted

in closed rooms shows Congress's mistrust towards its own MLAs," Sanghavi said. Haryana Minister Anil Vij, who recently fractured both his legs after a fall, arrived on a wheelchair to cast his vote. Before the polling ended, Vij and some other ministers, including Vipul Goel, expressed confidence that the BJP and the Independent candidate backed by it, will win. On the shifting of Con-



gress MLAs, Vij said, "Congress does not trust its MLAs, which is why they were taken here and there."

The Haryana Congress had on Friday moved 31 of its MLAs to two resorts in Kurri near Shimla. The MLAs,

who were shifted to Kasauli in Solan district on Sunday, returned on Monday morning. They arrived at former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda's Chandigarh residence, from where they proceeded to cast their votes.

Fresh snowfall in higher reaches of Kashmir

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MOST higher reaches of Kashmir received moderate to heavy snowfall, while the plains were lashed by rains, disrupting vehicular movement in some stretches, officials said on Monday. Several vehicles got stuck following heavy snowfall along the Sinthan Top following which police and army carried out a rescue operation on Sunday night to evacuate 214 stranded tourists and locals, they said.

Officials said the tourist resorts of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, Doodhpathri in central Kashmir's Budgam district, and Sonamarg in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, received moderate snowfall. They said the higher reaches, including Pir Ki Gali along the Mughal Road in Shopian district of south Kashmir, Zojilla axis, Gurez in north Kashmir's Baramulla, Sadhna Top in north Kashmir's Kupwara, and Sinthan Top, connecting Anantnag in south Kashmir to Kishtwar in Jammu region, received heavy snowfall. Sadhna Top has received over 12 inches of fresh snowfall, while Sinthan Top around six inches, they added.

All pre-poll promises fulfilled in 4 yrs: Mann

300 units of free electricity given to domestic consumers, electricity to farmers during the daytime, opening of 'Aam Aadmi Clinics' and providing up to Rs 10 lakh of cashless medical treatment under Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna

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CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday said his government has fulfilled all the pre-poll "guarantees" within four years of his term and the state is moving forward on the path of progress. Mann was addressing mediapersons here on the completion of four years of the AAP government in the state. He also released a booklet on his government's achievements so far.

Lashing out at the previous governments, Mann said they could not fulfil their poll promises made in their manifestoes within the five years of their respective terms. But the AAP government has fulfilled all guarantees within four years, he claimed.



"Punjab is moving on the path of progress," Mann added. Sharing details of his government's achievements, the chief minister spoke about providing 300 units of free electricity to domestic consumers, providing electricity to farmers during the daytime, opening of 'Aam Aadmi Clinics' and

providing up to Rs 10 lakh of cashless medical treatment under Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna. He said that after his government came to power in 2022, the opposition parties raised questions over the free electricity promised to the households. "We fulfilled our first poll promise in July," he said, referring to the 300

units of free electricity for households. There was no condition on providing electricity to the people, he said, adding that almost 90 per cent of the households are getting free electricity, which translates into the monthly relief of Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000 per household. He also spoke about resumption of coal supply from Pachwara coal mine and buying a 540 MW private power plant at an outlay of Rs 1,080 crore.

Mann further said his government set up 881 Aam Aadmi Clinics in the state and over 200 more such clinics would come up. He informed reporters that the number of OPD visits in these clinics crossed 5 crore, indicating people's trust in their services.

Omar opens Asia's largest tulip garden for visitors



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SRINAGAR

JAMMU and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday threw open Asia's largest tulip garden on the banks of Dal Lake here for visitors, and hoped that the tourism sector bounces back from the setbacks of last year. Abdullah was accompanied by his Cabinet colleagues and National Conference MLAs to the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden on Cheshma Shahi Road, officials said. "This will be a new start

for those associated with the tourism industry. They had to go through a very tough phase. However, the situation keeps changing, and we hope that it improves to enable people from outside to come and enjoy the beauty of Jammu and Kashmir," Abdullah told reporters. The tulip garden was among 44 destinations closed for tourists last year following the Pahalgam terror attack in April that killed 26 people. It reopened this year after a security audit. Abdullah said various stakeholders are

working on making floriculture a commercial venture whereby flowers grown here are exported to other parts of the country.

"Most things are in place. A reliable cold chain is the issue right now. Once we get that, be it through rail or air, this sector can bloom," he said. Abdullah also said that efforts are underway to develop tulip bulbs locally to save the expenditure on importing them from the Netherlands. "This will save foreign exchange as well," he said.

1.60L additions in annual voter roll revision in Jammu

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JAMMU

MORE than 1.60 lakh voters were added to the electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir during the recent special summary revision (SSR), while 67,690 names were deleted and 2.29 lakh corrections carried out, according to official data. Jammu district recorded the highest number of deletions, which included "duplicate" and "shifted" entries, in the annual voter list revision.

The special summary revision is separate from the special intensive revision (SIR) carried out in some states. According to the district-wise breakup of the current voter enrolment, Jammu district has the



highest number of electors at 11,89,555, followed by Srinagar with 7,53,222 and Baramulla with 7,20,500 voters.

Among the districts, Srinagar registered the highest number of additions with 30,077, followed by Jammu with 16,855 and Baramulla with 11,854. Jammu

recorded the most deletions at 10,430, followed by Budgam with 7,762 and Anantnag with 5,241, it said.

The data reveals that a total of 1,60,974 additions, 67,690 deletions, and 2,29,920 corrections were recorded across the Union Territory during the revision exercise.

'Excessive use of smartphones can harm children's mental health'

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JAIPUR

UTTAR Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday highlighted the ill effects of smartphones on young children and warned that excessive use could harm their physical and mental health, adding that drugs and smartphones are equally harmful. He urged parents not to give smartphones to children and encouraged them to guide kids towards studies, yoga, and physical exercise instead.

Adityanath said prolonged screen time can affect eyesight, disrupt daily routines and contribute to depression. "The future of the country lies with its youth. Efforts must be made to fight drugs. Drugs are dangerous, and smartphones are equally harmful,



so children should be protected from both," he said. He said that children spending hours on smartphones are missing opportunities for self-development and depression. "The UP CM also said that depression and suicides are the consequences of excessive use of smartphones. "I would tell mothers and sisters not

to give children phones. If a child is crying, let the child cry. If a child spends the whole day on a smartphone, it affects their eyesight. The time they spend on the phone could instead be used on their textbooks, yoga, or exercise, which would help them progress in life." The chief minister advised the youth to limit smartphone usage, spend more time with family, and avoid phones during meals and worship.

Woman, minor son found murdered at UP home

HANS NEWS SERVICE
PRATAPGARH

THE blood-soaked bodies of a woman and her minor son were found at their home in a village here on Monday, triggering panic among locals, police said. Superintendent of Police Deepak Bhukar said the bodies, lying in a pool of blood, were discovered by villagers around 10 am.

Police rushed to the spot after receiving information, and launched an investigation.

The deceased were identified as 40-year-old Shivpatti Maurya and her 12-year-old son Ayan. Police said both sustained severe head injuries inflicted with a sharp weapon, indicating they were murdered during the night. According to police,

Shivpatti's husband Dinesh works outside the village and was not present at the time of the incident.

The bodies were first noticed by a mason who alerted local residents, who then informed the police. A police team reached the spot, took the bodies into custody and collected evidence from the house.

Senior officers also inspected the crime scene and spoke to family members and villagers.

"All possible angles are being examined and evidence is being collected.

Police teams have been formed to crack the case at the earliest," the SP said. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem as police continue their investigation into the double murder, officials said.

Caste system meant to organise society, 'casteism' divides nation: Yogi

The previous governments believed in dividing people in the name of caste, region and language, which weakened the country and led to challenges such as the unrest in Kashmir, Naxalism, linguistic disputes and caste conflicts'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR

UTTAR Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said while the caste system is meant to organise society, 'casteism' weakens the social structure and divides the nation. Addressing a programme at the Sire



temple in Jalore, Adityanath also said that religion should act as a unifying force in society. "Caste should be the means of running the society systematically, but casteism weakens that system," Adityanath said. "The previous governments believed in di-

viding people in the name of caste, region and language, which weakened the country and led to challenges such as the unrest in Kashmir, Naxalism, linguistic disputes and caste conflicts. The benefits of governance often failed to reach the Dalits, the poor

and other marginalised sections," he said.

"But today, India is moving ahead to become a major global force under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The country has been brought together under his leadership," Adityanath said, adding that steps have been taken to address the issues of Kashmir and Naxalism, while ensuring that welfare schemes reached people without any discrimination. The chief minister also said that the government is focused on expanding infrastructure and public facilities across the country.

"Good roads have been built in areas where there were none earlier, railway connectivity has been ex-

panded, while airports, Metro, medical institutions and engineering colleges have been built in areas that lacked them," Adityanath said. Targeting the previous UPA regime at the Centre, Adityanath claimed it treated India's spiritual traditions as regressive.

"In contrast, the present leadership recognised that our faith is deeply connected to Sanatan Dharma and that society cannot move forward without faith," he said. Referring to the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, Adityanath said it could have been built decades earlier, but the previous governments did not act on it and even questioned the existence of Lord Ram.

Action recommended against 2 cops in house demolition case

HANS NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN

THE State Police Complaints Authority has recommended disciplinary action against two police officers, including an IPS officer, for failing to take immediate action in the alleged robbery and demolition of the house of a former Navy officer's widow in Uttarakhand. The authority, headed by retired judge N S Dhanik, said in an order that gross negligence was committed by the then SSP Janmejay Khanduri and the then Clementtown SHO Narendra Gehlawat, in the case of the robbery and demolition of the former Navy officer's house in the Clementtown area of Dehradun in January 2022.

According to the authority, this negligence caused



serious economic, physical, mental, and social harm to the complainant, Kusum Kapoor, and violated her human rights. The authority stated in its order that both officers were found guilty of failing to prevent the looting and demolition of the house and also failed to register an FIR in this regard.

The authority directed the Uttarakhand government's Home Department to recommend disciplinary action against the two officers and

inform the authority of the same. A copy of the order has also been sent to the director general of police. Khanduri, a 2007 batch IPS officer, is currently on deputation with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

Kusum Kapoor, widow of former naval officer Commodore Vinod Kumar Kapoor, had alleged that she had been living in the house with her unmarried and mentally challenged daughter, Tina, for the past 25 years.