

Normal life hit in Kashmir strike

SRINAGAR, NOV 17—/Normal life was affected in Kashmir Valley Saturday due to a strike called by separatists in protest against the conduct of the first phase of panchayat polls in the state. Most of the shops, fuel stations and other business establishments were shut in Srinagar—the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. They said public transport was off the roads while private cars, cabs and auto-rickshaws were plying in many areas of the city. The officials said similar reports of shutdown were received from other district headquarters of the valley. Security forces were deployed in strength in sensitive places across the valley to maintain law and order, they said.

Separatist leaders, under the banner of Joint Resistance Leaders' Front, had asked people to observe strike to protest against the "election drama" The JRL, comprising Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik, have also asked people to observe shutdown in poll-bound areas of the valley on the days of polling in the eight-phase panchayat elections. (PTI)

Cong releases 2nd list for Rajasthan

NEW DELHI, NOV 17—/The Congress released its second list of 32 candidates for the December 7 assembly election in Rajasthan on Saturday. Fielding former BJP leader Jaswant Singh's son Manvendra against Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje from Jhalrapatan constituency. The second list was received by the Congress general secretary and in-charge of Rajasthan Mukul Wasnik.

The opposition party had declared 152 candidates in the first list on Thursday night. Manvendra Singh, a former BJP MLA from Sheo, in September quit the saffron party to join the Congress ahead of the assembly election. Senior Congress leaders, including Ashok Gehlot, Sachin Pilot and CP Joshi, are contesting the state election. (PTI)

Cong asks Goa governor for special session to prove majority

PANAJI, NOV 17—/The Congress demanded Saturday that Goa Governor Mridula Sinha summon a special session of the legislative assembly and ask the BJP-led coalition government to prove its majority. The opposition party, which has been claiming that the state government is in disarray in the absence of ailing Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar from office, alleged that it is a classic case of fraud being played on the people of Goa by the Governor and the BJP at the Centre. Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala told reporters here that the party would raise this issue during the upcoming winter session of Parliament and also before President Ram Nath Kovind.

The Congress had submitted representations to the President and the Goa Governor, claiming that the party had the requisite number of MLAs to prove majority in the 40-member House. "We will put pressure on the central leadership of the BJP in winter session and also before the President for our demand to summon a special session to prove majority," he said.

Accusing the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in Goa of holding the

Constitution "captive", Surjewala said the formation of the Cabinet Advisory Committee by the BJP in absence of Parrikar is a "blatant fraud on the Constitution".

In the 40-member Goa Assembly, the Parrikar government has the support of 23 MLAs. These comprise 14 BJP MLAs, three each from the Goa Forward Party and the Maharashtra Gomantak Party as well as three Independents. Surjewala said the coalition government should prove its majority and lay down a roadmap for governance and administration.

The government should also settle issues like Regional Plan, mining, unemployment, he demanded. "This will clear all doubts about who is in-charge in Goa and the floor test will determine as to which party has the rightful claim to head a democratic government in people's interest in Goa," he added.

Surjewala questioned the effectiveness of state government in absence of Parrikar, who is currently recuperating at his residence here after undergoing treatment at AIIMS in Delhi.

Goa Health Minister Vishwanath Rane had said that Parrikar was suffering from pancreatic cancer.

Surjewala alleged, "Constitution is being held captive because of the BJP's lust for power. Formation of a Cabinet Advisory Committee (CAC) by the BJP is a blatant fraud on the Constitution itself. It negates the constitutionally conferred powers of the state cabinet under Articles 163, 164, 166."

Surjewala alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah were responsible for the "political and administrative mess" in Goa by allowing an ailing Parrikar to continue in chair. "Paralysed governance, crippled administration and collapse of authority is being symbolic of the chaos prevailing in the BJP government in Goa," he claimed.

Wishing Parrikar speedy recovery, Surjewala recalled that party president Rahul Gandhi had inquired about the chief minister's health last month. "On account of incapacity of the CM owing to his illness, power brokers are running amok and are plundering the state's resources and holding democracy to ransom," he alleged.

Surjewala said that the BJP held a meeting of Cabinet ministers of Goa in AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences) in Delhi on Octo-

ber 12, where Parrikar was undergoing treatment. "This has never happened in the history of Goa. On October 31, 2018, the official Twitter handle of the Goa CM posted a picture of that Cabinet meeting," he said. "The people of Goa were deeply disturbed by the visual in that picture. It reflects that Parrikar needs emergent medical attention rather than the grand-standing by the BJP," he said.

He said key governance issues were being dragged due to BJP's "misgovernance" in Goa. "The mess created by the BJP by stoppage of mining, closure of businesses of small traders and mismanagement of sand mining has affected the entire state," he claimed.

The Congress had earlier questioned non-issuance of medical bulletins on health of Parrikar. "If the CM is fine, as per the press statements, then why is he refusing to meet even the Leader of Opposition and interact with them?" Surjewala asked.

Recently, Subhash Shirodkar and Dayanad Sopte resigned as Congress MLAs and joined the BJP, bringing down the strength of the opposition party to 14 in Goa Assembly. (PTI)

Kargil to have museum soon

JAMMU, NOV 17—/Kargil, which shot into prominence during Operation Vijay in 1999, will soon have a museum, an official said Saturday.

It will come up soon as the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil agree to provide prime land in the town for the museum. Director, Archives, Archaeology and Museums Muneer-ul-Islam said.

He said the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums is setting up regional museums at various places in the state, including the twin capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu. "We shall soon be approaching the Ministry of Culture for funds to start the construction of the Kargil Museum," he said, adding that as a precondition for any grants from the Ministry of Culture, the department needs to have artifacts relevant to the theme of museum.

"I request the people having interest in culture and heritage to come forward and donate artifacts related to pastoral and agricultural lifestyle of Ladakh and adjoining regions for the proposed Museum," he said. He said that these could include jewellery, heritage household items, traditional agricultural and household implements, among others.

Muneer said such items could also include those depicting age-old trade relation of Kargil with the adjoining central Asian countries, particularly falling on the famed Silk route.

All these items can be deposited with Curator SPS Museum and Assistant Registration Officer Archives Leh or in the office of LAHDC Kargil against proper receipt," he said. (PTI)

PC asks Rajnath to send team to TN

*To assess damage caused by cyclone 'Gaja'

NEW DELHI, NOV 17—/Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram Saturday urged Home Minister Rajnath Singh to depute a team of two officers immediately to inspect the extent of damage caused by cyclone Gaja in Tamil Nadu.

The former union home and finance minister also requested Singh to modify the practice of sending inter-ministerial team to a disaster-affected state only after receiving a memorandum from the concerned state government. "I have requested HOME MINISTER through Home Secretary to depute a team of two officers immediately to visually inspect the extent of damage caused by cyclone Gaja (sic)," Chidambaram said in a tweet.

He said the usual practice is for the state to submit a memorandum after a disaster hits it and a visit by the inter-ministerial team. He said this takes at least 2-3 weeks and full impact of the disaster is not measurable because of repair and restoration work. "I have appealed to MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) to modify the practice," he said.

At least 13 people have lost their lives and over 81,000 others were affected after cyclone 'Gaja' hit the Tamil Nadu coast Friday.

Six districts of Tamil Nadu and two in Puducherry were hit by the cyclonic storm which also brought heavy rains in the southern state and the Union Territory. The National Emergency Response Centre has said at least 1,948 people were affected by the cyclone.

Cyclone 'Gaja' crossed Tamil Nadu coast between Nagapattinam and nearby Vedaranyam, bringing with it heavy rains in the coastal region Friday.

Gusty winds due to the cyclonic storm resulted in hundreds of trees and electricity poles being uprooted in Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts, officials said. (PTI)

Pondy CM appraises Centre of damage

PUDUCHERRY, NOV 17—/Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy Saturday said he has appraised the Centre of the damage caused by the cyclone Gaja in Karaikal.

Talking to reporters here, he said Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had contacted him over phone yesterday to know of the extent of damage the Union Territory suffered. "An interim relief would be sought along with an interim report on the damage the cyclone has caused in Karaikal," the Chief Minister said.

He said the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums is setting up regional museums at various places in the state, including the twin capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu. "We shall soon be approaching the Ministry of Culture for funds to start the construction of the Kargil Museum," he said, adding that as a precondition for any grants from the Ministry of Culture, the department needs to have artifacts relevant to the theme of museum.

30,549 complaints resolved

JAMMU, NOV 17—/The grievance cell of the Jammu and Kashmir administration has resolved over 30,500 out of 31,468 complaints registered by it, officials said Saturday.

Since the imposition of the governor's rule in the state on June 20 till date, the grievance cell has received 31,468 complaints, of which 30,549 have been dealt with and forwarded to the quarters concerned for timely redressal. According to the officials, 544 complaints are under process. All the advisors to the governor have been regularly meeting and hearing the grievances of delegations, deputations and individuals.

The advisors to the governor have attended and heard 2,130 delegations and 1,989 individuals from July 17 this year till date, the officials said.

Hero of Battle of Longewala passes away

CHANDIGARH, NOV 17—/Brigadier (ret'd) Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri, known as the hero of the Battle of Longewala during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, died at a hospital in Mohali on Saturday, his family said. He was 78. Brig Chandpuri was suffering from cancer. He is survived by his wife and three sons, his family said.

Brig Chandpuri was a recipient of the Maha Vir Chakra—the country's second-highest gallantry award—for his role at Longewala, an outpost in the Thar desert of Rajasthan. He held off a Pakistani attack while leading a small group of Indian soldiers through the night in the 1971 war.

The 1997 Bollywood classic, 'Border', in which actor Sunny Deol played the role of Brig Chandpuri, was made depicting the Longewala battle. The cremation will take place on Monday with full military honours.

Brig Chandpuri passed out from the Officers' Training Academy, Chennai, in 1963 and was commissioned into the 23rd Battalion of the Punjab Regiment. He took part in the 1965 war on the western sector and, thereafter, served in the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) for about a year. He also served

twice as an instructor at the Infantry School, Mhow.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh condoled the passing away of Chandpuri, saying his exemplary and heroic leadership in the Battle of Longewala would inspire the young soldiers and officers of the defence services to discharge their duties with utmost devotion, commitment and sincerity. "Very sorry to learn of the sad demise of Brigadier KS Chandpuri, MVC. He was a very brave and distinguished soldier and the hero of the Battle of Longewala. The nation is poorer with his passing away. My heartfelt condolences to his family," the chief minister tweeted.

The citation for his Mahavi Chakra Award reads: "Major Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri was commanding a company battalion of the Punjab Regiment occupying a defended locality in the Rajasthan Sector." At the Battle of Longewala, Brig Chandpuri exhibited dynamic leadership, exceptional courage and determination in holding his command intact and steadfast. He inspired his men moving from bunker to bunker till the reinforcements arrived, the citation added. (PTI)

SBSB leader a 'necessary evil': UP BJP chief

LUCKNOW, NOV 17—/In an unusual attack on his party's ally Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, Uttar Pradesh BJP president Mahendra Nath Pandey said Saturday its chief Om Prakash Rajbhar was a "necessary evil" and comments made by him "should not be taken seriously".

Rajbhar, a state minister, has often been critical of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and policies of its governments at the Centre and in the state. "The region where Om Prakash Rajbhar's party is having presence, we are having good relationship with its supporters, workers and office-bearers. But, 'bolchaal' (attitude) of Rajbhar is not appropriate," Pandey told PTI in an interview. The BJP leader referred to an eastern UP folklore to target the SBSB leader.

In the folklore, a woman used to head towards her paternal home after frequent tiff with her husband, while her in-laws and others used to placate her. Later, the village decided that no one will try to placate her. After she moved out of the village, she caught hold of a goat and started crying that even it was not allowed to help her in-laws in her place. "Similar is his (Rajbhar's) situation," Pandey said.

The UP BJP chief said there is a "limb" to getting angry virtually every day and reproach. "Hence, I say that his statements should not be taken seriously," Pandey said. Asked whether the BJP will try to persuade the disgruntled ally, Pandey said, "We are running a government in the state with overwhelming majority. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are doing exemplary work. On such a large 'rajpath', in political arena, there are some necessary evils (anivarya buraai) who accompany you. As of now, it is Om Prakash (Rajbhar) who is a necessary evil and accompanying (us)." The BJP leader claimed that the entire Rajbhar community was with the saffron party.

MP polls: BJP promises 10 lakh jobs in manifesto

BHOPAL, NOV 17—/The BJP released its manifesto for the Madhya Pradesh polls, including a separate document for women, Saturday, promising a proportionate bonus to small farmers, creation of 10 lakh jobs per year and two-women meritorious girls, among other things.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), ruling the state since 2003, is seeking to retain power against the backdrop of widespread farmers' protests last year for better support prices and a loan waiver.

In the main manifesto titled "Samridh Madhya

Pradesh Drishti Patra", the saffron party promised to distribute loans of Rs 40,000 crore among farmers, expand the area under irrigation to 80 lakh hectares in the next five years and a university to promote food processing.

In its women's manifesto, the "Nari Shakti Sankalp Patra", the party promised to install sanitary napkin vending machines in schools, a survey to every girl who gets more than 75 per cent marks in the Class 12 board examination, and to double the intake capacity of the educational institutions for women in five

years. The documents were released by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and other state-level BJP leaders here. The saffron party promised a "direct payment of a proportionate bonus" to small and marginal farmers—those owning up to five acres of land.

Chouhan claimed it would benefit 80 lakh farmers, adding that the bonus would be paid on the basis of production and would not entail the purchase of agricultural produce.

The party also promised the "Har Hath, Ek Kaj

Yojana" (the "work for every hand scheme") to impart job skills to one unemployed person in every household. Chouhan also promised to create 10 lakh jobs for the youth every year.

The ease of doing business would be enhanced by setting up a "CM Hotline" and reducing the administration's response time to investors to 72 hours, the manifesto said. Chouhan also promised to set up a "global skill park" in Bhopal and a new industrial township in the state.

Investments of Rs 10 lakh crore would be brought to the state in the next five

years, the BJP manifesto said. Besides the construction of the Bhopal-Indore, Gwalior-Chambal and Narmada expressways, the saffron party promised the "Atal Samridhhi Mala" (corridors) and the development of a defence production cluster in the Gwalior-Datia-Bhind-Morena region.

Chouhan said the BJP government would spend Rs 2 lakh crore on urban infrastructure in the next five years. The manifesto also promised a doorstep delivery of government services and piped water to 10 lakh households. Chouhan said the manifesto provided a

roadmap to convert Madhya Pradesh into a developed state. The opposition Congress had released its manifesto for the Madhya Pradesh polls last Saturday, promising, among other things, a "spiritual department" in the state, promotion of Sanskrit, development of a "Ram Path", a mythical route taken by Lord Rama during his exile, and commercial production of cow urine and cowdung cakes. The 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly will go to the polls on November 29 and the result will be announced on December 11. (PTI)



BJP workers participate in Kamal Sandesh Bike Rally, organised by Bharatiya Janata Party in Mirzapur on Saturday.



Members of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) conducting a mock drill to deal with Chlorine gas leak outside Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on Saturday.