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**Amid din, govt refers One Nation One Election Bills to JPC**

multaneous polls to a joint committee of Parliament. While 27 members on the panel will be from the Lok Sabha, 12 will be from the Rajya Sabha.

Former Union ministers Anurag Thakur and P P Chaudhary from the BJP, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of the Congress are among the Lok Sabha members, who will be part of the joint committee.

The two 'one nation one election' (ONOE) bills, including one requiring an amendment to the Constitution, lay down the mechanism to hold simultaneous elections and were introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday after a fiery debate.

**Productivity went down due to Oppn protests: Rijju**

follow those rules instead of just shouting, creating a ruckus, and disrupting the proceedings of Parliament, which causes great harm to the work of Parliament," he said.

The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned on Friday amid protests over Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks on BR Ambedkar. The Winter Session 2024 of Parliament began on November 25 and concluded on December 20.

**Prolonged dry spell continues**

valley continue to record a dip in mercury. The famous Ski resort Gulmarg, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.0 degree Celsius. Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination, recorded a low of minus 8.

**Inspection of Katra-Reasi rail link on Jan 5, 6**

accompany the Commissioner Railway Safety. Pertinently, the long-awaited Srinagar-New Delhi rail link, a monumental infrastructure project spanning over two decades, is set to become a reality.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to inaugurate the final 17-km section of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project on January 26, 2025. This section, connecting Reasi to Katra, will complete the 272-km railway line, bringing the much-anticipated Vande Bharat train service between New Delhi and Srinagar to life.

**Narrative appears to be anti-India separatist agenda: Govt tells LS**

he said. He also asked whether the government had "engaged diplomatically" with the governments of the US and Canada to "address concerns" regarding these cases.

"Government is aware of the allegations about the involvement of the Indian nationals in purported acts or intent in the US and Canada. As part of ongoing security cooperation with the United States, certain inputs shared by the US side pertaining to the nexus between organised criminals, gun runners, terrorists and others that impinge on India's national security interests as well are being examined by a High-Level Enquiry Committee that has been constituted for this purpose," the minister said.

Regarding Canada's allegations, Singh reiterated that no substantiating evidence had been presented, suggesting that their public stance appeared to support anti-India separatist interests.

Addressing concerns about Indian nationals' safety in these countries, Singh assured that their welfare remains paramount. He confirmed that relevant authorities are promptly notified of any issues faced by Indians in the US and Canada.

Earlier, in a November 28 Rajya Sabha response, Singh had emphasised that mutual respect for concerns, territorial integrity, and sovereignty are fundamental for maintaining stable bilateral relationships.

**Pak missile systems can potentially harm US: Dy NSA**

developed increasingly sophisticated missile technology. From long range ballistic missile systems to equipment that would enable the testing of significantly larger rocket motors. If these trend lines continue, Pakistan will have the capability to strike targets well beyond South Asia, including in the United States, raising real questions about Pakistan's intentions," he said.

Finer said that with these reports, Pakistan seems to be a threat to US security.

"The list of countries that possess both nuclear weapons and the missile capability to directly reach the US homeland is very small. They tend to be adversarial towards the United States- Russia, North Korea and China so candidly it's hard for us to see Pakistan's actions as anything other than an emerging threat to the United States," he said.

Finer said that it posed a question as to why Pakistan would do this, because the US was an ally of Pakistan.

"Leaders across our administration myself included have raised these concerns repeatedly with senior Pakistani officials we have been a longtime partner with Pakistan on development on counterterrorism and other security issues including quite sensitive issues. We've provided support to Islamabad during difficult times and we continue to desire a cooperative relationship in these areas of shared interest. That makes us question even more why Pakistan would be motivated to develop capability that could be used against us," he said.

Finer further said that Pakistan failed to take seriously the sanctions posed by the US and from other countries in the region and continued building on its capabilities.

"Unfortunately, it is our sense that Pakistan has failed to take these concerns and frankly, the concerns of others in the international community seriously and continues to advance these capabilities. As a result, the Biden Administration has implemented a series of steps to contend with

further development of long-range missile systems. Over the last year, we've issued three rounds of sanctions against non-Pakistani entities that have provided support to Pakistan's ballistic missile program and yesterday we issued sanctions directly against Pakistan's state-owned National development complex, which the United States assesses is involved in the development and production of Pakistan's long-range ballistic missiles. The first time we have sanctioned a Pakistani state-owned Enterprise tied to missile development," he said.

Finer added that the US will continue its pressure Pakistan to mitigate its missile program.

"Simply put, we're going to keep the pressure on Pakistan regarding its long-range missile program even as we also continue to seek diplomatic resolutions to address our concerns and we encourage every other nation to do the same finally," he said.

Finer further said that it was in everyone's interests to ensure that Weapons of Mass Destruction are limited in the world.

"It is in all of our interests to ensure that our nation prioritizes arms control and reduces WMD risks across the world in practice...even as we continue to modernize our nuclear forces," he said.

The US sanctioned four entities that were contributing to Pakistan's Ballistic Missile Program on Wednesday (local time).

**Former Haryana CM Chautala passes away**

tion, which took place on October 5 this year. He was seen at a polling booth in Sirsa's Chautala village.

Om Prakash Chautala, son of former Deputy Prime Minister of India Chaudhary Devi Lal, served as the seventh chief minister of Haryana.

Chautala was awarded a four-year jail term in a 16 years old disproportionate assets case on 27 May 2022 by a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Court and became the oldest prisoner of the Delhi's Tihar jail aged 87. He was released in 2020.

**IT dept unearths hawala transactions used to invest in Dubai properties**

was unearthed during the operation, with sources indicating the total amount exceeds Rs 800 cr. They said middlemen facilitating these transactions were also raided, shedding light on a nationwide network of individuals involved, spanning cities from Srinagar to Hyderabad.

In addition to uncovering evidence of offshore investments, the IT Department seized property transaction records in Kashmir worth over Rs 50 cr, involving substantial cash components. Officials also confiscated cash exceeding Rs 1 cr during searches, said the sources.

The investigations, conducted under the Income Tax Act, 1961, and the Black Money Act, 2015, are ongoing, with several individuals now under the IT Department's scrutiny. Further details are awaited.

**8 killed, 35 injured in road accident**

sight of a man engulfed in flames. Rajasthan health department officials said that seven people died in the crash while more than 35 were injured.

Police said there are chances that some people could not get out of their vehicles and got burnt inside. The situation will become clear once all the vehicles are thoroughly checked, they said.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Health Minister Gajendra Singh Khimsar rushed to the SMS Hospital, where the injured were admitted. Sharma spoke to administration officials and doctors and issued directions to ensure proper treatment was facilitated. He also visited the accident site and spoke to police officials.

In a post in Hindi on X, the chief minister said, "Deeply saddened to hear the news of casualties in the gas tanker fire incident on the Jaipur-Ajmer National Highway. As soon as the information about the incident came, I went to the SMS Hospital and directed the doctors there to provide immediate necessary medical facilities and take proper care of the injured."

Jaipur Police Commissioner Biju George Joseph and other officials of the department were at the spot on the highway.

**India raps B'desh govt over now-deleted 'annex' post by key aide of Yunus**

from its current constraints and expand its territory. He said that this was just the beginning of their efforts.

Responding to his (now deleted) facebook post, the MEA spokesperson said, "We would like to remind all concerned to be mindful of their public comments. While India has repeatedly signalled interest in fostering relations with the people and the interim government of Bangladesh, such comments underline the need for responsibility in public articulation."

Mahfuz was previously introduced by Yunus at a Clinton Global Initiative event in New York in September as the "mastermind" behind the protests that led to the ousting of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh.

Hasina was forced to resign after facing violent protests against reservations in government jobs.

She fled Dhaka in a military plane in August, as mobs threatened her safety in the capital city. After she fled the country, her house was ransacked by mobs.

India and Bangladesh's relations have been strained since the formation of the interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. On Thursday, New Delhi expressed concern over incidents of violence targeting Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh, stating that the interim government in Dhaka holds the primary responsibility for safeguarding their lives and liberty.

The Minister of State for External Affairs, Kirti Vard-

han Singh, made these remarks in Rajya Sabha, less than two weeks after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's visit to Bangladesh. During the visit, Misri conveyed India's concerns to members of the caretaker administration regarding the safety of minorities. Singh stated, "India's concerns regarding the need to ensure the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in Bangladesh have been conveyed and reiterated to the authorities of the interim government of Bangladesh on various occasions, including at the highest level."

**EVM verification plea to be heard by another SC bench: CJI**

In its verdict on April 26, the apex court termed the suspicion of manipulation of the EVMs "unfounded" and said the polling devices were "secured" and eliminated booth capturing and bogus voting.

The top court, however, opened a window for the aggrieved unsuccessful candidates securing the second and third places in poll results while allowing them to seek verification of microcontroller chips embedded in five per cent EVMs per assembly constituency on a written request upon payment of a fee to the poll panel.

The fresh petition of Dalal and Singla has sought compliance of the top court's April 26 judgement delivered in the case of 'Association for Democratic Reforms versus Union of India'.

Dalal and Singla secured the second-highest votes in their respective constituencies and sought a direction to the Election Commission (EC) to implement a protocol for examining the original "burnt memory" or microcontroller of the four components of the EVM -- the control unit, ballot unit, VVPAT and symbol loading unit.

The top court had mandated that five per cent of the EVMs in every assembly constituency should undergo verification by the engineers from EVM manufacturers after the election results were announced.

The petitioners said the poll panel has failed to issue any such policy, leaving the procedure for burnt memory verification unclear.

According to the petition, the current standard operating procedure issued by the EC only involves basic diagnostic tests and mock polls without scrutinising the burnt memory for tampering.

The petitioners said that their plea did not challenge the election results but sought a robust mechanism for EVM verification.

Separate election petitions challenging the results are pending before the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The petitioners have urged the Supreme Court to direct the EC to conduct the verification exercise within eight weeks.

**LS adjourned sine die amid uproar**

to speak in the House. Amid the din, both Houses adopted a motion to send the two bills to enable One Nation One Election to a 39-member joint parliamentary committee for further scrutiny.

In the Lok Sabha, the opposition shouted 'Jai Bhim' slogans as the Speaker read out directions barring demonstrations and protests at the gates of Parliament following the scuffle between BJP and INDIA bloc MPs on Thursday.

As the protests continued, the Speaker adjourned the House sine die.

The Rajya Sabha also witnessed similar protests from the opposition, even as chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said that such "persistent disruptions" were steadily eroding public trust in democratic institutions.

Dhankhar said the winter session's productivity was just 40.03%, with the Upper House functioning for just 43 hours and 27 minutes.

"As Parliamentarians we are drawing severe criticism from the people of India and rightfully so... It is time to choose between meaningful debate and destructive disruptions," he said before adjourning the House.

Before the session began, opposition MPs, including Congress's Priyanka Gandhi, held a protest march to Parliament from Vijay Chowk demanding Amit Shah's apology and resignation for allegedly "insulting" BR Ambedkar.

The BJP also held a counter-protest and party MP Aparajita Sarangi gifted Priyanka Gandhi a bag with '1984' written on it, referencing the year of the anti-Sikh riots.

The Opposition and the BJP have been at loggerheads this week over Shah's remarks on Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha during a debate on the Constitution. Matters came to a head on Thursday as MPs from both sides came face to face in the Parliament complex, resulting in injuries to two BJP MPs.

The BJP alleged that its MP Pratap Sarangi was pushed by Congress's Rahul Gandhi. An FIR has been registered against Rahul Gandhi after the BJP filed a complaint accusing him of "physical assault and incitement".

**Over 50 pc of IAF plane crashes due to human error: Parliamentary report**

port said, adding the CAT II lighting systems were installed in 48 airfields.

Udhampur had the old lighting system, while the other three operational IAF airfields (Leh, Thoise & Barrackpore) "could also conduct limited night operations using Mobile Airfield Lighting System (MAFLS)/Gooseneck flares", the report said.

The helicopter crash that killed General Rawat on 8 December, 2021 has been ruled a case of human error of the crew, according to the parliamentary panel report.

The then CDS, his wife and 12 others including his staff, pilots and crew were enroute to the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington from Sular when their Mi-17V5 crashed in the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu.

At the time, a tri-services inquiry was ordered by the IAF, headed by Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Training Command Air Marshal Manvendra Singh.

In January 2022, the air force came out with preliminary findings which said the crash occurred due to "unexpected change" in the weather conditions which led to a spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT).

Spatial disorientation is the inability of a pilot to correctly interpret aircraft attitude, altitude or airspeed in relation to the Earth or other points of reference.

The US' Federal Aviation Administration Safety defines CFIT "as an unintentional collision with terrain (the ground, a mountain, a body of water, or an obstacle) while an aircraft is under positive control". It adds that most often, the pilot or crew is unaware of the looming disaster until it is too late, and it most commonly occurs in the approach or landing phase of a flight.

"The Court of Inquiry (CoI) has ruled out mechanical failure, sabotage or negligence as a cause of the accident. The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley. This led to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in CFIT," the IAF had said in a statement.

**Putin denies defeat after rebels took over Syria**

who fled to the Russian capital, but that he "will definitely talk to him" and planned to meet him in Moscow.

He mentioned he would ask Assad about the fate of missing US reporter Austin Tice, whose release was described by the White House as a "top priority", according to reports.

Speaking at his annual end-of-the-year news conference, Putin also denied claims of Russia's loss with the fall of the former regime. Russia intervened in Syria in 2015 and turned the tide of the civil war there in Assad's favour.

"You want to present what is happening in Syria as a defeat for Russia," reports quoted Putin as saying. "I assure you it is not ... we have achieved our goals."

He said Russia intervened in Syria to "prevent a terrorist enclave from being created there" and that "it is not for nothing that today many European countries and the United States want to establish relations with them (Syria's new rulers)".

"We maintain relations with all the groups that control the situation there, with all the countries in the region," Putin continued, adding that the "overwhelming majority of them tell us that they would be interested in our military bases remaining in Syria".

Russia offered to maintain bases there "for humanitarian purposes", he said. He also admitted to having evacuated 4,000 Iranian fighters in the aftermath of the fall of the Assad government.

Notably, Syria's newly appointed Prime Minister, Mohammed al-Bashir, has focused on repatriating Syrian refugees living abroad as one of his key goals. Al-Bashir aims to "bring back the millions of Syrian refugees who are abroad" as part of efforts to restore stability in the country.

**Govt to set up data, AI labs, says Jitin Prasad**

tech sector is putting artificial intelligence (AI) at the heart of its work, using the technology for purposes as varied as credit assessment and understanding complex data.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) on Wednesday extended the import management system for select IT hardware products for another year. This comes at a time when domestic production in India is far lower than the demand.

Prasada said that India AI fellowships are being awarded annually to 400 B-Tech and 500 M-Tech students working in AI domain from All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)-recognised engineering institutions.

"Top 50 National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranked research institutes have been asked to take new PhD scholars under India AI PhD fellowship," he said.

On steps being taken by the government for creation of safe and trusted AI, the minister said that eight responsible AI projects have been selected to address the need for robust guardrails to ensure the responsible development, deployment, and adoption of AI technologies.

According to the list shared by Prasada, the selected projects include Machine Unlearning from IIT Jodhpur, Synthetic Data Generation from IIT Roorkee, AI Bias Mitigation Strategy from National Institute of Technology Raipur, AI Ethical Certification Framework from IIT Delhi and Telecommunication Engineering Center (TEC), among others.

**Crime Branch to probe complaints filed by BJP, Congress**

tween BJP and Congress MPs trying to prevent the other side from entering the Parliament. Two BJP MPs - Pratap Chandra Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput - were injured during the scuffle and were currently being treated in ICU of Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

On Thursday morning, Parliament saw simultaneous protests from both the Treasury and Opposition benches outside its premises. BJP MPs were protesting against the Congress party, accusing it of "insulting" BR Ambedkar.

MPs from the INDIA Bloc, led by Rahul Gandhi, staged a protest in the Parliament grounds, demanding the resignation of Amit Shah over his remarks.

Both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha had adjournments earlier on Wednesday, following protests from Congress and other opposition members in response to Amit Shah's remarks about BR Ambedkar during his speech attacking Congress in the Rajya Sabha.

The issue snowballed into a major political controversy with the Congress seeking the resignation of Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders attacking the opposition party.

**Div Com Kashmir reviews arrangements for celebration of Republic Day-2025**

**SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 20:** With an aim to ensure smooth and hassle free celebration of ensuing Republic Day-2024 in Kashmir, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri Friday chaired a high level meeting of concerned Officers to review the civil and security arrangements to be put in place.

The meeting was attended by, CEO SSCL/ Commissioner SMC, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Director School Education Kashmir, Director Health Services Kashmir Director Floriculture, Chief Engineers of

PWD (R&B), KPDC, PHE, UEED, MED Kashmir; Joint Director Information Kashmir, HoDs and representatives of Hospitality & Protocol, Fire & Emergency Services, Academy of Art Culture & Languages Kashmir, Regional Transport, J&K Sports Council, Youth Services & Sports, State Motors Garages, SMC and officers of other departments besides, senior officers of security agencies including BSF, CRPF and Police also attended the meeting in person.

Deputy Commissioners of other districts and other officers attended

the meeting through video conferencing.

The meeting was informed that the main event for the celebration of Republic Day shall be held at Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar.

Addressing the meeting, Div Com emphasized on all concerned Officers to ensure meticulous arrangements for smooth and successful conduct of the event. He also stressed on close synergy between line departments to avoid any glitch.

Bidhuri issued slew of instructions for selection of contingents, display of cultural programmes, transporta-

tion & accommodation facilities for student participants, traffic management, security arrangements, refreshment, illumination of government buildings and other important arrangements for smooth conduct of the event.

KPDCL authorities were directed for proper illumination of main Government buildings, besides uninterrupted power supply to the main function venue on the said date.

The Div Com directed the PW(R&B) department to make comprehensive seating and heating arrangements for participants at the

event.

For the live commentary, Div Com directed concerned departments including police, Information and Radio Kashmir to depute expert commentators.

Div Com also directed Director Floriculture to make more decorative and creative floral arrangements for the event in consonance with the past practice.

Moreover, he asked all departments to conduct special cleanliness and sanitation drives within the office premises in view of celebrations.

Also, he directed the Director

Health to deploy doctors, paramedical team and ambulance besides first aid team at the venue of Republic Day Celebration in case of any emergency.

He also directed SMC and MED for making arrangements of snow clearance at the main function venue including parking places, roads leading to the selected venues in case of snowfall.

Further, he exhorted upon all concerned officers to ensure that all necessary arrangements are put in place well in time for smooth and successful celebration of the Republic Day.