

## Cont. From Page 1

## TMC govt allocating more resources for 'madrasa education': Modi

Addressing a rally in the Jhargram district, PM Modi pitched the upcoming Assembly elections as a battle to save the state's identity.

"This election is to save the rich heritage of this land. It is for saving the identity of Bengal. Today, there is fear of Bengal losing its identity," he said.

"The path that the TMC is treading is very dangerous. The TMC wants to form a government of infiltrators and for infiltrators. A government that will protect only the religion of infiltrators, the language of infiltrators and the customs of infiltrators, rather than those of the people of Bengal," he alleged.

Modi claimed that for such a government, the biggest obstacle would be the ordinary people of West Bengal.

"For the TMC's infiltrator government, if there is any enemy, it will be the brothers and sisters sitting here who will be the enemies of the infiltrators," he said.

The PM claimed resentment against the TMC government had spread across communities and regions of the state.

"Therefore, every community, every class, every region of Bengal has resolved this time, and has taken a pledge to oust this TMC government," he claimed.

"If one has to build a house, one has to depend on TMC's syndicate. TMC MPs and MLAs are least bothered about your problems. They are busy filling their pockets," he alleged.

Modi alleged the TMC was depriving people of various welfare schemes.

"TMC is stealing your ration and free housing. The BJP will ensure that you get your ration and free housing," he said.

Sharpening the BJP's pitch in the tribal belt, Modi accused the TMC of neglecting the region despite being in power for 15 years.

"You gave 15 years to the ruthless TMC government. Fifteen years is no small amount of time. What has the TMC government given you? What have the tribal areas received? No education, no income, no medicine and no irrigation. Everything here is in dire straits," he alleged.

The PM also alleged that TMC leaders were illegally occupying tribal land in several parts of the state.

Referring to complaints of erratic power supply in parts of Jhargram, he said people remained in darkness while TMC leaders prospered.

"Tell me that if electricity goes out once here, it takes days to come back. Sometimes it does not come back at all. But the hefty electricity bill surely arrives. Here you are in darkness, while the bungalows and cars of TMC leaders are shining bright," he alleged.

The PM also warned of action against those allegedly involved in the coal scam.

"That is why Modi has taken a pledge. Those who loot the coal here, those who keep you in darkness, will not be spared. They will be identified one by one and held to account," he said.

## Oppn 'played with fire', conspired to derail Quota Bill: Puri

Mantri Awaj Yojana, with ownership largely given to women, and plans underway to build an additional four crore houses.

On the contentious issue of delimitation, Puri said it was a necessary precondition for implementing reservation.

Dismissing opposition claims that southern states would be disadvantaged, he cited data presented in the Parliament showing proportional seat increases across states such as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Accusing opposition parties of spreading misinformation, the minister said, "There is no north-south divide in the proposed framework."

He said the government remains determined to push for implementation before the 2029 general elections, reflecting what he described as the "national mood."

He said if opposition parties continue to block the bill, the government will take the issue directly to the people.

Calling it not just political opposition, but a betrayal of the aspirations of women across the country, he said, "What we saw in Parliament was unprecedented. A bill meant to empower women was defeated, and some members were seen celebrating."

The former NCW chairperson, echoing similar sentiments, termed the defeat of the bill "shameless" and likened it to a "foeticide of women's rights."

Sharma accused opposition parties, particularly the Congress, of consistently blocking the legislation over the past three decades through shifting positions and procedural hurdles.

"They kept changing their stand, first demanding reservation within reservation, then opposing delimitation. The intention was never to pass the bill," Sharma said.

She noted that women's representation in Parliament has increased only marginally - from around three per cent to about 14 per cent - over several decades, arguing that without legislative intervention, meaningful participation of women in policymaking would remain limited.

On Manipur, Sharma said the violence in the state was "ethnic in nature" with a historical background, adding that the Centre had engaged with all stakeholders to restore stability.

## Security tightened ahead of Pahalgalam attack

"All security agencies have been asked to remain alert for any possible subversive activities on the eve of the Pahalgalam terror attack anniversary, especially around tourist spots," officials said.

Preparatory meetings to devise a foolproof security plan were held at the ground level while senior officers recently reviewed these arrangements, officials said.

For the safety of tourists, a unique QR code-based identification system has been introduced for all tourism service providers at Pahalgalam. The system enables easy identification and verification of genuine and registered service providers, including pony-ride operators, hawkers, business establishments, as well as outside vendors.

## Soldier found hanging at Nagrota camp

gested it to be a case of suicide but the exact cause of death would be ascertained only after the completion of the investigation, officials said.

While Army had initiated a departmental inquiry, police had started inquest proceedings into the incident, the officials added.

## 11,000 posts violating election guidelines removed

states and one Union Territory.

It directed that any unlawful content must be removed within three hours.

In an official statement, the ECI said political parties, can-

didates and campaign representatives must clearly label any AI-generated or digitally altered campaign material as "AI-Generated," "Digitally Enhanced," or "Synthetic Content." They must also disclose the originating source to ensure transparency and maintain voter trust.

The Commission added that content violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), disrupting or potentially disturbing law and order, or spreading false narratives is being closely monitored. Action is being taken by State IT Nodal Officers in Assam, Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry under the provisions of the IT Act.

Reiterating the existing rules, the ECI emphasised that synthetic campaign material must comply with the 48-hour silence period before polling. It cited Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which prohibits the display of election-related material during this period across all media platforms, including television, radio, print and social media.

The commission also noted that citizens, political parties and candidates can report MCC violations through the C-Vigil module available on ECINET.

The MCC has been in force in Assam, Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry since the announcement of the election schedule on March 15. Polling in Assam, Kerala and Puducherry was held on April 9. Tamil Nadu will vote on April 23, while West Bengal will go to the polls on April 23 & 29. Counting of votes for all regions is scheduled for May 4.

## 2 US nationals detained at Sgr airport with satellite phone

authorisation is prohibited.

Further investigation was underway to ascertain the purpose of their visit and use of the device.

## For PM, women's reservation

## matter of faith: Jitendra

heart of policy-making-from flagship welfare schemes to the rise of nearly 40 pc women-led StartUps-reflecting a consistent effort to position women as key drivers of India's development

He launched a scathing attack on the Congress and the NDI alliance over the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, asserting that the proposed legislation represents not just a policy initiative but the core ideological conviction of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of women-led development.

Dr Singh said that since 2014, the Modi government has fundamentally shifted the paradigm of governance by placing women at the centre of policy planning and implementation.

"Women are no longer passive beneficiaries; they are active architects of India's development journey," he said, adding that this transformation reflects a deliberate and sustained policy approach.

Recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first Independence Day address in 2014, he noted that the emphasis on building toilets-particularly for women-marked a defining moment in governance priorities.

"What appeared unconventional at the time has today translated into dignity, safety and improved health outcomes for millions of women," he said, highlighting the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission on sanitation and girls' education.

## EAM meets S Korea Prez, says talks will deepen strategic ties

Sunday, marking a significant pivot in New Delhi-Seoul relations, being the first state visit by a South Korean leader in over eight years.

The visit is being framed as a crucial step for South Korea's "Global South" diplomacy and a "reboot" of the Special Strategic Partnership.

India and South Korea elevated their ties to a "Special Strategic Partnership" in 2015, and since then, cooperation between the two countries has broadened significantly. Both sides have focused on enhancing collaboration in areas such as advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, defence production, green energy, infrastructure development, and digital innovation.

South Korean companies have also played a growing role in India's industrial and consumer sectors, while Indian firms have deepened their presence in the Korean market.

The arrival of the South Korean President is expected to provide fresh momentum to ongoing bilateral initiatives and open discussions on expanding trade and investment opportunities.

India has been actively working to strengthen its engagement with Indo-Pacific partners, and South Korea remains a key pillar in this broader regional vision.

The President's itinerary is packed with high-level engagements designed to solidify ties between Seoul and New Delhi.

His first major engagement will be a meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to set the stage for the executive talks to follow. On Monday, the President will receive a formal Ceremonial Reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan before paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat.

Recognising the vital role of the private sector, President Lee will participate in a Business Forum at the iconic Bharat Mandapam. This forum will bring together industry titans from both nations to explore investment opportunities and supply chain resilience.

The state visit will conclude with a meeting with President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan, signifying the deep cultural and political respect between the two nations, the MEA statement added.

Beyond economic and strategic ties, India and South Korea share strong cultural linkages, with growing interest in Korean culture in India and increasing visibility of Indian heritage and traditions in South Korea. These people-to-people exchanges have added depth to the bilateral relationship.

The visit comes at a time when both countries are navigating a rapidly evolving global geopolitical environment, making strategic partnerships more significant than ever.

## Will implement women's reservation: Rajnath

urged people to "give it a farewell" in the hustings.

"Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought a bill in Parliament to ensure 33 per cent reservation for our mothers and sisters in Parliament, assemblies and councils. The DMK, Congress, TMC and Communist parties did not allow it to be passed. Still, I would like to assure, on the basis of the PM's resolve, that we will certainly give 33 per cent reservation for women and no power in the world can stop us," the senior BJP leader said.

In a major setback to the BJP-led Central government, a Constitution Amendment Bill to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures from 2029, along with increasing the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816, was defeated on Friday.

Lashing out at the DMK over corruption, Singh said some Tamil Nadu ministers were under the radar of central probe agencies such as the ED and the "TASMAC scam" was an

example of how "deep-rooted" corruption was in the "The DMK government is playing with the lives of poor people. Corruption allegations have become a pattern in the DMK government. The time has come to raise your voice against this corruption and give farewell to the ruling dispensation," he said, while batting for the AIADMK-led NDA in the state.

Further, the people of Tamil Nadu were known for their faith and anyone trying to mock Sanatan Dharma "will fall before the eyes of the people." Touching upon the Thirupprankundram lamp lighting row, he charged that despite a court order, the DMK government did not allow devotees to light a lamp atop a pillar (Deepathoon) there.

If the NDA is voted to power, the lamp lighting tradition will be allowed and "this is NDA's guarantee," Singh assured.

Further, slamming the "rampant" availability of illicit liquor in the state, he said the NDA government will form local units to tackle the menace.

## LeT terrorist 'Khargosh' escaped India with fake passport

Kashmir from the northern side, stayed at various locations in Bandipora and Srinagar and married the daughter of an LeT Over Ground Worker (OGW). The Nikah ceremony was held in Jaipur under his assumed name, Sajjad.

Officials stated that the marriage documents were also used to support his application for an Indian passport.

The unravelling of this inter-state terror module by Srinagar police has exposed several loopholes. Questions are being raised about how a passport was issued by authorities in Rajasthan despite the police verification system in place.

The LeT terrorist managed to flee to Indonesia, from where he is believed to have used another forged travel document to station himself somewhere in Saudi Arabia in 2024-25, officials said.

Officials said efforts were being made through diplomatic channels to bring him back to India and seek his deportation from the Gulf country. These details emerged after Srinagar police busted a "deep-rooted" interstate LeT module and arrested five people, including a Pakistani terrorist, Abdullah alias Abu Hureira, who had been on the run for 16 years and had successfully established bases outside the Union Territory.

The arrest of Abdullah, along with another Pakistani national, Usman alias Khubaib, was another major success for police, coming six months after the dismantling of a "white-collar" terror cell centred in Faridabad's Al Falah University.

During interrogation, Abdullah informed his captors about his and Harris' movements across India, particularly in Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab. This included the marriage ceremony, following which the bride's father was detained as he was well aware of the Pakistani terrorist's true identity, officials said.

The operation in Srinagar, which began on March 31, had unveiled the funding and financial pattern of the LeT, officials said.

The terrorists used forged documents and identities to create a network not just in Jammu and Kashmir, but in several other states, the officials added.

Three Srinagar residents, identified as Mohammad Naqeeb Bhat, Adil Rashid Bha and Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias Mama, were among the five arrested. They are accused of providing shelter, food and logistical support to the terrorists. The elaborate network began to unravel on March 31 when the first of the three Srinagar residents, Naqeeb Bhat, was arrested from Pandach area along with a pistol and other incriminating material.

During his questioning, Bhat told police that he was a part of the LeT and procured the arms and ammunition from another associate, Adil Rashid of Zakoora, and also provided support to foreign terrorists, the officials said. From Bhat, police were led to Mir and Rashid Bhat, both active associates of LeT in Srinagar and during the investigation, following disclosures from those arrested, various hideouts were also busted in forested areas in and around Srinagar.

The two Pakistani terrorists are categorised as 'A+' grade militants and the officials said they infiltrated India approximately 16 years ago and remained active across various districts of the Kashmir Valley, "commanding" around 40 foreign terrorists over the years, most of whom have since been neutralised, the officials said.

This busting of an interstate LeT module comes nearly six months after the 'Al Falah module' came to light in November 2025 after the Srinagar police probe unravelled a network comprising highly educated professionals, mostly doctors, who had been radicalised to carry out terrorist activities.

One of the accused was the Al Falah University's Dr Umer-un-Nabi, who was driving the explosives-laden car that detonated outside the Red Fort on November 10, killing more than a dozen people.

He had earlier made unsuccessful attempts to join terror groups in 2016 and 2018, the officials said.

## 23 killed infirecracker factory blast

veranda of the firecracker factory, 'Vanaja' fireworks. The impact of the blast was so severe that at least three rooms were reduced to rubble, and several adjacent structures were completely levelled.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister MK Stalin were among those who condoled the deaths.

PM Modi also described the mishap as "deeply distressing". "I extend my condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover at the earliest," he said in a post on X.

Chief Minister Stalin also condoled the deaths and instructed the district administration to coordinate all necessary assistance. Stalin said he had instructed ministers KKSSR Ramachandran and Thangam Thennarasu to rush to the spot and monitor the rescue operations.

"The tragic news of the deaths of several people in the firecracker factory explosion that occurred in Kattanapatti, Virudhunagar district, causes immense sorrow. My deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives," he said in a post on X.

## Radhakrishnan calls on Dissanayake, discusses strengthening of ties

resident to Sri Lanka. He emphasised India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and bilateral developmental cooperation, officials said.

"Both leaders held productive discussions on further deepening the multifaceted India-Sri Lanka ties, rooted in shared history, strong civilizational and people-to-people linkages," according to a social media post by Radhakrishnan.

They held wide-ranging discussions on various initiatives, including the Indian housing project and projects being implemented under the USD 450 million package

for areas affected by Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka, including reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in the most affected regions of the Indian-origin Tamil community, it added.

The two sides also discussed addressing fishermen issues in a humanitarian manner, considering the livelihoods of fishing communities on both sides. The fishermen issue is a contentious one in the ties between India and Sri Lanka.

The Palk Strait, a narrow strip of water separating Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka, is a rich fishing ground for fishermen from both countries. Fishermen from both countries are arrested frequently for inadvertently trespassing into each other's waters.

Later in the day, he was to meet with Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya.

A number of memoranda of understanding between the two countries are also scheduled to be exchanged during the visit, a Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry release said.

This visit, which follows recent high-level engagements between the two countries, is expected to further strengthen the millennia-old civilisational and people-to-people ties between India and Sri Lanka, an official statement said.

## EC adds 7 lakh new voters to WB electoral rolls ahead of polls

judicial officers from West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand are overseeing the ongoing Special Inquiry and Revision (SIR) process, which is addressing over 60 lakh objections from those excluded from the voter list.

## Cong demands implementation of quota law on current LS strength

Congress president Alka Lamba, Delhi Women's Congress chief Pushpa Singh and AICC spokesperson Ragini Nayak.

Addressing the gathering, Yadav said the protest was aimed at pressing for the immediate implementation of women's reservation on the existing 543 Lok Sabha seats.

"Our protest today is for the demand for women's reservation, which has been ongoing for many years. The Bill was introduced in Parliament in 2023 and passed unanimously. Today, once again, the BJP is trying to push the delimitation exercise under the garb of women's reservation. If you are truly well-wishers of women, then implement reservation within the 543 seats of the current Lok Sabha," he said.

The Congress also sought to counter the BJP's narrative on the issue, accusing the Centre of delaying the implementation of the 2023 women's reservation act.

AICC spokesperson Ragini Nayak alleged that the Centre had deliberately linked the quota with delimitation to delay its rollout.

"In 2023, the entire opposition supported the women's reservation law, but the Modi government attached two conditions, census and delimitation, thus postponing it. Even today, we are saying, implement reservation on 543 seats," she said.

During polling, 298 members voted in support of the Bill, while 230 MPs voted against it. Out of 528 members who voted, the Bill required 352 votes for a two-thirds majority needed to pass a constitutional amendment bill.

## IAF to get compact UAV system

system, they said.

The defence ministry recently issued a request for information for procuring a 'Micro UAV' system for the IAF's Garud Special Forces.

The proposed system should also be able to support day and night surveillance, target acquisition and real-time situational awareness, the officials said.

The 'Micro UAV' system is envisaged as a compact, lightweight, man-portable platform designed for Special Forces' operations, they said.

"This elite unit of the Indian Air Force presently has a 'similar system', and the new one will be an upgraded system, and an 'Indian-made one with latest specifications,' a senior official, aware of the project, said.

"The system is required to operate in extreme environmental conditions, including temperatures ranging from minus 20 degrees Celsius to plus 50 degrees Celsius, and at altitudes up to 16,400 feet above mean sea level," the official added.

The proposed system is also envisaged to have an increased range as well as enhanced endurance level, they said.

This project is aimed at enhancing operational capability of the IAF and boosting indigenous defence manufacturing, while reducing dependence on foreign systems.

The RFI prioritises Indian vendors, including start-ups and MSMEs, and encourages development of domestic industrial capability, including lifecycle support and obsolescence management within India, the second official said.

Vendors are required to specify indigenous content levels, demonstrate capability for domestic maintenance, repair, overhaul, and provide details of indigenously developed subsystems and software.

The RFI emphasises procurement under the 'Buy' or 'Buy Indian' categories with a requirement of "minimum 60 per cent indigenous content," the senior official, aware of the project said.

The initiative aligns with India's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision and seeks to promote indigenous design, development, and manufacturing in the defence sector.

Earlier this month, a senior official had said that the government has envisioned design and development of an unmanned combat search and rescue aircraft for the IAF that can be used in missions to rescue air crew without risking piloted aircraft.

The project, envisioned under Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020, has been "approved in principle", the senior official had said.

The indigenous autonomous system, as planned, should also be a platform which can be deployed to ferry logistic material and other supplies in forward areas and inhospitable terrains, including snow-bound heights, where conventional helicopters struggle, they had said.

## Indian tanker crosses Hormuz safely after 2 ships reversed course

New Delhi was called in yesterday by the Ministry of External Affairs for a meeting with Foreign Secretary. During the meeting, Foreign Secretary conveyed India's deep concern at the shooting incident earlier yesterday involving two Indian-flagged ships in the Strait of Hormuz. He noted the importance that India attached to the safety of merchant shipping and mariners," the update said.

Reiterating his concern at this serious incident of firing on merchant ships, "Foreign Secretary urged the Ambassador to convey India's views to the authorities in Iran and resume at the earliest the process of facilitating India-bound ships across the Strait," it said.

The situation, it said, "continues to be closely monitored in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and relevant stakeholders. All Indian seafarers are safe."

State-run SCI owns Desh Vaibhav and Desh Vibhor, while Sanmar Herald is operated by Sanmar Shipping and Jag Arnab by Great Eastern Shipping Company.