

J&K election to be held in three phases from Sept. 18

This will be the first Assembly polls in the Valley in a decade; Haryana to vote on Oct. 1; counting of votes for both Assemblies on Oct. 4; CEC says Lok Sabha voter turnout in J&K was encouraging

Sheeparna Chakrabarty
 NEW DELHI

The first Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election in a decade will be held in three phases on September 18, 25 and October 1, the Election Commission (EC) announced on Friday. This will also be the first Assembly poll in J&K since the revocation of Article 370 in 2019.

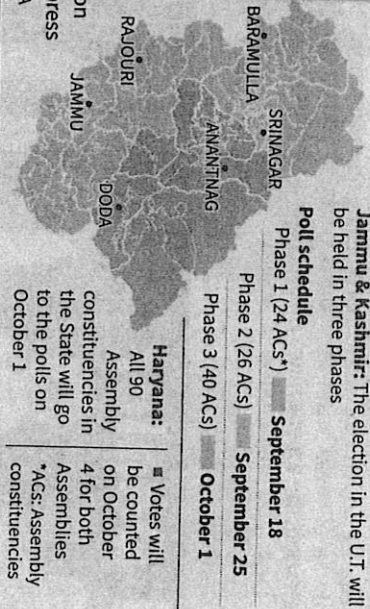
Haryana will vote in a single phase on October 1, and the counting of votes for both Assemblies will be held on October 4.

"People in Jammu and Kashmir opted for ballots instead of bullet and boycott [during the recent Lok Sabha election]. The Valley reached a new peak, witnessing a 30-point jump in poll participation from

Making it count | A look at key dates of the two States heading to the polls



Battle lines drawn: Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar with fellow Election Commissioners addressing a press conference. **SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA**



2019," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said at a press conference to announce the poll dates.

J&K voters last went to the polls to elect an Assembly in a five-phase exercise in November and December 2014. While upholding the

scrapping of Article 370 last year, the Supreme Court had directed that Assembly polls be held in J&K by September 30. Asked why the poll body overshot the deadline, Mr. Kumar said the EC had considered several factors, including the weather, the December

2023 amendment to reserve seats for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and the Amarnath Yatra, which ends on August 19.

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J&K election to be held in three phases

Mr. Kumar noted that conducting the Assembly election in J&K requires a considerable deployment of Central and State police forces to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections with fearless participation of voters, especially in vulnerable areas. "Mobilisation, deployment and disengagement of these forces with minimum criss-cross movement and optimal utilisation involved complex planning and detailed analysis," he added.

Slew of transfers

Asked about the series of transfers and postings which took place in the J&K administration late on Thursday evening and Friday morning just hours before the poll date announcement, Mr. Kumar said that the government was permitted to transfer officials until the Model Code of Conduct comes into effect. However, he promised that the EC will intervene if any official who has been transferred is found interfering in the free and fair conduct of the polls, and will not allow the level-playing field to be disturbed.

The simplification of the voting process for Kashmiri migrants, which had been initiated during the Lok Sabha poll, will continue in the Assembly election as well, he added.

J&K has 87,09 lakh voters, of which 44.46 lakh are men, and 42.62 lakh are women, while 3.71 lakh are first-timers. The first phase of voting will take place in 24 Assembly constituencies, while 26 seats will go to the polls in the second phase, and 40 seats in the third phase.

In Haryana, 2.01 crore voters - including 1.06 crore men, 95 lakh women, and 4.52 lakh first-timers - will exercise their franchise in 90 Assembly constituencies.

The last day to file the nominations of Haryana is September 12, the date of scrutiny is September 13, and the date of withdrawal of candidatures is September 16. The current Haryana Assembly's term ends on November 3.

Dated: 17.08.2024

J&K parties welcome Assembly polls, regret delay in Statehood

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The Election Commission's (EC) decision to hold the first-ever Assembly election in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) was widely welcomed by the political parties on Friday. However, the leaders regretted the Centre's delay in restoring Statehood ahead of the polls.

"People of J&K have been waiting for this day for a long time. Our party was prepared for the elections. People will come out and use their votes in the right direction. The EC should ensure the security of mainstream political parties, especially those opposed to the BJP," former Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah said.

Mr. Abdullah suggested holding talks with the Congress to discuss "concrete proposals and ideas" on a pre-poll alliance.

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Iltija Mufti, the daughter of PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, ex-

pressed hope that the elections will bring "redressal to people's issues and end *babudom*".

J&K came under direct Central rule in 2018 after the BJP-PDP coalition fell apart. It is after a gap of 10 years that J&K will see three-phase Assembly elections next month.

Questioning the delay in restoring Statehood, Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said "recent moves by the Union government have only added to the powers of the L-G there, making a mockery of the powers of a duly elected State government".

CPI(M) leader M.Y. Tariqami said the election notice has sent a wave of satisfaction among people in J&K. "We expect a level playing field, especially security to candidates. We expect impartial process," he said.

However, J&K Peoples Conference leader Imran Ansari termed the upcoming election an "eyewash". "Dates have been issued but the powers are there with L-G," he said.

Maharashtra polls to be held later due to J&K security needs'

CEC Rajiv Kumar says next set of dates will be announced after elections in Haryana and J&K; bypolls in Wayanad and other constituencies to follow

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Maharashtra, which had gone to the polls along with Haryana in 2019, will have its Assembly election later this time due to the security requirements for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election, dates for which were announced on Friday.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar noted that J&K had not been in the picture five years ago.

"Last time, Maharashtra and Haryana Assembly elections were held together. At that time, J&K was not a factor, but this time, there are four elections this year and fifth election immediately after this. Depending on the requirement of forces, we have decided to conduct two elections together," he said.

Besides J&K and Haryana, elections are due in



Some States experienced floods.. Let people have some breathing space. We will hold the bypolls within the stipulated six months
RAJIV KUMAR
Chief Election Commissioner

Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi. The terms of the Haryana and Maharashtra Assemblies end on November 3 and 26, respectively, while Jharkhand's term concludes on January 5, 2025.

Many factors The CEC said that the next set of State elections would be announced after the completion of the polls in J&K and Haryana.

A string of festivals, as well as the fact that Booth Level Officers were not being able to complete their job in Maharashtra due to monsoon rainfall were the

other factors behind the decision, he said. As far as bypolls to the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat and 46 Assembly constituencies were concerned, he said that the weather was the main issue in some States, adding that bypolls cannot be held in a piecemeal fashion.

"We saw a big disaster [landslide in Wayanad] in the Lok Sabha seat. We cannot have bypolls there now. Some States were experiencing floods... Let people have some breathing space. We will hold the bypolls within the stipulated six months," he said.

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

L-G govt. in J&K reshuffles 198 officers in 12 hours; NC seeks EC intervention

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The J&K Lieutenant Governor's (LG) administration's unprecedented reshuffle of at least 198 upper and middle-rung officers in 12 hours in the civil administration and police department on Friday raised many eyebrows, especially from the National Conference (NC).

J&K has been witnessing a major administrative revamp since Thursday in the security set-up. IPS officer Nalin Prabhakar has been appointed as the next Director General of Police (DGP) and Nitish Kumar has been appointed as the new CID chief.

Besides, the L-G administration, in a series of transfer orders, transferred 198 officers, which include five deputy commissioners and 10 Senior Superintendents of Police. 83 police officers have been reshuffled and posted to new areas.

This came a day after senior IPS officer Nalin Prabhakar was appointed as the



Manoj Sinha

hat was appointed as Special DG of J&K Police. He will assume the role of the force's chief following the retirement of R.R. Swain on September 30.

'Politically motivated'

The NC has termed these transfers politically motivated. "That the J&K administration had to call officers in the secretariat and police HQ to work on Independence Day to order this massive reshuffle tells me they had absolutely no clue that the Election Commission would announce poll dates today. All the more reason that the EC's SVEEP [Systematic Voters'

Education and Electoral Participation] should look at this transfer order from the prism of a free and fair poll. The NC suspects a biased intent on the part of the L-G administration," NC vice president and former J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said.

NC general secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar said the move seems intended to "undermine the integrity of the electoral process, which restricts such transfers to prevent the ruling party from gaining an undue administrative advantage over the Opposition".

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) also seemed to agree with the sentiment and issued a statement. "Around 150-200 transfers happened abruptly and arbitrarily. The L-G administration's behaviour is full of prejudice and bias in favour the BJP. Our concern is that elections should be conducted free, fair and transparent," PDP leader Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, said.

J&K TO GO TO POLLS IN 3 PHASES FROM SEPT. 18

■ Single day poll in Haryana Oct. 1; Results will be out on Oct. 4

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 16

After a brief break following a long and exhaustive general election that ended in June, the Election Commission of India was back on Friday with a new election schedule as it got the ball rolling for the Assembly elections for Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana. The polling in the Union territory of J&K will take place in three phases - September 18, 25 and October 1 - while in the state of Haryana it will be a single-day poll on October 1. Counting for both will be on October 4. Both have 90 seats each in their Assemblies.

The EC, however, did not give any dates for



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar during a press conference to announce the schedule for Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana, in New Delhi, Friday.

Maharashtra and Jharkhand where elections are also due around the same time. Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar clarified that earlier the Haryana and

EC did not give any dates for Maharashtra and Jharkhand where elections are also due around the same time.

Byelections are also due in 47 places - 46 for Legislative Assembly seats and one for the parliamentary constituency of Wayanad.

In the J&K polls, CEC said that each candidate would be provided sufficient security and the security of candidates will be under the EC's radar.

Maharashtra elections used to be clubbed together but then J&K was not a factor. This time, the EC had been directed by the Supreme Court to complete polling in the Union

territory by September 30, which is why it has taken Haryana with J&K in this round. The CEC further explained that since Maharashtra has recently seen heavy rains, the booth-level officers are yet to complete voter verification work. Besides, festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, etc. have been taken into account with regard to Maharashtra.

The byelections in 47 places are also due - 46 for Legislative Assembly seats and one for the parliamentary constituency of Wayanad. The CEC said weather and environment was not conducive at present for these byelections. He mentioned the floods in Assam and Bihar and the landslide tragedy in Wayanad. ■ P4

J&K to go to polls in 3 phases from Sept. 18

FROM PG 1

"Let the people recover first. We will take all bypolls together within six months," said Mr Kumar.

This will be the first Assembly polls in J&K ever since its Assembly was dissolved in 2019 after the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, taking away special status of the state, and making it a UT. In fact, this will also be the first election in J&K in ten years. The Congress on Friday said it has been all along demanding that elections in J&K should be held only after restoring its statehood.

"We were waiting for the weather to improve in J&K and the Amarnath Yatra to end. The yatra will end on August 19 and on August 20 the voters' list will be published," said the CEC while announcing the schedule for J&K. He added that the EC was encouraged by the heavy voter turnout in J&K during the Lok Sabha elections this year.

"J&K chose the ballot instead of the bullet.

People are eager to participate in this process of democracy... Duniya dekhegi napak iradon ke shikast ki kahani. People will respond to terror through votes," the CEC said.

J&K has 90 seats, out of which 74 are general, nine reserved for Scheduled Tribes and seven for Scheduled Castes, after delimitation. There are 87.09 lakh voters in the UT, out of which 3.71 lakh are first-timers. In the first phase, 24 seats will go to the polls, which include Kishtwar, Ramban, Doda, Anantnag, Pufawma, Shopian and Kulgam. The second phase will have 26 seats, which include Ganderbal, Srinagar, Budgam, Poonch, Rajouri, and Reasi. The third phase will have Jammu, Udhampur, Samba, Kathua among 40 seats going to the polls.

The CEC said there are enough forces for the Amarnath Yatra and sufficient forces will be available for the polls too. He added that each candidate will be provided sufficient security and the security of candidates will be

under the EC's radar.

The election in J&K was pushed by the Supreme Court. The Constitution Bench of the apex court had on December 11, 2023 directed the Centre to restore the process of restoration of statehood in J&K and hold elections before September 30, 2024.

However, just ahead of the poll announcement, the J&K UT administration, that comes now directly under the Centre, ordered the transfer and posting of 198 IAS and J&K administration officers, raising questions on the fairness of the polls. In fact, in a surprise and swift move, the Centre also positioned Andhra Pradesh cadre IPS officer Nalin Prabhat to J&K as the next director-general of police. His tenure, however, will begin from October 1.

The CEC said the EC has taken note of these transfers. "Out of all these, one SP and four DCs are main and the rest in the field (not directly connected to polls). Before the Model Code of Conduct is imposed, any transfer, posting can happen," said the CEC.

DECCAN Chronicle

17 AUGUST 2024

Elections in J&K after 10 years momentous

Fixing the dates for the elections to the Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and paving the way for the return of democracy to the Valley is a momentous step that is to be wholeheartedly welcomed, however complex a process it might prove to be. To hold polls, albeit after the prompting of the Supreme Court in placing a deadline, and ensure that the people of J&K have a direct say in governance and to swear in a popularly elected government is the representative way and the Indian way of upholding democratic values.

It is the right step forward irrespective of what the changed status has meant in the last five years after New Delhi abrogated Article 370 that had granted special autonomy to J&K. The arguments can be endless over the propriety of going back on a historical commitment, but there is no denying that democracy is now slated to return to a more egalitarian region, even if it has been divided into two UTs of J&K and Ladakh.

There is no arguing against the logic of direct strategic control of Ladakh where India must live face to face with a hostile northern neighbour in China eyeing its territory. But to bring back popular rule to J&K was a no brainer; it had to be done to preserve the principles that brought freedom to the country and to a region whose king chose to be with India at the time of British-sponsored Partition.

The ground reality of security concerns amid sponsored terror from another prickly neighbour in Pakistan, which shares a Line of Control with J&K, may not change even if elected representatives run the J&K government in Srinagar. However, an ideal scenario would be a popular government in place in today's J&K in which the police will oversee law & order and the Indian Army would be free to secure the border.

It would be too simplistic to say that Article 370 was abrogated only to fully integrate J&K into India. Doing away with the special status came at the cost of a huge political and social upheaval with international ramifications. Long-term stability and prosperity of the region can, however, be assured if a popular government is in charge and works for the development of the place rather than indulge in partisan politics and keep sniping at the Centre from a place that has been an integral part of India all along after independence.

The holding of the District Development Council (DDC) polls in December 2020 and the Lok Sabha polls last April-May without a scare from imported or homegrown terror provided proof it is perfectly possible to hold polls in J&K without having to trot out the excuse of terror threats. Three-phase polls on September 18 and 25, and October 1 with due consideration for the logistics of deployment of forces for orderly conduct in J&K — the Haryana polls will be held on a single day on October 1 — makes perfect sense.

From here it is up to the people of J&K to place their trust in the Indian election system and vote without fear and realise their dream of being able to elect their own representatives. Some laws may have changed in empowering the lieutenant governor of the UT more, but it is a significant political milestone that J&K and India will be crossing soon in giving the people a direct say in local development and governance.

Dated: 17.08.2024

Parties welcome EC decision to conduct J&K polls Sept. 18

Polls to fortify democracy in J&K: Shah ■ Better late than never: Omar

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, AUG. 16

Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream political parties have welcomed the Election Commission's announcement of holding the Assembly polls in the Union territory (UT) in three-phases, beginning September 18, hoping that it would restore democracy and help its people towards facing the long-standing challenges democratically.

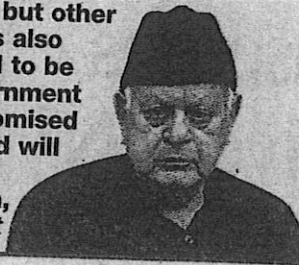
However, they also emphasised the importance of restoring J&K's statehood at the earliest to meet the collective desire of its people. "It is good that elections have been announced but the Government of India should also begin to rectify

the wrongs it committed in the past six years, particularly after August 2019. It should restore the full legislative powers of the Assembly by returning us our constitutional status," said former minister and National Conference (NC) MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi.

NC president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah also asked for

It is not just us but other political parties also want statehood to be returned. The Government of India has also promised that J&K's statehood will be restored

— Farooq Abdullah,
NC president



the restoration of J&K's statehood so that full legislative powers could be returned to its assembly. "It is not just us but other political parties also want statehood to be returned. The Government of India has also promised that J&K's statehood will be restored", he told reporters.

Soon after the EC announcement, NC vice

president Omar Abdullah posted a picture of an inked finger after voting on microblogging site 'X' and said, "Der aayad durust aayad (better late than never)!"

Senior Congress leader and AICC general secretary Ghulam Ahmed Mir said that the Supreme Court's supremacy has been upheld.

Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday welcomed the EC announcement and said the polls would further strengthen the roots of democracy in the region. "In the last 10 years, the Modi govt through a series of relentless initiatives, has created a new era of peace, development and strengthening democracy in J&K," he wrote on X.

Date d: 17.08.2024

Rejig in J&K admin, police hours before poll dates out

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, AUG. 16

Hours before the Election Commission (EC) announced the Assembly poll schedule for Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, the Union territory's administration headed by lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha ordered the transfer and posting of nearly 200 officers in a major administrative reshuffle. The move has raised many eyebrows.

Several other administrative decisions made in a hurry before the imposition of the model code of conduct, too, have been questioned by the Opposition parties.

Former chief minister and Opposition National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah said, "Transfers and postings outside (EC) guidelines should be stopped." He added that the EC must take notice of the concerns over the large-scale reshuffle of senior police officers, including the head of the J&K CID department before the polls.

"We have doubts that this government is helping the BJP and its B, C and D teams. The EC emphasised

FORMER CHIEF minister and NC chief Farooq Abdullah said that the massive rejig in the administration and police signify that the L-G administration knew about the announcement beforehand

free and fair polls. We wrote to it on police transfers in the last 24 hours. They should take notice," Mr Abdullah said.

NC president and three-time chief minister Farooq Abdullah, while speaking to reporters, said that the massive rejig in the administration and police signify that the L-G administration knew about the announcement beforehand.

"The EC should take note and ask the administration about the motives behind these transfers," he said.

PDP's Iltija Mufti also questioned the L-G administration's move and said, "Just before the announcement of the poll schedule 150-200 transfers have been ordered abruptly and arbitrarily by the government. Mr Sinha's behaviour is full of prejudice and bias. Apparently, he wants to help the BJP."

Dated: 17.08.2024

EC cites rain, festivals & lack of forces to delay Maha polls

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New Delhi: The Election Commission, while announcing polls in J&K and Haryana, said it is keeping Maharashtra for later as the state is still dealing with heavy rain and has a long festive season and streak of religious events ahead. Besides, the EC added, the high requirement of forces in J&K did not leave scope for adding Maharashtra in the schedule announced on Friday.

Explaining why Maharashtra polls have not been timed along with Haryana elections, as was the case in the past, CEC Rajiv Kumar said the term of Haryana assembly is ending on Nov 3, 2024, while that of Maharashtra concludes only on Nov 26, 2024. Since J&K polls were due this time around and had to be held before Sept 30, Haryana had to be brought forward as EC would otherwise need to announce it in the midst of J&K poll. Had EC waited until after Oct 4, the time was not enough to have the new Haryana assembly in place before Nov 3. "So the only option was to hold the J&K and Haryana polls together," the CEC said.

A source said Maharashtra polls may be announced shortly after the assembly elections in J&K and Haryana are completed. In all probability, the assembly poll in



Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, NCP-SP chief Sharad Pawar and Congress neta Balasaheb Thorat during the gathering of MVA workers in Mumbai on Friday

Announce MVA's CM face: Uddhav to allies

Uddhav Thackeray told the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s partners in the Maha Vikas Aghadi on Friday that the alliance should announce its CM face in advance to avoid infighting and assured them of his support for the candidate of their choice, reports **Vijay V Singh**. However, neither Congress nor NCP (SP) leaders spoke on the subject though former CM Prithviraj Chavan and NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar were in attendance at the first joint meeting of office-bearers of the three parties. Uddhav said the MVA should not go by the logic of deciding to keep the CM's post for the party that wins the most seats.

Jharkhand, where the term of the current assembly is expiring on Jan 5, 2025, will be brought forward and synced with Maharashtra election.

Addressing a press conference here, Kumar said heavy rains in Maharashtra had led to delays in updation of the voters list in the state, which is considered as a crucial step in the electoral process.

"There was heavy rainfall

in Maharashtra, booth level officers have to complete their work. There are several festivals too that have to be factored in. Ganesh Festival, Pitru Paksha, Navratri, Diwali, all that put together, this is what we thought we could handle as two elections at a time," the CEC said. The festive season will end with Diwali on Oct 31, and Maharashtra polls could be held after that.

The Voter & The Soldier Are Ready

Past experience shows whenever J&K goes to polls, the security dynamic improves. People want their voice to be heard. And security forces can thwart terror plans

Syed Alta Hasnain



EC's decision to conduct assembly elections in J&K in three phases was preceded by a lot of prep. It has taken ground realities into consideration, examined past elections, and processed complex lessons from all this experience. It has also had full consultations with state and central government machinery, before arriving at the assembly elections decision. Great credibility also comes from how it conducted LS polls successfully minus violence, and with complete transparency.

Elections complement security strategy

True, everyone's attention is focused on the security situation. And there are doubts raised by the spate of encounters in Jammu division. But against all this, there's the goal of restoring normalcy to the social and political domains. This is not the first time we are at such a juncture and the learning from the past is clear.

In 1996 we decided to conduct elections, seven years after the initiation of hybrid war by Pakistan and its proxies, with terrorism at its core. We used a kinetic approach to bring the situation under reasonable control, although all Pak-supported proxy networks continued to thrive. Govt decision to go ahead with elections in 1996 even with an adverse public order situation was bold, albeit laden with risk. Despite the predictably low turnout, public representatives formed govt and democracy helped damp the proxy conflict, at least for some time, before the adversaries adopted newer strategies.

Terrorists fear polls | People's empowerment, however, remained a powerful normalising tool even as the situation worsened, including in 2002 and 2008 when violence hit high levels. Even UN religiously follows this doctrine for its

peacekeeping and enforcement missions. Post-demobilisation of armed cadre and their cantonment in disturbed areas, UN always pursues an electoral process, which alone is presumed to be the final nail in conflict resolution. Of course, the J&K case is a little more complicated, since it involves containing and stabilising a disturbed situation.

In 1996, the elections were preceded by a period of intense violence in urban and rural centres. Separatist sentiment was high everywhere, in the streets, on campuses and even among govt servants. But the elections proved to be a positive stroke. International community was appreciative of how India handled the conflict and Pakistan had to work overtime to try to counter this sentiment.

In the 1999, 2002 and 2008 elections which I witnessed, violence was a factor and worrisome too. But we overcame it through a) sufficiency of security resources and b) a people-centric approach. A distinct divide still remained. Areas closer to the LoC populated by Bahari and Gujjar communities clearly conveyed their preference

through 70% turnout, limiting the separatist sentiment to the Valley floor.

It's the right time | LS polls of May 2024

gave good indicators on political and social readiness, although some awkwardness had been expected after the delimitation boundaries came into place. If their 58% turnout is an indicator, assembly polls, always considered 'bread and butter' elections, are bound to do better. The populace, after experiencing five years of an effective development agenda, especially under a non-controversial IJG, who has remarkable cultural sensitivity, appears ready for closer integration; especially the youth.

Extending the period of non-empowerment, awaiting an even more conducive time, or ideal conditions, may prove counterproductive. Seizing the moment is a better mantra. Elections will also help in the restoration of statehood, which in turn will help fight any potential separatist sentiment, which Pakistan may think of exploiting.

Don't fall for Jammu syndrome

The million-dollar question is, will the security situation permit it? Sentiment is very positive on this. Majority of

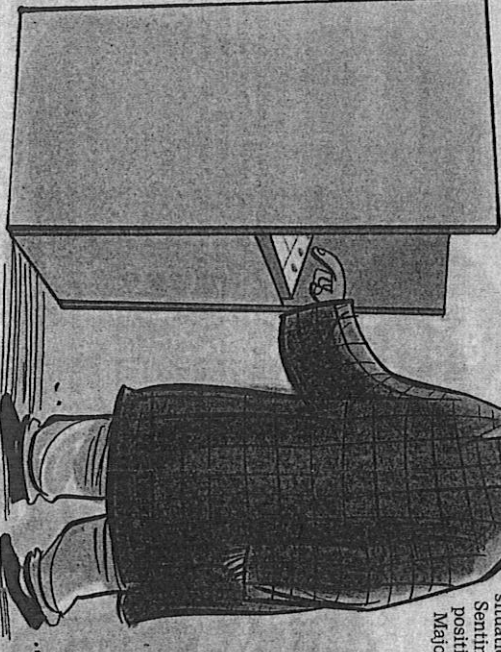
may-sayers are perhaps those who may not be fully familiar with the finer aspects of the dynamic security environment of J&K. Elections in 90s and 2000s were conducted despite the urban centres of Budgam, Srinagar, Anantnag and Pulwama being in the throes of sub-conventional violence with well-established networks of over-ground workers. The professionalism of Indian security forces overcame all this, and without coercion.

The Jammu syndrome, which is influencing many minds, is a phenomenon far from the urban centres. And in many ways, it actually signifies the success of our overall security control. The Pir Panjal range effectively separates the Jammu and Kashmir divisions. Its high, rugged and forested. Sponsored terrorists and possible Pak B&T teams cannot influence the main population centres on either side, where the campaigning and the casting of votes will be done.

Our forces are winning | The army may have suffered some reverses in the recent past but it has never adopted an attitude of helplessness. Its pro-activeness is drawing out the terrorists, restricted currently to the forest tracts. Their neutralisation is only a matter of time. Terrorists on the run have little or no capability to participate in a campaign to set back the assembly elections.

A cursory look at the map, even of a Google variety, reveals a wide green and brown swathe of ground in the Pir Panjal range and its relative distance from the prime population centres. That itself should allay fears. Yes, there will be threats to the population, to retain relevance among terrorist cadre. But with a combination of army, CAPFs, the redoubtable J&K Police and Village Defence Committees, these threats too can be neutralised. We have done it very effectively before and we will do it again.

The writer is a former commander of the Srinagar-based Chinhar Corps
 Uday Deb



After 10 yrs, J&K to vote in 3 phases, Haryana on Oct 1

Maha Put Off Over Security Needs Of J&K

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New Delhi: The Election Commission on Friday announced assembly elections in Jammu & Kashmir and Haryana, ending a 10 year-wait for political parties since the last state elections and honouring Supreme Court's Sept 30 deadline. This will be the first-ever assembly election in J&K since the nullification of Article 370 and its reorganisation as a Union Territory.

Staggered over just three phases, the upcoming J&K poll is perhaps the shortest in several decades, with polling to be conducted over a 14-day period between Sept 18 and Oct 1. Haryana will see a single-day poll on Oct 1. Counting for both J&K and Haryana will be held on October 4, chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar, flanked by election commis-

1ST POLLS AFTER 370 SCRAPPED

JAMMU & KASHMIR	2014 Assembly Elections (83 seats)		
	Party	Seats	Vote Share (%)
Assembly Seats			
90	PDP	28	22.9
Poll Dates	BJP	25	23.0
Sept 18, 25 & Oct 1	NC	15	21.1
Voters	Cong	9	17.2
Over 87L	Others	6	15.8

* Excluding 4 Ladakh seats from 87-member assembly as it was then

HARYANA	Seats		Poll Date		Voters	
	Haryana 2019 Assembly	2024 LS, Assembly Segment-Wise (90)	Leads	Vote Share (%)	Seats	Vote Share (%)
	90	90	Oct 1	over 2cr		
Party	Seats	Vote Share (%)	Leads	Vote Share (%)		
BJP	40	36.5	44	46.1		
Cong	31	28.1	42	43.7		
JJP	10	14.8	0	0.9		
INLD	1	2.4	0	1.7		
Others	8	18.2	4	7.6		

sioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu, said at the press conference here. Assembly elections in Maharashtra, which were held along with Haryana in 2019, will be announced later

due to security requirements for J&K, he added.

Congress will look to preempt a BJP hat-trick in Haryana, and pull off a good show in J&K, where leading local par-



MANY FIRSTS: These will be the first elections in J&K after more than 6 yrs of Central rule, abrogation of Art 370 (2019), rollout of ST-reserved seats & redrawing of constituencies (2022). Seven assembly seats were added, taking the no. to 90

ties National Conference and People's Democratic Party are its allies in INDIA but are likely to fight solo.

'Better late than never': J&K parties welcome EC move

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Srinagar: Political parties in J&K applauded Friday the announcement of assembly elections, calling it a big leap towards restoring democracy after six years of central rule and abrogation of special status in 2019.

Former CM Omar Abdullah of the National Conference (NC) described the announcement of the three-phased polls from Sept 18 as the end of a long wait. "Better late than never," Omar said. Omar's father and NC president Farooq Abdullah echoed the sentiment. "I thank God. This has been an unusually long gap. The last elections were in 2014," Farooq said.

Omar, though, pointed out that this election might be the first since 1987-88 to be held within such a short time frame. Earlier elections were held in five to six phases. "It will be a new experiment for parties. But NC is prepared and will soon start electioneering," Omar said, appearing to rule out for now "any pre-poll alliance".

People's Democratic Party's (PDP) Iltija Mufti welcomed the decision but wondered what took the Election Commission (EC) six years. "In the last five years, not only fundamental rights of the people of J&K but democracy has been suspended," said Iltija, daughter and media adviser of PDP president and former CM Mehbooba Mufti.

Iltija argued the Centre had not done the J&K people any favour by announcing the polls, saying "it is a fundamental right in a democracy to choose a government".

Both NC and PDP questioned the massive shake-up of the administration in the last 24 hours preceding the announcement of the polls, including the appointment of Nalin Prabhat as new J&K DGP. "We have doubts this government is helping BJP and its B, C and D teams. EC should stop transfers outside its guidelines," Omar said.

Congress's J&K senior vice-President Ravinder Sharma remarked that the people had been waiting for polls since the fall of the PDP-BJP govt in 2018.

D. T. NEXT

Dated: 17.08.2024

J-K to go to polls after a decade

NEW DELHI: Assembly elections will be held in Jammu and Kashmir after a decade in three phases from September 18, setting the stage for the people of the union territory to elect a government after the scrapping of Article 370 in 2019.

The Election Commission also announced that elections to the 90-member Haryana assembly will be held on October 1 and results for both the polls will be declared on October 4.

The two assembly elections will be the first popularity test for the BJP and the INDIA bloc following the Lok Sabha polls. The three-phase elections to the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir assembly will be held on September 18, September 25 and October 1, Chief Elec-

tion Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said.

While 24 seats will go to the polls in the first phase in Jammu and Kashmir, elections will be held in 26 seats and 40 seats in the second and third phases respectively.

The last assembly elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir in November-December 2014 in five phases.

On the polls due in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Delhi, CEC Kumar said the next set of elections would be announced after the

completion of the process in Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana. CEC Kumar said assembly elections in Maharashtra, which were held along with Haryana in 2019, will be announced later due to security requirements for Jammu and Kashmir.



Rajiv Kumar

Dated : 18.08.2024

Maha election dates after J&K, Hry results: EC

Election Commission will announce the assembly polls in Maharashtra only after the J&K and Haryana election results are in on Oct 4, and is likely to tie them up with Jharkhand polls, reports **Bharti Jain**. Sources in the poll panel told TOI that elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand may be held in Nov and shall be completed before the term of the Maharashtra assembly ends on Nov 26. CEC Rajiv Kumar on Friday said elections in Maharashtra and Haryana were delinked this time as the Haryana assembly's term is ending on Nov 3. **P6**

PDP & NC positive reactions to J&K polls signal shift in stand after decade-long gap

Ahmed Ali Fayyaz | TNN

Srinagar: Election Commission's announcement to hold assembly elections in J&K after a decade-long gap has sparked optimism, with parties such as Mehbooba Mufti's People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Farooq Abdullah's National Conference (NC) showing signs of a potential shift in their stand on participating in the electoral process.

Until recently, both former CM Mehbooba and NC's Omar Abdullah had maintained firm positions, stating they would not participate in any elections until J&K's statehood, stripped after the

Cong urges NC and PDP to joins hands to form broad alliance against BJP

New Delhi: Congress is pushing the National Conference (NC) for a wider alliance in Jammu and Kashmir for the assembly elections, stressing that the prime idea is to defeat BJP for which all the like-minded forces should come together, reports **Subodh Ghildiyal**. Congress general secretary and senior J&K leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir said NC and PDP should stand true to their earlier stance that the cause of the state is above personal issues, as he lashed out against their failure to keep the INDIA alliance together in the Lok Sabha elections. He warned that people would be watching their moves.

abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, was restored. However, EC's announcement of elections in three phases from Sept 18 to Oct 1 appears to have altered the political landscape.

PDP insiders suggested Mehbooba is also likely to reconsider her decision to stay away from elections, as pressure mounts from party cadre urging her to participate.

For his part, NC president

Farooq Abdullah asked the party cadre to gear up for the polls, emphasising the need to strengthen its grassroots base. "We are committed to overall development of J&K," he said Saturday in Jammu, while welcoming J&K BJP's OBC wing general secretary and others into the NC fold.

Despite the presence of over 40 political parties in J&K, including Ghulam Nabi Azad's Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), many of these parties lack the organisational strength and visibility of PDP and NC, making the upcoming elections a critical battleground for the region's dominant players.

சிறப்பு அந்தஸ்து நீக்கப்பட்ட பிறகு முதல்முறையாக

காஷ்மீரில் சட்டப்பேரவை தேர்தல் அறிவிப்பு

● **செப்டம்பர் 18-ல் தொடங்கி மூன்று கட்டங்களாக நடைபெற உள்ளது.**
ஹரியானாவில் ஒரே கட்டமாக அக்டோபர் 1-ம் தேதி வாக்குப்பதிவு நடக்கிறது.

● **புதுடில்லி**
 ஜம்மு காஷ்மீரில் 10 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு பிறகு சட்டப்பேரவை தேர்தல் நடைபெற உள்ளது. செப்டம்பர் 18, 25, அக்டோபர் 1 என 3 கட்டமாக அங்கு சட்டப்பேரவை தேர்தல் நடைபெறும் என்று தேர்தல் ஆணையம் அறிவித்துள்ளது. ஹரியானாவில் ஒரே கட்டமாக அக்டோபர் 1-ம் தேதி வாக்குப்பதிவு நடைபெற உள்ளது. 2 மாநிலங்களிலும் அக்டோபர் 4-ம் தேதி வாக்கு எண்ணிக்கை நடைபெறும்.

இதுதொடர்பாக டெல்லியில் தலைமை தேர்தல் ஆணையர் ராஜீவ் குமார் நேற்று கூறியதாவது:

நாடு முழுவதும் 2024 மக்களவை தேர்தல் அமைதியாக நடத்தப்பட்டது. பெண்கள், இளைஞர்கள் ஆர்வத்தோடு வாக்களித்தனர். இந்தேர்தலில் பல வரலாற்று சாதனைகள் படைக்கப்பட்டன. இந்தியாவின் ஜனநாயகம் உலகம் முழுவதும் பறைசாற்றப்பட்டது.

ஜம்மு காஷ்மீர் மக்கள் நீண்ட வரிசையில் காத்திருந்து வாக்களித்தனர். கடந்த 30 ஆண்டுகால வரலாற்றில், மிக அதிகபட்சமாக 58.58 சதவீத வாக்குகள் பதிவாகின. காஷ்மீர் பள்ளத்தாக்கில் கனிசமான வாக்குகள் பதிவாகின. இதுதான் ஜனநாயகத்தின் வலிமை. காஷ்மீர் மக்கள் துப்பாக்கி குண்டு களுக்குப்பதிலாக தேர்தல் நடைமுறையை தேர்வுசெய்துள்ளனர். காஷ்மீர் மக்கள் சட்டப்பேரவை தேர்தலுக்காக ஆவலுடன் காத்திருப்பதை, சமீபத்தில் அங்கு சென்றபோது அறிய முடிந்தது. ஜம்மு காஷ்மீரில் 7 எஸ்டி தொகுதிகள், 9 எஸ்டி தொகுதிகள், 74 பொது தொகுதிகள் என மொத்தம் 90 சட்டப்பேரவை தொகுதிகள் உள்ளன. அங்கு செப்டம்பர் 18, 25, அக்டோபர் 1 என 3 கட்டங்களாக தேர்தல் நடத்தப்படுகிறது. காஷ்மீரில் 87.09 லட்சம் பேர்



↑ டெல்லியில் நேற்று செய்திாளசாளரை சந்தித்த தலைமை தேர்தல் ஆணையர் ராஜீவ் குமார், உடன தேர்தல் ஆணையர்கள் குர்னேஷ் குமார், சக்ஷி சிங். படம்: அக்ஷ

நா. மிதக்கும் வாக்குச்சாவடிகளும் ஏற்படுத்தப்படும்.

ஹரியானாவில் ஒரேகட்டமாக..

ஹரியானாவில் உள்ள 90 சட்டப்பேரவை தொகுதிகளுக்கு ஒரே கட்டமாக அக்டோபர் 1-ம் தேதி தேர்தல் நடத்தப்படும். மாநிலத்தில் 2.01 கோடி பேர் வாக்குரிமை பெற்றுள்ளனர். மொத்தம் 20,629 வாக்குச்சாவடிகள் அமைக்கப்படும்.

காஷ்மீர், ஹரியானா சட்டப்பேரவை தேர்தலில் பதிவாகும் வாக்குகள் அக்டோபர் 4-ம் தேதி எண்ணப்பட்டு முடிவுகள் அறிவிக்கப்படும். இவ்வாறு அவர் கூறினார். மகாராஷ்டிர சட்டப்பேரவையின் பதவிக்க காலம் நவம்பர் 26-ம் தேதி முடிவடைகிறது. அங்கு எப்போது தேர்தல் நடத்தப்படும் என்று செய்தியாளர்கள் கேட்டனர்.

இதற்கு பதில் அளித்த தலைமை தேர்தல் ஆணையர் ராஜீவ் குமார், “கடந்த முறை மகாராஷ்டிரா, ஹரியானாவுக்கு ஒரே நேரத்தில் தேர்தல் நடத்தப்பட்டது. சமீபகாலமாக மகாராஷ்டிராவில் பலத்த மழை பெய்தது.

காலம் 2025 பிப்ரவரி 15-ம் தேதி முடிவடைகிறது. அங்கு ஜனவரியில் தேர்தல் நடத்தப்படும் என்று குறிக்கிறது. காஷ்மீரில் கடந்த 2014-ம் ஆண்டில் சட்டப்பேரவை தேர்தல் நடத்தப்பட்டது. பல்வேறு நிர்ப்பந்தங்களுக்கு பிறகு மக்கள் ஜனநாயக கட்சி - பாஜக இணைந்து அங்கு கூட்டணி ஆட்சி அமைத்தனர். கடந்த 2018-ல் கூட்டணி உடைந்து, ஆட்சி கவிழ்ந்தது. இதன்பிறகு அங்கு ஆளுநர் ஆட்சி அமல்படுத்தப்பட்டது. கடந்த 2019 ஆகஸ்டில் காஷ்மீர் மக்கள் கிராபி அந்தஸ்து ரத்து செய்யப்பட்டது. ஜம்மு-காஷ்மீர் 2 யூனியன் பிரதேசங்களாக பிரிக்கப்பட்டது. ஜம்மு-காஷ்மீர் சட்டப்பேரவையுடன் யூனியன் பிரதேசமாகவும், லடாக் பகுதி சட்டப்பேரவை இல்லாத யூனியன் பிரதேசமாகவும் உருவாக்கப்பட்டன.

ஜம்மு-காஷ்மீரில் செப்டம்பர் மாதத்துக்குள் தேர்தல் நடத்தப்பட வேண்டும் என்று உச்ச நீதிமன்றம் கடந்த டிசம்பரில் உத்தரவிட்டது. கிராபி அந்தஸ்து நீக்கப்பட்ட பிறகு, அங்கு முதல்முறையாக சட்டப்பேரவை தேர்தல் நடைபெற உள்ளது.

வாயாடு இடைத்தேர்தல் எப்போது?

கடந்த மக்களவை தேர்தலில் கோளாறின் வாயாடு, உத்தர பிரதேசத்தின் ரேபேலி ஆகிய 2 தொகுதிகளில் காங்கிரஸ் முத்த தலைவர் ராகுல் காந்தி போட்டியிட்டார். 2 தொகுதிகளிலும் அவர் பெற்றி பெற்றார். இதில் ஏதாவது ஒரு எம்.பி. பதவியை ராஜினாமா செய்ய வேண்டும் என்பதால், வாயாடு தொகுதி எம்.பி. பதவியை அவர் ராஜினாமா செய்தார். இதைப்பற்றி தொகுதி இடைத்தேர்தல் தலைமை தேர்தல் ஆணையர் ராஜீவ் குமார் நேற்று கூறியபோது, “காலியாக உள்ள தொகுதிக்கு 6 மாதங்களுக்குள் இடைத்தேர்தல் நடத்தப்பட வேண்டும். ஆனால், சமீபத்தில் ஏற்பட்ட நிலச்சரிவு காரணமாக, வாயாட்டில் அரசாணை ஆய்வு நிலவுகிறது. எனவே, அந்த தொகுதி இடைத்தேர்தல் தள்ளிவைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இயல்பு நிலை திரும்பிய பிறகு இடைத்தேர்தல்