

In first election since 2019, Ladakh queues up, registers 77.61% voting

There are 85 candidates in the fray for the 26-member Hill Council; results will reflect the mood of the people on the Centre's move to grant UT status to Ladakh, comprising Leh and Kargil districts

Peerzada Ashiq
KARGIL

With Pakistani peaks overlooking the polling booths in once-war-battered zones of Kargil, the fifth Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Kargil (LAHDC-K) elections witnessed a massive 77.61% turnout on Wednesday, in the first ever polls since Ladakh was carved out as a Union Territory in 2019.

The polling, which started at 8 a.m. and ended by 4 p.m., marks a quantum jump from around 70% polling recorded during the 2018 Council elections, according to an official.

In all, 85 candidates are in the fray for the 26-member Hill Council, with Congress fielding the highest number at 22, followed by 17 each from the National Conference (NC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP is facing an uphill task against the NC-Congress combine. There are 24 candidates who are contesting as independents in these elections which will reflect the mood of the people on the Centre's move to grant UT status to Ladakh, comprising Leh and Kargil districts.

Kargil has a population of 1.08 lakh and around



A senior citizen walking towards a polling station in Hunderman, the last village on the Line of Control, to vote in the Hill Council polls on Wednesday. NISSAR AHMAD

65,878 voters, with Shia Muslim population in a majority. P

olling booths were abuzz with men and women since morning at Kargil's Kaksar village, located at an altitude of 14,000 feet. Muzaffar Ali, 51, a voter in Kaksar, described the first ever polls held under the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh, carved out from J&K in 2019, as "significant and decisive".

Villagers dislocated

During the 1999 Kargil war, Kaksar village saw the dislocation of the entire local population "because of incessant Pakistani shelling from the peaks nearby", overlooking the highland

plateau. "The ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan has brought relief to locals. We welcome it," Mr. Ali said.

He is however critical of the Centre's move to separate Kargil from Kashmir and says "it was not the right move".

"We believe Statehood and the provisions of Article 370 should be returned to us," Mr. Ali added.

Bilqees Nasreeni, 19, a student who is also a first-time voter from Kaksar village, which has over 600 voters, said she voted for "a strong Hill Council that upgrades the poor education sector by getting more professional colleges to Kargil".

A majority of voters in Kargil district expressed resentment over the Centre's decision to bifurcate J&K into two UTs.

"I am an Indian. People of Drass helped the Army fight the Pakistan Army in 1999. But Drass sees its identity closer to Kashmir, where we have centuries-old links. Restoring Article 370 will help in protecting our identity," Gayas-ud-Din, a shopkeeper at the world's second coldest place Drass, said.

In Hunderman, overlooking the villages of Pakistan-Occupied Gilgit-Baltistan, voters say the government is unmoved by the water crisis faced due to the dip in snowfall.

INDIAN ATHLETES CONTINUE MEDAL RUN

Neeraj Chopra, men's 4x400m relay team win Gold medals

HANGZHOU, Oct 4 (PTI)

OLYMPIC champion Neeraj Chopra became only the second man in Asian Games history to defend his gold with a season's best effort of 88.88m in the javelin throw event marred by controversy here on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old Chopra sent his spear to 88.88m, his fourth career-best throw, in his fourth effort to clinch the gold. He had won a gold in the 2018 Asian Games with a throw of 88.06m.

Chopra's compatriot Kishore Jena took the silver with a throw of 87.54m in a 1-2 finish for India. Jena thus also sealed his berth for the Paris Olympics. The qualification mark was 85.50.

The men's 4x400m relay team of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Amoj Jacob, Muhammed Ajmal and Rajesh Ramesh won the gold for the first time after 61 years with a time of 3:01.58.

On the javelin field, a huge controversy erupted during Chopra's event when his first attempt was not measured, prompting legendary Anju Bobby George to accuse the Chinese officials of "trying to cheat" and "deliberately targeting the Indians".

It seemed Chopra had comfortably cleared the 85m mark but to his surprise the effort was not recorded by the officials apparently because they could not spot the landing point of his javelin at the 'Big Lotus' stadium.

India lost the crown in women's 4x400m relay after five successive gold medals from 2002 to 2018 Asian Games as the quartet of Aishwarya Mishra, Subha Venkatesan, Prachi and Vithya Ramraj finished second behind Bahrain with a time of 3:27.85.

Armyman Sable, who clocked 13:21.09, even saluted after crossing the finish line. With the seven medals India



Indian athletes Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Kumar Jena celebrate after securing Gold and Silver medal respectively in the Men's Javelin Throw Final event at the 19th Asian Games, in Hangzhou, China on Wednesday. (PTI)



Gold medalists Indians Rajesh Ramesh, Muhammed Ajmal Variyathodi, Amoj Jacob and Muhammed Anas Yahiya pose for photos during the presentation ceremony of the Men's 4X400m Relay Final event at the 19th Asian Games, in Hangzhou, China on Wednesday. (PTI)

won in the last day of track and field competitions, India ended their Hangzhou Asian

Games athletics competition with 29 medals, the second best after the 34 in the inaugural

1961 edition. India won 20 medals in the 2018 Asian Games.

Deotale-Jyothi win first archery mixed team Gold

HANGZHOU, Oct 4 (PTI)

OJAS Deotale's youthful energy blended seamlessly with Jyothi Surekha Vennam's skills, securing India's maiden gold medal in the compound mixed team event and contributing to their best-ever show in archery at the Asian Games, here on Wednesday.

The 21-year-old reigning world champion Nagpur's Deotale dropped a point but a flawless Jyothi made up for it, shooting all perfect scores from her eight arrows to down the second-seeded Korean pair So Chaewon and Joo Jaehoon 159-158. With this, Indian archers are set to win at least four medals from the ongoing Games, which will better their previous best show at Incheon in 2014 when they bagged a men's team compound gold, one silver and a bronze.

Playing three back-to-back knock-out matches -- quarter-finals, semi-finals and final -- in 140 minutes can be gruelling, but the Indian pair was ice-cool, especially the



Ojas Pravin Deotale and Jyothi Surekha Vennam pose with their Gold medals. (PTI)

27-year-old Jyothi, who excelled in some crucial moments to nail it.

That the pair dropped just four points in three matches tells a lot about the authority shown by Deotale and Jyothi. "I'm not surprised by the result," Deotale said after the win. "We knew that we could do this. It was very close, but we maintained our (Contd on page 5)

India shines brighter than ever: PM



NEW DELHI, Oct 4 (PTI)

INDIA shines brighter than ever before at the Asian Games, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday as the country recorded its best ever haul of 71 medals at the Hangzhou edition of the Games.

"India shines brighter than ever before at the Asian Games! With 71 medals, we are celebrating our best-ever medal tally, a testament to the unparalleled dedication, grit and sporting spirit of our athletes," he said in a post on X.

Army gets two super high altitude firing ranges in Arunachal Pradesh

- Both the super high altitude firing ranges are located within 50 km aerial distance of the LAC

■ **By Achinta Borah**

TAWANG, Oct 4 (PTI)

TWO super high altitude firing ranges were made available to the Armed Forces for the practice of various kinds of weapons and surveillance equipment in Arunachal Pradesh within an aerial distance of 50 kilometres from the highly sensitive Line of Actual Control, sources said.

The initiative to hand over the land of the Mandala and Kamrala firing ranges, located at an altitude of above 10,000 feet, to the Armed Forces was



taken by Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

While the first of the integrated surveillance and fire-power training exercises named 'Buland Bharat' has already been conducted at Mandala in May, a major firing exercise is yet to be conducted at the Kamrala firing range, security sources told PTI.

Both the super high altitude firing ranges are located with-

in 50 km aerial distance of the LAC.

Arunachal Pradesh shares a 1,129-km-long LAC with China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

A top security officer deployed in the region said, both the firing ranges in Arunachal Pradesh were made available to the Armed Forces at the personal initiative of Chief Minister Khandu.

US issues first-ever fine to Dish Network for leaving junk in space

WASHINGTON, Oct 4 (IANS)

THE US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has for the first time issued a fine to Dish Network for leaving junk in space.

The penalty of \$150,000 announced by FCC's Enforcement Bureau is based on its investigation into Dish for failure to properly deorbit its EchoStar-7 satellite launched in 2002.



Space debris - artificial objects orbiting Earth that are not functional spacecraft - are a growing concern to satellites and is also

known to pose a hazard to the ISS, which has had run-ins with debris in the recent past.

To curb them, the FCC in 2022 adopted a rule that would require satellite operators to dispose of their satellites within five years of mission completion.

The agency found that the Dish violated the Communications Act, the FCC rules, and the terms of the company's licence by relocating its direct broadcast satellite ("DBS") service EchoStar-7 satellite at the satellite's end-of-mission to a disposal orbit well below the elevation required by the terms of its licence.

This marks a first in space debris enforcement by the Commission, which has stepped up its satellite policy efforts, including establishing the Space Bureau and implementing its Space Innovation Agenda.

"This is a breakthrough settlement, making very clear the FCC has strong enforcement authority and capability to enforce its vitally important space debris rules," said Enforcement Bureau Chief Loyaan A. Egal, in a statement.

Dish's orbital debris mitigation plan was approved by the FCC in 2012.

Later, it estimated that based on the remaining fuel and projected operational parameters, the satellite's end-of-mission deorbit manoeuvres would take place in May 2022.

It committed to bringing the satellite at the end of its mission to an altitude of 300 kilometres (km) above its operational geostationary arc.

However, in February 2022, Dish determined that the satellite had very little propellant left, which meant it could not follow the original orbital debris mitigation plan in its licence.

Dish ultimately retired the satellite at a disposal orbit approximately 122 km above the geostationary arc, well short of the disposal orbit of 300 km specified in its orbital debris mitigation plan.

Indian envoy takes PM's note to Muizzu

Press Trust of India

MALE

India is looking forward to productive discussions with the new leadership of the Maldives to further enhance bilateral relationship, the country's envoy in Male said on Wednesday as he met President-elect Mohamed Muizzu and handed over a congratulatory message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mr. Muizzu, a close associate of former Maldives President Abdulla Yameen who forged close ties with China during his Presidency from 2013 to 2018, de-

feated India-friendly incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the presidential run-off held on Saturday.

Prime Minister Modi on Sunday congratulated Mohamed Muizzu on being elected as President of the Maldives.

In a post on X, Progressive Party of Maldives said that President-elect Muizzu and Vice President-elect Hussain Mohamed Latheef had a "fruitful meeting" with the Indian High Commissioner.

Mr. Muizzu is due to take over the office on November 17.

New defence indigenisation list has futuristic weapons, systems

State-of-the-art infantry combat vehicle, all-terrain vehicles, UAVs, medium-range precision kill system for artillery, test equipment for guided weapon system for tanks, armour plates for Mi-17 chopper cabin nose to be sourced domestically

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday released the fifth Positive Indigenisation List of 98 items to be procured by the three Services from domestic sources in a staggered manner on specified timelines. He also released the Navy's updated indigenisation road map, "Swavlamban 2.0".

The Department of Military Affairs compiled the list after several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders, the Defence Ministry said in a statement. "It lays special focus on import substitution of components of major systems, besides important platforms, weapon systems,



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R. Hari Kumar during 'Swavlamban 2.0' in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

sensors and munitions which are being developed and likely to translate into firm orders in the next five to 10 years," it said.

At the plenary session of "Swavlamban 2.0", the two-day seminar of the Na-

val Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO), Mr. Singh launched 76 challenges for the industry under the "10th Defence India Start-up Challenges (DISC-10) and DISC 10 PRIME of Innovations for

Defence Excellence (iDEX) and five problem statements under iDEX for Fauji". In addition, two INDUS X challenges under "INDUS-X Mutual Promotion of Advanced Collaborative Technologies" (IMPACT) challenges jointly finalised by iDEX and the U.S. Department of Defence were launched. A special interactive session for the industry to explain the nuances of the road map is planned on Day 2 of the seminar.

The items on the indigenisation list include futuristic infantry combat vehicle, articulated all-terrain vehicles, several types of unmanned aerial vehicles, medium-range precision kill system for artillery, test equipment for guided weapon system for T-90 S/SK

tanks, radars, armour plates for cabin nose section for Mi-17 helicopter, automated mobile test system for OSA-AK-M air defence system, gravity rollers for Mi-17V5 helicopter and flares of P-8I and MiG 29-K aircraft.

The department had earlier promulgated four such lists of 411 military items. This is in addition to the four lists for defence public sector undertakings.

At the event, Navy chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar said that last year, the Navy sought solutions to 75 challenges, received more than 1,000 responses, declared 118 winners under DISC-7, SPRINT and SPRINT-PRIME and concluded over 100 technological developmental agreements."