

Congress nominee's 'Constitution forced on Goa' remarks invite PM's ire; BJP files complaint

PANAJI, APRIL 23: South Goa Congress nominee Viriato Fernandes's remarks that the Constitution was "forced" on the coastal state after its liberation from the Portuguese rule sparked a row with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday latching on to the comments to slam the opposition party and the BJP lodging a complaint with the EC.

A defiant Fernandes said he was ready for a debate on his controversial comments as well as on issues like "destruction of Goa's identity", unemployment, inflation, crime and corruption under the BJP rule even as he received support from his party in the coastal state.

The Navy veteran-turned-politician asserted his words should not be twisted for political mileage.

Addressing an election rally on Monday in South Goa, Fernandes referred to his conversation with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, and said he had told him, "When Goa was liberated in 1961, the Indian Constitution was forced upon us."

His comments found echo in faraway Chhattisgarh where PM Modi, ad-



ressing a BJP campaign rally in Sakti district, tore into the Congress over the remarks and termed them a "ploy" to break the country.

"...now a Congress candidate from Goa says the Indian Constitution is not applicable to Goa. He is saying the Constitution was forced on Goa...Isn't this an insult to Babasaheb Ambedkar? Isn't this an insult to the Constitution? Is this not tampering with the Constitution of India?" the PM asked.

Modi said today the Congress was rejecting the Constitution in Goa, and tomorrow it would do the same in the entire country. Minister Pramod Sawant

on Tuesday said Fernandes' comments clearly reflected 'Bharat Todo Abhiyaan' (breaking up the country) of the Congress. On Monday, he had termed the comments appalling.

In a video statement, Sawant said the Congress kept Jammu and Kashmir separate and delayed the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese rule.

"The statement by Fernandes is an insult to all the Goans, freedom fighters who struggled to liberate Goa, the nation (India) and the Indian Constitution," the BJP leader noted.

BJP turned up heat on the Congress and on Tuesday lodged a complaint with the Election Commis-

sion against Fernandes.

Goa BJP president Sadanand Shet Tanavade submitted a complaint to Chief Electoral Officer Ramesh Verma, alleging Fernandes' remarks were a "clear case of spewing venom against the sacred Constitution of India" and violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

In the complaint, the BJP accused the Congress nominee of indulging in hate speech against the Constitution and sought the cancellation of his candidature.

Facing fire, Fernandes said his words should not be twisted for political mileage and called for a debate on his remarks.

SC expands Patanjali misleading ads hearing to include FMCG Cos

NEW DELHI, APR 23: Expanding the scope of its hearing in the Patanjali Ayurved case, the Supreme Court on Tuesday took a stern view of misleading advertisements by FMCG firms and asked three Union ministries to inform it about the steps they have taken to curb the practice which takes "public for a ride" and adversely affects their health.

The court passed the order after Yoga guru Ramdev and his aide Balkrishna of Patanjali Ayurved Ltd. Told a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Anand Kulkarni that they have issued unqualified public apology in as many as 67 newspapers over misleading advertisements and are willing to issue additional advertisements expressing their contrition.

The bench said the public apology published in newspapers were not on record and asked those to be filed within two days. It posted the matter for April 30 for further consideration.

While hearing the Patanjali case, the apex court said the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and the Consumer Protection Act and the related rules also needed a closer examination.

It said the issue was not limited to Patanjali but extended to all Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) firms which have been issuing "misleading advertisements and taking the public for a ride, in particular affecting the health of babies, school-going children and senior citizens who have been consuming products on the basis of the said misrepresentation".

"We must clarify that we are not here to gun for a



particular party or a particular agency or a particular authority. This is a PIL, and in the larger interest of the consumers, public should know which way they are going and how and why they can be misled, and how authorities are acting to prevent it," the bench said.

The court asked the Union ministries of consumer affairs, information and broadcasting, and information technology to explain what action they have taken to prevent the misuse of consumer laws.

It also sought an explanation from the Centre over an August 2023 letter issued by the Ministry of Ayush to the licencing authorities of all states and Union Territories and drug controllers of Ayush asking them to not initiate any action under rule 170 of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

The bench also asked the Indian Medical Association (IMA), the petitioner in the Patanjali advertisements case, to "put its house in order".

It said several complaints have been made about alleged unethical acts by members of the IMA who prescribe highly expensive medicines and line of treatment. The bench also ordered impleading the National Medical Commission (NMC) as a respondent in

the matter for effective assistance to the court.

At the outset, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Ramdev and Patanjali Ayurved Ltd managing director Balkrishna, told the bench they have issued on Monday unqualified apology for the "lapses" on their part.

"Where? Why it is not filed?" the bench asked.

Rohatgi said it was issued on Monday in 67 newspapers across the country.

When the court asked the senior advocate why did the respondents wait for a whole week before publishing the public apology, Rohatgi said, "Its language had to be changed".

The court also quizzed him about the size of advertisements.

"Is it the same size of advertisements that you normally issue in newspapers?" it asked Rohatgi, who submitted "It costs tens of lakhs (of rupees)".

The bench ordered that the apology published be filed on record and added it wanted to see the actual advertisement published in newspapers.

"The said advertisements are not on record. It is submitted that the same have been collated and shall be filed in the course of the day with copies to counsel for the parties. Needful shall be done within two days with copies to counsel

for the parties," it said.

The counsel said additional advertisement shall be issued by Ramdev and Balkrishna tendering unqualified apology for the lapses on their part.

The bench said it was necessary to implead the three central ministries in order to examine the steps taken to prevent the abuse of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act and rules, the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and the Consumer Protection Act.

It said these ministries shall file affidavits enunciating the action they have taken to prevent the misuse/abuse of these statutes along with the relevant data since 2018.

The bench said licencing authorities of all states and UTs shall also be impleaded as co-respondents in the matter.

The bench told the IMA's counsel that while they are pointing fingers at Patanjali, "the other four fingers are also pointing at you (IMA)".

April 16, the apex court had warned Ramdev and Balkrishna against any attempt to "degrade allopathy" and permitted them to tender a "public apology and show contrition" within a week in the contempt proceedings in the misleading advertisements case against Patanjali Ayurved Ltd.

The apex court is hearing a plea filed in 2022 by the IMA alleging a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine. Ramdev and Balkrishna had earlier tendered an "unconditional and unqualified apology" before the top court over advertisements issued by the firm making tall claims about the medicinal efficacy of its products.

Congress synonymous with corruption, A family rule, appeasement politics: Piyush

HYDERABAD, APR 23: The Congress is synonymous with corruption, family rule and appeasement politics, Union Minister and senior BJP leader Piyush Goyal alleged on Monday. Congress had made promises since the era of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to eliminate poverty in the country, but it did not happen, he said.

He was addressing a rally in support of the BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from Telangana's Zaheerabad B B Patil. Patil, who is a current MP, was with the BRS and defected to the BJP

on March 1, just 15 days before the Model Code of Conduct came into force. Goyal, who highlighted the Narendra Modi Government's pro-poor schemes and welfare measures including Ayushman Bharat, scheme aiming to provide free houses for four crore people, Jal Jeevan Mission and goal of constructing 11 crore toilets, alleged that the Congress only makes hollow promises.

"Modi cares for the poor and the marginalised sections of society. Rahul Gandhi's grandmother (Indira Gandhi) promised to people that she

will eliminate poverty. But, they did not work for the poor," he further claimed. "Rajiv Gandhi told the country that he sends Rs 100 from Delhi and that only Rs 15 reaches the poor with 85 per cent being eaten away by middlemen and corruption," he said, "Vut, the problem remained unresolved."

He further attacked the Congress, saying, "Congress means corruption, Congress means family rule, Congress means appeasement politics." In Telangana, the "corrupt BRS government" was voted out.

Congress wants to implement 'Sharia law' in country: UP CM Adityanath

AMROHA (UP), APR 23: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday made serious allegations against the Congress and said the grand old party has in its election manifesto expressed its intention to implement the 'Sharia law' in the country and redistribute people's property.

Addressing an election rally in Amroha, Adityanath said, "The Congress and its allies have betrayed the country and have once again come to you with their false manifesto. If you look at the Congress' manifesto, they say that if they form a government, we will implement the Sharia law."

"You tell me, will this country be run by the Constitution made by Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar or by Shariat?" he asked.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in his election rallies said the Congress has included redistribution of people's property in its manifesto.

"Congress people talk in their manifesto that they



will implement 'vyaktigat kanoon' (personal laws). That means Sharia law will be implemented because Modi ji stopped the practice of triple talaq," Adityanath said.

"They say that we will again restore personal law. These people will implement Sharia law..." he added.

Escalating his attack, Adityanath alleged, "The Congress manifesto says that they will take people's property and distribute it. Do you want to allow the Congress and Samajwadi Party to loot your property?"

"Look at the condition of these shameless people. On one hand, they are eyeing on your property and on the other hand they are making the mafia and criminals their necklace and reciting Fatiha in their name," he added.

Referring to a comment made by former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in 2006, Adityanath said, "When Dr Manmohan Singh ji was the Prime Minister, he had said that Muslims have the first right on the country's resources..."

"So where will our Dalits, backward classes, Kharagvanshis, Pals, poor and

farmers go? Where will the mothers and sisters go, where will the youth go?" he asked.

The chief minister claimed that terrorism has been finished in India during the tenure of the Modi government.

"There was an atmosphere of fear and terror in the country 10 years ago, people were afraid. After 2014, terrorism was controlled and by 2019, Modi ji did such a thing that the root of terrorism Jammu Kashmir's Article 370 was abolished. Today terrorism has been destroyed in India," he said.

Adityanath claimed that now whenever there is a loud burst of firecrackers somewhere, Pakistan clarifies that it has no involvement.

"Pakistan is afraid that even by mistake, a terrorist incident takes place in India and some innocent citizen is killed, they will have to face consequences," he said.

Amroha will go to polls in the second phase on April 26.

Kerala CM poses questions to Rahul over CAA

KANNUR (KERALA), APR 23: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday continued to accuse the Congress of not being part of anti-CAA agitations in the country and sought to know from senior leader Rahul Gandhi whether the national leadership had barred its state unit from participating in the protests.

He alleged that the party's top brass had asked the state unit to withdraw from the anti-CAA agitations.

"This is just our guess. It may be right or wrong. If we are wrong, they (Congress) can tell that. Rahul Gandhi is touring Kerala...He can tell that what you (CM) have said is not fact," Vijayan said.

Gandhi was not saying anything against it, as it is a fact, the chief minister al-

leged.

As Lok Sabha polls are just four days away in the state, Vijayan was addressing an election meeting in Mattannur, in this northern district.

Targeting Gandhi, the Left veteran further said the Congress leader was carrying out a tour across the country when the CAA came out.

Though he had reacted to all the problems being faced by the country and the world, he did not respond to the contentious law, Vijayan alleged.

The CM also claimed that Gandhi could not raise his voice on such issues because of the presence of leaders with a Sangh-Parivar mindset with him.

Lashing out at the BJP government at the Centre, he said no civilised nation in

the world has made religion the basis of citizenship.

He alleged that when everyone came forward protesting against the CAA and to safeguard secularism, the Congress did not raise any significant protests against the BJP government's move.

"No civilised nation has decided citizenship on the basis of religion. No country divides refugees on the lines of their religion," Vijayan said.

India is making religion the basis for deciding citizenship. It is destroying secular values, he charged.

While several national leaders, including those from Communist parties, were arrested for protesting against the CAA in New Delhi years ago, no Congress leaders were among them, Vijayan alleged.

The CM accused the 18 Congress-led UDF MPs from the state of attending a feast hosted by the party president on the day when the national capital witnessed the fiercest agitation against the CAA.

Vijayan further asked why the Congress, which is claimed to be a secular party, cannot oppose the RSS agenda being implemented in the country.

The LDF government in the state has been adopting a strong stand against dividing people on the lines of religion, he said.

The Marxist veteran also claimed that the southern state is witnessing a pro-LDF wave during the election campaign and that the ruling front would achieve a remarkable success in the Lok Sabha elections to be held on April 26.

FSSAI safety glare on packaged spices after Hong Kong, Singapore flag Indian imports

NEW DELHI, APR 23: India's apex food safety agency has initiated a nationwide quality check of packaged spices after authorities in Hong Kong and Singapore ordered the recall of specific products imported from India allegedly found contaminated with a pesticide.

The fresh quality check initiative on spices by the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will pick up samples from across the country, said an officer with the FSSAI who requested not to be named.

The Hong Kong government's Centre for Food Safety (CFS) had announced on April 5 that several prepackaged spice mix products imported from India were found to contain a pesticide called ethylene oxide during routine food surveillance.



The CFS had listed Madras Curry Powder, Sambhar Masala Mix Masala Powder and Curry Powder Mixed Masala Powder from MDH and Fish Curry Masala Powder from Everest as products found to contain ethylene oxide.

"Members of the public should not consume the affected products. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected products immediately if

they possess any of them," the CFS had said in a media release.

The FSSAI officer said the ongoing quality check will look at not just MDH and Everest products but pre-mixed spices from other firms too.

The Singapore Food Agency on April 18 had also issued a recall order on Everest's Fish Curry Masala powder saying the product had been imported into Singapore too. Ethylene oxide is a pesticide that is not authorised for use in food, the agency said.

Under Singapore's food regulations, ethylene oxide is allowed to be used in the sterilisation of spices. Although there is no immediate risk to consumption of food contaminated with low levels of ethylene oxide, long-term exposure may lead to health issues, the agency had said.

Shoe insole technology to prevent diabetic foot ulcers unveiled

NEW DELHI, APR 23: A team of researchers has unveiled a novel shoe insole technology aimed at reducing the risk of diabetic foot ulcers, a serious complication that can result in hospitalization and even leg, foot or toe amputation.

Muthu B J Wijesundara, principal research scientist at The University of Texas at Arlington Research Institute (UTARI), explained that the innovation targets a major cause of these ulcers: skin and soft tissue breakdown due to repetitive stress during walk-

ing. Diabetes often damages the small blood vessels supplying nerves, leading to poor circulation and foot ulcers, affecting approximately one-third of individuals with the condition. Despite numerous attempts with shoe insoles to address this issue, their effectiveness in preventing ulcers has been limited, as per Wijesundara.

In an article in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Lower Extremity Wounds, Wijesundara and UTA colleagues Veysel Erel, Aida

Nasirian and Yixin Gu, along with Larry Lavery of UT Southwestern Medical Center, described their innovative insole technology. After this successful pilot project, the next step for the research team will be refining the technology to make it more accessible for users with varying weights and shoe sizes.

In India as in the world, the burden of diabetes-related amputations is a serious issue. According to a study by the Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism.