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'Shehzade' insulted Maharajas, but silent on atrocities by Nawabs: Modi

Belagavi and killing of a Jain monk in Chikkodi. These incidents were shameful and degraded Karnataka's pride.

Citing the recent murder of a Hubballi student, Neha Hiremath, at her college premises that created "sensation" in the country, he said, the family sought action, but Congress government gave priority to appeasement. "For them, the lives of daughters like Neha have no value, they think only about their vote bank." Even when there was a bomb blast in a Bengaluru's cafe, the Congress government did not take it seriously initially; they even termed it a cylinder blast. "Why are you — Congress — lying to the people of the country, if you can't, leave and go home." The Congress for the sake of votes is taking support of banned PFI — the anti national organisation that supported terrorism. "To win one seat in Wayanad, are you surrendering to them? BJP has banned PFI and has put its leaders behind bars." Modi said.

India will never bow down: Rajnath on talks with China

"The country can never forget the role of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. It was due to the initiative of Prime minister Narendra Modi that Qatar had earlier released all eight former Indian Navy personnel from its custody. Even in the Russia-Ukraine war, Modi talked to the presidents of the two countries as well as USA and India and rescued 22,500 Indian students," Singh said.

He added, "Due to Modi, the credibility of the BJP has increased not only in India but all over the world. Whenever our government and party promised anything, we have always fulfilled it."

4 killed as vehicle falls into stream

Those, who were rescued, were admitted to hospital and their condition was stated to be stable.

Police had taken cognizance of the incident.

Avalanche warning issued

avalanches was also not ruled out in the hilly areas of Jammu region.

"People living in these areas have been advised to take precautions and avoid venturing in the avalanche prone areas till further orders," officials said.

Jammu has witnessed widespread rains in the past few days.

BJP won't remove reservations nor allow anyone to do so: Amit Shah

Targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, he said, "Rahul Gandhi says that if the BJP gets 400 seats, it will remove reservation. I want to say that we had a full majority for two terms but Narendra Modi is a supporter of reservation."

"I want to say that it is a Modi guarantee that neither the BJP will remove reservations for SCs (Scheduled Castes), STs (Scheduled Tribes) and OBCs (Other Backward Classes) nor will it allow anyone to do so," Shah said.

Listing the BJP government's schemes, including free ration and homes to the poor, Shah said the free ration scheme will continue till 2029 if the BJP returns to power.

He also hit out at Samajwadi Party chief Yadav for allegedly fielding only members of his family.

Alleging that people had to migrate during the Samajwadi Party government, Shah said "goondas are forced to migrate not people" under BJP rule in Uttar Pradesh.

"In Uttar Pradesh, where once bombs exploded, today 'bombs' are being manufactured for export under the leadership of Modi," Shah said.

He went on to claim that the BJP will secure more than 100 seats from the seats that went to the polls in the first two phases while the Congress and the Samajwadi Party will not be able to open their accounts.

Polling in Kasganj will be held in the third phase on May 7.

Ishaq Dar appointed as Pak deputy PM

marks a strategic move within the government's leadership hierarchy.

According to reports, the decision was announced while Shehbaz Sharif is on a visit to Saudi Arabia to attend the World Economic Forum.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ishaq Dar is currently serving as Pakistan's Foreign Minister. He has been also included in the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

Earlier in March, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the reconstitution of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), replacing the finance minister with the foreign minister.

The president, acting on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, established the eight-member CCI in accordance with Article 153 of the Constitution, as stated in a notification.

The CCI, chaired by Shehbaz Sharif, comprises all four chief ministers alongside other council members. The notification also confirms the inclusion of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, and Saffron Minister Amir Muqam, reports said.

The Council of Common Interests holds significant authority as the primary decision-making body in the nation. It adjudicates various matters, including the distribution of natural resources, especially in cases where disputes arise between the central government and provincial authorities.

Dar served as the Pakistan's Finance Minister during the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government that came to power after Imran Khan's ouster in 2022.

Elderly woman murdered

Khurd late last night.

Soon after the matter came to their notice, police reached the spot and took the body in their custody. It was later shifted to hospital mortuary for post-mortem.

The accused had also been arrested by police and booked under relevant sections of law, officials said.

VDGs playing vital role in containing terrorism in J&K: Kavinder

ment to the region's march towards progress under the leadership of the PM Modi.

He reiterated the firm resolve of Government of India to foster a culture of prosperity and advancement in the region, undeterred by the efforts of those seeking to sow discord and chaos.

Gupta extended heartfelt condolences to the family members of deceased and urged the Union Territory administration to adequate compensation them.

CDS Chauhan's France visit reaffirms long-standing strategic partnership: Govt

been constructed in India by Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in cooperation with the Naval Group of France.

The defence and strategic ties between India and France have been on an upswing in the last few years.

The two strategic partners have been looking at co-development and co-production of advanced defence technologies, including for the benefit of third countries.

Gen Chauhan held wide-ranging talks with senior civil and military leadership of France on ways to bolster the military cooperation between armed forces of the two countries.

"The interactions of the CDS with Patrick Pailloux, Director of Civil and Military Cabinet of the Minister of the French Armed Forces, and Lt Gen Vincent Giraud, Chief of Military Cabinet of the Minister of the Armed Forces at the apex level and also with his counterpart, Gen Thierry Burkhard have enabled exchange of views on areas of common interests and mutual security concerns," the ministry said.

It is learnt that the situation in the Indo-Pacific that has witnessed growing Chinese military muscle-flexing figured in the talks.

"Deliberations at France's Directorate General of Armament for enhancing the exchange of high-end dual-use technologies followed by interactions with the top leadership of the French Defence industry, including Dassault, Safran and Naval Groups, and Thales Alenia Space, towards futuristic capacity building of the Indian armed forces, would provide an impetus to indigenisation," the ministry said in a statement.

The CDS also visited the French Land Forces Command, the French Space Command, and the School of Military Studies (Ecole Militaire).

During the interactions, Gen Chauhan provided India's point of view on key security challenges.

The CDS also paid tributes at the War Memorials of Neuve-Chapelle and Villers-Guislain, remembering the extraordinary bravery of soldiers of the Indian Expeditionary Force who fought on the Western front during the First World War, the ministry said.

"These memorials stand testimony to the long-standing Indo-French relationship," it said.

"The India-France Strategic Partnership has gathered significant momentum over time and has now evolved into an even closer and multifaceted relationship that spans diverse areas of cooperation," it added.

Just 8 pc of women candidates in 2 phases of LS polls

In the first phase of the elections on April 19, there total number of candidates in the fray was 1,625. In the second phase held on April 26, 1,198 candidates contested the elections.

Of the 135 women candidates in the first phase, Tamil Nadu had the highest share at 76. However, that figure accounted for just 8 per cent of the total candidates in the state.

Kerala had the maximum number of women candidates at 24 in the second phase.

Partwise, the Congress fielded 44 women in the two phases and the BJP 69.

This significant gender imbalance has sparked criticism from political analysts and activists, who asked why parties are waiting for the Women Reservation Act to be implemented instead of proactively fielding women.

Dr Sushila Ramaswamy, an associate professor at Delhi University's Jesus and Mary College, said political parties should take concrete steps to promote women's candidacy.

"Political parties should have been more proactive and fielded more women candidates," she underscored, citing the effectiveness of seat reservations for women within party structures, as seen in the UK's Labour Party.

With women constituting nearly half of India's electorate, their under representation in the candidate pool raises broader questions about the barriers hindering women's full participation in the political sphere, said Dr Iftekhar Ahmad Ansari, an associate professor at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).

Beyond the symbolic gestures and promises, he stressed the importance of structural reforms to ensure equal opportunities for women in politics.

He also highlighted the critical role of party leadership in promoting gender diversity.

"Political parties must prioritise gender inclusion in candidate selection and provide adequate support to women aspirants," he emphasised.

Farhat Jahan, a retired faculty member at AMU's Abdullah Women's College, said the issue of women's politi-

cal representation extends beyond numerical quotas to encompass systemic changes in party dynamics and electoral processes.

She also emphasised the need for gender-sensitive policies that address challenges faced by women in politics.

"The upcoming phases of the elections present an opportunity for political parties to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality through concrete actions. Initiatives such as mentorship programmes, capacity-building workshops and awareness campaigns can empower women to actively participate in the electoral process and pursue leadership roles," she added.

Prof Mohammad Aftab Alam from the political science department at AMU pointed out the challenges women often face in forming independent political opinions amid societal influences.

"Even the ones elected are often relegated to symbolic roles," he remarked, highlighting broader issues of token representation.

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is the only party that, as a policy, provides 33 per cent tickets to women.

Meera Parida, state vice-president of the BJD's Biju Mahila Dal, stressed the need for substantive action in women's empowerment and praised her party's initiative of reserving 33 per cent of seats for women.

"Reserving seats alone is not enough. We need a cultural shift where women are seen as leaders and decision-makers," she emphasised, advocating for comprehensive reforms.

Both major parties — the BJP and the Congress — have listed women-centric initiatives in their manifestos.

The BJP's manifesto promises to implement the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Act) to honour and empower women, integrate women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) into the service sector to enhance their economic participation and expand health services.

The Congress has pledged legislative reforms for women's empowerment, including the immediate enactment of the Women's Reservation Act.

However, these commitments are yet to translate into substantial numbers of women contesting the elections.

Alka Lamba, chief of the Congress' women's wing, highlighted the party's commitment to gender equality across sectors.

"The Congress has extended political, economic and social rights to women," Lamba asserted, outlining ambitious targets for women's representation in leadership roles.

As the Lok Sabha elections progress, the spotlight is on political parties to address these concerns and demonstrate tangible commitment towards fostering women's participation and representation in governance.

The upcoming poll phases will be closely monitored to assess whether there is a meaningful shift towards greater gender inclusivity in the political landscape especially after the hype over passage of the Women's Reservation Act, Aftab said.

Ramaswamy noted, "While parties are vocal about empowering women, the lack of women candidates reflects a deeper issue of gender bias within political systems."

The Lok Sabha polls are being held in seven phases beginning from April 19 and the counting of votes will take place on June 4.

The second phase was held on April 26 while the other phases are scheduled for May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1.

Property seized under UAPA

stay. The logistic support to the terrorists was provided by the house owner Mohammad Lateef Kar who has links to terrorist activities. The property is now under official seizure, prohibiting any transfer, lease, disposal, or alteration without prior permission from the designated authority," the officials added.

The seizure was pursuant to an FIR registered at Pulwama police station under sections 16, 18, 19 20, 38 and 39 UA(P) Act.

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) enacted in 1967 empowers law enforcement to detain individuals involved in unlawful activities posing a threat to the state. The law's main objective is to prevent unlawful activities that threaten India's sovereignty and integrity.

Village guard killed in encounter with terrorists at Basantgarh

which extends from Basantgarh to Kishtwar and then to the valley.

Joint teams of Army, police and CRPF had fanned out in the woods to track down the escaped terrorists. While the searches were in progress when reports last came in, forces were yet to find any clue to the whereabouts of the terrorists.

Army also airdropped special forces in the forest area. The help of drones and helicopters was also likely to be taken tomorrow if there was no fresh contact of the forces with the terrorists.

LG grieved over loss of lives in road accident

ministration to render all necessary assistance, as provided in rule, to the affected persons."

It may be mentioned that four persons were killed after a passenger vehicle fell into Sindh nallah at Sonamarg. Three persons were rescued while two others were missing.

14 Pak nationals held with drugs worth Rs 600 cr

help of NCB and ATS officials on board, it said. During the operation, the Pakistani nationals attempted

to escape arrest by trying to run their boat over ATS officials and even fired shots in retaliation. However, they were eventually apprehended by the authorities.

Security agencies had been conducting a search operation near the international sea border, within Indian territorial waters, for the past two days.

"The operation was being carried out by the agencies based on intelligence inputs for the last few days," the officials said.

The ship's specialist team embarked on the suspect boat and, after thorough checks, confirmed the presence of a sizable amount of narcotics, the Coast Guard said.

The boat along with its 14-member crew was apprehended and brought to Porbandar for further investigations, it added.

A total of 78 packets weighing 86 kg were recovered from the Pakistani fishing boat, Gujarat Director General of Police Vikas Sahay said.

The preliminary investigation revealed that the packets contained heroin, a powerful recreational opioid, he said.

Last month, the Coast Guard, NCB and ATS had caught a boat carrying methamphetamine, a highly addictive psychostimulant drug, worth over Rs 400 crore and its six Pakistani crew members off the Porbandar coast in Gujarat, officials had said.

After phase II 'washout', desperate PM 'fear mongering': Congress

sistance, and the Centre's denial of additional allocations of rice for PDS," he said.

Analysing the transcripts of all debates, PRS found that very few MPs even tried to initiate policies or programmes to address their constituencies' issues, Ramesh said.

"Three MPs did not ask a single question in five years, and five MPs did not participate in a single debate. While most MPs were criticised for neglecting the state, seven MPs only focused on the RSS-BJP's unconstitutional agendas in their constituencies," he alleged.

"Perhaps the most damning finding was that 14 of the 28 were directly or indirectly involved in abetting communal violence in their localities. Will PM Modi apologise for foisting these ineffectual MPs on the people of Karnataka? Or was this his design all along to elect non-performing BJP MPs so that he can ignore the voice of Karnataka?" he said.

Ramesh also said that it has been more than seven months since the Karnataka government sought more than Rs 18,000 crore of relief from the Centre as per disaster relief rules.

Karnataka is reeling under an acute drought situation, with 223 out of 236 talukas facing drought conditions and 196 taluks being categorised as severely hit, he noted.

As early as September 2023, the Karnataka government had approached the Modi government to release funds of Rs 18,171 crore for drought relief, he said.

"The rules of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, state that the Centre must take a final decision on the release of funds within one month of receiving the Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) report. For Karnataka, this period expired in December 2023. Last month, the Finance Minister made the excuse that her hands are tied since the Model Code of Conduct came into force," he said.

"After being forced to the Supreme Court by the Karnataka Government, the Centre has finally sanctioned funds but only a mere Rs 3,498 crore. This is less than 20% of the total amount requested," he said.

Why is PM Modi so "indifferent" to the people of Karnataka, Ramesh asked.

"In last year's Union Budget, the Modi government had proudly announced a Rs 5,300 crore grant for the Upper Bhadra Project. More than a year later, state Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has revealed that not a 'single paisa' of this grant has been released," Ramesh said.

During his assembly election campaign, PM Modi had also claimed to resolve long-standing issues with the Mahadayi-Kalasa Banduri Nala Project but earlier this year, clearance for the project has been deferred by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, he said.

"These projects are crucial to expanding drinking water and irrigation access in a state that has been reeling under a severe drought. Why has the Modi Government neglected these essential infrastructure projects? What vendetta does the PM have against the people of Karnataka?" Ramesh said and asked the prime minister to break his "silence" on these issues.

StartUps grew 300 times in 10 yrs: Jitendra

fastest-growing unicorns. For the first time in the history of independent India, Modi as PM made a painstaking and conscious effort to educate youth of this country that employment is not confined only to a government job and he has promoted new avenues of livelihood which may be more lucrative than a government job," he said.

Dr Singh said PM Modi had unleashed India's Space research by opening up the hitherto conservative and secluded sector. "India has literally reached for the moon and beyond with the twin feats of Chardyaan-3 and Aditya L1 solar mission in the last year alone," he added.

"Not only this, the number of Space StartUps has gone up from a single digit to three digits in just about four years since the Space sector was opened up to the private sector," he informed.

"PM Modi's out-of-the-box decisions have given a push to different sectors including Space, Railways, Roads, Infrastructure and Electronics-Communication, and which has posted India's economy from 11th rank to 5th largest economy and is now on the verge of occupying 3rd rank," he said.

Pakistan appoint Gary Kirsten as ODI, T20I head coach, Jason Gillespie in Test

LAHORE, APRIL 28: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday appointed World Cup-winning Gary Kirsten as their head coach for ODIs and T20Is, while former Australian pacer Jason Gillespie will take over that role in Test cricket.

Along with them, former Pakistan all-rounder Azhar Mahmood was appointed as the assistant coach of the team across the formats.

"The appointment of (Gary) Kirsten and (Jason) Gillespie who are high-profile coaches

shows how much value is given to the Pakistan cricket team and how much potential foreign coaches see in our players," PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi said during a media conference.

"We want to give the team the best facilities and that is why we have gone for Kirsten and Gillespie," he added.

Kirsten is expected to take over from Pakistan's tour of England from May 22 which will feature four T20Is and from there the team will travel for the T20 World Cup in June.



Pakistan have been on the search for a full-time head coach since the end of the 50-over World Cup last year where they failed to enter the knockout stages.

After their shambolic effort in the marquee event held in India, Pakistan had sacked the entire set of coaching staff — head coach Grant Bradburn, team director Mickey Arthur, bowling coach Morné Morkel and batting coach Andrew Puttick.

Premier batter Babar Azam was also removed from cap-

taincy post the ICC showpiece with Pakistan opting to appoint pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi as their white-ball leader and Shan Masood doing that duty in Tests.

Along with that, Pakistan had also turned to former cricket Muhammad Hafeez for the guiding role during their tour to Australia.

But Hafeez lost the job after Pakistan lost 0-3 in the Test series and 1-4 in the T20Is.

While Masood was retained as captain, Afridi was relieved from leadership and Babar was rein-

stated in the last week of March. However, Pakistan could not find a full-time head coach despite them approaching some top names such as Matthew Hayden and Shane Watson.

Eventually, they have been zeroed in on Kirsten, who had led India to World Cup triumph in 2011, and Gillespie, who comes with bagful of coaching experience with English county side Sussex.

Naqvi explained the rationale behind choosing foreign names for coaching role.