

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Cong Hits Out At Modi For 'Ceding Diplomatic Space', Rahul Terms Him 'Compromised'

NEW DELHI, MAR 6: India's foreign policy is the result of the "exploitation of a compromised individual", Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Friday while attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a day the US announced a temporary waiver allowing Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil.

The Congress and its president Mallikarjun Kharge echoed the sentiment in separate social media posts hitting out at the government on its foreign policy and for "continuously ceding diplomatic space".

"India's foreign policy emerges from the collective will of our people. It should be rooted in our history, our geography, and our spiritual ethos based on Satya and Ahimsa," Gandhi said in a post on X.

"What we are witnessing today is not policy. It is the result of the exploitation of a compromised individual," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said.

He also shared his February 11 speech in the Lok Sabha during the discussion on the budget where he



spoke about India's energy security being compromised. "The US will tell us who we can or cannot buy oil from, if it's Russia or Iran, the US will decide. But our prime minister will not decide," Gandhi had said.

As the conflict in West Asia escalates, the US said it is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said this "deliberately short-term measure" will not provide significant financial benefit to the Russian government as it only authorises transactions involving oil already

stranded at sea. The Congress also shared Gandhi's speech in its X post. "The proof is here to be seen – and the silence of the compromised Prime Minister is shameful," the party said.

Kharge alleged in his post that India's strategic autonomy and national sovereignty is under dire threat "because PM Modi is getting blackmailed on Epstein Files and Adani Case".

"The US proclamation to 'allow' and grant us 'permission' to buy Russian oil, as a 'waiver for 30-days' clearly demonstrates Modi Government is continuously ceding

diplomatic space. "This is the kind of language which is used for sanctioned states, and not India, who has been a responsible and an equal partner in global order," the Congress chief said in his lengthy post.

"Now, the US grants India a 'temporary 30-day waiver' and 'allows' Indian refiners to buy Russian oil. From trade to oil, from data to India's long-term relationships with friendly countries, Modi ji SURRENDERED it all. India, he said, has a proud record of chartering its own destiny and one that has remained unblemished until now.

"From Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi to even Atal Bihari Vajpayee – No Prime Minister has buckled under pressure of any country and made India a virtual vassal state, except Modi ji," he said.

"Main Desh Nahi Jhukne Doonga' was a mere slogan to win elections. 140 Crore Indians stand betrayed. Modi ji SURRENDERED it all," Kharge alleged. (Agencies)

Bank employees detained and cash seized in Hungary, Ukraine says

BUDAPEST, MAR 6: Ukraine's foreign minister accused Hungarian authorities of taking seven Ukrainian employees of a state-owned bank hostage and illegally seizing a cash shipment that was travelling in a convoy across Hungary.

In a post on X late Thursday, Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha wrote that the well-being of the seven Ukrainian employees of the state-owned Oschadbank travelling in two armoured cars between Austria and Ukraine was unknown.

The armoured cars were carrying cash as part of regular services between state banks, Sybiha wrote.

In a separate statement, Oschadbank wrote that USD 40 million in American currency, as well as 35 million euros and 9 kilograms (19.8 pounds) of gold, had been apprehended by Hungary.

GPS data showed the vehicles were in the center of Budapest near one of Hungary's law enforcement agencies, but the location of the bank employees remained unknown, the bank wrote.

Hungary's Interior Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The incident further inflamed tensions between Hungary and Ukraine, which are embroiled in a bitter feud over Hungary's access to



Russian oil through a pipeline that crosses Ukrainian territory.

Oil shipments through the Druzhba pipeline have been interrupted since Jan. 27. Ukraine says a Russian drone strike damaged the pipeline's infrastructure, and that repairing it carries risks to technicians, and that even if restored, it would remain vulnerable to further Russian attacks.

Hungary's government, however, has accused Ukraine of deliberately holding up supplies of Russian crude, and has vowed to take countermeasures against Kyiv until oil flows resume.

Hungary, along with neighbouring Slovakia, has defied European Union efforts to wean off Russian fossil fuels and continued to purchase them despite Moscow's invasion of

Ukraine.

Without mentioning them directly, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban alluded to the detention of the bank vehicles in statements to state radio Friday, saying: "We will stop things that are important to Ukraine passing through Hungary until we get the approval of the Ukrainians for oil shipments."

Orban, who has maintained close relations with the Kremlin while escalating an aggressive anti-Ukraine campaign ahead of crucial elections next month, previously ceased diesel shipments to Ukraine, vetoed a new round of EU sanctions against Russia, and blocked a major, 90-billion-euro (USD 106-billion) loan for Kyiv in retaliation for the interruption in oil shipments. He's also deployed mili-

tary forces to key energy infrastructure sites across Hungary, accusing Ukraine of plotting disruptions.

On Thursday, Orban told an economic forum that Hungary would use "force," including "political and financial tools," to compel Ukraine to resume oil shipments.

On his post on X, the Ukrainian foreign minister took issue with Orban's comments, writing: "We are talking about Hungary taking hostages and stealing money."

"If this is the force announced earlier today by Mr. Orban, then this is a force of a criminal gang," Sybiha wrote. "This is state terrorism and racketeering."

Sybiha added that Ukraine would take the matter up with the EU to clarify Hungary's actions. (AP)

Divine Has Many Forms; Wars Due To Failure In Seeing Oneness: Mohan Bhagwat

AISALMER, MAR 6: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said global wars and conflicts continue because people fail to recognise the fundamental oneness among all.

He was speaking at the 'Dharma Sabha', marking the inauguration of Jain community's Chadar Mahotsav in Jaisalmer.

Bhagwat said wars do not stop because humanity overlooks the truth of ekatva (oneness).

"People appear different, but all are one," he said, adding that the League of Nations was set up after the First World War to prevent future wars, but it failed.

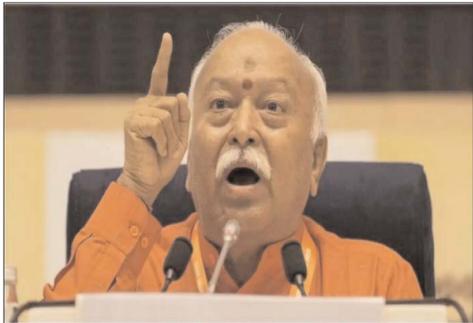
"The United Nations came into being after the World War II for the same reason, yet conflicts persist worldwide," he said.

Drawing from Indian thought, Bhagwat said the absolute truth is one, eternal and universal for everyone.

"Diversity exists because the divine chose to appear in many forms. One should recognise unity while moving through this variety," he said.

Bhagwat said India's ability to survive difficulties comes from this understanding of unity in diversity.

"Disputes should be set-



tled through goodwill and harmony, not through arguments. Society needs to build this goodwill step by step to remove divisions and selfishness," he said.

"India has the answer to world problems through its ancient wisdom of unity. Society must stand without discrimination to protect dharma and help create a better world. By doing this, India will not only become prosperous but will emerge as Vishwaguru, giving rise to a new harmonious world," he said.

Bhagwat urged people to see the whole world as their own, with no one as an outsider.

He said different paths and traditions exist because no single way suits all.

"All sects lead to the divine and deserve respect, while each person follows their path with faith," he

said. Talking about Acharya Jinadattasuri, a prominent Jain monk who lived during the medieval period in India, Bhagwat said Suri's work and teachings have endured through centuries of challenges, and reflected strength of the Sanatan culture.

He said great figures have appeared at different times in history to rid society of divisions such as caste and selfishness, and to teach oneness and sense of duty. The RSS chief said that when foreign invasions and internal divisions took place in his time, Suri brought back unity and helped overcome crises.

A special Chadar Mahotsav is being organised in Jaisalmer from March 6 to 8 during which events such as the viewing and worship of the "miraculous gar-

ments" will take place. Thousands of devotees are expected to arrive for expressing their devotion to Acharya Jinadattasuri, who is also called 'Dada Gurudev'.

It is believed that when the body of Jinadattasuri was consigned to the funeral pyre, his physical form was consumed by the fire, but the garments he wore remained completely unburnt.

The "chamatkari vastra" were transported to Jain temple in Patan. Centuries later, when a severe epidemic struck Jaisalmer, the king ordered that the garment be brought from Patan.

Devotees believe that water sanctified by contact with these garments was sprinkled throughout the city, and the epidemic was miraculously eradicated.

Since then, the 'vastra' or chadar has been reverently preserved in the Gyan Bhandar (scriptural treasury) of Jaisalmer, continuing to be a symbol of his eternal grace and divine protection.

On Saturday, a grand procession carrying the sacred Chadar and devotional tableaux will be taken out from Jaisalmer Fort. (Agencies)

'How long will American blackmail continue': Cong after 30-day waiver on Russian oil purchase

NEW DELHI, MAR 6: The Congress on Friday took a swipe at the Modi government after the US announced a temporary waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil, and asked till when will this "American blackmail" continue.

In a post in rhyming in Hindi on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Trump ka naya khel, Dilli dost ko kaha, Putin se le sakte ho tel, kab tak chalega ye Ameriki blackmail (Trump's new game; told his friend in Delhi you can get oil from Putin; how long will this American blackmail continue?)

Amid the escalating conflict with Iran, the US said it is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver on Russian oil



purchases.

"President Trump's energy agenda has resulted in oil and gas production reaching the highest levels ever recorded. To enable oil to keep flowing into the global market, the Treasury Department is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil," Treasury

Secretary Scott Bessent said on Thursday.

Bessent said this "deliberately short-term measure" will not provide significant financial benefit to the Russian government, as it only authorises transactions involving oil already stranded at sea. "India is an essential partner of the United States, and we fully anticipate that

New Delhi will ramp up purchases of US oil. This stop-gap measure will alleviate pressure caused by Iran's attempt to take global energy hostage," Bessent said in a post on X.

US President Donald Trump had imposed 25 per cent punitive tariffs on India for buying Russian oil, with the administration asserting that Delhi's purchases were helping fuel Russia's war against Ukraine.

Last month, the US and India announced they had reached a framework for an Interim Agreement on trade, and Trump issued an Executive Order removing the 25 per cent punitive tariffs on India, noting the commitment by New Delhi to stop importing energy from Moscow and increase purchasing American energy products. (PTI)

Kosovo president moves to dissolve Parliament for early election as country plunges into new crisis

PRISTINA, MAR 6: Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani on Friday said she was dissolving Parliament to pave the way for an early election after lawmakers failed to elect her successor.

The development marks a new crisis in the Balkan country that already went through a snap vote in December after a nearly year-long political deadlock.

Kosovo's assembly had a deadline of midnight Thursday to elect a new president to replace Osmani, who took office in 2021. A vote late on Thursday failed due to a lack of a quorum in the 120-member assembly.

Prime Minister Albin Kurti has blamed the failure on the opposition's boycott of the session. His ruling Vende-



dosje, or Self-Determination, party has asked the Constitutional Court to temporarily suspend the deadline for the process to resume.

It was not immediately clear when the court will rule and whether it could affect Osmani's decision to dissolve the Parliament.

Osmani said in an address Friday that the situation was "completely avoidable" and lawmakers had enough time to choose a president.

"It is a great misfortune for this state that they did not choose the interests of the Republic of Kosovo," Osmani said. "I have issued the

decree for the dissolution of the assembly, and through this decree I am fulfilling the constitutional obligation that is clearly defined."

Vetevedosje swept the early vote in December and made an alliance with ethnic minority groups to form a new government in February. The same party won an election in February 2025 but could not muster a parliamentary majority, which led to a stalemate and snap vote in December.

A former Serbian province, Kosovo declared independence in 2008 following a 1998-99 war that ended after a US-led NATO intervention. Serbia does not recognise the split and tensions have simmered ever since. (AP)

Delhi Assembly declines Kejriwal's request of live streaming of privileges committee proceedings



NEW DELHI, Mar 6: The Delhi Assembly has written to former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal declining his request for live streaming of the proceedings of the Privileges Committee which has summoned the AAP chief on Friday in a matter

related to the 'Phaansi Ghar'.

The letter noted the Privileges Committee chairperson's surprise over Kejriwal's "ignorance in this matter" even though he has been a member of the assembly for over 10 years and has attended several sittings of the Privilege Committee.

"I am directed by the Chairperson to inform that the proceedings of the Committee of Privileges are confidential and the Rules of Procedure do not permit for their live streaming," the Delhi Assembly Secretariat's

letter read. Further, there is no precedence of the sitting of the Committee of Privileges being telecast in the Parliament or other states, added the letter, which was made public on Friday.

"The Chairperson has also expressed his surprise over your ignorance in this matter in spite of being a former member of this House for more than ten years, when numerous sittings of the Committee of Privileges were held but not even a single sitting was ever telecast/live streamed," letter further

said. On Tuesday, Kejriwal wrote to the Privileges Committee confirming that he would appear before it on March 6 in the 'Phaansi Ghar' issue and demanded the live-streaming of proceedings.

The Privileges Committee is examining the significance of a British-era 'Phaansi Ghar' replicated inside the Delhi Assembly by the AAP government. The AAP claims that the building housed a secret gallows during the British rule while the BJP claims that it was only a tiffin room. (PTI)

ED Raids Against Anil Ambani's Company Reliance Power Ltd In Mumbai, Hyderabad



NEW DELHI, MAR 6: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in Mumbai and Hyderabad as part of an investigation against Reliance Power

Ltd., a group company of businessman Anil Ambani, officials said.

About 10-12 locations linked to the said company and its executives are being searched in the two cities, they said.

About 15 teams of the agency are undertaking the action, the officials said.

A query sent to the Reliance Group did not elicit an immediate response.

The ED is investigating multiple companies linked to Anil Ambani as part of an alleged bank fraud linked money laundering case apart from financial irregularities under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Anil Ambani, 66, has been questioned twice by the ED under the anti-money laundering law as part of this investigation.

The ED has formed a spe-

cial investigation team (SIT) to probe the cases against Ambani's group companies on the directions of the Supreme Court.

According to information furnished by the ED to the apex court, it has filed three money laundering cases against the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) to investigate charges of bank loan fraud and other financial irregularities. (PTI)