

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Those who criticise Nehru day and night praising him today: Priyanka's dig at Rijiju

NEW DELHI, MAR 10: Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday took a swipe at Union minister Kiren Rijiju for quoting Jawaharlal Nehru during a debate on the resolution seeking Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's removal, saying those who criticise India's first prime minister day and night are now citing his remarks.

Intervening in the debate, Rijiju cited Nehru's remarks during the debate in 1954 on the resolution to remove then speaker G V Mavalankar.

"I would beg of hon. members sitting opposite, those who have signed it and those who in duty bound have supported it, to read that thing which they have signed. It is a vicious thing they have signed. I doubt whether the persons have read it before they signed it. If they had read it, they would have hesi-



tated a hundred times before they signed that document," Nehru was quoted as saying by Rijiju.

Rijiju also took a swipe at the Congress, saying if Priyanka Gandhi had been made the LoP, the performance would have been better. "Priyanka Gandhi is sitting there and is laughing. If they had made her the LoP, the performance would have been better. At least she sits in the House, listens, and also smiles," he said.

After Rijiju's remarks,

Priyanka Gandhi said, "He (Rijiju) mentioned that I was laughing. I wanted to clear that I was laughing because whom they keep criticising day and night, that Nehruji, they used a quote of Nehruji for their own argument." "They have suddenly started respecting Nehruji and that he strengthened democracy and gave such a speech," she said.

Priyanka Gandhi asserted that there is just one person who has not bowed before the government and that is

the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi.

The LoP speaks the truth in this House without any hesitation and those sitting on the treasury benches are not able to digest that truth, she said.

Later, speaking with reporters in the Parliament House complex, she alleged that the government has bowed before the US by signing a deal.

The Congress leader alleged that the BJP had ruined institutions and the opposition was trying to save institutions. She said the resolution needed to be brought as the government had pressured Birla and hindered his independence.

Priyanka Gandhi said the government has no answers to the questions raised by Rahul Gandhi and therefore keep raising inconsequential issues to divert attention. (PTI)

Is VSR Ventures owner trying to blame pilot for Ajit Pawar's plane crash? Rohit Pawar

PUNE, MAR 10: NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar has questioned if VSR Ventures owner V K Singh was trying to hold the pilot of the Learjet aircraft responsible for the crash that killed Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and four others in January.

The Crime Investigation Department questioned Singh and recorded his statement last week, a CID officer had said, without disclosing details.

The CID has not issued any statement about the details regarding Singh's questioning.

A Learjet 45 aircraft, operated by VSR Ventures, crashed near the Baramati air strip in Pune district on January 28, killing Ajit Pawar and four others.

Citing reports in a section of media about a submission



purportedly made by Singh to CID, Rohit Pawar in a post on X on Monday said, "What exactly was recorded in the black box has still not been revealed. If that is the case, how did VSR company owner V K Singh come to know within a short time of

the crash that it was the pilot's fault?"

"If this gentleman is declaring that the pilot was at fault and washing his hands of the matter, it appears as though he is trying to shift the blame onto someone else while keeping himself out of

it," he added. Until authorities release concrete and credible information about the plane crash, people should not believe any discussions or baseless claims, the NCP (SP) MLA said.

"The CID has said that the investigation into Ajit Dada's plane crash is still underway. It is even difficult to talk about the credibility of the recent preliminary report by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)," he stated.

At times, reports say the black box of the plane was burnt, while at other times it is claimed that the data has been recovered, the legislator pointed out.

"Meanwhile, the investigating agencies are maintaining complete silence on the matter," he added. (PTI)

Rijiju slams Cong for bringing no-confidence motion against 'impartial' Birla

NEW DELHI, MAR 10: Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday lashed out at the Congress for the no-confidence motion against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, saying he always remained impartial and gave more opportunities to opposition members to express their views in the House.

Participating in the debate on the resolution for removal of Birla from the Speaker's post, Rijiju accused the Congress of attacking constitutional institutions since 2014, when it was ousted from power, and said this time the target is the post of Speaker which is "akin to an attack on democracy itself".

During his hour-long intervention, the Minister strongly defended Birla's actions and quoted former prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajiv Gandhi to reiterate that the decision of the speaker is final on matters in the Lok Sabha and should be accepted by all.

The minister claimed that 50 opposition members told him personally that they were not happy with the resolution against Birla but had



to support it because of political compulsion.

Rijiju also took a dig at the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, claiming he has shown immaturity in his conduct, often skipping the proceedings to go abroad and leaving after his speech, disregarding the rules of the House. The minister went on to say that Congress member Priyanka Gandhi Vadra could be a better Leader of Opposition than Rahul Gandhi.

Rijiju said that everyone, including the prime minister and other ministers, needs the permission of the speaker to address the Lok Sabha as the speaker is the custodian of the House.

"If somebody believes that he is above the speaker, then there is no remedy," he said,

referring to Rahul Gandhi's remark that it is his right to speak in the House and does not need anyone's permission. Without taking the name of Rahul Gandhi, Rijiju said that the Congress leader has shown immaturity by hugging Prime Minister Modi in the House and also winking at his party colleagues during a serious debate. Rijiju said he used to go on overseas visits during the session and often leaves the House after his speech, disregarding the rules.

The minister cited statistics to rebut the opposition's charge of favouritism against the speaker and said that Birla has always remained impartial, giving more opportunity to opposition members to ask Supplementary Questions and to raise

matters of public importance.

Birla, in his tenure as Speaker, took several decisions to reform the House proceedings, like making Parliament paperless and giving opportunities to young members to speak, Rijiju said.

"I say with pride that I am a member of the Lok Sabha of which Om Birla is the Speaker. He has helped strengthen Parliamentary democracy," the minister said.

He said the NDA members have never torn papers or climbed on the secretary general's table, unlike the Congress MPs.

He said that despite all the good work done by Birla, the Congress party, "instead of being thankful to the speaker, brought a no-confidence motion against him". "You should not harbour so much hatred against Birla that you forget the good work done by him," Rijiju said.

The minister also asserted that the mud-slinging against Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not yield any result as he is "as pure as a lotus". (PTI)

DUBAI, MAR 10: Iranian fired drones towards Saudi Arabia and Kuwait early Tuesday as the war in the Middle East shows no sign of abating.

The Saudi Defence Ministry said it has destroyed two drones over the kingdom's oil-rich eastern region, while in Kuwait, the National Guard said it shot down six drones attacking the county's northern and southern areas.

Iran's latest attacks on neighbouring Gulf States come as US President Donald Trump sends contradictory signals about how long the war could last, fueling uncertainty that's causing markets to swing.

Trump on Monday told Republican lawmakers that the war was likely to be a "short excursion," but hours later posted on social media that "If Iran does anything that stops the flow of Oil within the Strait of Hormuz, they will be hit by the United States of America TWENTY TIMES HARDER than they have been hit thus far."

In an apparent response to Trump's remarks published in Iranian state media, a spokesperson for the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, Ali Mohammad



Naini, said "Iran will determine when the war ends."

Kamal Kharazi, foreign policy adviser to the office of the supreme leader, told CNN on Monday that Iran is prepared for a long war.

He said he sees no "room for diplomacy anymore" unless economic pressure prompts other countries to intervene and stop the "aggression of Americans and Israelis against Iran."

The US stock market careened through a manic Monday, going from a steep early loss to a solid gain as worries turned into hope that the war with Iran may not last that long.

Oil prices whipped from

nearly \$120 per barrel, the highest since 2022, back toward \$90.

But prices later fell and US stocks rose on hopes that the war with Iran may not last much longer.

The war has choked off major supplies of oil and gas to world markets and sent fuel prices rising across the US.

The fighting has also led foreigners to flee from business hubs and prompted millions to seek shelter as bombs hit military bases, government buildings, oil and water installations, hotels and at least one school.

Iran's attacks in the Strait of Hormuz have all but

stopped tankers from using the shipping lane through which a fifth of the world's oil is carried, and Iranian drones and missiles have targeted oil and gas infrastructure in major producers.

Attacks on merchant ships near the strait have killed at least seven mariners, according to the International Maritime Organisation.

Several US diplomatic missions have ordered all but key staff to leave.

The war has killed at least 1,230 people in Iran, at least 397 in Lebanon and 11 in Israel, according to officials.

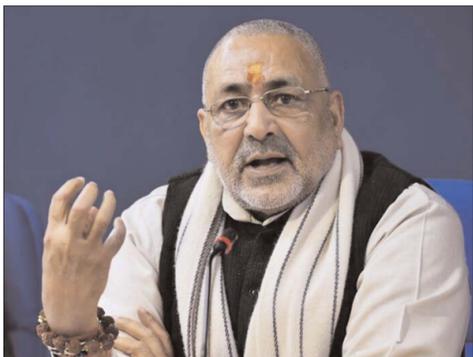
A total of seven US service members have been killed. (AP)

Giriraj Singh terms Rahul 'urban naxal', 'clueless last prince of fake Gandhi family'

NEW DELHI, MAR 10: Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of behaving like an "urban naxal" and likening him to the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar.

Speaking to reporters inside the Parliament complex, he alleged that Gandhi has been avoiding debate and voting in the House, and referred to discussions related to the West Asia conflict and the recent no-confidence motion against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

"I do not understand. I have not seen such a LoP. He has no vision and behaves



like an urban naxal. As the LoP, you inform the House that you want a debate on certain issues and seek a vote on them. Why are you running away from them?" Singh posed.

He claimed that as the Leader of the Opposition, Gandhi should inform the Lok Sabha if he wants a discussion or a vote on an issue instead of "staying away from the proceedings".

"He is the same for Congress as the last Mughal emperor was for the Mughal dynasty — a clueless last prince of a fake Gandhi family," the BJP leader said.

The remarks come amid sharp exchanges between the ruling BJP and the opposition over Parliament's functioning, with the former accusing the latter of trying to hold the House to ransom.

The Lok Sabha on Monday could not take up a notice seeking to move a resolution to remove Speaker Birla from office due to repeated disruptions as opposition members demanded a debate on the West Asia situation. (Agencies)

The operation reportedly involved Khorramshahr, Fattah and Kheibar missiles along with strategic drones.

The strikes came as Mojtaba Khamenei, son of Iran's late supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was named the country's new supreme leader amid the intensifying conflict.

US President Donald Trump had earlier described Mojtaba as an "un-

Iran accuses US, Israel of seeking to 'partition country, seize oil wealth'

TEHRAN, MAR 10: In the latest developments in the ongoing Israel-Iran war, Tehran on Monday accused the United States and Israel of attempting to fragment the country and seize its oil wealth, even as fighting intensified across the region and Iran launched fresh strikes against US and Israeli targets.

Iran's armed forces carried out the 30th round of strikes against US and Israeli targets in the Middle East, deploying drones along with hypersonic and ballistic missiles, according to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The IRGC said the strikes were part of "Operation True Promise 4," which it claimed achieved "complete success" by hitting US bases in the region and locations in what it described as the "northern occupied territories."

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US President Donald Trump had earlier described Mojtaba as an "un-



acceptable" choice, while Israel warned it would target any successor.

Speaking at a press briefing in Tehran, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei alleged that Washington and Tel Aviv were pursuing a broader geopolitical agenda.

"The US and Israel want to fragment the country and take over its 'oil riches,'" Baghaei said, condemning ongoing military strikes on Iranian territory.

He ruled out talks or mediation at the current stage of the conflict.

"As we speak, military confrontations are still under way. At this particular point, speaking of any matter other than 'defending our homeland' is irrelevant," he said.

Baghaei asserted that Iran

did not initiate the conflict, describing it as "not a war of choice" but "a war of necessity that was imposed on us."

He also accused Washington of having "torpedoed" diplomatic talks that were under way before the latest attacks on Iran.

At the same time, he said Tehran remained "adamant to maintain good and friendly relations" with neighbouring countries, while retaining the "right to defend" itself if other states allowed their territory to be used for attacks against Iran. Meanwhile, the war has triggered economic shockwaves globally. Oil prices surged past \$100 per barrel, prompting G7 finance ministers to consider a joint release of strategic reserves as energy markets reacted to escalating attacks

on regional infrastructure. European stock markets and US futures also fell sharply, reflecting growing concerns over the global economic fallout from the expanding Middle East conflict.

Saudi Arabia strongly condemned what it described as Iranian attacks targeting the Kingdom, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and other regional partners. In a statement, the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the attacks on civilian infrastructure, airports and oil facilities were unacceptable and violated international law.

The Kingdom said it "reserves its full right to take all necessary measures to protect its security, sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens and residents."

Saudi Arabia also rejected Iranian claims that its fighter jets and refuelling aircraft were preparing to participate in the war, saying the aircraft were deployed only for air patrols to monitor and protect the airspace of the Kingdom and GCC states from Iranian missiles and drones.

The escalating confrontation has raised fears of a wider regional war as military exchanges continue and diplomatic efforts remain stalled. (UNI)

Shivraj criticises West Bengal Govt in LS

NEW DELHI, Mar 10: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday slammed the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, accusing it of not implementing various agriculture schemes of the Centre and alleged that farmers in the state were facing "injustice".

The BJP and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) are locked in an intense political battle ahead of the Assembly



elections in the state.

Chouhan, who is the agriculture and farmers' welfare minister, told the Lok Sabha that the West Bengal govern-

ment was "committing a sin" by not implementing the PM Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana and other schemes, and was "not bothered" about the

welfare of farmers in the state.

While replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour, Chouhan took a swipe at the TMC, saying that the dispensation in the state will change after the elections.

He also accused the state government of doing "mean politics". Those shouting slogans here are not implementing agriculture schemes in West Bengal, he said.