

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Strong, developed India can only be built on foundation of its native languages: President

WARDHA, APR 16: President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said a strong, self-reliant and developed India can only be built on the foundation of the country's native languages.

A single stream of culture, sensitivity, and consciousness flows through all the diverse languages of India, she said, urging people to learn at least one Indian language besides their mother tongue.

President Murmu was speaking at the sixth convocation of the Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University in Maharashtra's Wardha.

"In 1936 right here in Wardha, Mahatma Gandhi, along with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Acharya Kaka Kalelkar established the 'Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti' to promote and propagate Hindi language. Notably, Mahatma Gandhi's mother tongue was Gujarati, Netaji's was Bengali and Kakasaheb's was Marathi," she said.

"These great souls recognised the power of Hindi as a medium for patriotism and national unity, and they harnessed it. During the freedom struggle, Hindi played a vital role in uniting the people across the country. Netaji



Subhas Chandra Bose gave his call of 'Give me your blood and I will give you freedom' in Hindi," the President added.

She praised the university for its name, saying that naming it after the Father of the Nation was entirely in keeping with history.

"India's soul finds expression in Indian languages and a single stream of culture, sensitivity, and consciousness flows through all our diverse Indian languages," she said.

"That is why I or other Odia speakers like me can connect effortlessly with Munshi Premchand's stories or Mahadevi Verma's poems in Hindi while reading their

Odia translations. Similarly, Hindi readers connect with Odia litterateurs like Fakir Mohan Senapati, Gopinath Mohanty and Pratibha Ray. Our national song 'Vande Mataram', composed in a mix of Bengali and Sanskrit, binds the emotions of all Indians into one thread," President Murmu said.

She urged the students to take pride in the heritage of India and its languages.

With this sense of national pride, focus especially on two national goals – eradicating the remnants of a slave mentality and restoring the prestige of India's knowledge traditions, she added.

"I often quote a line from a popular Odia poem, and I

find it relevant today – 'Learn as many other languages as you can, but honour your mother tongue,' she said.

"All Indian languages are our own. Every Indian should learn at least one more Indian language besides their local one," Murmu said.

Mahatma Gandhi stressed the promotion of Hindi. He did not oppose English, but gave priority to Indian languages. He considered education as the foundation of self-reliance and stressed that only education connected to the needs of most people's lives is meaningful, according to her.

President Murmu said that our own language alone can be the language of creation, exploration, original thinking and invention.

She called for building a strong, self-reliant and developed India.

"Such an India can only be built on the foundation of Indian languages. Therefore, we must focus in this direction," she said.

Murmu noted that through efforts like the National Education Policy (NEP), the country was moving in the right direction. (PTI)

If Chankaya Was Alive, He Would've Been Startled By Your Political Shrewdness: Priyanka To Shah

NEW DELHI, APR 16:

In friendly banter, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday told Home Minister Amit Shah that had Chankaya been alive today, he would have been startled by the BJP leader's "political shrewdness".

Participating in a debate in the Lok Sabha on three bills introduced for amendments to the women's quota law and setting up a delimitation commission, Priyanka Gandhi accused the government of once again wanting to "dupe" people and launching a "big attack on the country's integrity".

"On the one hand there is this big talk of women's reservation, and on the other hand, the rights of OBCs are being taken away. A strong structure is being erected for the next polls by reducing the influence of small states, shredding democracy to pieces," Priyanka Gandhi alleged.

"The home minister is laughing... He has made this full scheme. Had Chankaya been alive, he would have been startled by your political shrewdness (rajnaitik kuttita). He (Shah) made the whole plan, and he is laugh-



ing now... He agrees with me," the Wayanad MP said.

Hitting out at the government, she claimed the plan involved calling a sitting of Parliament during elections, not calling an all-party meeting, sharing the draft of the bill just a day before the sitting so that the opposition does not get a chance to deliberate on it, starting a discussion in media that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is going to take a big step for women's empowerment and put the opposition in a bind.

"Women's reservation on one hand, and independence to change the structure and neglect the OBC section on the other. It is one thing to be shrewd in politics, and probably we should be a bit more shrewd on this side of the aisle, but it's another thing to

take the right decision in national interest, keeping aside the aspirations to remain in power," Priyanka Gandhi said.

In her remarks, she also took a swipe at Prime Minister Modi, saying that from his remarks, it appeared as though the BJP is the sole champion of women's reservation.

"Any woman will tell you that women can instantly spot men who repeatedly try to mislead them," she said.

Giving a background to women's reservation in legislative bodies, the Congress MP said, "When the Women's Reservation Bill was passed in 2023, the Congress extended its full support to it, in alignment with its core ideology. There should be no doubt

whatsoever that the Congress stands firmly in favour of women's reservation." Taking a dig at the government, she said the story began with a man named Nehru "but not the one you try to avoid".

"Motilal Nehru Ji prepared a report in 1928, which he submitted to the Congress Working Committee. Motilal Nehru Ji was the chairman of a committee, and at that time, he prepared a list of 19 fundamental rights.

"In 1931, under the chairmanship of Sardar (Vallabhbhai) Patel Ji, the Karachi session was held, in which this resolution was passed. It was then that the issue of equal rights for women was included in India's politics," she said.

"At the same time, the principle of 'One Vote, One Citizen, One Value' was implemented in our politics," Priyanka Gandhi said, adding that due to this principle, women got the right to vote from the very first day of Independence.

"In countries like America, women had to wait 150 years for this right," she said. (Agencies)

Three Bills To Tweak Women's Quota Law, Set Up Delimitation Panel Introduced In Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, APR 16:

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill to tweak the women's quota law was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday after a division of votes.

Two ordinary bills – the Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill to implement the proposed amended women's quota law in Union territories of Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir – were also introduced in the House.

The Bills were introduced after a fiery 40-minute debate following which the opposition pressed for the division of votes to introduce the Constitutional (131st Amendment) Bill.

The Bill was later introduced with 251 members supporting it and 185 members voting against the introduction.

Congress' K C Venugopal questioned why the proposed changes in the women's quota law were not incorporated when it was passed earlier by Parliament.

"Bills to tweak the women's quota law and set up a delimitation panel are anticonstitutional," he said.

Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav questioned



the rush to introduce the bills. "We support women's quota in legislature but why not hold a census?" he asked.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah hit back, saying the Census 2027 is on and the Centre has also decided to go for caste enumeration, but reservation based on religion is "unconstitutional".

DMK members dressed in black clothes in the Lok Sabha to protest amendments to the women's reservation law. "We favour the 2023 women's quota law, but the present Bill is aimed at delimitation," DMK's T R Baalu said.

RSP's N K Premchandran opposed the women's quota law amendment, saying it is

not meant for reservation but delimitation.

Venugopal said a Constitutional amendment bill cannot be discussed together with other ordinary bills. Shah, however, rejected his objection saying it can be done. Speaker Om Birla cited precedents to say that the Constitution amendment Bill can be discussed with other Bills as they relate to the same subject.

According to the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, Lok Sabha seats will be increased to a maximum of 850 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimita-

tion exercise based on the 2011 Census. Seats will also be increased in state and Union territory assemblies to accommodate 33 per cent reservation for women.

The seats reserved for women in the Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies "shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a state or Union territory", the draft bill circulated among Lok Sabha members said.

Several opposition parties on Wednesday decided to unitedly vote against the delimitation provisions in the Constitution amendment bill in Parliament, while asserting that they are not against reservation for women in legislative bodies.

NEW DELHI, APR 16:

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the pleas of industrialist Anil Ambani challenging the Bombay High Court order that allowed the proceedings initiated by banks against him and Reliance Communications Ltd to classify their bank accounts as fraud to continue.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joy-malya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi permitted Ambani to pursue his plea before the high court's single judge bench against the banks' show cause notices to declare the accounts as fraud.

The bench requested the single judge bench to expeditiously decide Ambani's plea against the show cause notices issued by three banks.

The apex court passed the



order while hearing three separate pleas filed by Ambani who had challenged a February 23 order of a division bench of the high court. The division bench had

quashed a single judge bench interim order that stayed proceedings initiated against him and Reliance Communications Ltd to classify their bank accounts as fraud. (Agencies)

True Intent Of Bills Brought By Govt Mischievous, Have To Be Rejected Completely: Cong

NEW DELHI, APR 16:

The Congress on Thursday said the true intent of the bills being brought by the government in the garb of implementing women's quota law is "mischievous" and they have to be rejected completely in their present shape and form.

After a meeting of INDIA bloc leaders ahead of Parliament proceedings, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Opposition will not allow Parliament to be hijacked by flawed delimitation bills disguised as women's reservation.

"We stand united and will fight this devious assault on our Democracy with all our strength," Kharge said on X.

The way delimitation has actually been done in Assam and Jammu and Kashmir shows how "diabolically the Modi-Shah duo work" he said. "The true intent of these Bills is mischievous, their content devious, and their damage enormous. They have to be rejected completely in their present shape and form," Ramesh asserted.

"The Opposition demand is simple: Reserve one-third of the current strength of the Lok Sabha of 543 for women along with reservation for women belonging to SC, ST, and OBC communities," he said.



This was the Opposition's position in 2023 and this continues to be the position even now, he added.

"This is true power-sharing and vastly more democratic and in keeping with Constitutional values and principles," Ramesh said.

His remarks came as the government has listed three bills for introduction in Lok Sabha on Thursday to implement the women's quota law by 2029, and increase the strength of the House to up to 850.

According to a bulletin issued on Wednesday, 'The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026', 'The Delimitation Bill, 2026' and 'The Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026' will be introduced and debated for passage in the Lower House.

While Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal will in-

introduce the first two bills, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will introduce the third one.

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Several opposition parties on Wednesday decided to

unitedly vote against the delimitation provisions in the Constitution amendment bill in Parliament, while asserting that they are not against reservation for women in legislative bodies.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the opposition parties are opposed to the manner in which the bill is being brought and alleged that it is politically motivated.

The leaders of several INDIA bloc constituents, besides the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), met at Kharge's residence here on Wednesday to evolve a joint strategy in Parliament during its three-day special sitting starting Thursday.

In a post on X, Ramesh said on Wednesday night, "The Opposition will do whatever it takes to defeat the Constitution Amendment Bill especially. The country should prepare itself for a political earthquake."

The special three-day sitting of Parliament will be held Thursday, during which amendments to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act, mandating 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, will be brought for implementation in 2029. (Agencies)

South Korean star Lee Dong-wook to lead new Netflix series 'The Facade of Love'

NEW DELHI, APR 16:

South Korean star Lee Dong-wook is set to headline Netflix's upcoming series "The Facade of Love," the streaming platform has announced.

The show will feature Dong-wook alongside a strong ensemble cast that includes Jeon So-nee, Jung Yu-mi and Lee Jong-won, a press release said.

Directed by Mo Wan-il, known for "The World of the Married" and "The Frog," and written by Ha Su-jin, who previously penned "The Matchmakers" and "Sell Your Haunted House," the series explores what happens when a single night away from routine sets off a chain of consequences across four lives.

In the show, Dong-wook



will play the role of Ji-hun, a man caught between what he feels and what he believes is right.

One of South Korean television's most recognisable faces, he rose to widespread fame with the fantasy romance "Guardian: The Lonely and Great God" opposite Gong Yoo, and has since starred in "Tale of the Nine Tailed," the psycholog-

ical thriller "Hell Is Other People" and the romance drama "Touch Your Heart".

The story begins when Ji-hun and Hu-kyung – two strangers far from home – share an unforgettable night together. Though both expect to return to their ordinary lives in Korea, the connection between them follows them back, slowly unravelling the lives of four

people, according to the official plotline.

So-nee, known for creature thriller "Parasyte: The Grey", romance drama "Melo Movie" and the supernatural series "As You Stood By", plays Hu-kyung, the unexpected centre of Ji-hun's emotional upheaval.

Yu-mi of "Train to Busan" fame takes on the role of Sun-hee, Ji-hun's wife – a woman confronted with a shocking truth.

Jong-won rounds out the lead cast as Dae-hee, Sun-hee's younger brother, who becomes entangled with Hu-kyung in unexpected ways. His credits include romantic comedy "Brewing Love", the period drama "Knight Flower" and the fantasy series "The Golden Spoon". (PTI)