

BJP Blatantly Assaulted Democracy Under Guise Of Women's Empowerment: J&K Congress

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The Jammu and Kashmir unit of Congress on Sunday hit out at the BJP over a "blatant and desperate assault" on democracy under the "guise" of women's empowerment, saying women's rights cannot be reduced to campaign rhetoric or used to justify institutional manipulation.

Congress spokesperson Namrta Sharma said the failure to pass a bill to amend women's reservation law in the Lok Sabha marked a decisive rejection of the BJP's attempt to weaponise women's rights to push through a politically motivated restructuring of India's electoral framework.

The remarks followed after the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures from 2029 and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816 was defeated in the Lower House on Friday.

"The Congress has always supported women's reservation and continues to firmly back the 33 per cent quota for women in legislative bodies. When the 2023 law was passed, the entire opposition supported women's reservation, reflecting a rare and clear national consensus on the issue," Sharma said at a presser here.

Despite this consensus, she said, the BJP deliber-



ately diluted the framework by linking its implementation to census and delimitation, effectively converting an immediate constitutional commitment into an "uncertain and deferred" promise.

Accusing the BJP of a "blatant and desperate assault" on democracy under the "guise" of women's empowerment, the senior Congress leader said, "This was not about granting rights (to women) but about postponing them, ensuring that women's reservation remains a political slogan rather than a realised constitutional guarantee." "The attempt has exposed the BJP's real intent — not to implement reservation, but to fundamentally alter the structure of parliamentary representation to its advantage.

"Under the pretext of women's reservation, the government sought to introduce sweeping structural changes, including altering seat distribution, to disturb the federal balance among states," she alleged. Sharma also said the

Sharma claimed, calling it "political blackmail".

The Congress leader also claimed that the bill not clearing the Lok Sabha test came as a significant political setback for the BJP and a major victory for the opposition and democratic accountability.

"This outcome is not merely a political win but a victory for constitutional values, fair representation, and the genuine empowerment of women," she said.

"Had the government's intent been sincere, it could have implemented women's reservation immediately without linking it to delimitation, as has already been done in panchayats and municipalities," she added. The Congress leader claimed that the delay was "deliberate and politically motivated".

"The BJP seeks to retain women's reservation as an electoral talking point rather than transforming it into a binding and enforceable right," Sharma claimed.

She added that Congress will not allow women's rights to be reduced to "campaign rhetoric" or used as a cover for "institutional manipulation". Demanding immediate implementation of women's reservation, its complete delinking from delimitation, and removal of all conditional barriers that delay justice, Sharma said, "Give women their rightful share, now."

Congress has consistently opposed the arbitrary linkage of reservation with delimitation, and emphasised that delimitation is not a neutral administrative exercise but a deeply political process capable of reshaping power equations across the country.

The Congress leader described the BJP's approach as an "aggressive and calculated" attack on India's federal structure and democratic equilibrium. "This pattern is not new," she said, pointing to Jammu and Kashmir, where delimitation exercises previously raised serious concerns about political bias and selective advantage.

She alleged that the BJP is now attempting to replicate the same model at the national level by trying to redraw constituencies, recalibrate representation, and consolidate power in its favour.

"The government's message was effectively coercive: accept delimitation on its terms or indefinitely delay women's reservation,"

BOPEE conducts CET for admission to BE/B Tech Engineering Courses in J&K, Ladakh

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The Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE) today conducted the Common Entrance Test (CET) for admission to B.E./B.Tech Engineering Courses for the academic session 2026-27 in Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir & Ladakh.

The test was held at several examination centres in

Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, Doda, Rajouri, Jammu, and Leh districts, with 1263 candidates appearing out of 1538 applicants.

To ensure smooth conduct of the entrance test, arrangements were made in collaboration with the respective institutions/college administrations and law enforcement agencies, under the guidance of Chairperson, J&K BOPEE Prof. Minu Mahajan.

Due to keen oversight of capable staff members

from the respective institutions/colleges, no untoward or unfair incident was reported from anywhere.

Notably, for the second time, BOPEE had arranged Examination Centres in other districts like Baramulla, Anantnag, Doda, Rajouri and Leh.

Extensive measures were established to ensure that students from remote areas can access these facilities within their respective districts.

The Chairperson, along

with the Members, Secretary, Controller of Examinations, and officials of the JKBOPEE actively monitored the conduct of entrance Test across J&K and Ladakh.

The JKBOPEE administration expressed gratitude to the staff members of the respective Institutions/Colleges and the staff deployed under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioners in the respective district headquarters for the smooth conduct of the entrance test.

NIT Srinagar shines at SAE World Congress in Detroit at USA

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In a major boost to its global academic standing, the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar made a strong impression at the prestigious SAE World Congress 2026 held in Detroit, Michigan, USA, with its faculty presenting cutting-edge research on sustainable mobility and advanced automotive systems.

Representing the institute, Dr. Harveer Singh Pali and Dr. Noor Zaman Khan, faculty advisors of the SAE Collegiate Club from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, showcased innovative research addressing key challenges in the rapidly evolving mobility sector, including energy efficiency, emissions reduction, material processing, and smart mobility solutions.

Organised by SAE International, the global congress witnessed participation from leading industry giants such as Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai Motor Company, Toyota, IBM, Dassault Systèmes and Samsung, among others, making it one of the most influential platforms for engineers, researchers, and industry leaders worldwide.



The research contributions from the NIT Srinagar team were widely appreciated by international experts for their focus on sustainability and future-ready automotive technologies. Their participation also opened avenues for collaboration through high-level interactions with global leaders, including Peter Doty, Executive Vice President of SAE International, G. Nagarajan, President of SAEINDIA, Richard Butcher of BP Castrol, and Catherine Amodio from Ford Motor Company. Both faculty members expressed gratitude to the Institute leadership, including the Board of

Governors Chairman, Director, Registrar, and all Deans, for their continued support and facilitation.

In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, said the achievement a "matter of immense pride" for the Institute.

"Our faculty's participation and recognition at a global forum like WCX 2026 reflects the growing research capabilities of NIT Srinagar. It underlines our commitment to innovation, industry engagement, and contributing to sustainable technological advancements," he said.

Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, also

lauded the achievement. This accomplishment highlights the institute's expanding global footprint and the quality of research being carried out by our faculty.

"Such international exposure not only enhances institutional reputation but also creates meaningful opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange," he said.

Prof. Rehman said this participation aligns with NIT Srinagar's broader vision of fostering high-impact research and nurturing future-ready engineers capable of contributing to the global mobility ecosystem.

ASTRO ZINDAGI

(Weekly Horoscope April 20 - 26, 2026)

ARIES :

This week, you feel a strong pull toward adventure in love. For singles, you are drawn to someone who offers excitement and challenges, sparking curiosity. However, Mars indicates that restlessness may also set in, making you crave variety and spontaneity. For couples, this is an excellent time to take risks together whether it's a spontaneous trip or trying something new. The key is balancing fun with respect for your partner's emotions, avoiding impulsive decisions. On the financial front, your focus shifts to building long-term stability. Mercury indicates a good week for transparent discussions, and you may receive positive news regarding approvals or confirmations by the weekend. Professionally, take time to reassess your strategies. Romance

TAURUS :

This week, Venus, brings a calm and steady pace to your relationships. Whether you are in a relationship or single, you are more open about expressing your needs, creating deeper connections. In committed relationships, sharing everyday tasks like planning or discussing home life brings you closer. For singles, reconnecting with someone from your past or feeling a spark with someone new is possible. Take your time and let things develop naturally. In your finances, Mercury encourages long-term planning. Focus on savings, renegotiating deals, or finding steady ways to earn money that align with your values. Avoid get-rich-quick schemes, and trust in your ability to build wealth gradually and securely.

GEMINI :

This week, emotional clarity takes center stage, supported by Mercury's influence on communication. In love, you may feel more confident about what you need from a relationship and what you will not tolerate. If you are in a relationship, an honest conversation could strengthen your bond. Singles may connect with someone who shares similar values, leading to slow but steady growth. The South Node's influence may bring up old emotional patterns, offering a chance to break free and move forward with honesty and patience. Financially, focus on practicality.

CANCER :

This week, a light and refreshing energy flows into your love life, thanks to the supportive influence of Venus and the movement of Mercury. If you are in a relationship, shared laughter and easy communication help lift any recent tension. It's a great time to reconnect through fun, simple moments. If single, you may attract someone in a casual or social setting, just by being your natural self. Financially, your intuition sharpens under the influence of the Moon aligning with Uranus. This is a great time to reassess your goals and take a practical look at your spending. Avoid big purchases for now, and consider redirecting unexpected gains toward long-term savings. Communications & Media Studies

LEO :

At the beginning of the week, your natural charm shines brightly in romance. Whether single or committed, your warmth and boldness attract positive energy, encourage fun, laughter, and genuine connections. Venus supports playful and heartfelt moments, reminding you that love flows best when shared. Moving into mid-week, the focus shifts to finances under Mercury's influence. Unexpected expenses may appear, but careful planning and clear communication help you stay steady. Avoid impulsive decisions and seek advice when needed to maintain financial balance. In the latter half of the week, creativity and mental sharpness reach a peak with the help of the Sun and Mars.

VIRGO :

The week begins on a joyful note as Venus brings a spark of fresh energy to your love life. Whether you are in a relationship or single, your openness and playfulness shine through. Couples can reignite their bond through spontaneous moments, while singles may find exciting connections through social or creative settings. Let go of overthinking, being present and sincere makes your charm irresistible. By midweek, Mercury urges you to strengthen your financial footing. Focus on reducing small debts, resist new liabilities, and organize your budget. You will gain clarity and confidence through simple, disciplined steps. Professionally, Saturn supports critical reflection and careful adjustments.

LIBRA :

Your love life feels comforting and supportive under the gentle influence of Venus. Couples may enjoy a peaceful, trusting connection with plans that feel more secure. Singles are likely to be drawn to someone steady and emotionally grounded, valuing safety over excitement. Midweek, financial decisions require careful thought, especially those involving others. Saturn advises you to avoid risks unless fully informed and emotionally balanced. Patience is key if you face delays, and revisiting your goals will protect your progress. A slow, methodical approach strengthens your foundation.

SCORPIO :

This week begins with the Venus, urging emotional clarity in love. Whether you are committed or single, you are called to reassess if your relationships reflect your true emotional needs. For couples, this can be a turning point either healing distance or reaffirming deeper commitment. For singles, the South Node may trigger release of lingering attachments, freeing you for more fulfilling connections. Financially, Mercury can bring surprise expenses or sudden shifts in contracts. Stay grounded and read the fine print before committing. Collaborative efforts may pay off if handled with diplomacy. Keep focus on long-term planning rather than short-term gain. Career-wise, the Sun harmonizes with Mars, boosting your confidence and influence.

Sagittarius :

The week starts with the steady influence of the Sun boosting your emotional confidence. You no longer second-guess your feelings and stand firmly by what you want. In relationships, this deepens bonds through shared stability, while singles attract partners who appreciate their emotional growth rather than old patterns. Venus encourages breaking cycles and rewriting your love story with honesty. Financially, Saturn urges you to focus on long-term security and build sustainable routines. It's a good time to explore learning tools for money management or investing, and to follow up assertively on pending job offers or payments. Risk-taking isn't favored now; persistence and clarity bring steady growth. Midweek, Uranus inspires innovative energy—new projects or business ideas may emerge, with unexpected support from unlikely sources. Romance

CAPRICORN :

The week starts with the influence of Moon and South Node, inviting emotional healing in love. If you are in a relationship, past tensions may resurface to deepen understanding. Patience builds trust now. Singles might reconnect with someone from the past, prompting clarity rather than reunion. Your emotional growth protects you, emphasizing reflection over action. Financially, Mercury energizes communication and short-term opportunities like freelance or extra hours. Be cautious of quick gains with hidden conditions—review details carefully. It's a good time to renegotiate terms but hold off on upgrades unless necessary. Aquarius : At the start of the week, you will focus on reviewing your progress and planning carefully for the future. The influence of Mars encourages you to be practical and organized, especially with finances. You might face some small expenses or decisions about loans, so prioritize wisely and avoid mixing money with friendships. Midweek brings a sense of emotional stability in love—whether single or partnered, loyalty and trust take center stage. Conversations about long-term goals strengthen your bonds, creating a safe and grounded connection.

PISCES : This week begins with emotional healing as Venus encouraging forgiveness and deeper connection. Vulnerability becomes your strength—honest talks dissolve tension for couples, while singles may find calming, unexpected connections. Old romantic wounds resurface to heal, inviting you into authentic love received with ease. Financially, the Sun and Mars boost momentum, bringing responses to projects or support requests. Watch for Mercury's hidden fine print.

Creative talents might quietly generate income—don't dismiss unconventional paths. Near the weekend, choose substance over impulsive treats. Professionally, reassess commitments as some roles or clients may no longer align. North Node urges releasing what drains you.

JU VC visits Udhampur Campus, reviews academic & developmental initiatives

UDHAMPUR, APR 19: Prof Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, undertook an extensive visit to the Udhampur Campus and reviewed ongoing academic programmes, assessed proposed initiatives, and evaluated the progress of various developmental works.

The Vice Chancellor was accompanied by Prof Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies; Prof Sangita Gupta, Dean Planning and Development; and Dr Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, JU.

During the visit, Prof Yash Pal Sharma, Rector, Udhampur Campus, delivered a detailed and data-driven PowerPoint presentation, providing a comprehensive overview of the campus's academic

profile, research activities, extension programmes, and future expansion plans.

A significant component of the visit was the Vice Chancellor's interaction with senior officials of the District Administration, wherein issues of critical importance to the campus were discussed threadbare. The meeting was attended by Umesh Shan (ACD Udhampur), Uttam Singh (CPO Udhampur), along with officers from PWD, PDD, PHE and representatives from PMGSY.

Interacting with faculty members, non-teaching staff, and students, the Vice Chancellor appreciated their dedication, resilience, and proactive initiatives in maintaining academic vibrancy despite certain con-

straints. He lauded the efforts of the campus in promoting quality teaching, student-centric activities, and community engagement. He emphasized that offsite campuses like Udhampur hold immense potential to emerge as important academic hubs and assured that the University would extend all necessary support for their growth and development.

Prof Neelu Rohmetra and Prof Sangita Gupta, assured their full cooperation and institutional support in further strengthening academic programmes, enhancing research output, and accelerating developmental activities.

Other officials accompanying the Vice Chancellor included Amit Sharma, Executive Engineer UWD; Ir-

fan Goni, Campuses Development Officer; Shami, Assistant Engineer; and Vikas Vaid, who also contributed to the discussions related to infrastructure planning and execution.

The visit concluded with a comprehensive review of actionable points and future strategies. The Vice Chancellor emphasized the need for time-bound execution of development works, effective removal of administrative bottlenecks, and sustained focus on academic excellence, innovation, and capacity building. He called for enhanced coordination among all stakeholders to ensure that the Udhampur Campus evolves into a vibrant, self-sustaining centre of higher learning, research, and innovation.