

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Russia to fulfil all agreements on energy supply to India: FM Lavrov

MOSCOW, May 13: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has pledged that agreements on energy supplies to India will be fulfilled despite unfair external competition, as he underlined that the relations between the two countries are based on friendship and there is no scenario in which their paths would diverge.

In an interview with Russia Today-India ahead of his visit to New Delhi this week, Lavrov also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he is one of the most energetic leaders the world has ever seen.

"I can guarantee that India's interests as they apply to Russian supplies will not suffer. We will do everything to ensure that this unfair and dishonest competition does not damage our agreements," he said.

Lavrov pointed out that Russia has never failed to fulfil its obligations to India or anyone else when it comes to energy supplies.

"The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant is our flagship project. It meets a significant share of India's needs,"



he said. "Cooperation on the construction of new power units for this nuclear plant is continuing. Even so, India needs more. We continue supplying hydrocarbons such as gas, oil, and coal."

The Kudankulam nuclear power plant is being built in Tamil Nadu with the technical assistance of Russia. The construction began in March 2002. Since February 2016, the first power unit of the Kudankulam NPP has been steadily operating at its design capacity of 1,000 MW.

The plant is expected to start operating at full capacity in 2027, according to Rus-

ian state media.

Lavrov said Prime Minister Modi is "one of the most energetic leaders the world has ever known."

"He possesses great energy and channels it towards extremely important goals such as achieving maximum sovereignty across all spheres: the economy, the military, defence, culture, and the preservation of India's civilisational wealth, which is unmatched by any other country."

Lavrov said the relations between India and Russia are based on friendship and there is no scenario in which

their paths would diverge.

"There isn't just one word for these relations. Not because human languages aren't rich enough, but because it is hard to imagine a relationship so full and deep," he said while replying to a question.

"A situation where our paths diverge simply does not exist - it is unthinkable. We began our conversation with the very foundation of Russian-Indian relations: friendship," Lavrov noted.

Stating that 'Hindi-Rusi bhai bhai' (Indians and Russians are brothers), Lavrov said that's not just a fun slogan to chant, it has become part of our culture.

"Indian cinema, Raj Kapoor, more recent television series and films - they are immensely popular in Russia, everywhere, in every corner."

The economy, joint energy production, military cooperation, nuclear and other forms of energy, cultural and humanitarian ties, and a high-level political dialogue marked by unprecedented trust - all of it is rock solid," he said.

TVK Govt Wins Trust Vote With Support From Cong, Left; DMK Walks Out, AIADMK Divided

CHENNAI, MAY 13: The four-day old TVK Government in Tamil Nadu crossed a major hurdle on Wednesday, winning a confidence-boosting trust vote by a 144:22 margin amid a walkout by the principal opposition party DMK and a divided AIADMK whose one faction supported the C Joseph Vijay-led government.

In the 234-member House, 118 is the simple majority mark.

AIADMK MLAs backing chief Edappadi K Palaniswami voted against the Government.

The BJP, with its lone MLA, stayed neutral while another NDA constituent, the PMK (4), also abstained.

Amidst questions of its stability in the wake of a lack of a majority, the win gives the maiden TVK Government the much-needed confidence to settle down and get on with delivery of governance, even as the ministers, including CM Vijay, are yet to be allotted portfolios.

For the next six months, another floor test may not be held. The Vijay-led TVK Government won the trust vote with support from the Congress, VCK, Left, AMMK and the AIADMK rebel faction led by leaders SP Velumani and C Ve Shanmugam.

As soon as the House convened at 9.30 am, CM Vijay moved a vote of confidence resolution, and the legislators belonging to all



parties spoke on the motion.

Speaker JCD Prabhakar, after conducting division-wise voting, declared that the resolution moved by the Chief Minister seeking vote of confidence of the Assembly has won, and as many as 144 MLAs voted with the government. He said 22 MLAs opposed and five took a neutral stand.

The main opposition DMK, which has a strength of 59 MLAs, staged a walk out before voting was taken up on the resolution.

MLA S Kamaraj, expelled from the TTV Dhinakaran-led AMMK, an NDA constituent, was among those who voted in favour of the government.

Replying to discussions over the resolution moved by him seeking vote of confidence, Vijay said his Government will always be secular

and would continue to implement the welfare schemes launched by previous regimes.

While the Government functioned with "horse-speed", it does not engage in horse-trading, he asserted.

The floor test was held in the House in lines with Governor RV Arlekar's directions to hold it on or before May 13, after Vijay ensured his maiden government with the outside support of CPI, CPI (M), VCK and IUML.

The ruling TVK has an overall strength of 107, including the Speaker who did not vote. Further, a High Court ruling had barred the party's Tirupattur MLA, R Seenivasa Sethupathy from voting in such floor tests following a case filed by his rival DMK candidate, who lost to the TVK legislator by one vote in the April 23 polls. The

DMK leader has sought re-counting of votes.

The ruling party has already secured the support of five Congress MLAs for its government. Besides, CPI, CPI (M), VCK and IUML - with two MLAs each, had also last week announced their outside support to the TVK government.

Further, a section of AIADMK MLAs, about 30 of them who are led by senior leaders Velumani and Shanmugam and opposed to party chief Palaniswami, have announced support to the Government.

Those AIADMK MLAs owing allegiance to Palaniswami had already said that they will vote against the government and warned that anti-defection would apply to party MLAs going against the diktat. (Agencies)

Kejriwal calls on Gen Z to demand accountability on NEET paper leak, cites Nepal uprising

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday urged Gen Z to ensure that those behind the alleged NEET paper leak are brought to justice, saying that if the youth in Bangladesh and Nepal could bring political change, Indian students could also force accountability. A A

Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal said recurring paper leak incidents had shaken the confidence of aspirants. He also wondered whether investigations in the past by the Central Bureau of Investigation had led



to strict punishment for those responsible. A A "If Gen Z in countries like Bangladesh and Nepal could

change the government, then Indian youth could also ensure accountability in cases of paper leaks," the former Delhi chief minister said. A A He also alleged that the CBI probe into the NEET paper leak would achieve nothing and that the agency had failed to do anything in previous leaks. A A

Kejriwal cited paper leak incidents since 2014 and said the lapses affected the future of crores of students. A A

He alleged that several such incidents had taken place in states ruled by the BJP. (PTI)

Seems Hosabale's Recent US Trip Impacted Him As Well As RSS: Cong's Dig Over Pak Remarks

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: The Congress on Wednesday took a swipe at RSS functionary Dattatreya Hosabale over his remarks that there should always be a window for dialogue with Pakistan, saying his recent US trip has impacted him as well as the Sangh.

The opposition party also wondered how the "bhakt brigade, including the various TV channels", would have frothed, fumed and fulminated if the remarks were made by someone else.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh tagged a post on X carrying the video clip of Hosabale's remarks in an interview to PTI.

"It appears that the recent US trip of Shri Hosabale, during which one of his colleagues admitted to the PM doing what the US wanted him to do, has impacted him as well as the RSS," Ramesh said on X.

"Just imagine how the bhakt brigade including the various TV channels would have frothed, fumed and fulminated if...," Ramesh said.



In an interview with PTI Videos, Hosabale has said people-to-people contact is key to breaking the deadlock with Pakistan and there should always be a window for dialogue.

Hosabale said Pakistan's military and political leadership have lost India's confidence and it is time for civil society to lead the way.

"The security and self-respect of a country have to be protected and the government of the day should take care of it. But at the same time, we need not close the doors. We should always be ready to engage them in a di-

ologue," he said.

The RSS general secretary termed people-to-people contact the key in breaking the deadlock between the two countries and said that it "should be tried more and more now".

The RSS had been on a mission to remove the misconceptions about it in the western world with senior leader Hosabale reaching out to intellectuals and academics in the US and the UK last month to convey the aims and objectives of the organisation in its centenary year.

Hosabale, the RSS general

secretary, toured different cities across the US, addressing conferences at the Stanford University in San Francisco and Hudson Institute here and meeting a cross-section of the Indian diaspora.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had dubbed the RSS as "Rashtriya Surrender Sangh" and alleged that its leader Ram Madhav has revealed the outfit's true nature of "farzi (fake) nationalism" here and "pure servility" in the US.

He was referring to a video of Madhav from an event in the US, where the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader said that India agreed to stop buying oil from Iran and Russia and also agreed to higher tariffs imposed by the US.

Madhav, however, later apologised, saying what he said was "factually incorrect" as India did not agree to stop importing oil from Russia and had "vigorously protested" the 50 per cent tariff imposition by the Trump administration. (Agencies)

'Pure' Inter-Faith Love Fine, Plot To Lure Hindu Girls Problematic: RSS On 'Love Jihad'

NEW DELHI, MAY 13: No one can question "sheer pure love" even if it's between individuals of different religions, but any planned conspiracy to take away Hindu girls is definitely problematic, top RSS functionary Dattatreya Hosabale has said.

He said there are an umpteen number of cases among Swayamsevaks who have married across castes, religions and even nationalities for "pure love" and the Sangh has always accepted it as natural.

"We have welcomed, celebrated and attended those weddings," the RSS General Secretary said in a rare and free-wheeling interview.

"If it is sheer pure love, no question. When it is jihad, there is a question," he said.

Asked how he defines 'love jihad', a term often used by the Hindu right wing for companionship between a Muslim man and a Hindu woman, Hosabale said, "The thing is nobody has (defined it). Love jihad, the term, was first used by some high court judge. So it is not our contribution." "The thing is that if two individuals are in love, then there is no religion, nationality, et cetera. So that love is pure." But, he added, when this becomes an agenda and there is a planned conspiracy to take away Hindu girls, then it raises a question and causes friction.

"Then this DNA thing doesn't work. Because even with that (same) DNA, if somebody is hijacking a girl from some village, leave alone Muslims, it is not love,"



he said, referring to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's comments about Hindus and Muslims of India having the same DNA.

He stressed that he was not talking only about Hindu girls and it cannot be allowed even if a girl from any other community is kidnapped.

"You cannot say that 'as we belong to one DNA, it's okay'. It is not. That is why it should be a socially acceptable thing. Love is not barred in a society," he said.

Asked specifically whether he was saying that the Sangh was not against a love marriage between individuals of different faiths or communities, he said that there are many families of Swayamsevaks where people have married outside their caste, community or religion.

"We do not publicise it as we accept it as a natural thing," he said. At the same time, he said, what is being

referred to as 'love jihad' cannot be ignored, as such cases are being reported in large numbers and heard in courts every month.

"Many girls have come back and they have told their sad stories... There are around 20,000 cases that have been documented. All these things cannot happen," he said.

He also wondered whether love happens only one way. "All cases of Hindu girls and Muslim boys? So that means this love has only one dimension. Then it is not love. There is a conspiracy," he said. On another question about Bhagwat's comments about the need for Hindus to have more children, Hosabale said it is important for family security and several other reasons.

"If there is only one child, one child norm, then if something happens to the child at some age, what will happen to the parents in their old

age? "Secondly, if there is only one child who gets all the love and everything, there is a risk that the child develops an ego or loneliness.

"Siblings help us learn love, sharing and compassion. But if a child grows without a sibling, there can be psychological problems or ego or loneliness," he said.

He further said that having more children is also important for the community and the nation. "We are creating economy, we are creating wealth, we are growing everything. But in the future, if the nation becomes a nation of old people, there would be a problem," he said while referring to Japan.

Hosabale said India is an ancient nation, but it is also a young nation even after thousands of years.

"We should remain young as a nation," he said while advocating for people to have more children. (Agencies)

Those who abused Sanatan Dharma have already been cremated: Baba Ramdev

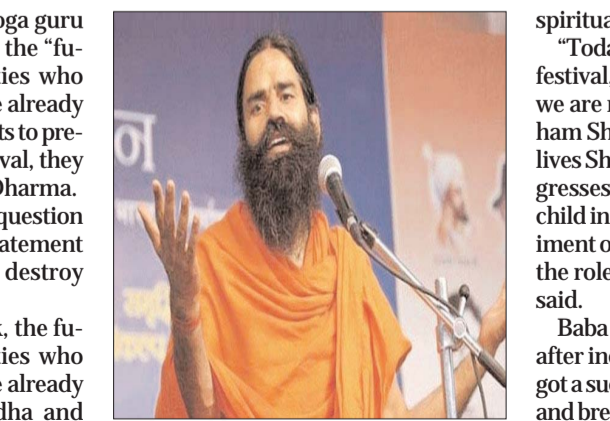
VARANASI, MAY 13: Yoga guru Baba Ramdev today said that the "funerals of some political parties who abused Sanatan Dharma have already taken place" and if anyone wants to preserve their existence and survival, they should stop abusing Sanatan Dharma.

He said this in response to a question about Udhayanidhi Stalin's statement in Tamil Nadu that he would destroy Sanatan Dharma.

Swami Ramdev said, "Look, the funerals of some political parties who abused Sanatan Dharma have already taken place, and the Shradha and Tarpana rituals will also take place soon".

"So, if anyone wants to preserve their existence and survival, they should stop abusing Sanatan Dharma."

He was speaking at the spiritual symposium organized at the Swatantrata Bhawan of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on Tuesday as part of the Som-



nath Swabhimana Parv.

Ramdev said that Sanatan culture has been flowing continuously for ages. Sanatan Dharma has an eternal power. Today, we are witnessing this power of Sanatan Dharma politically in India, and in the times to come, the entire world will witness Sanatan Dharma's political, economic, social, religious,

spiritual, and global power.

"Today, on this Somnath Swabhimana festival, we take pride in our hearts that we are not just individuals, but 'Shivoham Shivoham'. Every person in India lives Shivatva. When this Shivatva progresses unimpeded, then surely every child in India will emerge as an embodiment of Shiva, and India will truly play the role of world guru," the Yoga Guru said.

Baba Ramdev said, "Yes, it is true that after independence, Uttar Pradesh has got a successful Chief Minister who lives and breathes Sanatan, and India has got a successful Prime Minister who, through his conduct, thoughts, words, behavior, temperament and culture, is working to align the governance system with the Dharma system and Sanatan system. It is a matter of pride to see that our country's Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, is a living embodiment of Sanatan."