

Rahul Flags Lack Of Hostels For Female Students, Seeks Answers From PM

NEW DELHI, SEPT 20: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday flagged the issue of lack of hostels for female students and sought answers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the problem being faced by them. Follow Federal Policy

Gandhi cited the remarks by a female student during his 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' event in Indore on Saturday to corner the government.

"The government has money to light diyas - why not for our hostels?" This question was asked of me yesterday by a female student in Indore. She came to the city from a village to study," Gandhi said recalling the interaction.

"There's no hostel, so she has to stay in a PG. Just to stay safe, lakhs are spent. The worry of monthly rent, and the fear of becoming homeless - she has to study amidst all this," Gandhi said in his post in Hindi.

Many girls drop out of their studies for this very reason - because there's no place to live, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said.



"And what about the housing allowance? It doesn't increase with inflation, and on top of that, it falls prey to corruption. Narendra Modi ji - Do you have any answer to that little girl's question?" Gandhi said.

Tagging Gandhi's post, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said, "PR events. Designer clothes. Luxury cars. Aircraft. Skincare. Modi has money for everything except the education of India's youth."

"No adequate infrastructure. No quality teachers. No training. No hostels. No jobs. At this point, the authenticity of his degree is almost irrelevant. His contempt for

education explains how 'educated' he is," he said.

Gandhi on Saturday had alleged that a rotten "system", especially in education, had captured the country and did not want students to ask questions, instead wanting "andhbhaktis" -- a term commonly used by critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his supporters -- to spread its narrative and hatred.

The remarks came at the fifth edition of Gandhi's youth outreach programme 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' in Indore, a BJP stronghold, where he spoke on the theme 'system versus students' and interacted with Gen Z and other young participants on

education, recruitment and employment issues.

"The system is afraid of students because students ask questions. The system does not want students; it wants 'andhbhaktis'," Gandhi had said in Indore.

He said students were curious, questioned authority and sought answers about the functioning of institutions, recruitment, examinations and opportunities, while "andhbhaktis" lacked these qualities and instead spread hatred.

Gandhi alleged that the "system" had several layers and targeted Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and industrialists Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani, alleging that they exercised control over different aspects of the country's political, institutional and economic life.

Students posed a challenge to this system because they remained curious and questioned what was happening around them, Gandhi had said. (Agencies)

Tata Sons dispute: Abhishek Singhvi says he enters fray with 'sadness and regret'

NEW DELHI, SEP 20: Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appointed to represent Tata Trusts, said on Sunday he is entering the fray with "sadness and regret" as these issues could not be amicably solved.

In a post on X, the lawyer said the fundamental rights of shareholder-owners cannot be nullified in the manner in which they have been.

"Having worked closely with Ratan Tata earlier, being aware of his legacy and not only knowing personally all the principal actors on both sides in the current so-called Tata dispute but also having deep, genuine and abiding respect for and excellent equations with all of them, my first reaction, as I enter the fray as the lead lawyer for one side, is one of sadness and regret that these issues could not be solved amicably," Singhvi said.

The Tata Sons board has backed a further five-year



term for Natarajan Chandrasekaran, much to the opposition of Noel Tata, and challenge to the validity of the decision by the Trusts.

The Tata Sons board has favoured moving ahead with a public listing following the Reserve Bank of India's rejection of the company's application to surrender its registration as an upper-layer non-banking financial company (NBFC).

Tata Trusts, which collectively controls about 66 per cent of Tata Sons, have op-

posed the listing, with chairman Noel Tata urging the company to explore alternatives.

Singhvi said stultifying shareholder-ownership rights would spell doom for corporate governance across hundreds of Indian companies.

He said that to stymie democratic intra-trust decision-making by Tata Trusts by putting a sudden and completely unwarranted fetter on even convening a meeting is another matter of

patent legality.

"Rupturing the over hundred years of Tata Trust and Tata Sons established hyphenated relationship and divorcing one from the other seems unthinkable.

"Ignoring the unvarying precondition of Trust unanimity in voting & the clear veto in provisions applied without cavil for decades appears patently unjustified. Sadly, the Supreme Court judgement in 'Tata-Mistry' which clearly gave Tata Trusts primacy in the relationship with Tata Sons, upheld the special Articles in this regard in the Tata Sons articles and spoke of the fiduciary duty to millions of Indians, seems to have been selectively forgotten," he said.

Singhvi said that, in the absence of collegiality and conviviality, these and many other related issues, unfortunately, can only have legal solutions. (PTI)

Inside Gujarat's 'Prostitute Village': Where Child Engagements Are Way Out Of Flesh Trade

VADIA (GUJARAT), SEP 20: Child 'engagement' or prostitution. That is the stark choice facing girls in this 'prostitute village', the disparaging moniker not a throwback to a shackled past but a lived present where their weddings are fixed when as young as seven to escape the dragnet their mothers and grandmothers could not.

Vadia village, 200 km from Gujarat's bustling main city Ahmedabad and a world away from the aspirational India of gender equality, is where women are struggling to break free from the roles forced on them by history.

For generations, women in the traditionally nomadic tribe village have been forced into sex trade while the men acted as their agents.

It continues to this day.

In a discomfiting ritual, men from the village of 750 in Banaskantha district head to the Palanpur Tharad highway each morning. They queue up on the highway not in search of work but to solicit truck drivers, passers-by and men from neighbouring villages and cities as customers for women of their village.

And so while child marriages are banned in India, Vadia is still in a time warp, the past impinging on the present. Getting their girl children engaged is seen as a shield, a chance to marry out of the village before they are forced into sex work.

Ironies are clear, change is making its way through the back door, navigating patriarchal pathways by opting for child marriage or rather engagement as a way out. For several families in Vadia, which has a population of about 750, it is the only way of keeping their daughters away from the flesh trade that has long sustained the community.



A 19-year-old girl who grew up in the village is emblematic of this conflict. Her mother and grandmother are both sex workers. Studying to be a nurse in a far off college, a dream that seemed impossible, she is already married, the choice of her groom decided when she was 11.

"I grew up seeing my father and uncle getting men for both my mother and grandmother till they became 'unfit' to be served the visitor's desires. My mother told me that it wasn't that she was forced into it but it just felt like the norm which everyone followed due to poverty.

My mother was not even sure if my father was my biological father because of this," she told PTI on condition of anonymity.

"But my mother decided that she will not let me be pushed into this... I was engaged at 11 in a collective ceremony and married at 18," she added. She is one of many.

Led by social workers and few families, formal engagements are arranged for girls as young as seven to 12 from nearby villages or relatives. Villagers have agreed to an unwritten code of conduct -- girls who are engaged or married are not pushed into prostitution.

Visitors are looked at carefully.

On a hot afternoon recently, a group of men sitting idly on a cot ask searching questions of every stranger entering the village the reason for the visit. Some women, clad in colourful ghaghra-cholis, are outside, all either engaged, married or older women who have left the trade.

The women involved in flesh trade are mostly indoors while men of the family or pimps get clients for them, said a villager.

The 750 residents in the village include about 350 women.

Stalked by the stigma of indeterminable fatherhood, women in Vadia remained unmarried for generations.

"When I wanted to get my daughter married, I was told that I need to accept it as fate of girls here and not be rebellious. I got my daughter engaged at

12 and married at 18. The boy's family gave us Rs 1 to confirm the engagement and some clothes to my daughter," said Chandra Sarania who was forced into prostitution when she was just 15 and now runs a small dairy.

Despite the government allotting her family agricultural land in 1963, the lack of irrigation facilities at the village forced her into sex work.

Chandra has brought up three children -- two sons and a daughter -- from the proceeds of sex trade but was determined not to let the shadow of her past haunt the future of her children, especially her daughter.

A glimmer of change arrived in 2012, when the first mass marriage ceremony was held after NGOs managed to convince some of the families not to force their daughters into the flesh trade. Since then, every year, such marriages or engagements have been held in Vadia.

Mittal Patel, founder of the NGO Vicharta Samuday Samarthan Manch (VSSM), who first led the initiative to organise mass marriage, said the practice has stopped several girls from forced prostitution.

"Persuading the families to stop pushing their daughters in this trade, confronting pimps who move around disguised as moneylenders, sensitising society on this heinous practice, compelling parents to educate their children, organising the first ever mass marriage ceremony in the village, convincing 90 of 160 families to give up the trade... the change has been anything but easy," Patel said.

BJP-RSS Have Hollowed Out Education System; Rahul Standing With Students: Cong

NEW DELHI, Sep 20: The Congress on Sunday alleged that the people of the BJP-RSS have hollowed out and corrupted the education system, and asserted that Rahul Gandhi is standing with the students as they demand accountability with their "voice echoing" across the country.

The opposition party's assertion came after Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi alleged that a rotten "system", especially in education, had captured the country and did not want students to ask questions, instead wanting "andhbhaktis" -- a term commonly used by critics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his supporters -- to spread its narrative and hatred.

The remarks came at the fifth edition of Gandhi's youth outreach programme 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' in Indore, a BJP stronghold, where he spoke on the theme 'system versus students' and interacted with Gen Z and other young participants on education, recruitment and employment issues.

Tagging Gandhi's post on the programme, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Yesterday, Rahul Gandhi ji revealed the secret of this system that has been suppressing students. Who is this system? The people of BJP-RSS who have



seized control over the entire country. On education, on the economy, on politics, on every institution."

"They have hollowed out and corrupted the education system. Because this system fears students. They ask questions, demand accountability," Ramesh said in his post in Hindi on X.

"Now Rahul ji stands with them, the fear among students has ended. Their voice is echoing across the entire country," he added.

Gandhi's visit to Indore on Saturday came a day after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat interacted with 1,700 Gen Z participants at the 'Yuva Dharma Sansad' in Ujjain and two days after BJP pres-

ident Nitin Nabin, on his maiden visit to Madhya Pradesh after taking charge as the party's national chief, launched a government scheme in Indore.

Nabin's sudden visit was seen by many as a BJP move aimed at countering the impact of Gandhi's programme in the city.

"The system is afraid of students because students ask questions. The system does not want students; it wants 'andhbhaktis,'" Gandhi said.

He said students were curious, questioned authority and sought answers about the functioning of institutions, recruitment, examinations and opportunities,

while "andhbhaktis" lacked these qualities and instead spread hatred.

Gandhi alleged that the "system" had several layers and targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and industrialists Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani, alleging that they exercised control over different aspects of the country's political, institutional and economic life.

Students posed a challenge to this system because they remained curious and questioned what was happening around them, Gandhi had said. (Agencies)

"Will cut 27,000 BJP votes in every seat in 2027": Akhilesh Yadav targets BJP over Ambedkar statue van-

LUCKNOW (UTTAR PRADESH), SEPT 20: Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday slammed the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the state executive meeting, setting an ambitious target for the upcoming 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

Yadav outlined his party's strategy, criticised the state's handling of law and order, and expressed gratitude to the Muslim community while taking political swipes at senior BJP and alliance leaders.

"Today was our state executive meeting. In this, we have decided that in the 2027 assembly elections, we will work to increase 27,000 votes in every assembly seat. That means we will reduce 27,000 votes of the BJP," Yadav declared, setting the electoral tone for his party's cadre.

Highlighting farmers' plight and alleged corruption in key regions, Yadav accused the state government of failing to support agriculture and flagged irregularities in land acquisi-

tion.

"Farmers are not getting the right price for their crops. The BJP has taken land from farmers but not given the correct circle rate. Major land scams have taken place in Ayodhya. Time and again, they have caused distress to everyone," he said.

He also acknowledged the patience demonstrated by the Muslim community amid ongoing political dynamics.

I want to tell all our Muslim brothers that we are grateful to them for the patience and the spirit of goodwill they have shown," he added.

Presenting detailed figures on the alleged desecration of Dr BR Ambedkar's statues across the state, Yadav accused the BJP of targeting symbols of the Constitution and social justice.

"The BJP has vandalised the most statues—more than 151 statues of Babasaheb have been broken by the BJP. They attack the book in Babasaheb's hand. In 71 districts, 15



statues are damaged every year, making it 151 statues destroyed," Yadav alleged.

Yadav flagged a sharp rise in statue vandalism cases under the current regime, citing official figures. According to the data he shared, 46 statues were reported

vandalised during Yogi Government 1.0 between 2017 and 2022. The number more than doubled to 105 cases under Yogi Government 2.0, from 2022 till date. Despite 151 such instances reported over the last decade, Yadav said action in these cases remains sparse.

"FIRs have been registered in only 14 cases of statue vandalism, with cases filed against 45 unknown individuals. Named FIRs have been filed in only 8 cases. In 10 years, 151 statues of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Ji were damaged. Since 2022, there has been a 12-fold increase," he added.

Dismissing the BJP's criticism of his campaign chariots, Yadav defended his party's political tradition while attacking the ruling party's agenda.

"They did not look at the Rath properly. Monocoloured people can only see one colour. When we climb onto the Rath, we do so after taking the blessings of Netaji [Mulayam Singh Yadav]. The BJP has only one goal: to change the Constitution. In 2027, the responsible people of SP are ready, and we will reduce 27,000 BJP votes from every assembly seat," he said.

He also took sharp digs at Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and ally OM Prakash Rajbhar over rumoured internal rifts.

"Word has it that Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya was scolded. He was reprimanded in front of children for calling the CM 'obsessive' (sananki)," Yadav claimed. "The question is why Rajbhar hasn't posted anything in a long time. His password must have been snatched away, which is why he hasn't been able to post," he added mockingly.

Outlining his governance vision if the Samajwadi Party returns to power, Yadav said emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Remote Sensing would be integrated into key sectors.

"Upon coming to power, our government will use remote sensing technology in the agriculture sector. We will also expand the use of AI and remote sensing in the medical field," he said.

"We will also use technology to investigate incidents where vehicles flipped over and where RDX was recovered. Furthermore, we will increase the use of AI and remote sensing to control crime," he added. (Agencies)