

# Bhagwat's remarks on population 'balanced', he didn't point fingers at particular community: S Y Quraishi

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Former chief election commissioner S Y Quraishi on Wednesday said RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's remarks on population control policy were "balanced" as he did not point fingers at a particular community.

Quraishi, who has busted many myths related to Muslim population numbers in his book "The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India", said Bhagwat is rightly of the view that family planning must be adopted by all sections of the Indian society.

Speaking at the annual RSS Dussehra rally at the Reshimbagh Ground in Nagpur, Bhagwat said India should frame a well thought out, comprehensive population control policy applicable to all social groups equally and flagged the issue of demographic "imbalance".

Quraishi said the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) sarsanghchalak's Vijayadashami speech is being scrutinised very closely with media's focus on his references to the population.

"People are referring to my book 'Population Myth - Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India' which I had an opportunity to present to Mr. Bhagwat just recently where I briefly mentioned its

focal points," Quraishi told PTI.

It was significant that the RSS chief heard me out carefully, he said.

"I think Mr. Bhagwat's speech was quite comprehensive and balanced. For one, he didn't point fingers at a particular community. He mentioned both the dimensions of population debate - a burden or an asset," the former bureaucrat said.

Bhagwat highlighted the factors that influence population behaviour, Quraishi said and pointed out that the RSS chief, in his remarks, said the number of children is linked with maternal health, education, financial status and individual wish.

Bhagwat said the population policy has to be formulated considering all these factors mindfully, Quraishi noted.

He also pointed to Bhagwat's remarks that population imbalances lead to changes in geographical boundaries.

The RSS chief mentioned East Timor, South Sudan and Kosovo in this context, Quraishi said.

Referring to Bhagwat's remarks that population control and religion based population balance is an important subject that can no longer be ignored, Quraishi said the fact is that it was

never ignored.

In the last seven decades every analysis of population policy has mentioned pockets of poor family planning performance, mainly of Muslims, though no specific measures were suggested or taken to overcome the resistance among the community, he said.

Nonetheless, Muslim community has increasingly adopted family planning as a result of which the gap in the population growth which was higher than all other communities has come down drastically, Quraishi said.

The gap in Total Fertility Rate (TFR) between Hindus and Muslims which was 1.1 in the first National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 1991-92, now stands at 0.3 in NFHS 5, 2022, he said.

"This is because Muslims have adopted family planning much faster than the Hindus. Even the current gap would have levelled off had the unmet need of the Muslims which stands at 12 per cent, the highest among all communities, had been met on priority," the former chief election commissioner said.

"There is ample evidence to show that Muslims want to adopt family planning very proactively, if only the services could reach them faster," he argued.

"In his speech, Mr Bhagwat

is rightly of the view that family planning must be adopted by all sections of the Indian society for which the determining factors like literacy, income and service delivery are critical," he said.

Quraishi was among the Muslim intellectuals who had met Bhagwat recently for strengthening communal harmony.

Bhagwat had recently met Quraishi, Delhi's former lieutenant governor Najeeb Jung, former Aligarh Muslim University vice chancellor Zameer Uddin Shah, former MP Shahid Siddiqui as well as businessman Saeed Sherwani.

During the meeting, Bhagwat had reportedly raised the issue of the usage of the word "kafir" for Hindus, which he said does not send out a good message. The group of Muslim intellectuals, on their part, objected to some right-wing activists calling Muslims "jihadi" and "Pakistani".

They also reportedly told Bhagwat that the real intent behind the word "kafir" was something different but it is now being used as an abuse in some quarters.

The RSS chief, it is learnt, acknowledged the views of the intellectuals and underscored that the "DNA of all Hindus and Muslims are same".

# Russian launches to space from US, 1st time in 20 years

## ■ AGENCY

CAPE CANAVERAL: For the first time in 20 years, a Russian cosmonaut rocketed from the U.S. on Wednesday, launching to the International Space Station alongside NASA and Japanese astronauts despite tensions over the war in Ukraine.



Their SpaceX flight was delayed by Hurricane Ian, which ripped across the state last week.

I hope with this launch we will brighten up the skies over Florida a little bit for everyone, said the Japan Space Agency's Koichi Wakata, who is making his fifth spaceflight.

Joining him on a five-month mission are three new to space: Marine Col. Nicole Mann, the first Native American woman bound for orbit; Navy Capt. Josh Cassada and Russia's lone female cosmonaut, Anna Kikina.

They're due to arrive at the space station Thursday, 29 hours after departing NASA's Kennedy Space Center, and won't be back on Earth until March. They're replacing a U.S.-Italian crew that arrived in April.

Kikina is the Russian Space Agency's exchange for NASA's Frank Rubio, who launched to the space station two weeks ago from

later this decade, but we know that it's not going to happen very quick and so probably we will keep flying with NASA until then, he said.

The space agencies agreed over the summer to swap seats on their flights in order to ensure a continuous U.S. and Russian presence aboard the 260-mile-high (420-kilometer-high) outpost. The barter was authorized even as global hostilities mounted over Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February. The next crew exchange is in the spring.

Shortly before liftoff, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said that the key reason for the seat exchange is safety in case an emergency forces one capsule's crew home, there would still be an American and Russian on board.

In the meantime, Russia

remains committed to the space station through at least 2024, Russia space official Sergei Krikalev assured reporters this week. Russia wants to build its own station in orbit

webbed hoop believed to offer protection. Retired NASA astronaut John Herrington of the Chickasaw Nation became the first Native American in space in 2002.

I am very proud to represent Native Americans and my heritage, Mann said before the flight, adding that everyone on her crew has a unique background. It's important to celebrate our diversity and also realize how important it is when we collaborate and unite, the incredible accomplishments that we can have. As for the war in Ukraine, Mann said all four have put politics and personal beliefs aside, and it's really cool how the common mission of the space station just instantly unites us.

Added Cassada: We have an opportunity to be an example for society on how to work together and live together and explore together."

Elon Musk's SpaceX has now launched eight crews since 2020: six for NASA and two private groups.

Boeing, NASA's other contracted taxi service, plans to make its first astronaut flight early next year, after delays to fix software and other issues that cropped up on test flights. (AP)

# 6 drown during Durga idol immersion in Ajmer

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAIPUR: Six people drowned in a ditch filled with rainwater during the immersion of a Goddess Durga idol in Rajasthan's Ajmer district on Wednesday, police said.

The incident occurred at Nandla village under the Nasirabad Sadar police station where the youths had gone to immerse the idol.

Ajmer Superintendent of Police Chuna Ram Jat said the ditch is used for idol immersion by locals often, but it appeared they had no idea of the depth this time around. He said five bodies were recovered initially, but later it was reported one more person was missing following which a rescue operation was started.

The sixth body was recovered in evening, he said. SHO Hemraj said the victim thought it was a shallow ditch and went down "but the ditch was deep and they all drowned."

Ajmer collector Ansh Deep, SP Chuna Ram Jat and other district administration and police officials rushed to Nasirabad as soon as they received information about the incident.

The police identified the deceased as Pawan Raigar (35), Gajendra Raigar (28), Rahul Meghwal (24), Lucky Bairwa (21) Rahul Raigar (20) and Shankar whose age was not immediately known. The five bodies which were recovered initially were handed over to family members after postmortem and their funeral was conducted. Shankar's body, which was recovered later, will be handed over to his family on Thursday, the officials said.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot expressed grief over the incident. "I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved family, may God give them strength to bear this loss and may the soul of the departed rest in peace," Gehlot tweeted.

# Sisodia demands CBI probe into Rs 6K cr 'scam' in MCD; asks LG to stop 'interference' in Govt works

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday wrote to Lieutenant Governor V K Sasena demanding a CBI probe into the alleged Rs 6,000 crore scam in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

Sisodia also hit out at the LG for interfering in the government's works and conducting fake probes against the Arvind Kejriwal-led dispensation. The deputy chief minister alleged that he had apprised the LG about corruption in the MCD two months ago, but he did not initiate any measure. I want to draw your attention towards my earlier letter in connection with the Rs 6,000 crore corruption in the MCD. You did not order a CBI probe into the matter which I raised two months ago. But you are setting a new record in ordering probes into fake cases in order to stop the government's works but you are unable to see corruption in the MCD.

You are illegally interfering in the works of the elected government instead of paying attention to public issues... I request you to order a CBI probe into the MCD scam, Sisodia's letter to the LG in Hindi said. Further, he said the Constitution has entrusted the LG with the responsibility of streamlining the Delhi Police's functioning, but crime in the city has been on the rise.

He also sought to remind Sasena that the LG, being the chief of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), has the responsibility of managing it but alleged that its land is occupied by the mafia.

If you (the LG) show the same interest in stopping rapes and reducing crimes in Delhi, the people will feel relieved in just two to four months. If you get the land freed from the mafia, it can be used for public welfare schemes such as schools and hospitals, the deputy chief minister said.

Sisodia also alleged that the LG had ordered a "fake" probe into the free electricity scheme. He said this probe will bear no fruit just as he claimed the officials found no wrongdoing in their investigations into the alleged irregularities in the excise policy and the procurement of buses by the Delhi Transport Corporation.

# Nobel Prize for 3 chemists who made molecules 'click'

## ■ AGENCY

STOCKHOLM: Three scientists were jointly awarded this year's Nobel Prize in chemistry on Wednesday for developing a way of snapping molecules together that can be used to design better medicines, including ones that target diseases such as cancer more precisely. The Shiv Sena does not belong to one person but it belongs to all loyal Sena workers, Thackeray said, adding, "If you feel I should not remain the Sena president, I will quit. "There is a limit to lust for power... After the act of treachery, he now wants the party, its symbol and also wants to be called the party president," Thackeray said, targeting Shinde.

He formed a post-poll alliance with traditional foes Congress and Nationalist Congress Party to teach the BJP a lesson for

first such candidates that would easily snap together with each other but not with other molecules, leading to applications in the manufacture of medicines and polymers.

Bertozzi, 55, who is based at Stanford University took click chemistry to a new level, the Nobel panel said.

She found a way to make the process work inside living organisms without disrupting them, establishing a new method known as biorthogonal reactions.

Such reactions are now used to explore cells, track biological processes and design drugs that can target diseases such as cancer more precisely.

"Doing chemistry inside human patients to make sure that drugs go to the right place and stay away from the wrong place, Bertozzi explained.

Speaking by phone at a news conference following the announcement, Bertozzi said she was absolutely stumped to receive the prize.

I'm still not entirely positive that it's real, but it's getting realer by the minute, she said.

Speaking to The Associated Press by Zoom, Bertozzi said one of the first people she called after being woken by the call around 2 am was her father, William Bertozzi, a retired physicist and night owl, who was still awake watching TV.

The problem was to find good chemical buckles, he said. They have to react with each other easily and specifically.

Meldal, 68, based at the University of Copenhagen and Sharpless, who is affiliated with Scripps Research in California, independently found the

something to tell you, she said she told him. After assuring him nothing was wrong he guessed the news. You won it, didn't you?

One of three daughters, Bertozzi said she was "fortunate because I grew up with parents that were very supportive, evangelical almost, about having their girls participate in the sciences.

Bertozzi, who is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press' Health and Science Department, said she was grateful for the energy and enthusiasm that a Nobel Prize win will inject into the field.

Meldal said he received the call from the Nobel panel about half an hour before the public announcement. They... told me not to tell anyone, he told the AP, adding that he just sat in his office, shaking a bit. "This is a huge honour.

Meldal started out as an engineer, but I wanted to understand the world so I thought chemistry would give me the solutions.

Jon Lorsch, director of the U.S. National Institute of General Medical Sciences, which supports the work of Bertozzi and Sharpless, described click chemistry as sort of like molecular Lego you have a group on one molecule that specifically attaches to a group on another mol-

ecule, like Lego clicking together. That makes it possible to attach molecules in very specific pre-defined ways, he said, and gives scientists a very precise tool to build complex new molecules that can be used for drugs, synthetic materials and other uses.

However, the first iteration of click chemistry could not initially be used to work on living cells. The original click chemistry used copper as a catalyst to join molecules, Lorsch said. But the trouble is that copper is toxic to most living systems at higher concentrations.

Bertozzi then devised a way to jumpstart the reactions without copper or other toxic solvents broadening the applications of the molecular Lego to human and animal tissues.

Being able to work without dangerous solvents, opened many new doors to work on living cells. The original click chemistry used copper as a catalyst to join molecules, Lorsch said. But the trouble is that copper is toxic to most living systems at higher concentrations.

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