

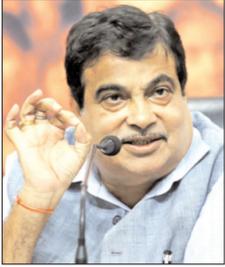
Ram temple movement was a campaign to ensure justice with all and appeasement of none: Gadkari

STATE TIMES NEWS

NAGPUR: The Ayodhya movement was an awareness campaign not just for a temple but to ensure "justice with all and appeasement of none", said Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday and stressed that the history of Hindutva is the history of "our" country.

The senior BJP leader was addressing a gathering at a book launch in Nagpur.

Gadkari said BJP stalwart L K Advani's Rath Yatra brought the Ayodhya Ram temple cause to the forefront in the country. The Union minister said Ashok Singhal of Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), senior BJP leader Uma Bharti, Sadhvi Ritambhara, several sadhus



and Shankaracharyas struggled for it.

The Ram Janmabhoomi movement was not just about a temple, said Gadkari. "These efforts were to give back pride and respect to India's history, culture and heritage," he said.

Gadkari said the presence

of a Ram temple where Lord Ram was born is a symbol of pride and self-respect for all those living in the country.

"Hence, this issue was not communal or caste-related. It was rashtriya (national)," he said.

People are now happy that a grand temple is being constructed at the birthplace of Lord Ram and "we all will get an opportunity to take darshan on January 22", he said.

In the past, the Union minister said, the word "secular" was wrongly interpreted for political gains. "...but our society is genetically dharm nirpeksh' (secular). The meaning of dharm nirpeksha is sarv dharm satbhav' (equal respect for all

religions)," he said.

Gadkari said the Ayodhya Ram temple movement was a public awareness campaign to ensure "justice with all and appeasement of none" and was against a "new appeasement policy" that had been brought out by putting aside "our country's pride, culture and history".

The Union minister of Road Transport and Highways also talked about the 2019 Ayodhya verdict of the Supreme Court.

"That time, we were expecting that justice should be given based on history, truth and evidence and SC gave that justice to the followers of Prabhru Ram Chandra," he said.

According to Gadkari, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) founder Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar used to say that in spite of all rulers being Hindus in India, a few numbers of foreigners ruled "us because of lack of unity among us".

Indians should rise above caste and dedicate themselves to Hindu culture, Hindu history and Hindu way of life, he said.

"Hindu is Indian culture, and Indian culture is synonymous with Hindutva. Hindutva is not narrow, not sectarian, and not casteist. Hindu is inclusive of all, pride of the nation and the history of Hindutva is the history of the nation," he added.

Congress' Nyay Yatra a hoax, its leaders not getting justice, leaving party: Anurag Thakur

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday described the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra of the Congress as a hoax and said its senior leaders were not getting justice and joining other outfits.

Thakur referred to the exit of leaders such as Kapil Sibal, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Himanta Biswa Sarma, Hardik Patel, Jyotiraditya Scindia, RPN Singh and Sunil Jakhar from the Congress.

"There is a long list of leaders who have left the Congress as they are not getting justice in the party. Now, Milind Deora too has left the Congress," the senior BJP leader said.

A former Union minister



and once a close aide of Rahul Gandhi, Deora quit the Congress on Sunday to join the Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

"The Nyay Yatra of the Congress is a hoax. Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi talk of justice to the people, but the reality is Congress leaders themselves are

deprived of justice," Thakur said.

The Union minister said people have reposed their faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and were keen to align with him.

Taking a dig at the opposition bloc INDIA, Thakur said that in West Bengal, Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee was not ready to share seats with the Congress, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is not keen to become the convener of the alliance, when Mallikarjun Kharge's name was put forth as face of the coalition, the Gandhi family was unhappy.

"This is not an alliance but entertainment," Thakur said.

PM Modi to visit Andhra Pradesh, Kerala on Jan 16, 17

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on a two-day trip to Andhra Pradesh and Kerala from Tuesday to launch a number of development projects, including the New Dry Dock and the International Ship Repair Facility at the Cochin Shipyard Limited.

The PMO said Modi will visit Sri Sathya Sai District in Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday and inaugurate the new campus of the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN).

He will interact with officer trainees of the 74th and 75th batches of the Indian Revenue Service (Custom & Indirect Taxes) as well as officer trainees of the Royal Civil Service of Bhutan.

On Wednesday, PM Modi will offer prayers at

Guruvayur and Thiruvayur Shree Ramaswami temples in Kerala before inaugurating important infrastructure projects related to the ports, shipping, and waterways sector, the PMO said.

In what will be a major boost to the sector, he will inaugurate three projects -- the New Dry Dock (NDD), the International Ship Repair Facility (ISRF) and the LPG Import Terminal of Indian Oil Corporation Limited -- worth over Rs 4,000 crore.

The NDD built at a cost of about Rs 1,800 crore at the existing premises of Cochin Shipyard Limited is a flagship project reflecting India's engineering prowess, it said.

This one-of-a-kind 310-meter-long stepped dry dock, with a width of 75/60 meters, depth of 13 meters and a draught of up to 9.5 metres,

is one of the largest marine infrastructures in the region. It features heavy ground loading which will position India with advanced capabilities to handle strategic assets like future aircraft carriers up to 70,000T displacement as well as large commercial vessels, thus eliminating India's dependency on foreign nations for emergency national requirements, the statement said.

The ISRF project, built at a cost of about Rs 970 crore, is a unique facility of its own. It has a ship lift system with a capacity of 6000T, a transfer system, six workstations and a berth of approximately 1,400 metres which can accommodate 7 vessels of 130 metres in length simultaneously.

The ISRF will modernise and expand the existing

ship repair capabilities of CSL and will be a step towards transforming Kochi as a global ship repair hub, the PMO added.

The Indian Oil's LPG Import Terminal at Puthuvyppeen, Kochi, built at a cost of about Rs 1,236 crores, boasts state-of-the-art facilities. This project will further strengthen India's efforts towards ensuring accessible and affordable energy for all.

With the commissioning of these three projects, the nation's shipbuilding and repair capacities as well as the growth of energy infrastructure including ancillary industries will get a boost, it said.

The projects will also boost EXIM trade, reduce logistics costs, drive economic growth, build self-

reliance and create numerous domestic and international business opportunities.

The new state-of-the-art campus of NACIN at Palasamudram in Andhra Pradesh is spread on 500 acres of land, the PMO said. The world-class training institute will impart training to the officials of the Indian Revenue Service (Custom and Indirect Taxes) as well as to the central allied services, state governments and partner nations. With the addition of this new campus, the NACIN will focus on the use of new-age technologies such as augmented and virtual reality, blockchain as well as Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies for training and capacity building, it added.

Footfall of 12 crore devotees expected at Ujjain Kumbh Mela in 2028: MP govt

STATE TIMES NEWS

BHOPAL: About 12 crore people are likely to participate in the Ujjain Simhastha Mela in 2028 as per the assessment by the Madhya Pradesh government and various works like cleaning the Kshipra river and construction of stop dams to check the flow of effluent are being undertaken.

These instructions were given at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav in Ujjain on Sunday.

It is estimated that about 12 crore devotees will participate in the 2028 Simhastha (Kumbh Mela or fair), which is organised once in 12 years, an official release said.

Yadav directed officials to construct stop dams at various places in neighbouring Indore and Dewas to check the release

of waste in the Kshipra River. He told officials to ensure that the river is rid of pollution and its water becomes drinkable before 2028, it said.

"The chief minister also directed officials to chalk out a work plan after consulting saints and sadhus. If needed, the third phase of the Mahakal Lok corridor can be started," as per the release.

Officials said nine stop dams will be constructed in Indore where polluted drains release

water in the Kshipra river. The ghats on the banks of the river where saints reside will be developed on a priority basis, it said.

Yadav also said the road leading to the Mahakal temple be widened and an alternative road constructed. He directed setting up a power station, lodging and boarding facilities for devotees, expansion of the airstrip and vehicle parking arrangements, the release said.

Mahayuti leaders vow to win all 3 Lok Sabha seats in Thane district, hail PM Modi's leadership

STATE TIMES NEWS

THANE: Union minister Kapil Patil, Kalyan MP Shrikant Shinde and other leaders on Sunday vowed to strengthen the Mahayuti alliance to clinch all three Lok Sabha seats in Thane district of Maharashtra. Leaders of Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, the BJP, and the NCP (Ajit Pawar faction) besides smaller constituents addressed a gathering here in the evening. Speaking on the occasion, former BJP Rajya Sabha member Vinay Sahasrabudde emphasized national devotion, asserting that Ram Bhakti transcends individual affiliations, and administered a "Shree Ram" pledge. Union Minister of State Kapil Patil spoke about the impact of government schemes like Kisan Samman and Ayushman Bharat. He urged Mahayuti workers to collaborate effectively to ensure a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Maharashtra Minister Ravindra Chavan and MP Shrikant Shinde also lauded PM Modi's governance for the completion of significant projects, including the Ram temple, in ten years. Shiv Sena's Naresh Mhaske urged supporters to become "Namo soldiers" while NCP's Anand Paranjape appealed for a united effort to win all three Lok Sabha seats. Bhiwandi, Thane, and Kalyan are three parliamentary constituencies in Thane district, two of which are with BJP and Shiv Sena led by Shinde.

Ensure cleanliness of all temples in week: Maharashtra CM tells collectors

STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday instructed the district collectors to undertake a cleanliness drive at all temples in the state and ensure the change is "visible" within a week, ahead of the consecration of Lord Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22. Shinde gave these instructions at a review meeting chaired by him at his official residence here. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a call to keep temples clean. The district collectors in Maharashtra should undertake a cleanliness drive across all the temples and decorate them with electric lights. The change should be visible within a week," Shinde said. He said the District Planning and Development Council of every district should allocate some funds for undertaking the cleaning of temples and surroundings at regular intervals.

Rahul embarks on Nyay Yatra, says Cong will present new vision for India devoid of violence, hate

STATE TIMES NEWS

THOUBAL (MANIPUR): The Congress' Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra began from violence-hit Manipur on Sunday with Rahul Gandhi asserting that the party will present a new vision for India that will be based on harmony, brotherhood and equitability and devoid of hatred, violence and monopoly.

At a rally here to flag off the over-6,700-km yatra from Manipur to Mumbai, Gandhi and Congress president Kharge attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not visiting Manipur as it reeled under ethnic violence, and vowed to ensure justice for its people. Gandhi said he had to undertake the yatra as the country was going through a period of "great injustice" and stressed the party wants to listen to people's 'Mann Ki Baat'.

Ahead of the January 22 consecration ceremony at the

Ayodhya Ram temple, Kharge said everyone has faith in God but one should not resort to "dhongbaazi (deception)" for securing votes.

"Wo samandar ke upar sair karte firte hai, aur jap karte baithte hain -- Ram Ram Ram Ram (He is seen enjoying the sea, sitting and chanting Ram Ram). 'Mukh mein Ram, bagal mein churi', do not do this with the people," the Congress president said, referring to the Hindi idiom that cautions against people whose words and actions differ.

Hours before the start of the yatra with much fanfare, senior Congress leader Milind Deora announced his resignation from the party, in the latest addition to a list of young leaders who have left it to begin new innings in other parties.

But the Congress downplayed his exit, with general secretary Jairam Ramesh

saying that one Milind Deora goes away but "lakhs of Milinds who believe in our organisation and ideology stay".

The BJP described the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra as "Bharat Tolo Yatra", and said the Congress should first provide justice to the leaders deserting it and to the people wronged by its erstwhile governments instead of promoting Rahul Gandhi and trying to maintain the hold of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty.

Later in the day, Gandhi embarked on the journey in a bus after it was unveiled by Kharge with top Congress leaders, including chief ministers Siddaramaiah, Revanth Reddy and Sukhinder Singh Sukhu, cheering him on.

The bus travelled from here to Manipur capital Imphal, a distance of about 40 km, with Gandhi interacting with locals who lined up along the route.

The yatra flag-off rally was

attended in large numbers by women and youth.

Lok Sabha MP Danish Ali, who has been suspended by the BSP, also attended the rally and joined Gandhi in the bus for the yatra.

Addressing the rally, Kharge alleged that Modi had earlier come to Manipur for votes but when people were in trouble, he did not visit.

The ethnic violence in the northeastern state, which broke out in May last year, has claimed more than 180 lives and rendered thousands homeless.

With top Congress leaders on the dais, Gandhi explained the reasons for taking out the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra after his Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir Bharat Jodo Yatra that ended January last year.

"Question arises, why Nyay Yatra? Because we are going through a period of great injustice in India -- social, economic and political injustice.

Injustice against the people of Manipur, the traditions of Manipur, but also injustice across the nation," he said.

In the economy, monopolies are being built and a few people are getting access to all the wealth of the country, he alleged.

"One or two businesses have their fingers in everything and the large majority of businesses -- small and medium businesses -- are being destroyed. Huge levels of unemployment and massive price rise is what the whole of India is facing," Gandhi said.

"On the social side, the large mass of India's people -- the lower castes, Dalits and tribals -- simply do not have a say in the governance system of the country. I have given you example upon example of how the large mass of our people are excluded from the political system and from the governance system," he said.

These are the issues that the

Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra is going to raise, "but this is less about us and more about you", he told the gathering.

Noting that during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, they used to walk during the day and an interaction in the evening, Gandhi said the idea was to listen to farmers, labourers, small shopkeepers, women and youth.

This is the aim of this yatra (Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra) as well, he added.

"We do not want to speak much, we do not want to tell you our 'Mann Ki Baat'. We want to listen to your 'Mann Ki Baat', understand your pain," Gandhi said. He said the party is going to present the next vision for India which is not of violence, hatred and monopoly, but a vision which is "harmonious, equitable and of brotherhood". "After listening to your voice, we are going to present that vision to India," he said.

Milind Deora quits Congress, joins Shiv Sena led by CM Shinde to 'walk path of development'

STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: In a setback for Congress in Mumbai ahead of Lok Sabha polls, its young brigade member and former Union minister Milind Deora on Sunday quit the party "to walk the development path" and joined the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, saying the Congress' old character is changed.

Deora, 47, said he believed in the politics of "GAIN" which stands for Growth, Aspiration, Inclusivity and Nationalism and not of "PAIN" which he explained as an acronym for Personal Attacks, Injustice and Negativity.

His decision marks the unseam in Shiv Sena (UBT)-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) over the sharing of seats for the upcoming general elections.

Taking a veiled dig at Rahul Gandhi after joining Sena, Deora alleged the Congress was not the same as it used to be when Manmohan Singh had launched economic reforms, but it is now abusing industrialists and businessmen, and calling them anti-nationals.

He was welcomed in the Shiv

Sena fold by CM Shinde at his official residence Varsha late afternoon.

The former Mumbai South MP announced his decision to resign from the primary membership of Congress on social media platform X in the morning, ending his family's "55-year relationship with the party".

Days preceding his resignation, speculations were rife that Deora was unhappy with Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) staking a claim to the Mumbai South Lok Sabha constituency which he had represented in the past even though formal seat-sharing talks in MVA are not concluded.

The MVA includes Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress, and the NCP (Sharad Pawar faction).

"Today marks the conclusion of a significant chapter in my political journey. I have tendered my resignation from the primary membership of the Congress, ending my family's 55-year relationship with the party. I am grateful to all leaders, colleagues and karyakartas for their unwavering support over the years," Deora stated on X.

Reacting sharply, the Congress alleged the timing of Deora's resignation was determined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "headline management" to counter the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, and asserted that it would have no impact.

Deora offered prayers at Siddhivinayak Temple in Prabhadevi after announcing his decision earlier in the day.

When he stepped out of his residence 'Ramalayam' in south Mumbai in the afternoon, he told reporters that he was "going to walk on the path of development".

Deora is in the sulk since Shiv Sena (UBT) publicly staked a claim to Mumbai South constituency, which was represented by him in the past. The undivided Shiv Sena's Arvind Sawant, now with the Thackeray faction, had defeated Deora in the 2014 and 2019 general elections.

Notably, Deora was recently appointed the joint treasurer of the All India Congress Committee. He had also headed the Mumbai Congress unit in the past.

Deora's father Murli Deora had represented the Mumbai

South constituency four times.

Milind Deora first became a Lok Sabha member from this constituency in 2004 by defeating BJP veteran Jayawantiben Mehta. He returned to Lok Sabha in 2009 again, trouncing candidates of MNS and Shiv Sena (undivided).

The Mumbai South constituency comprises six assembly segments including upscale areas like Colaba and Malabar Hill, with a significant population of Marwari, Jain, and Gujarati communities.

Addressing a gathering at the official residence of CM Shinde late afternoon, Deora said PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have a vision for developing the country. He also hailed Shinde as the "most accessible" chief minister.

"It is not easy to decide to quit Congress with whom the Deora family has been associated for 55 years. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde requires good people. It is the opinion of Shinde and Lok Sabha member Shrikant Shinde that I can represent his vision and I am thankful to them for trusting me."

Delhi airport: 10 flights diverted, nearly 100 delayed as dense fog disrupts operations

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: A total of 10 flights were diverted, nearly 100 delayed, and some cancelled at the Delhi airport on Sunday morning, as low visibility due to dense fog conditions disrupted operations.

An official said a total of 10 flights, including 2 international flights, were diverted to Jaipur between 4.30 am and 12 noon.

Nearly 100 flights, including overseas services, were delayed, and some of the flights cancelled due to the bad weather, the official said.

Sources in the know said the visibility at the airport was almost zero during the period from 4 am to 10 am.

During this period, there were no flight departures and only 15 arrivals, they added.

The airport handles around 60 departures and arrivals per hour in normal weather conditions.

Sources also claimed that the 10 diversions were due to the pilots operating the flights concerned not being trained for CAT III landings.

Generally, CAT III refers to landing in low visibility conditions.

During the day, airlines said their flight schedules might be impacted due to adverse weather conditions.

The country's largest airline IndiGo said low visibility and dense fog conditions across north India had a "cascading effect" on its operations.

Among the impacted flights at the

Delhi airport, Air India's flight AI 185 to Vancouver, slated to depart early in the morning, was rescheduled.

Passengers had to wait inside the aircraft for many hours before they boarded. After boarding was complete, the flight, which was to depart a little past 5.00 am, could not take off due to the dense fog.

An airline official said that after waiting for a few hours, it was decided to reschedule the departure of the flight as the crew would have also breached the flight duty timing requirements.

Now, the flight is expected to leave at around 11.30 pm. The passengers have been provided accommodation, the official added.

At 8.38 am, the Delhi airport said that due to dense fog, flight operations at the airport may get affected.

Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information," it said in a post on X.

A thick layer of fog shrouded Delhi and other parts of North India on Sunday, with visibility levels plunging to zero metres at several places.

In a statement, IndiGo said its flight operations were impacted due to the low visibility and dense fog conditions across north India.

"This had a cascading effect on our operations throughout the day. Our staff kept passengers apprised of all delays and cancellations across airports and made every possible effort to facilitate

the passengers. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to our passengers," it said.

Vistara, in a post on X at 6.38 am, said that due to dense fog and poor visibility in Delhi, arrivals and departures may be impacted from Delhi.

"Due to adverse weather (fog) at Delhi, Chennai, Varanasi, Bagdogra & Lucknow our flight schedules have been affected, which may lead to consequential delays. We understand this may impact your travel plans and regret the inconvenience..." Akasa Air said in a post on X at 12.12 pm.

Meanwhile, in another post on X at 1.35 pm, Akasa Air said that due to fog in Varanasi, four flights have been cancelled. They are Bengaluru-Varanasi, Varanasi-Mumbai, Mumbai-Varanasi and Varanasi-Bengaluru flights.

During December 25-28 last year, flight operations were significantly impacted at the Delhi airport, and nearly 60 flights of various airlines were diverted due to dense fog.

Last month, airport sources had said that a total of 58 flights were diverted due to bad weather between 12 am on December 25 to 6 am on December 28. Recently, aviation regulator DGCA issued show cause notices to Air India and SpiceJet for not deploying pilots trained to operate in low visibility conditions, following diversions of various flights amid dense fog at the Delhi airport in late December.