

Cong is planning religion-based quota, I will not let this happen: PM Modi at Karnataka rally

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

B A G A L K O T E (KARNATAKA): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday accused the Congress of planning religion-based reservation in the country for the sake of vote bank politics, but asserted that he will not let it happen.

He said this Congress proposal is to appease minorities as the SC/ST and OBC community is now with the BJP. "In Karnataka, Congress has started a campaign to change the Constitution and to snatch away the rights of SC/ST and OBCs. Our Constitution does not accept religion-based reservation. But the Karnataka government has given part of OBC reservation to Muslims," Modi said.

Addressing a mega election rally in this district headquarters town, he said, "they (Congress) will not settle with this. They had earlier too in their manifesto said about coming out with a law to provide religion-based reservation. There is a similar signal in their manifesto this time."

"I want to make my Dalit, SC/ST and OBC brothers and sisters aware about Congress' intentions. These people on the basis of religion, to keep their vote bank safe, are planning to loot your right which was given by Babasaheb Ambedkar and



the Constitution," he added. Veteran BJP leader B S Yediyurappa, BJP candidates and MPs from Bagalkote (Bagalkot) and Vijayapura (Bijapur) -- P C Gaddigoudar and Ramesh Jigajinagi, respectively -- were among those present at the rally.

Noting that most of SC, ST and OBC MPs in the Parliament are from BJP, Modi said, "So they feel that as SC, ST and OBC are with BJP. To gain the trust of minorities, they want to loot from SC, ST and OBC and give it to minorities. Will you let this happen?"

"I want to guarantee today to my Dalit, Adivasi and OBC brothers and sisters. I will not let such intentions of Congress be successful. To protect your rights, your reservation, Modi will go to any extent. I'm assuring you this," he added.

Citing a habit among people to forward certain informa-

tion that comes on various platforms without verifying, Modi alleged that, "those who have lost elections or have lost (while being in) the fray are using technology to make fake videos. Misusing artificial intelligence they put out wrong things in my voice in social media -- this is creating a big threat." Appealing to people to inform police or the BJP about such fake videos and legal action will follow, the PM said the law of this country will not allow people to play such games with anyone. Warning those who try to kill innocent people of the back and fights openly face to face, he said he did not hide information about the Balakot air strikes, and disclosed information about it

and the destruction caused to the enemies, after the strikes. "I had asked the forces to call the media and inform them, but I said before that I will inform Pakistan through telephone about airstrikes at night and destruction caused, but Pakistan people did not come on phone. So I asked forces to wait, and after informing them, we later disclosed to the world about airstrikes that happened during the night," he said, adding Modi doesn't hide things nor attacks from hiding, and does things openly.

Observing that BJP has resolved to make India a manufacturing hub and skill centre, the PM said this resolve cannot be accomplished by those enjoying vacations, as it needs vision and determination to strive for it. Accusing the Congress of loot and asking whether

the country can be given to them, he said the grand old party has made Karnataka, where it is in power, the "ATM of its loot", and in a short span they have emptied the state's coffers.

"The situation is that legislators are not getting funds for development on time and days are not far when Karnataka government will be unable to pay (salary) its employees," he said, as he accused Congress of running a 'vasooli gang', and not the government, in Karnataka.

Congress has turned the tech hub of Bengaluru into a "tanker hub", by aiding tanker mafia over the water crisis, and the commission is reaching the party, he alleged, as he also claimed that the grand old party was dreaming about a scam as big 2G scam worth lakhs of crores.

In Karnataka, fundamentalist forces have become unbridled, he said.

Referring to the alleged attack on a shopkeeper in Bengaluru for listening to 'Hanuman Chalisa' and the bomb blast at the city's cafe, he said, "these are not incidents of normal crime, this is terror and fundamentalist mentality, and Congress is trying to protect it to get votes," Modi added.

GO for Srinagar PC visits Dispatch & Collection Centre



■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: General Observer for 02-Srinagar Parliamentary Constituency (PC), Mukul Kumar on Monday visited various Distributions and Collection Centres established for smooth conduct of the General Election to Lok Sabha-2024.

The General Observer inspected Distribution and Collection Centres of 20-Khanyar, 21-Habbakadal and 24-Zadibal for Srinagar Lok Sabha Seat established at Burn Hall School, SP Higher Secondary School and SP College respectively.

During his visit, the General Observer took detailed assessment of facilities and arrangements put in place for surveillance and

security of Election related material and machinery kept at these centres for the Lok Sabha Elections.

He instructed the concerned to ensure all safety measures and adherence to the guidelines of Election Commission of India in letter and spirit for protection of election related material and machinery at these centres.

Kumar stressed the concerned Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) to make sure all necessary measures have been put in place to facilitate smooth and efficient election process.

He asked them to make proper arrangements for polling staff, adequate parking and separate entry/exit of the vehicles carrying elec-

tion material at Strong Rooms cum Collection/Distribution Centres.

He also laid emphasis on placing adequate spaces for counters to be placed at Collection/Distribution Centres in order to avoid any cluttering during distribution/collection of election materials.

While interacting with the AROs and other concerned staff, the General Observer underscored the importance of ensuring that all Strong Rooms cum Collection/Distribution Centres adhere to prescribed standards of Election Commission of India to uphold the integrity and fairness of the electoral process.

SC dismisses plea on tallying of VVPAT slips with vote cast using EVMs

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea raising the issue of tallying of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips with the votes cast using the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

A bench of justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta told the petitioner's counsel that a coordinate bench of the apex court had last week delivered its verdict on the issue.

"A coordinate bench has already taken a view," the bench said, while refusing to entertain the plea.

When the petitioner's counsel said the issue was of transparency and the apex court had already

suggested some safeguards, the bench observed, "Another bench has already passed an order two days back."

On April 26, an apex court bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta had rejected the pleas seeking complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with VVPAT, an independent vote verification system which enables electors to see whether their votes have been recorded correctly.

Terming the suspicion of manipulation of the EVMs "unfounded", the bench had rejected the demand for reverting to the old paper ballot system, saying the polling devices

were "secure" and eliminate booth capturing and bogus voting.

However, the top court had opened a window for the aggrieved unsuccessful candidates securing the second and third places in the poll results and allowed them to seek verification of micro-controller chips embedded in five per cent EVMs per assembly constituency on a written request upon payment of a fee to the poll panel.

It had directed that from May 1, the symbol loading units should be sealed and secured in a container and stored in a strongroom along with the EVMs for a minimum period of 45 days post-declaration of results.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Changing its earlier plan, the Ministry of Culture has decided to not move its collection of artefacts at National Museum to a temporary storage location, but shift them "directly" to the new museum that will come on the Raisina Hill complex, according to sources.

It is learnt that the decision was taken recently at a meeting after factoring in the safety of the artefacts during its movement and storage at an interim facility which may not be suitably equipped with temperature and humidity control mechanism. The National Museum in Delhi is home to a collection of rich ancient artefacts which would eventually be moved to the proposed Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum to be located in the North Block and South Block of the Raisina Hill complex.

In September last year, an official source had said, "As part of the Central Vista redevelopment project, the plan is to vacate the National Museum by the end of this year (2023). Instructions have been given to search for a space where the collections could be safely and properly shifted."

Official sources on Monday, however, said, in a recent meeting, it was decided to shift them "directly to



the new national museum site".

After an assessment of the artefacts was done, it was realised that given the precious nature of these artefacts, keeping them in a temporary storage location may be fraught with risk as lack of proper temperature and humidity control mechanism may cause damage to them, they said.

Sources earlier had indicated that the old National Museum would have become inaccessible to visitors and scholars once its artefacts were moved.

Now, the museum will remain accessible until the shifting timeline is decided and the move thereof, they added.

The 35,000-square metre National Museum presently holds approximately 2,00,000 objects, both Indian and foreign, covering

National Museum artefacts to be relocated directly to new museum: Sources

over more than 5,000 years of Indian cultural heritage.

The foundation of the present building was laid by the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on May 12, 1955. The first phase of the National Museum building was formally inaugurated by the then Vice President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on December 18, 1960. The second phase was completed in 1989.

The redevelopment of the Central Vista, the nation's power corridor in Delhi, envisaged a triangular Parliament building next to the existing one, a common Central Secretariat for ministries and the revamping of the 3-km-long Rajpath from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

As per the fate of the old National Museum building, after its artefacts are eventually shifted, it is not clear whether the over 60-year-old building, one of the most iconic modern landmarks of the capital city, will be retained or razed after its objects and collections are shifted. The move for temporary storage at a facility before eventually moving it to the new museum had raised concerns among the art and heritage experts and many others.

Last December, Union Minister for Culture G Kishan Reddy informed Parliament that no decision had so far been taken to shut down the National Museum to expand the Central Vista, the Centre.

He had shared this information in a written response to a query by TMC's Jawhar Sircar in Rajya Sabha.

Sircar, in his written query, had also asked if the government had decided a place to

shift the priceless artefacts of the museum for interim storage, and if the government had studied any shifting of such a scale anywhere in the world.

Sircar had also asked whether the government had consulted the best international and national experts on museums and antiquities; and whether, during such storage, the government will ensure appropriate requirements of light, heat, ventilation, humidity, etc. for all objects that require them.

The upcoming Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum, billed to be the largest museum in the world, will have eight thematic segments telling the story of India spanning over 5,000 years.

France will partner with India for the ambitious new national museum, and a top French official and a team of experts have discussed the "next steps in this cooperation", the country's embassy here had said on April 23.

The team of experts had also visited the North Block and South Block, the site of the new museum.

The new museum, to be housed in the North Block and South Block in the heart of the country's capital, will cover an area of 1.17 lakh sqm with 950 rooms spread over a basement and three storeys, Indian officials had earlier said.

Delhi CM's wife Sunita, minister Atishi meet him in Tihar jail

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita and cabinet minister Atishi met him in Tihar jail on Monday.

Sunita Kejriwal, whose application to meet her husband was earlier denied by the Tihar jail administration,

was granted permission for the meeting on Monday, according to the AAP.

After the meeting, Atishi told reporters that upon being asked about his well-being, Kejriwal instead asked if schoolchildren were getting books and whether medicines were being supplied to

mohalla clinics.

On Sunday, the AAP had said that the jail authorities had denied her permission to meet the chief minister, a charge refuted by the prison authorities.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will meet Kejriwal on Tuesday.



vulnerable spots to avoid any loss to human lives or property damages.

The DC laid emphasis on round the clock monitoring of vulnerable flood prone areas and ensuring timely dissemination of information among the people viz. flood alerts, evacuation points/centres, transportation plans, etc., so that people are updated about the evacuation/rescue plans well in time. He directed the concerned

Officers to focus on the identified vulnerable spots so that rapid action is ensured in case of need or to arrest embankment breach, if any.

The DC further directed the concerned departments to formulate rescue plans, identify safe control room locations and also prepare a backup plan. He asked for strengthening communication with the ground level staff and people during any emergency so that people

do not panic and get actual information about rescue measures and places available for the public.

The CMO was directed to ensure that important machinery/medicines at health institutions are kept at safer places in all the Health Institutions.

He was also asked for evolving proper SOPs to deal with the floods as like the 'Code Blue' being followed in Hospitals, where every concerned individual is fully acquainted with their responsibilities in the times of emergency.

Similarly, the Deputy Director FCS&CA Department was asked to make necessary arrangements to protect the food grains from any damage due to rising water levels.

The Department was asked to distribute Ration for the

month of May, 2024 among the consumers of the District in advance in wake of the inclement weather predictions.

Likewise, SMC, Mechanical Engineering, Mechanical Irrigation, SRTC, State Motor Garages and other line departments were directed to ensure all flood mitigation measures.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad; Superintending Engineers of Hydraulic, Mechanical Irrigation, R&B, Chief Medical Officer; Deputy Directors of Tourism, FCS&CA, SRTC, State Motor Garages, Officers from Irrigation & Flood Control and other concerned departments were present in meeting.

LS polls: Rajnath Singh files nomination from Lucknow seat

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LUCKNOW: Union minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh on Monday filed his nomination papers from the Lucknow seat, seeking a third consecutive term from the prestigious Lok Sabha constituency.

Accompanied by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his Uttarakhand counterpart Pushkar Singh Dhami, the Union Defence minister reached the collectorate for filing the nomination paper.

The nomination was filed in the presence of District Election Officer Surya Pal Gangwar.

Besides Adityanath, Singh was accompanied by

the two deputy chief ministers of the state as he took out a procession from the state BJP headquarters.

Enthusiastic party workers lined up along the roads shouting slogans, showering flower petals and beating drums.

The party had made elaborate arrangements with the road leading from the party office to the collectorate decorated with flags, banners and bunting, giving Singh's constituency a festive look.

Before filing his nomination, Singh offered prayers at the Dakshin Mukhi Hanuman Temple and at the Hanuman Setu Temple here.

Former prime minister

Atal Bihari Vajpayee had in the past represented the prestigious Lucknow constituency.

In the 2019 election, Singh had defeated Samajwadi Party's Poonam Sinha while in 2014, he had defeated Congress candidate Rita Bahuguna Joshi.

Before contesting his first election from Lucknow in 2014, Singh had won the Lok Sabha polls from Ghaziabad in 2009.

Polling in Lucknow will be held in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha elections on May 20.

The Samajwadi Party has fielded Ravidas Mehrotra from this seat.

Firing outside Salman Khan's home: MCOCA court remands three accused to police custody till May 8

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: A special court here on Monday remanded to police custody till May 8 three accused arrested in connection with the firing at Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's residence in Bandra.

Special MCOCA judge A M Patil remanded the accused, Vicky Gupta (24), Sagar Pal (21) and Anuj Thapan (32), to police custody and

sent Sonu Kumar Chander Bishnoi (37) to judicial custody on medical grounds.

The police on Saturday invoked provisions of the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against alleged shooters Gupta and Pal as well as Bishnoi and Thapan, who are accused of supplying two firearms and bullets, and gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and his brother



er Anmol, shown as wanted accused. The accused were earlier booked under the relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Arms Act.

In the proceedings held on camera, the court sent Gupta, Pal and Thapan to police custody till May 8 and remanded Bishnoi to judicial custody.

Public prosecutor Jaisingh Desai sought the custody of the accused, citing that the police needed to conduct

a detailed investigation to unearth the conspiracy. Police had registered the first information report (FIR) under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 307 (attempt to murder) after two motorbike-borne men fired at Galaxy Apartment in Bandra, Khan's residence, in the early hours of April 14.

Gupta and Pal, both residents of Bihar, were apprehended from Kutch in neighbouring Gujarat on April 16,

while Sonu Bishnoi and Thapan were held from Punjab on April 25.

Anmol Bishnoi, who stays in Canada and travels to the USA, had claimed responsibility for the firing through a Facebook post, though its IP address was traced to Portugal, as per police.

Lawrence Bishnoi, accused of several crimes, is lodged in a jail in Sabarmati in Gujarat.