

Modi invokes 1971, says he'd have taken back Kartapur Sahib before freeing Pak soldiers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

PATIALA : Noting that more than 90,000 Pakistani soldiers surrendered in the 1971 Indo-Pak War, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asserted if he had been in power he would have taken Kartapur Sahib from Pakistan before freeing their troops.

Addressing a rally at Patiala, his first in the state for the seventh phase of Lok Sabha polls on June 1, Modi said Punjab and the Sikh community have always been at the forefront of national-building efforts, even as he lambasted the current AAP government over issues of corruption and drugs trade.

He called Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann only a 'kagazi CM' -- chief minister only on paper.

Modi brought up the emotive issue of the gurdwara in Kartarpur Sahib, a place sacred to Sikhs as Guru Nanak Dev spent the last years of his life there, and blamed the Congress for country's partition, saying they did it for sake of power.

The partition left Kartar Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab, just a few kilometres away from the border with India. "For 70 years, we could have a 'darshan' of the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara only with

binoculars," Modi said.

He said opportunity presented itself to take back the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara in 1971 when more than 90,000 Pakistani soldiers surrendered before the Indian Army and "we had the trump card in our hands".

"I had Modi been there at that time, I would have taken Kartapur Sahib from them (made it part of Indian territory) and then freed their troops," he said.

"They (Congress) did not do that, but I did as much I could," Modi added, referring to the opening of the Kartapur Sahib Corridor in 2019 that made it easier for Sikh pilgrims to travel to the shrine.

Campaigning for Preneet Kaur, the wife of former chief minister Amarinder Singh, who is BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from Patiala, Modi said he had come to seek the blessings in the land of Gurus "by bowing my head".

Other BJP candidates -- Parampal Kaur Sidhu from Bathinda, Arvind Khanna from Sangrur, Hans Raj Hans from Faridkot and Gejja Ram Valmiki from the Fatehgarh Sahib seat -- were also present on the stage as Modi spoke, donning the traditional Sikh turban.

Punjab has given leader-

ship to the country in various sectors, from agriculture to industry, Modi said. But, the current "fiercely corrupt" Bhagwant Mann government has changed all that, he added. "Trade and industry are leaving Punjab while the drug trade is growing. The entire state government is running on debt."

The government's writ does not run here while sand and drug mafia, and shooter gangs' rule, the prime minister said. "All ministers are enjoying and the 'kagazi CM' is always busy marking his presence in the 'Delhi darbar'. Can such people bring development in Punjab?"

He also took a dig at the AAP and the Congress for fighting the Lok Sabha polls together in Delhi and against each other in Punjab.

"In Punjab, they are fighting against each other in elections just to show to people. Delhi's 'fiercely corrupt party' and the party which is guilty of anti-Sikh riots are enacting a drama of fighting against each other," he said.

"But the truth is 'panja' (Cong symbol) and 'jhadoo' (AAP symbol) are two outfits, but the shop is the same. Over here they may give any statement (against each

other), but in Delhi both are dancing together. That is why, I urge people of Punjab to beware of them."

He said the party that "betrayed" their guru Anna Hazare and can speak lies 10 times a day can never do any good to Punjab or its children.

Modi listed out steps taken by his government for the benefit of the Sikh community such as tax exemption on material used for making 'langar' and relaxing foreign donation norms to the Golden Temple. He further said his government had announced 'Veer Baal Diwas' to mark the martyrdom of the tenth Sikh guru's sons.

"But some people do not understand what is the meaning of announcing 'Veer Baal Diwas'. I feel sad that there are certain people who have no understanding of it. I wanted every child should know the sacrifices of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh."

He further said his government brought Sikh families and 'saroops' of Guru Granth Sahib from Afghanistan. "I have blood relations with you," said Modi, adding that one of the 'panj pyare' (five beloved ones) of Guru Gobind Singh belonged to Gujarat.

He said he was the Gujarati

chief minister, he rebuilt a gurdwara, where first Sikh Guru Nanak Dev once halted, which got damaged in an earthquake. "Modi does not do it for votes. Modi's head bows before the sacrifices of Sikh Gurus," he said.

Keeping up the attack on the INDIA bloc, he said "hey neither have a leader, nor intent" and their biggest aim is the appeasement of their vote bank while the BJP's mantra is 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas'.

Slamming the Congress for opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Modi said Sikh families were persecuted in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and his government decided to give them citizenship. "It is not for vote bank," he stated.

He said the INDIA bloc lies to farmers. "They made a promise with farmers but did not fulfill it. It is the BJP which gives priority to the welfare of farmers."

In the last 10 years, there was a record purchase of wheat and paddy from Punjab, he said. "We raised MSP two-and-a-half times in the last 10 years," he added. Security was beefed up in view of the call given by farmer bodies to hold a demonstration against Modi.

Peak power demand hits season's high of 235 GW on Wednesday amid severe heat wave

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: India's peak power demand hit the season's high of 235.06 GW on Wednesday mainly due to excessive use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and coolers amid severe heat waves in most parts of the country.

According to the power ministry data, the peak power demand met or the highest supply in the day is recorded at 235.06 GW on Wednesday, which is the maximum so far in the summer season this year. The all-time high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was recorded in September 2023. The record is expected to be broken during this summer season. Earlier this month, the power ministry projected a peak power demand of 235 GW during daytime and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW during evening hours for June 2024.

Besides the power ministry has also projected that peak power demand can hit the 260GW mark during this summer season.

The data shows peak power demand was 224.18GW in April 2024, when the country witnessed the onset of the summer season in various parts of the country. It was 221.82GW in March, 222.16GW in February and 223.51GW in January. During May, peak supply hit 233 GW on May 6 and 233.80 GW on May 21. It was 221.42 GW recorded in May 2023.

Last week, the peak power supply touched

229.57 GW on May 18, while it was around 226 GW on May 15, 16 and 17.

The peak supply was 229.77 GW on May 4 and 228.71GW on May 20. The industry experts are of the view that power demand could soar further and can easily breach the all time high of 243.27 GW recorded in September 2023.

From March to May, the above-normal number of heatwave days is likely over most parts of the country, except northeast India, the western Himalayan region, the southwest peninsula and the west coast, it stated.

According to the IMD report on Thursday, the maximum temperatures were in the range of 44 to 47 degrees Celsius in many places over Rajasthan; in some places in Gujarat state; in isolated places pockets over Haryana, West Uttar Pradesh and West Madhya Pradesh; in the range of 40-44 degrees Celsius in many places of Punjab, Delhi, East Madhya Pradesh, Vidharbha and Marathwada; in some parts of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana; in isolated pockets of East Uttar Pradesh, interior Madhya Maharashtra and North Interior Karnataka.

The IMD, in its bulletin, said that heat wave to severe heat wave conditions are very likely in most pockets of West Rajasthan; in many/some pockets of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, West Uttar Pradesh and East Rajasthan during May 23 to 26, in isolated pockets of Northwest Madhya Pradesh and Delhi during May 24 to 26.

Women stop Vande Bharat train in Jammu to protest against water crisis

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Women stopped the Vande Bharat train on Thursday by staging a protest at a railway station here against water crisis compounded by heatwave conditions.

The demonstrators threatened to block all incoming and outgoing trains if the water crisis in their colony was not addressed urgently.

Scores of women and some children from the Jammu East Colony marched to the Jammu railway station to protest against the administration's alleged failure to ensure a regular water supply.

The protesters, some of them carrying buckets, stopped the Vande Bharat train at the station for a brief period before the police and railway authorities intervened.

"There has been no regular water supply to our colony for the past four months. We

have approached the authorities, but nothing has been done. We have to fetch water from long distances even for cooking and drinking," said Sakshi, a protester.

Another protester claimed that life has become "unbearable" in the hot weather conditions.

Police and authorities assured the protesters they would address the water supply issue in their colony. "We will ensure that your demand for water supply is addressed soon," a police official told them.

However, the agitators warned of further protests if their grievances remained unaddressed. "This agitation will be intensified if our demand is not met," another protester Sonia said.

power in the world. "But we do not want to become a super power to attack any country or grab even one inch of its land. We wish this for the welfare of the world," the BJP leader said.

Singh also asserted that he has full confidence that by 2070, India will become the "richest economy" of the world.

He also said that India aspired to be a super

eight years.

"Prominent financial firms are claiming that India is the fastest growing economy. With this speed, it will become the third largest economy of the world," he said.

Singh also asserted that he has full confidence that by 2070, India will become the "richest economy" of the world.

He also said that India aspired to be a super

"A person in whose presence a woman was beaten up in his house says probe is going on. Such people are cowards. A brave person is one who accepts that a mistake has been committed and is prepared to face the consequences," Singh said.

"Parties like the AAP should be wiped out from the country's politics. They have no moral right to remain in politics," the minister said.

Singh said under the Narendra Modi government, the country has jumped from the eleventh spot to become the fifth largest economy in the last

Cong, AAP responsible for crisis of credibility in Indian politics: Rajnath

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Senior BJP leader and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday attacked opposition INDIA bloc partners Congress and AAP, alleging that they are responsible for the crisis of credibility in Indian politics.

Singh made the remarks while addressing an election meeting in favour of BJP's West Delhi Lok Sabha constituency candidate Kamaljeet Sehrawat, hours before campaigning for the May 25 round of polling ended.

Targeting Congress and AAP, which are contesting the general elections in the

national capital under a seat-sharing arrangement, he said, "The leaders of the Congress and the AAP have contributed the most to the crisis of credibility in the politics of India."

While the AAP is contesting four seats, the Congress has fielded candidates from three seats. The seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Delhi go to polls in the sixth round of the seven-phase general elections.

Taking a swipe at Delhi Chief Minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on continuing on the post despite being arrested and jailed in connection with a

Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case, Singh said, "I have heard about work from office and work from home. The chief minister here has done the miracle of work from jail."

Kejriwal was released from jail on interim bail on May 10 on the orders of the Supreme Court. He has to surrender on June 2.

Citing the alleged assault on AAP Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal, Singh said it was a "heart rending" incident but Kejriwal after maintaining silence for long is now saying that police are probing the matter.

Publishing polling booth-wise data will "vitiate" electoral space, create "chaos": EC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission has opposed in the Supreme Court an NGO's demand to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections, contending it will "vitiate" the electoral space and cause "chaos" in the poll machinery in the midst of the general elections.

A vacation bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma is scheduled to hear the plea of NGO 'Association for Democratic Reforms', which has also sought direction to the poll panel that scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded) of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls.

In its counter affidavit, the poll panel said there is no legal mandate to provide Form 17C to any person other than the candidate or his agent.

It said that public posting of Form 17C - which gives the number of votes polled in a polling station - is not provided in the statutory framework and could lead to mischief and vitiation of the entire electoral space as it increases the possibility of the images being morphed.

"The Petitioner is trying to create an entitlement when none exists in the law by way of filing an application in the middle of the election period. It is respectfully reiterated that for credible multiple practical reasons, the result as per the statutory mandate, is declared on the basis of the data contained in Form 17C at the time as prescribed under the statutory rule regime in existence," it said.

It further said that "indiscriminate disclosure" of



polling station-wise voter turnout data and posting it on a website will cause chaos in the election machinery which is already in motion for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

The EC also dismissed as false and misleading the allegation that there was "5-6" per cent difference between the voter turnout data released on the day of the polling for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections and the press releases issued subsequently. The NGO claimed the final voter turnout data jumped sharply from the initial figures released by the poll panel.

The Election Commission's 225-page affidavit said, "It is submitted that if the reliefs sought by the petitioner is allowed, it will not only be in teeth of the aforesaid legal position but will also cause chaos in the election machinery which is already in motion for the ongoing General Elections to the Lok Sabha, 2024."

It said the petitioner NGO 'Association of Democratic Reforms' has failed to mention a single instance where candidates or voters had filed an election petition on the basis of the allegations raised by the petitioner with respect to the Lok Sabha election in 2019.

"This indicates that the allegation of discrepancies in voter turnout data made by

the petitioner in the main petition as well as the present application is misleading, false and based on mere suspicion," it said.

The poll panel said there are certain elements and vested interests who keep on throwing baseless and false allegations, creating an unwarranted atmosphere of suspicion in the close proximity of time of conduct of every election by the Election Commission of India, to somehow discredit the same.

"It is most humbly submitted that there is a consistent malafide campaign/design/efforts to keep on raising suspicion and doubt in every possible manner and by misleading assertions and baseless allegations regarding the conduct of elections by the Election Commission of India," the poll panel said, as it sought dismissal of the NGO's plea.

The EC added that the legal regime with regard to Form 17C is peculiar in that while it authorises the polling agent at the close of the poll to get a copy of Form 17C, a general disclosure of the nature as sought by the petitioner is not provided in the statutory framework.

"It is submitted that a wholesome disclosure of Form 17C is amenable to mischief and vitiation of the entire electoral space.

"At the moment, the original Form 17C is only avail-

able in the Strong Room and a copy only with the polling agents whose signature it bears. Therefore, there is a one-to-one relationship between each Form 17C and its possessor," it said.

The poll panel added that "indiscriminate disclosure" and public posting on the website increases the possibility of the images being morphed, including the counting results which then can create widespread public discomfort and mistrust in the entire electoral process.

The poll panel said, "Further, it is submitted that the Petitioner has specifically relied on the voter turnout data published by the answering respondent with respect to the first two phases of the ongoing General Elections to the Lok Sabha, 2024 and has alleged that there was an increase of 5-6% in the voter turnout data released on the day of polling and in the subsequent press releases for each of the two phases.

"In this regard, it is submitted that the aforesaid allegation is misleading and is unsubstantiated."

It added that the Rules do not permit the giving of a copy of Form 17C to any other entity.

On May 17, the top court had sought within a week a response from the Election Commission on the NGO's plea seeking a direction to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

The ADR has filed an interim application in its 2019 PIL seeking directions to the poll panel that "scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded)" of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls.

CREMATION

Dr Sheetal Singh

(Former Principal GMC Srinagar)

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the untimely sad demise of our beloved Dr. Sheetal Singh

S/o S. Lochan Singh on 22nd May 2024, Originally from Kanahama Baramula at present Sector 1 Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Cremation will take place on 24th May 2024, 11.30 am at Shastri Nagar Cremation Ground.

Departure from home will be at 11.00 am.

GRIEF-STRICKEN

Dr. Supinder Kour (Wife)

S. Sajjan Singh & Updesh Kour (Brother & Bhabi)

Mrs. Tripat Kour W/o Late Dr. A. S. Bedi (Sister)

Dr. Kanchan Kour & Dr. JBS Jaggi (Daughter & Son-in-Law)

Dr. Manpreet Kour & Sumit Pal Singh Rana (Daughter & Son-in-Law)

Dr. Harinder Singh Bedi & Dr. Arvinder Kour

S. Kamal Jeet Singh & Dr. Rajni

Ichpal Kour & Satvinder Singh (USA)

Dr. Kirpal Kour & Dr. JB Singh

Satinder Kour & Jasbir Singh

Staff Lochan Nursing Home

9419195055 | 9910388833 | 9419197097 | 9419125171