Rahul Gandhi has no fire but Cong playing with fire by attempting Hindu-Muslim divide: Rajnath

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has no fire while his party is playing with fire by attempting to create Hindu-Muslim divide for electoral dividends, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said.

In an interview to PTI, Singh also indicated that the BJP will implement its big-ticket plans like rolling out of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and implementing the 'One Nation One Election' push if it retains power for the third consecutive term.

The defence minister also said that he was confident the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will cross 400 seats and the BJP will get over 370 as these projections were made after detailed assessment of the ground situation and not made only for public consumption.

On the overall political landscape, the defence minister accused the Congress of attempting to disturb social harmony and trying

to create tensions on religious lines.

"They are attempting to create Hindu-Muslim divide for electoral gains. The Congress is trying to create tensions on religious lines," he alleged.

"The Congress wants to disturb social harmony. They look at the Muslim community only as a vote bank. I have a suggestion for them -- politics should not be done only for forming governments. The aim of politics should be for nation building," he said.

"Rahul Gandhi has no fire but Congress is playing with fire," he said.

Singh said people of the country will repose their faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP's tally will improve significantly based on the performance of the government in the last five years.

"Our seats will increase in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and we will get some seats in Tamil Nadu. Our account will open in Kerala as well. We are winning a good number of seats in Andhra Pradesh Telangana," the senior BJP leader said.

"We will increase our tally in Odisha, Jharkhand and Assam. We are sweeping Chhattisgarh," he said, asserting that the BJP will cross the 370-mark.

Asked whether the BJP's seats in Maharashtra will come down, he did not give a direct reply but said there may be some adjustments here and there.

The BJP leader also came down hard on the Congress for its plan to "redistribute" wealth, saying it will have disastrous consequences for the country's economy.

"The concept of redistribution of wealth will trigger recession. Argentina and Venezuela implemented it and faced disastrous consequences. The investors will lose confidence in India," Singh said.

On the BJP's big-ticket plans like implementation of the UCC and 'One Nation One Poll' push in if it retains power, Singh said it

fulfils "We will go for 'One Nation promises that it One Election. We will take to the people of views of every quarter, including all political parties on it," he said. In its manifesto, the BJP

pledged to implement the UCC if it returns to power On the UCC, the defence after the general elections. minister said even the It also mentioned that the Constitution-makers felt a need for it, as it is men-

party will move forward with a resolve to realise the idea of 'One Nation, One Election'. "We always fulfil our com-

mitments. We will never allow any question mark on our credibility and will not compromise on the country's unity and integrity. We implement whatever we say in our manifesto. We have to do whatever we say," Singh

Cong to approach courts for disqualification of MLAs involved in 'anti-party' activities

GUWAHATI: Congress general secretary in-charge of Assam Jitendra Singh on Sunday said the party will approach the courts for disqualification of its MLAs who are involved in "antiparty" activities after the Assembly Speaker "failed" to act on its petitions to cancel their membership of the House. "We have already written to

the Speaker seeking disqualification of Congress MLAs indulging in anti-party activities. That the Speaker is not acting against them shows that the BJP government is not following rules," Singh said, addressing a press conference here.

He said the party will now approach the high court and even the Supreme Court, if needed, to get these legislators disqualified.

The state's principal opposition party has submitted multiple petitions to Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary seeking disqualification of at least five MLAs for various "anti-party" activities, like lending sup-

port to the government, voting against party nominee in Rajya Sabha poll and campaigning against the party candidate in Lok Sabha elec-

On recent show-cause notice to Goalpara (West) MLA Abdul Rashid Mandal, Singh said, "There was a complaint against him and he was served show-cause notice. He has given his reply. It is being studied and follow up action will be

AICC general secretary Ajoy Kumar, also speaking at the same press meet, claimed that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma wants to return to the Congress, which he had left for the BJP in 2015.

"We hear that he wants to return and is evaluating the options, once Narendra Modi loses this election. But the Congress will never accept a turncoat like him," Kumar, the party in-charge for Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, claimed.

Alleging large-scale corruption against Sarma, he said, "I have come from the

After first two phases of LS polls, Modi

(Odisha) to the most corrupt state (Assam) in the country."

He claimed that the BJPled government has "failed" the state on all fronts, with rising unemployment and corruption in the name of building roads and other infrastructure, among oth-

"Unemployment increased by 7 per cent on one hand, and liquor shops are mushrooming on the other hand. The youth, who have no jobs, are getting addicted to the easily available liquor. Sarma has become the 'liquor man of India'," Kumar alleged.

The AICC leader alleged that the Modi government has "failed" on economic, employment and national security fronts.

Money is concentrated at the hands of a few people leading to a greater richpoor divide, unemployment is rising and the PM remains silent on China and Pakistan-based militants continue to carry

Courts should not act as 'mere tape recorders', says SC; flags role of public prosecutors

NEW DELHI: Courts have to take a participatory role in a trial and not act as "mere tape recorders", the Supreme Court said here

take a participatory role in the trial and not act as mere tape recorders to record whatever is being stated by the witnesses,



and lamented that there is "practically no effective and meaningful cross-examination" by public prosecutors of any hostile witness during hearings of criminal appeals.

The apex court said a judge has to monitor the proceedings in aid of justice and, even if the prosecutor is remiss or lethargic in some ways, the court should control the proceedings effectively so that the truth is arrived at.

Observing that relations between the public prosecution service and the judiciary are the very cornerstone of the criminal justice system, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Chandrachud said time and again, the top court has said that there should not be any element of political consideration in matters like appointment to post of public prosecutor etc.

The observations by the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, came in a judgement while upholding the conviction and life sentence awarded to a man for

murdering his wife in 1995. "It is the duty of the court to arrive at the truth and subserve the ends of jusdelivered on Friday. It said the court must be conscious of serious pitfalls and dereliction of duty on the part of the prosecuting

The bench said a judge is expected to actively participate in the trial, and elicit necessary materials from the witnesses in the appropriate context which he feels necessary for reaching the correct conclusion.

It said any crime committed against an individual is a crime against the entire society and in such circumstances, neither the public prosecutor nor the presiding officer of the trial court tions on record and therecan afford to remain remiss or lackadaisical in any

The apex court said while making appointments, like for the post of public prosecutor, the only consideration for the government should be the merit of the person.

"The person should be not only competent, but he should also be a man of impeccable character and integrity. He should be a person who should be able to work independently without any reservations, dictates or other con-

The bench noted that public prosecutors, who are responsible for conducting prosecutions and may appeal against the court decisions, are one of the judges' natural counterparts in the trial proceedings and also in the broader context of management of the system of criminal law.

Observing that free and fair trial is the very foundation of criminal jurisprudence, the bench said, "There is a reasonable apprehension in the mind of the public at large that the criminal trial is neither free nor fair with the prosecutor appointed by the state government conducting the trial in a manner where frequently the prosecution witnesses turn hos-

It noted that over a period of time, the apex court has noticed while hearing criminal appeals that there is practically no effective and meaningful cross-examination by the public prosecutor of a hostile witness.

"The only thing that the public prosecutor would do is to bring the contradicafter prove such contradictions through the evidence of the investigating officer. This is not sufficient," it said.

"What we are trying to convey is that it is the duty of the public prosecutor to cross-examine a hostile witness in detail and try to elucidate the truth and also establish that the witness is speaking a lie and has deliberately resiled from his police statement recorded under section 161 of the CrPC," the bench said.

The top court was dealing with an appeal filed by the

convict challenging the May 2014 judgement of the Delhi High Court which had affirmed his conviction and life term awarded to him by the trial court.

According to the prosecution, the appellant had married in 1982 and in December 1995, he murdered his wife due to their strained marital relation-

The police had claimed that his minor daughter, who was five years old at the time of the incident, was the sole eye-witness to the incident.

The bench noted that during the trial, the minor failed to support the prosecution's case and was declared a hostile witness.

While dismissing the appeal, the apex court noted it should not overlook the fact that the appellant had inflicted 12 blows with a knife on the deceased who was unarmed and helpless. "For all the foregoing rea-

sons, we have reached to the conclusion that the high court committed no error in affirming the judgment and order of conviction passed by the trial court, holding the appellant guilty of the offence of murder of his wife," it said.

Noting that the appellant has undergone almost 11 vears of imprisonment so far and is about 65 years old, the bench granted him liberty to prefer an approrepresentation priate addressed to the state government praying for remission of sentence.

It said if any such representation is filed by the appellant, the state shall look into it and take an appropriate decision in accordance with law within

is ahead: Amit Shah in Andhra Pradesh **STATE TIMES NEWS**

DHARMAVARAM: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, on the campaign trail in Andhra Pradesh, on Sunday said after the first two phases of the general elections in the country, Narendra Modi has hit a century and was moving forward towards getting over 400 seats.

tioned in the directive prin-

create fear psychosis; they

want to use the Hindu-

"They do not have any

issue. They want to form a

government by dividing the

society in the name of caste,

creed and religion and they

have always done it," he

Muslim card," he said.

"The Congress wants to

Addressing a poll rally in Dharmavaram Assembly constituency in the state, Shah also attacked Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), accusing them of encouraging corruption, sand and land mafias and crime in Andhra Pradesh.

The Home Minister said



to lend strength to the BJP, TDP and Jana Sena alliance's fight against corruption, crime, mafia and conversion in the state.

He said they formed the alliance to bring an end to

the alleged rule of goondas and criminals, rampant corruption and sand mafia in the state and to make Amravati the capital of Andhra Pradesh once again. Shah further said the

whole country has decided to make Modi the Prime Minister for the third time, asserting that none of the INDIA bloc leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, were fit

SP, Cong work only to benefit their families, vote banks: PM Modi in UP's Etawah

STATE TIMES NEWS ETAWAH (UP): Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attacked the Samajwadi Party and the Congress, saying they are contesting elections to benefit their families and their

Addressing a Lok Sabha poll rally here in Samajwadi Party (SP) founder the late Mulavam Singh Yadav's home turf, Modi also recalled Yadav's 2019 speech in Parliament, where he had said that Modi was going to become the prime minister again.

"It was his blessing," Modi said.

The prime minister said the slogans of both the SP and the Congress are "lies' and their "intentions are also not good". The SP and the Congress,

both members of the opposition INDIA bloc, are contesting the polls in the state as allies.

"The Samajwadi Party and the Congress are contesting the elections for their future and that of

their children. They work only to benefit their families and their vote banks," Modi

alleged. He also attacked the Samajwadi Party on the issue of COVID-19 vaccines, alleging that its leaders had instigated people against the vaccines but got themselves inoculated in

secret. "Modi and Yogi are working for the future of your children.. we don't have chil-

dren," Modi further said.

15 'crorepati' candidates in third phase of LS polls in Assam

STATE TIMES NEWS

GUWAHATI: Altogether 15 candidates out of the 47 in the frav for the four Lok Sabha constituencies in Assam going to the polls on May 7 are 'crorepatis', with the richest being AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal contesting from the Dhubri

The 'crorepati' candidates include two each from Congress and AGP, one each from BJP, AIUDF, Peoples' Front Bodo(BPF), United People's Party, Liberal (UPPL), Trinamool Congress, CPI(M) and Ekam Sanatn Bharat along with four independents, according to the affidavits filed by the contestants.

Independent candidate Triptina Rabha, contesting from Kokrajhar (ST) constituency has the lowest assets with Rs 25,521 as movable assets.

There are two women in the crorepati list and they are BJP's Bijuli Kalita

Medhi and Congress's Mira Borthakur Goswami, both contesting from Guwahati constituency. All the four candidates of

the ruling NDA are crorepatis. Barpeta and Guwahati Lok Sabha constituency have crorepati candidates each, Dhubri three and Kokrajhar (ST) two. The crorepati candidates comprise 32 per cent of the total contesting candi-

Ajmal, contesting from Dhubri to retain the seat for the fourth consecutive term, is the richest among all the candidates in the fray with assets worth Rs 155 crore, comprising Rs 28.89 crore of movable and Rs 126.17 crore of immovable assets.

He is followed by independent candidate Dulu Ahmed from Barpeta constituency with assets worth Rs 63 crore including Rs 6.16 crore of movable and Rs 57.41 crore of immov-



Congress MLA and forminister Rakibul Hussain is third on the list with assets worth Rs 25 erore, including Rs 2.49 crore of movable and Rs 22.80 crore of immovable

Guwahati's Congress candidate Mira Borthakur Goswami has assets worth Rs 2.37 crore with Rs 27.44 lakh as movable and Rs 2.10 crore as immovable assets while her BJP rival Bijuli Kalita Medhi is worth Rs 1.61 crore, including Rs 31.89 lakh as movable and Rs 1.30 crore as immovable assets.

BJP's alliance partner candidate Phani Bhushan Choudhury, contesting from Barpeta has assets worth Rs 3 crore, comprising Rs 79.56 lakh as movable and Rs 2.48 crore as immovable while his party colleague Zaved Islam, contesting from Dhubri has assets worth Rs 1.57 crore with Rs 97.22 lakh as movable and Rs 60.15 lakh

as immovable assets. Another NDA partner UPPL's candidate Joyanta Basumatary, contesting from the Kokrajhar (ST) constituency, has assets

worth Rs 2.28 crore, comprising Rs 27.44 lakh as movable and Rs 2.10 crore as immovable.

BPF's Kampa Borgoyary, contesting from Kokrajhar (ST), has assets worth over Rs 24 crore with Rs 18.94 crore as movable and Rs 5.91 crore as immovable.

Manoranja CPI(M)'s Talukdar, contesting from Barpeta, has assets worth Rs 1.56 erore, including Rs 76.57 lakh as movable and Rs 80 lakh as immovable.

Trinamool Congress's Abul Kalam Azad has total assets worth Rs 1.31 erore,

comprising Rs 80.60 lakh in movable and Rs 50.90 lakh as immovable assets while Ekam Sanatan Bharat's Amitabh Sarma, contesting from Guwahati, has assets worth Rs 13.88 crore with the entire as movable assets.

Among the independents, Jagannath Roy of Barpeta has assets worth Rs 2,53 crore, Colonel Chandra Singha and Kazi Nekib Ahmed, both from Guwahati, have assets to the tune of Rs 1.79 crore and Rs 1.50 crore respec-

tively. The candidates having the highest liabilities are independent candidate Dulu Ahmed with Rs 11.86 crore, BPF's Kampa Borgoyary with Rs 7.61 crore and Congress's Rakibul Hussain with Rs 4.36 crore.

Out of the total 143 contestants in the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Assam, there are crorepati candidates.

IGI Airport: Korean national held with over 3 lakh US dollars



STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: A Korean national was on Sunday apprehended by CISF personnel at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying more than 3 lakh US dollars worth about Rs 2.80 crore in an unauthorised manner, a senior officer of the force said.

passenger was bound for Bangkok on a Thai Airways flight and he was intercepted during checks Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International

am, the officer added.

A total of USD 3,39,000. worth about Rs 2.80 crore as per current exchange rates, was found in the baggage of the Korean national, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer said.

The CISF handed over the passenger and the currency to the customs department as he could not furnish any valid reason or document for carrying such a huge amount of currency, he added.