

PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATES DEEP-WATER SEAPORT IN VIZHINJAM

Modi Takes a Dig at Left-ruled Kerala, Tharoor for Endorsing Adani-built Port

Says presence of Kerala CM and Tharoor at commissioning of Vizhinjam Seaport will give 'sleepless nights' to many



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, and others during the inauguration of the Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport in Thiruvananthapuram — IANS

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi took digs at the INDIA bloc, especially the Left parties and Congress at a programme in Kerala where he inaugurated a deep-water seaport in Vizhinjam built by the Adani group which has drawn a lot of flak for its alleged proximity to the Centre. In an ostensible reach-out to the sizable Christian community of the state, Modi also paid homage to Pope Francis who passed away recently. Addressing a public meeting in Thiruvananthapuram after the inauguration of the port, he said, "I have just returned after visiting the new port. When the people of Gujarat come to know that Adani has built such a nice port here in

Kerala — they have been building ports in Gujarat for the past 30 years but till now, they have not built such a good port there — then, they will have to be prepared to face the wrath of the people of Gujarat." Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan and Thiruvananthapuram MP and Congress leader Shashi Tharoor were present on the dais when Modi delivered his speech. Taking potshots at them, the PM said, "I would also like to say to our CM — you are a very strong pillar of the INDI Alliance — and Shashi Tharoor is also seated here... Today's event here will give sleepless nights to many people." He was alluding to Adani building a port in Left-ruled Kerala and the work being endorsed by the state government and a Congress MP Tharoor has also been in the news for making remarks

closer to the BJP and at odds with the Congress' official stand on key issue in the last few days. After a pause, Modi smilingly said, "The message has gone where it was meant to go." Condoling the passing away of Pope Francis, he said: "Our Kerala has been a land of harmony and tolerance. St Thomas Church, the first church in the country and one of the oldest churches in the world, was built here hundreds of years ago. We all know that a few days ago a great moment of sorrow has come for all of us. We all lost Pope Francis a few days ago. President Droupadi Murmuji attended the last rites on behalf of India." Minister of State for Minority Affairs and Kerala MP George Kurien had accompanied the President, he said.

Confront Pak instead, Cong on PM's Jibe

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: Responding to the Prime Minister's jibe at the Congress leadership over some party legislators, including Shashi Tharoor and the INDIA bloc ally and Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan sharing a platform with him at the commissioning of the Adani Group-operated Vizhinjam seaport, the Congress said when Modi should have been confronting Pakistan, he was fixated on disturbing the sleep of the Opposition leaders.

"Even after the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam, our PM remains fixated on disturbing the sleep of the Opposition leaders instead of confronting the real threat — Pakistan. His priorities are crystal clear: appeasing his real master — Adani. But rest assured, PM, while you're busy with your distractions, our sleepless nights will be spent on holding you accountable," said KC Venugopal, AICC general secretary (organisation).

from the government side". Later, Charanjit Singh Channi said at a post-meeting media briefing: "The government's competency and accountability is under question. The whole nation is waiting for action, we demand the government to go ahead". Sachin Pilot referred to the "national mood" and "expectation" of decisive action from the Centre and pointed out how the Congress leadership has extended full support to the government in national interest. On the caste census front, the CWC meeting congratulated Rahul Gandhi, saying his campaign forced the government's hand and said "for 11 years, the PM attacked the Congress leadership for raising this demand. Rahul Gandhi has been the strongest and most consistent voice demanding a nationwide caste census. At the 2022 Nav Sankalp Shivir in Udaipur, he raised the urgent need to gather data on caste so that government policies could truly reflect the lived realities of the marginalised. This demand was reiterated at the Congress plenary in Raipur in 2023..." the resolution said. "The CWC resolution demanded a "timeline" on caste census and sought the Centre to follow the "Telangana model". The CWC also demanded "urgent implementation of Article 15(5) of the Constitution" for quota in private educational institutions and sought the lifting of quota cap beyond 50%.

MEETING ON PAHALGAM ATTACK AND CASTE CENSUS

Act with Firmness, Teach Pak a Lesson: CWC urges Modi Govt

CWC meeting hails Rahul Gandhi's campaign in pushing for caste census, asks central govt for a timeline

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: The Congress Working Committee meeting on Friday urged the Modi government to "act with firmness and strategic clarity" "to teach Pakistan a lesson" for the Pahalgam massacre and for exporting terror to India even as some leaders questioned the "delay" in retaliatory strike and said it was raising "questions" about the "competence" of the government. The CWC meeting also claimed it was the campaign by the party, especially by Rahul Gandhi, that made the Centre announce the caste census. Some leaders, including Gandhi, were learnt to have underscored at the meeting the need to constantly campaign to project Congress' role in pushing for the caste census. The

CWC resolution reiterated the party's solidarity with the families of the Pahalgam victims, questioned "Intelligence failure", sought "accountability", pledged the party's commitment to national unity and then demanded from the government "action". "This is a time for demonstrating our collective will as a nation to teach Pakistan a lesson and curb terrorism decisively. The masterminds and perpetrators of this cowardly attack must face the full consequences of their actions. The Congress party urges the Government of India to act with firmness, strategic clarity, and international coordination to isolate and penalise Pakistan for its continued export of terror into our territory". Party president Mallikarjun Kharge told the CWC: "While the Congress has extended full support



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Cong Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi at the CWC meet in New Delhi — ANI

to the government after the Pahalgam massacre but even after several days, no clear strategy is visible

ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER QUESTION

The govt's competency and accountability is under question. The whole nation is awaiting action: Charanjit Singh Channi

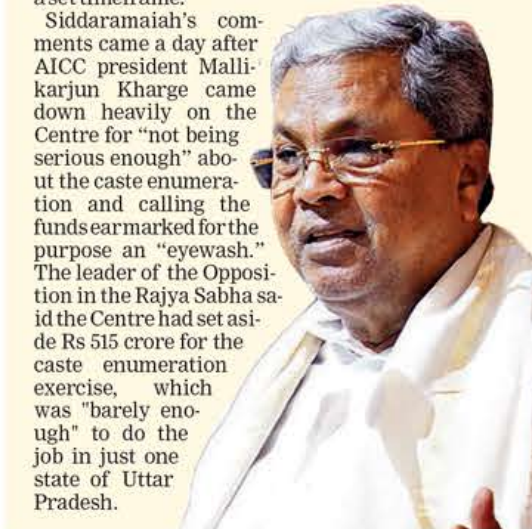
Siddaramaiah Urges PM Modi to Introduce Quota in Private Sector

Our Political Bureau

Bengaluru: Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to introduce a quota system in the private sector, reviving a demand that the party has often mentioned in its election manifestos. The CM, who has welcomed the Centre's decision to take up caste enumeration alongside the census, also pressed for removing the 50% cap on reservations by amending the Constitution.

50% RESERVATION CAP The Karnataka CM also pressed for removing the 50% cap on reservations by amending the Constitution

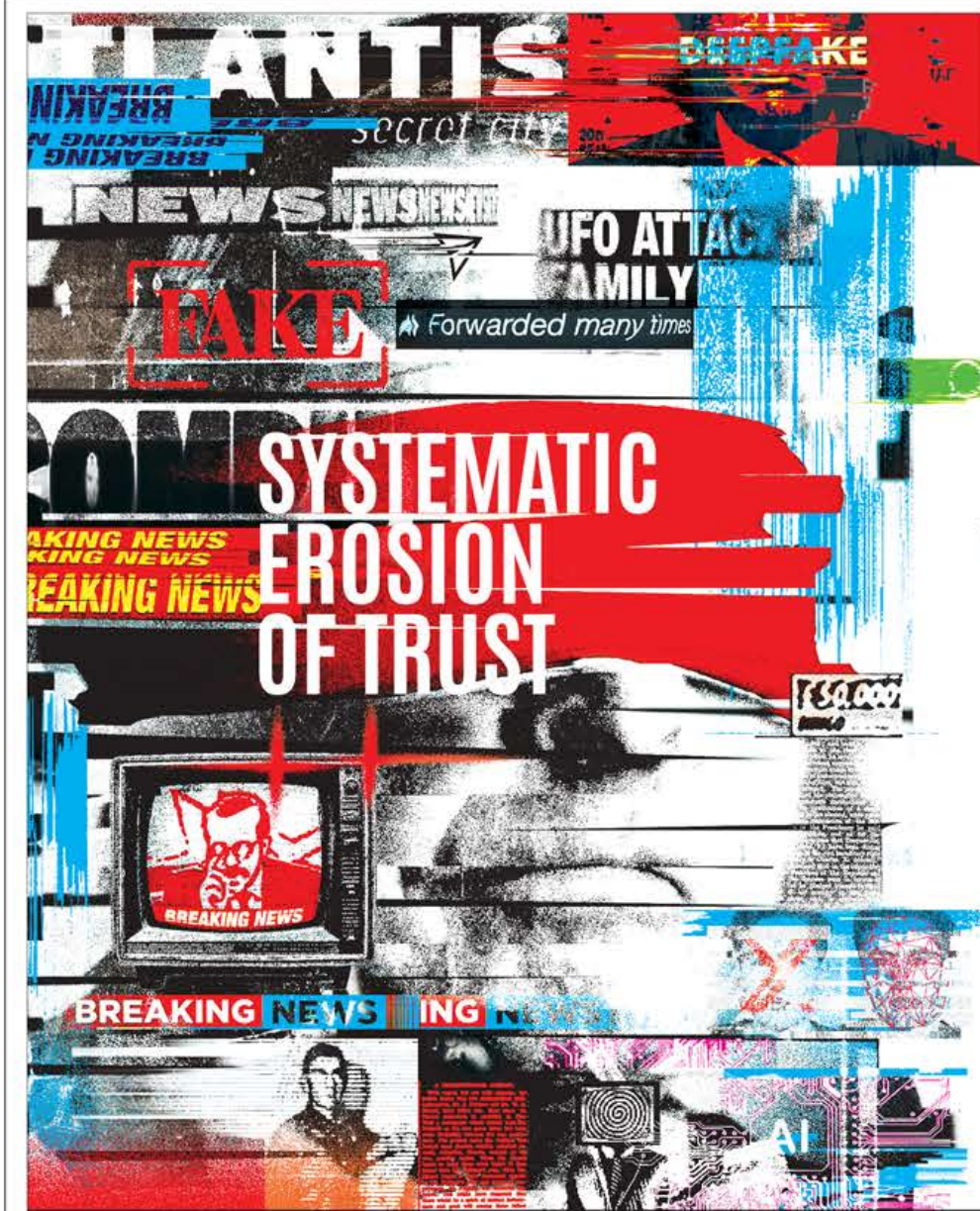
proportionate to their population if this cap exists. That would make it difficult to build an equitable society, Siddaramaiah said, speaking to the media. He urged the PM to remove the quota ceiling and introduce a quota system in the private sector within a set timeframe. Siddaramaiah's comments came a day after AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge came down heavily on the Centre for "not being serious enough" about the caste enumeration and calling the funds earmarked for the purpose an "eyewash." The leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha said the Centre had set aside Rs 515 crore for the caste enumeration exercise, which was "barely enough" to do the job in just one state of Uttar Pradesh.



Maha Starts Phase 2 of Land Title Updating

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has launched the second phase of its 'Jivat 7/12' campaign to update land records, revenue minister Chandrashekhar Bavankule said on Friday. A land title document is commonly referred to as '7/12 extract' in Maharashtra. The first phase of the exercise, including training of officials, was conducted earlier this year. "We have initiated the second phase of the Jivat 7/12 campaign" to ensure that

farmers do not face any difficulties due to obsolete entries in land records. The government has issued an order to replace such entries with accurate, up-to-date information," Bavankule said. Outdated remarks, repaid agri loans, bonding encumbrances, mortgages, private moneylender loans, land acquisition disputes, non-agri orders, substandard land areas and women's inheritance claims will be removed," he said.—PTI



Caste Census: Ambedkar's Call for Limiting Reservation to Minimum Likely to be Violated



R SUBRAHMANYAM

Mahatma Gandhi stated in 1931 that he did not believe in "caste in the modern sense". Though he earlier supported the varna system as an organisation of professions, he found how divisive caste is, and concluded that "caste, in so far as it connotes distinctions in status, is an evil". Dr Ambedkar had waged a relentless struggle against caste and argued for the annihilation of the caste system to build a social democracy. They have looked at caste as a social phenomenon that divided people. It is perplexing to see how caste, which has defined social structure in India, has become central to the political system. This transcending of caste from being a 'social entity' to a 'political entity' is the change we are witnessing. Every party wants to know the caste composition of a constituency before selecting a candidate. Today, many use Ambedkar's name to perpetrate the very caste system that he fought. Even when the political leadership of BJP battled against caste surveys that militates against their concept of unity of Hindus, one of the most powerful ministers in the Union Cabinet told me that he believes in dividing all posts according to the population percentage of each caste, and that caste census is a must. States, especially those going for polls, have used the caste survey as a means to strengthen the voter base, by creating a base for powerful castes to agitate for a greater share of the cake. Politics is the art of capturing power and maintaining it. In the absence of clear ideologies that differentiate one party from the other, creating separate identities

A PIQUANT POSITION



The govt will be in a piquant position since it had taken a stand in the courts against the caste census in the past



and preserving them as vote banks become the sole means. Only when you create an identity and separate it from the rest can you wrest leadership of that entity. With the Union Cabinet deciding to conduct the caste census along with

the Census exercise, it is clear that political expediency has prevailed. However, the government should conduct this exercise better than the 'botched' exercise done in enumerating the castes in the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC). This would require three things: Firstly, there should be a Register of Castes to be prepared by expert anthropologists. A starting point would be the list of castes enumerated in Census 1931. Secondly, the approach of SECC — self-declaration by respondents — shall be amended to make 'choice from a drop-down menu'. Thirdly, there should be a facility for people to say they are 'casteless', without fear of losing out on opportunities. A whole new younger generation, has outgrown the caste syndrome. The exercise should not push them back in time. These are all matters of implementation which can be handled. My fear is the implications. Caste surveys done in the past have raised demands for increased reservations to match their percentage in the population.

THE CHANGE



The transcending of caste from being a 'social entity' to a 'political entity' is the change we are witnessing

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(A)	(B)	(D)	(C)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)
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