Modi talking only about himself on campaign trail: Rahul

DAKOR (GUJ), DEC 10 /--/Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi today accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of dumping the development agenda and talking only about himself during campaigning for the Gujarat polls. Gandhi, who began his second day of campaigning for the second phase polls after offering prayers at Lord Krishna's Ranchhod Raiji Mandir here, claimed Modi frequently changed the election planks and now the prime minister was left with nothing to speak about.

The BJP started its campaign on the issue of the Narmada. After 4-5 days, the public said they were not getting the river water, the Congress leader noted.

"The BJP took a right turn. It said the election will not be contested on Narmada ... let's contest it on the issue of other backward classes (OBCs). "But then the OBCs said the BJP government did not do anything for them. After five-six days, the BJP made a sharp left turn and said it would take out development yatra and talk about 22 years of development," he added. The Congress leader said he listened to the PM's speech yesterday in which "Modiji talked about Modiji for 90 per cent of the time...First right turn, then left turn, then apply brakes". "The election is not about Modiji, nor is it about me. It is neither about the BJP nor the Congress. This election is about the future of the people of Gujarat," he said.

Criticising Modi over his election rallies which run parallel to his public meetings ahead of the second phase of the polls, Gandhi accused the prime minister of not talking his future plans for the state and keeping mum on the issue of "corruption."

He also questioned the prime minister over his silence on the agitations by various communities, including Patels, Dalits, anganwadi workers, among others. Gandhi said the truth had caught up with the BJP and it could go nowhere from here. He also asked Congress workers not to use "wrong words" against the prime minister and said his party will defeat him and the BJP with "love and sweet words". The Congress leader attacked Modi over demonetisation and GST, saying the note ban helped all "thieves" convert their "black money into white" and the "Gabbar Singh Tax" destroyed small businesses and rendered one lakh people jobless. "For 60-70 minutes Modiji talks about himself but does not utter a word about note ban and Gabbar Singh. I was sitting in a tea shop. The tea seller said, Rahulji, I am making Rs 50 instead of Rs 100 I made before GST. He (Modi) has caused us 50 per cent loss," Gandhi said. Gandhi also raised the issue of BJP president Amit Shah's son Jay Shah's business dealings whereby he allegedly "converted Rs 50,000 into Rs 80 crore", and the Rafale fighter jet deal. "You must have observed Modiji does not talk about corruption in his speeches. He made you stand in the queue and imposed the Gabbar Singh Tax," he said. "Earlier he used to say 'na khaunga na khane dunga'. Now he does not utter a word on corruption," Gandhi added. (PTI)

Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi addressing a public meeting during election campaign at Dakor in Gujarat on Sunday.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu being received by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami on his arrival at Chennai Airport on Sunday.

JKLF chief Yasin Malik detained in J-K

SRINAGAR, DEC 10 /--/ JKLF chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik was today detained as he tried to take out a march towards the local office of the United Nations here to protest alleged human rights violations in Kashmir.

Malik reached near the Lal Chowk city centre here and tried to march towards the office of United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) at Sonwar, a police official said. The march was foiled by the police who detained Malik and took him to Kothi Bagh police station, he said.

The separatists on Thursday had asked people to observe a shutdown and march towards the office of UNMOGIP to protest the "gross human rights violations".

"On December 10, the international human rights day, Kashmiris will observe a complete shut down and blackout against gross human rights violations," the separatists, under the banner of Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL), had said in a statement. The JRL comprises of Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik. (PTI)

Drug rehab centre gives new lease of life to addicts

JAMMU, DEC 10 /--/ Offering a ray of hope to drug addicted youth, the police drug de-addiction and rehabilitation centre here has helped cure 94 per cent of the nearly 7,000 persons since it started operations four years ago. The centre, initially with a staff strength of six, was set up as a counseling centre in April 2013 to help drug addicts overcome the problem and has now turned into a full- fledged round-the-clock 20 bedded hospital. Dozens of youth and their family members were present at the centre on Saturday as part of an interaction programme with Director General of state Police S P Vaid, who advised them to remain steadfast in their resolve to give up drugs for their own good and the society.

Funded by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs under civil action programme, the centre has attended to 6,976 patient in outpatient department till date, of whom 279 including 38 police personnel availed indoor facility which was started in December last year, in-charge of the Centre Gurmeet Kour told PTI. The doctor, a de-addiction expert, said 219 of the indoor patients were addicted to poly drug abuse like heroin, while 59 were alcoholics. She said 56 patients left against medical advice and 17 others discharged on request but only 12 cases of relapse were reported since December last year.

"The recovery rate of the centre is 94 per cent, which is a big achievement.It is the direct result of coordinated efforts and the support of police department, Kour, who is heading a 19-member staff including yoga and meditation experts, said. Superintendent of Police, headquarters, R C Kotwal said there are four types of drug abusers in Jammu and its peripheries with heroin users marking a steady increase over the past couple of years which is "most dangerous". The first category is of those who are using prescribed drugs like capsules, tablets, injections and cough syrups and mostly transporters are involved in it, he said adding charas and ganja, which is smuggled from Chattisgarh, Odisha and parts of south Kashmir, are the most common.

Gayatri Devi's grandchildren her legal heirs: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 /--/ The Delhi High Court has ruled that Rajmata Gayatri Devi's two grandchildren will be her legal heirs and overruled its earlier decision whereby it had said that the two stepsons of the late maharani of Jaipur were also entitled for a share in her property. The dispute had arisen following the death of Gayatri Devi as to who would stake claim over her property. Her grandchildren Devraj and Lalitya had earlier moved the high court saying their father Jagat Singh was the son of Gayatri Devi and late Maharaj Sawai Man Singh. Jagat Singh, who was married to Mom Rajawongse Priyanandana Rangsit of Thailand, died leaving a will that Gayatri Devi would be the owner of all his properties.

Later, Gayatri Devi, who died on July 29, 2009, left a will saying her grandchildren Devraj and Lalitya, currently residing in Bangkok, would inherit all her properties, they had told the high court. The recent order by Justice S Ravindra Bhat came on a review petition by the two grandchildren challenging a 2010 decision of this court allowing two separate applications for impleadment as heirs of Gayatri Devi. While one plea was filed by Devraj and Lalitya, the other application was moved by Gayatri Devi's stepsons Prithvi Raj Singh and Jai Singh, who were born from another wife of Maharaj Sawai Man Singh. Her grandchildren contended that only they were entitled to succeed her share as they were the children of late Jagat Singh, who was her predeceased son, and the only class-I legal heirs under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956.

They had also said that Prithvi Raj Singh and Jai Singh were the children of late Sawai Man Singh through another wife and could not be treated as Gayatri Devi's heirs. Their submissions were countered by Prithvi Raj and Jai Singh who relied upon the will of Jagat Singh, allegedly excluding his children from succession to his properties. It was submitted that though Devraj and Lalitya might, in the normal circumstances have been the heirs of Gayatri Devi as children of Jagat Singh, they have to be excluded as her successors because they were disinherited by their father. The court, however, set aside its October 19, 2010 order and allowed the review petition and said "Devraj and Lalitya Kumari are to be treated as legal representatives of late Gayatri Devi".

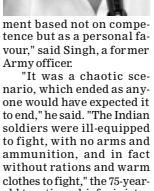
It also relied on a Supreme Court judgement saying the verdict was decisive on the question that stepchildren cannot be equated to children. "... Therefore, the question of other indiviuals, claiming to succeed to Gayatri Devi's will, cannot arise. For the foregoing reasons, it is held that the review petition has to succeed. It is allowed. The order dated October 19, 2010, is therefore, set aside."The present applicants - Devraj and Lalitya Kumari - are to be treated as legal representatives of late Gayatri Devi," the bench said.The Supreme Court, in September 2015, had upheld the verdict of the Delhi High Court allowing transfer of some shares of Gayatri Devi to Devraj and Lalitya Kumari. (PTI)

Illegal religious structures near Metro: HC seeks DDA reply

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 /--/ The Delhi High Court has sought response of the DDA and civic bodies here on a PIL for removal of illegal religious structures existing near metro stations. A bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice C Hari Shankar issued notice to the land owning agency and the civic bodies and sought a status report. It also asked the authorities to ensure that there are no encroachments on public land or near the metro stations, as pointed out by the petitioner. The court directed the agencies to place their status report before April 10 next year, the next date of hearing. The NGO Fight for Human Rights through its lawyer K R Chitra moved the court seeking direction to the agencies to initiate necessary steps to stop and discourage illegal construction and encroachments on public land and near metro stations. It also sought immediately removal or demolishing of illegal religious construction existing below Nirman Vihar and Sarita Vihar Metro stations here.

The plea alleged that there is a temple built illegally adjacent to the DTC bus stop in Defence Colony. It said that the illegal structures cause obstruction in free movement of pedestrians and vehicles. (PTI)

Delhi kept its eyes closed to China threat in 1962: Amarinder



CHANDIGARH, DEC 9 (PTI) The Indian Army was not equipped to handle the 1962 Indo-China war with New Delhi closing its eyes to the looming threat from Beijing, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh claimed today. He called upon the present political establishment to ensure that the defence forces were fully prepared, "in view of the fresh signs of aggression from the country's eastern border". Blaming New Delhi for India's humiliating defeat in 1962, Singh, according to an official release, said, "The entire atmosphere in New Delhi was then of negation, with nobody ready to believe that the Chinese invasion was imminent despite the signs being loud and clear."

Speaking at a panel discussion on 'Sino-Indian Conflict 1962 on the concluding day of the Military Literature Festival here, Singh said, in response to a question, that the war ended the way everyone had expected it to end. Pinning the blame for the defeat on the government's policy and the alleged complete intelligence failure, the chief minister said India did not go into the battle with adequate preparation, the release quoted him as having said. "...the political masters in Delhi put men of their choice in key positions, with even the Corps Commander handpicked by the government based not on competence but as a personal favour," said Singh, a former Army officer.

"It was a chaotic scenario, which ended as anyone would have expected it to end," he said. "The Indian soldiers were ill-equipped to fight, with no arms and ammunition, and in fact without rations and warm clothes to fight," the 75-year-old two-time chief minister claimed, recalling that the soldiers were, at one time, surviving on water and salt. He said that though trends have changed, so has the style of Army's functioning, and the current situation at the border with China continued to be as volatile as it was in 1962. "It is up to the government at the Centre to ensure that our soldiers are properly equipped to counter the fresh threat," he added. "The 1962 war was a wake-up call for India, which should learn its lessons from the mistakes committed then," he added. (PTI)

India's first Military Literature Festival concludes

CHANDIGARH, DEC 10 /--/ India's first of its kind Military Literature Festival today concluded in Chandigarh, with Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh expressing hope it would prove instrumental in motivating the youth to join the Army. Delivering the valedictory address at the festival, Singh said though he was in favour of organising a historical literature festival, Punjab Governor V P S Badnore wanted a military literature festival in Chandigarh to raise awareness among people about the legacy of the armed forces, and rekindle among youth the motivating spirit to join the Indian Army.

Singh, a former Army captain, said being a part of the defence forces was a matter of pride and every youngster should be imbued with the spirit to join the forces. He highlighted the contribution of the Armed Forces in safeguarding India's unity, integrity and sovereignty. Noting that as a student of history he has always been passionate to relive the major episodes relating to the role of Punjabis, Singh promised that the festival would be scaled up in coming years to reach out effectively to more people and help imbibe a sense of patriotism and nationalism among the people, including the youth.

Speaking at 'National Security Strategy' panel discussion earlier in the day, former Army chief Gen. V P Malik called for the involvement of civilians to prevent terrorist attacks. Gen. Malik touched on multiple aspects of security, including internal and external, infiltration from Pakistan, new challenges posed by China and cybercrime, the expensive combat conventional strategy, insurgency and the role of the three armed forces.

A session on the 'Indo-Pak War 1965' saw the main speakers debate the rights and wrongs of the war, with Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Badal joining retired Army officers in highlighting some of the key developments of that time. Writer-historian William Dalrymple gave the audience an insight into the intrigues in Maharaja Ranjit's darbar. He spoke about the military techniques adopted by the British and Indians during the 17th and 18th centuries. He attributed the weakening of the empires of Ranjit Singh and Tipu Sultan in the face of the British onslaught to a lack of unity, leadership and resources.(PTI)

Judiciary doing local bodies' statutory duty as they don't: HC

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 /--/ The Delhi High Court has said that local bodies are not performing their statutory duty like cleaning of drains and preventing felling of trees, forcing the judiciary to do that job as well. The observation by a bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice C Hari Shankar came while hearing a PIL alleging lack of proper facilities for discharge of sewage and disposal of garbage dumped by residents of a slum in Civil Lines area of north Delhi. "If you (local authorities) had done your statutory duty, we could have done our statutory duty. But we are doing your statutory duty," the bench said. The court issued notice to the Centre, the Delhi government, its departments of forest and environment, the police, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) and the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB)

and sought their replies by March 7.

The PIL by a lawyer who resides in the area near the slum also alleged that the residents of the jhuggi jhopri (JJ) colony are illegally felling trees, openly defecating and poaching animals in a nearby vacant forested land at Khyber Paas in the Civil Lines area. Petitioner Sanjucta Kabasi claimed that the activities of the slum residents are harmful to public health apart from causing harm to the flora and fauna of the area. She sought imposition of heavy fines on the local authorities -- DPCC, NDMC, police and Delhi government -- for not taking any action despite the repeated complaints made by her regarding the problems raised in the petition. She also sought directions to the DUSIB to relocate and resettle the slum cluster apart from action against the residents of the colony. While seeking the response of the authorities, the court also directed the forest department of the Delhi government to ensure there is no illegal or unauthorised felling of trees in the area. (PTI)