

Alpesh Thakor sits on day-long fast

*Claims innocence over attacks on migrants

AHMEDABAD, OCT 11—/Congress MLA Alpesh Thakor, who is facing heat over the violence against hindi-speaking migrants in Gujarat, began his day-long fast here Thursday to promote "peace and harmony" among people.

While admitting that "someone may have said something" against migrants, he claimed that the real culprits were those who politicised the entire issue.

Since the rape of a 14-month-old girl in Sabarkantha district on September 28 and the arrest of a labourer hailing from Bihar for the crime, six districts in Gujarat saw sporadic incidents of violence against hindi-speaking people.

The attacks led to exodus of over 60,000 migrants, mostly from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

In his address at the 'Sadbhavana Ugras' (fast for goodwill) venue near his residence in Ranip area, Thakor asserted he never indulged in spreading hatred.

"I am not at all spreading hatred. I am not that kind of person. We (Thakor community) are pure at heart. It is possible that someone may have said something (against migrants), but we do not harbour any grudge against anyone. We never indulged in violence. We never in any way... the Congress MLA said. Thakor, who heads a community outfit named 'Gujarat Kshatriya Thakor Sena', said some people were indulging in politics over the issue. "We all need to make sure that Gujarat's image does not get tarnished. No one is migrant... the word itself is wrong. I think some people are politicising the issue. This is an attempt to break the country. Dividing people in the name of states is something I or my people will never do," he said.

Earlier, following the rape of the 14-month-old girl, Thakor had publicly blamed a "non-Gujarati" for the crime. Referring to the incident, the MLA from Radhanpur constituency on Thursday claimed that he and

his people were branded "anti-nationals" for demanding justice for the girl. "I will never allow this poison of division to spread among people in Gujarat... I think such incidents are part of a conspiracy to malign Gujarat's image. This is a conspiracy to create enmity among poor people," he said. "We only demanded justice for the 14-month-old girl. But, we were labelled as anti-nationals. We are not like that. We may have committed some mistakes, but we are not those who harass poor people. Ultimately, we all are Indians. Stop maligning our image," Thakor said.

Although police have arrested several members of the Thakor Sena in connection with the attacks on hindi-speaking people and also named the outfit in some of the FIRs, the Congress legislator claimed that police were harassing "innocent" youths from his community. "It is the state government's responsibility to arrest people if they are involved. But, at least do

not politicise the issue. We are not culprits. Many innocent Thakor youths are wrongfully arrested," he alleged. Before starting his fast Thakor visited the Sabarmati Ashram and paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

Thakor told reporters that he will visit other states to spread the message of peace and harmony and urged the members of his community to invite migrants at their homes or visit them to build an atmosphere of trust. Congress MLA was caught in a controversy after a video went viral in which he was purportedly seen speaking against migrant workers. Authorities said on Wednesday that the number of hindi-speaking migrant workers leaving Gujarat has come down after they were reassured about their safety in the state.

Police and district officials held meetings with migrant workers and factory owners at several places and told them that they need not worry about their safety (PTI)



External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj departs for Dushanbe on two-day visit to Tajikistan, in New Delhi on Thursday

RSS leaders moved SC in 2006, seeking entry of all women into Sabarimala, says minister

KOCHI, OCT 11—/Kerala Devaswom Minister Kadakampally Surendran Thursday sought to turn the tables on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on the Sabarimala issue, claiming that hardcore Sangh leaders had moved the Supreme Court 12 years ago, seeking entry of women of all ages into the hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa.

He also equated the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) five-day march from Pandalam to Thiruvananthapuram on the issue with the "trith yatra" organised by the saffron party to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh.

Surendran's statement came amid mounting protests in Kerala against the government's alleged hasty move to implement the apex court order, allowing the entry of women of all age-groups into Sabarimala.

In Thiruvananthapuram, a march by the Yuva Morcha activists to the residence of Surendran turned violent Thursday, leading to the police using water cannons and tear-gas shells to disperse the crowd. The trouble started when the activists tried to break the barricades put up by the police a few metres from the minister's house.

Playing the BJP's "Save Sabarimala Yatra", which commenced Wednesday, Surendran, a CPI(M) leader, said, "The long march reminds us of the old Rath Yatra of the

BJP." "Hardcore RSS leaders had approached the Supreme Court 12 years ago, seeking entry of women of all age-groups into Sabarimala," the minister claimed and alleged that the Sangh Parivar was trying to gain political advantage by misleading people. He also urged the protesters to be calm till the Supreme Court took a decision on the review petitions filed by various organisations.

Certain modes of agitation like putting up roadblocks was against the wishes of Lord Ayyappa, the minister said. Rallies, marches and roadblocks marked the protests staged by Hindu outfits Wednesday against the Left Democratic Front-led Kerala government's decision to implement the Supreme Court verdict on Sabarimala. State BJP president P S Sreedharan Pillai has accused the LDF government of trying to divide the Hinduus "to defeat" the movement of the Lord Ayyappa devotees against its decision to hurriedly implement the Supreme Court order.

The Congress, the BJP, besides various Hindu organisations, have launched protests, demanding that the state government file a review petition against the verdict. But the Left government has maintained that it will not go in for a review of the ruling. The apex court, in its verdict on September 28, had allowed the entry of women of all ages into the Sabarimala shrine. (PTI)

Centre to draw up recommendations on urban flooding: Official

NEW DELHI, OCT 11—/Concerned with the rise in instances of urban flooding in the country, the Centre has decided to draw up recommendations on how cities should deal with such a situation, an official said on Thursday.

Union housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said there is need to devise a system to anticipate natural disaster and make preparations accordingly to deal with.

The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) on Thursday held a workshop 'Urban Flood Resilience' where experts suggested a number of ways to tackle the issue. After attending the workshop, Puri told reporters that there has been an increasing trend of urban flood disasters in the country in past few years. "In Kerala we had serious flood. Issues were raised again on whether we are prepared sufficiently to deal with such situation," Puri said. According to the ministry, recommendations to be drawn up to tackle urban flooding will be based on categories such as early warning for natural disaster, preparedness for emergency and planning for disaster reduction. According to NIUA's Twitter handle, Puri, while addressing the workshop said, "We need to map emergency services and make the information available to people." An official of the NIUA said once the recommendations are drawn up, they will be sent to states. NIUA Director Jagan Shukh stressed on the need for better coordination between different departments in states during natural disaster. (PTI)

Yuvamorcha activists block min's convoy

*LDF says stir to 'destabilise' gov't

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCT 11—/As the Sabarimala issue heats up, a march by Yuvamorcha activists Thursday to the house of Kerala Devaswom Minister Kadakampally Surendran here turned violent, leading to police using water cannons and tear gas shells to disperse the crowd.

The trouble started when the activists tried to break barricades put up by police a few meters away from the minister's house.

Reacting to the incident, the ruling CPI(M) alleged that the ongoing stir over the Sabarimala issue by the opposition BJP and Congress along with other outfits was to destabilise the LDF-led state government.

Addressing a press conference here after an LDF meeting, Front Convener A Vijayaraghavan said the nature of the stir, which included blocking the minister's convoy, "insulting" the chief minister and attacking Travancore Devaswom Board offices, indicated that the effort was to sidestep the LDF government.

Alleging that the stir was to create trouble at a time when the LDF government was being praised for its relief work after the massive floods in the state last month,

SABARIMALA ISSUE

Vijayaraghavan said the opposition parties were using the Supreme Court verdict (on Sabarimala) as a tool to attack the government.

With a view to counter the "false propaganda" unleashed by the Opposition over the issue, LDF would convene public meetings in all 14 districts this month to explain the stand of the government and the LDF, he said.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will address the meetings here on October 16, at Pathanamthitta on October 23 and at Kollam on October 24, the LDF convener said.

The government cannot reject the apex court order and it is bound to implement the same, Vijayaraghavan



asserted. Meanwhile, BJP state president P S Sreedharan Pillai, who addressed the "long march" launched by NDA with the slogan of 'Save Sabarimala' at Noornad in Allpuzha district, claimed that the march was getting massive support from the general public.

A sit-in by some Hindu outfits, demanding that the government go in for a review petition against the apex court order permitting entry of women of all ages into the

Lord Ayappa temple at the hill shrine, continued.

The Congress, BJP and various Hindu organisations have launched protests, demanding that the state government file review petition against the Supreme Court verdict. But the Left government has maintained that it will not go in for a review of the ruling. The apex court in its September 28 verdict had allowed entry of women of all ages into the Sabarimala shrine. (PTI)

Sushil Modi's 'Lalu Leela' released in Patna

PATNA, OCT 11—/Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi has come out with a near 200-page book titled "Lalu Leela", documenting "bonami" land deals allegedly involving the RJD national president and his family members. The book was released at a programme in Patna Thursday.

It is a compilation of documents distributed to media persons by Modi in the past one year on acquisitions of properties made allegedly by Lalu Prasad and

his family. "Lalu Leela" carries blurbs by Union ministers Arun Jaitley and Nitin Gadkari, who have praised Modi's "courage" to bring before the public the tales of corruption. The preface has been penned by another Union minister, Ravi Shankar Prasad. He praises Modi for his over 40 press conferences since April 2017 to "expose the wrongdoings of the Lalu family". He says, the change of regime in Bihar on July 27, 2017 was a result of the tireless efforts of Sushil Modi. Modi's alle-

gations against Lalu Prasad's family had triggered a political uproar last year in Bihar, then ruled by the Grand Alliance comprising the RJD, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) and the Congress.

Rattled by demands of resignation of Tejashwi Yadav, Lalu Prasad's younger son who was the Deputy chief minister, Kumar resigned from his post in July and walked out of the Grand Alliance. A day after, he formed a new government with the BJP

and Modi became the deputy chief minister of Bihar. Several Union ministers and state leaders, including Ravi Shankar Prasad and Shah Nawaz Hussain, attended the book launch. The RJD and its ally Hindustani Awam Morcha have alleged that Modi "depends on Lalu for his own political survival". RJD national spokesman Manoj Jha said "even if Sushil Modi were to get re-born seven times, he would never be able to match the stature of Lalu Prasad". (PTI)

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Wordwheel

No. 28

Insert the missing letter to complete an eight-letter word reading clockwise or anticlockwise. Solution No. 27: REFOREST

5x5

Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.

No. 27

M	L	L	Y	
R	R	N		
R	V	N		
T	A			
H	R	S		

OUR SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 26 (Other combinations may occasionally be possible.)

Reference: C.O.D. 1995

WORD-BUILDER

27

T	U	E
S	P	

How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

TODAY'S GOALS:
Good - 8 Excellent - 13 Amazing - 18

SOLUTION 26: amp, amps, map, maps, maw, maws, paw, paws, samp, sap, saw, spa, swam, swamp, swap, was, wasp