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PM 'ready' to pay political price for steps taken for better India

■ Asks media to shun negativity and focus on country's success stories



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing a gathering in New Delhi on Thursday

NEW DELHI, NOV 30 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said that he was ready for the big political price he will have to pay for the steps he has taken for the betterment of the country, in a reference to decisions taken to curb black money. Modi also said that his government is committed to developing a development-centric economic system which is free of corrup-

tion and is citizen centric. Addressing a gathering here, he said that post demonetisation, black money, which was part of a parallel economy, has now become part of the formal system. Inaugurating a summit here, the Prime Minister said data mining after the note ban is also helping government track down those involved in corruption. Appreciating the role of Aadhaar

in delivering services to the people and also checking pilferages, he said the system would also work as a tool to track down benami properties. "The day the country will have a technical and digital address for all monetary transactions, organised corruption would be checked to a great extent. I am aware of the big political price I will have to pay for the steps I have taken, the path I have chosen and the destination I want to take the country to. But I am ready for it," the Prime Minister stated. Modi also used the opportunity to hit out at the previous Congress-led UPA government, saying that when the NDA took over in 2014, the "legacy" it got was in the form of a poor fiscal order, banking system, economy and governance. In an apparent dig at the media, he said the situation then was not described "harshly". "The headline was 'policy paralysis... things were described in discount words. No harsher words were used to describe the situation," he noted. The Prime Minister said during the rule of the previous government, "corruption was the norm (bhrashtachar hi shishtachar tha)... I understand that no magic can change the country... but we cannot sit doing nothing... people who do nothing are filled with a sense of dejection... this approach prevents us from taking risks," he said. Modi said for the past 70 years, people were fighting the system. "The system was a hurdle in development, success. My effort and commitment is that the people's struggle with the system

should end and ease of living should go up," he said. The Prime Minister said the introduction of LED bulbs has helped save Rs 14,000 crore. "You would not believe the figure... had the government introduced a scheme (with an outlay of) Rs 14,000 crore, I would have secured a vote bank of middle income group (people) for the next 50 years," he said. The Prime Minister said no one would have stopped the previous government from implementing such schemes. "But we won't be stopped," he asserted. The Prime Minister today invoked late President APJ Abdul Kalam to urge the media to give up negativity and focus on positive developments to help give direction to the country. The Prime Minister also said that each institution involved in nation building should identify challenges before the country and resolve to solve these at their respective levels by 2022, when the country completes 75 years of independence. "He (Kalam) had few years ago asked why our media is so negative? These are not my words, (he had said) why is that in India, we are embarrassed of our capabilities and achievements? "We are a great country, we have unprecedented stories of success. Still, we refuse to accept them. Why it is so? These were Kalam's words," Modi said. The Prime Minister suggested that the media can discuss the issue in seminars and their newsrooms to bring about an "irreversible change". "I urge the media to be resolute and also inspire others.

Chidambaram asks Modi if Govt's chief economic adviser is also 'stupid'

NEW DELHI, NOV 30 /--/ Former Union finance minister P Chidambaram today responded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for criticising the Congress party after it demanded an 18-per cent cap on GST rates, saying whether the government's Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) was "stupid" for having a similar view. "If it is Grand Stupid Thought to argue for a cap of the tax rate at 18%, then CEA Dr Arvind Subramanian and many other economists are stupid. Is that what PM is saying?" Chidambaram said in a series of tweets. Modi, who addressed four back-to-back election rallies in Gujarat on Wednesday, targeted Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Chidambaram responded to the criticism saying, "Has PM read the CEA's report on Revenue Neutral Rate? Did not CEA recommend an RNR of 15-15.5%? Why can't the normal GST rate be 15% and RNR plus rate on luxury goods be 18%?" he asked. The senior Congress leader said tax and spend is the "credo" of the BJP government. "Example: when crude oil prices fell by 50 per cent, prices of petrol and diesel remained the same."

Mamata asks people to remain alert against BJP's 'evil design'

GOSABA, NOV 30 /--/ West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today accused the BJP of trying to destabilise the state administration and asked people to be alert against provocation that might foment communal problem in the state.

Addressing a gathering after her brief meeting with the South 24 Parganas district administration here, Mamata also asked police officials to remain alert on the issue. "I must tell you repeatedly to keep a close vigil in your locality, specially on any outsider or stranger. If you see anything odd, draw the attention of the police immediately," she said. The Trinamool Congress supremo cautioned people not to fall into any trap of provocation or false campaign that might invite bitterness and enmity among people. Attacking the BJP, she said: "There is a government at the Centre that is more busy in

giving lectures than doing works to benefit the people." "The BJP is also in the habit of engineering riots or a similar situation in a peaceful state where the party does not have base," Mamata alleged. The chief minister also criticised the erstwhile Left Front Government for allegedly leaving the state debt-trapped. Announcing a number of development programmes for the Sundarbans, she said a new district would soon be created bifurcating the existing South 24 Parganas district. Elaborating various development programmes undertaken by her government in the state, Mamata said: "Our government has not done anything which might hurt people belonging to any particular religion, caste or creed." The chief minister also asked her party workers and leaders to work together forgetting differences among themselves.



DHAKA, NOV 30 /--/ A Bangladeshi court today ordered the arrest of former prime minister Khaleda Zia for skipping a scheduled appearance as the main accused in a graft case, the third such warrant issued against the country's main opposition BNP chief in less than two months. Court

B'deshi court orders Khaleda Zia's arrest

officials said 72-year-old Zia was supposed to resume delivering her unfinished statement defending herself before the Dhaka's Fifth Special Court in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. However, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) instead announced a country-wide demonstration where it called the court order "politically motivated" and a part of a plan by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League-led government. "The judge (of Dhaka's Fifth Special Court) issued the arrest warrant as she failed to

appear as scheduled in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case once again," a court official said. This was the third such warrant against the ex-premier since October 10 when two courts in Dhaka separately ordered her arrest after she failed to appear before them as she was in London on a private visit. She subsequently obtained bail, surrendering before the courts on her return home, he said. Zia earlier claimed that cases filed against her to be "false, motivated and imaginary made up" and aimed at harassing her.

Why should Gujaratis pay for your financial mismanagement, Rahul questions PM

NEW DELHI, NOV 30 /--/ Continuing his attack against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi today asked him why the people of Gujarat should pay the price for his "financial mismanagement and publicity". Rahul, who began his 'one question a day' series on Wednesday with the BJP's promises in the last polls, today focused on Gujarat's debt burden. "My second question to Prime Minister on the state of affairs in Gujarat. In 1995, total debt on Gujarat was Rs 9,183 crore. In 2017, the total debt on Gujarat was 2.41 lakh crore. That means a debt of Rs 37,000 on every Gujarati. Why should the people of Gujarat pay up the price for your financial mismanagement and publicity", he tweeted. In the first of the posers ahead of the Gujarat Assembly polls on December 9 and 14, Rahul had sought accountability from the ruling BJP for the promises it made to the state during the last polls. 22 salon ka hisaab, Gujarat mange jawaab (Gujarat demands answers for 22 years of BJP rule, the Congress leader tweeted on Wednesday. He went on to ask Modi whether it would take 45 more years to provide new houses to Gujaratis, as the incumbent BJP government had provided only 4.72 lakh houses in the last five years against the promised 50 lakh.



Pope Francis inspects guards of honour after arriving at the airport in Dhaka —Reuters

Bengal CM trying to finish Gorkhaland movement: Gurung

NEW DELHI, NOV 30 /--/ Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) leader Bimal Gurung today claimed in the Supreme Court that West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee was trying to break his party to finish the movement for separate statehood. The apex court said the movement was one thing, but no one can be allowed to take law into his own hand. Gurung told a bench comprising Justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan that he has been framed in several fake cases and if allowed to surrender, then he will be in jail for a decade and entire movement will be finished. He sought handing over of the probe to a central agency like CBI or NIA and claimed to have a video showing the state police planting an AK-47 rifle in his house. "There are difference of opinion between me and chief minister of West Bengal. Effort is being made to break my party and pop up a new leader. If today I am given to the police, then I will be in jail for another decade and the whole movement will be finished," senior advocate P S Patwalia, appearing for Gurung, said. He claimed that movements for separate states were occurring "everywhere and new states are being carved out". Patwalia said if the impression goes out that "I have been treated unfairly and wronged, then this would create more unrest in Darjeeling and hence these case be referred to CBI. He said that recently, multiple FIRs lodged by West Bengal police over violence in hills have a pattern and have same mistakes, same language and same format. "These are all fake FIRs have showing a possibility of frameup," the senior advocate said adding that main flash point of confrontation was that the GJM had opposed the state government's move to make the Bengali language mandatory in schools in West Bengal. "This is a big issue in hills and the people were opposed to it," Patwalia said. The hearing remained inconclusive and the bench listed the matter for December 4.

AT A GLANCE

Pope arrives in B'desh

DHAKA: Pope Francis today arrived in Bangladesh on a historic visit to the Muslim-majority country during which the raging issue of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar is likely to figure prominently. A red carpet welcome was accorded to the 80-year-old pontiff who arrived here on a special plane for a three-day visit after wrapping up his Myanmar tour during which he sent out a message that justice and human rights are the foundation of peace, in an apparent reference to the Rohingya crisis.

China's decision on Doklam

BEIJING: The Chinese military today hinted at maintaining sizable presence of its troops near the area of Doklam standoff during winter, asserting that the region is in Chinese territory. India and China resolved the 73-day tense standoff on August 28 at Doklam area after the People's Liberation Army (PLA) stopped building a strategic road close to India's narrow Chicken Neck area connecting to North-Eastern states. Bhutan also claims the Doklam area to be its part.

Saurav's fake FB account

KOLKATA: The Kolkata Police has started an investigation into a complaint filed by former India captain Saurav Ganguly that fake face book page and accounts have been created in his, his wife Dona's and daughter Sana's name and that they should be immediately removed. "We have told face book authorities to block and remove the accounts and we will soon take necessary action against the miscreants," Vishal Garg, Joint CP, crime, today said while briefing the media at Lalbazaar.

Akhilesh, Azam in city on Dec 2

KOLKATA: Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, his former cabinet colleague and party general secretary Azam Khan, MP Dimple Yadav are among senior SP leaders who will attend the party's state level delegate conference to be held at Mahajati Sadan in Kolkata on December 2. So far state level conferences used to be held every three years but now according to the party's amended constitution state level conferences will be held every five years. At present the SP in West Bengal has 1.25 lakh primary members.

Padmavati: Director, CBFC chief appear before MPs panels

NEW DELHI, NOV 30 /--/ "Padmavati" director Sanjay Leela Bhansali today appeared before a parliamentary standing committee on information technology to share his views on the controversy surrounding the film. The panel, which also looks into the issues of the information and broadcasting ministry, had called the meeting to discuss the problems and issues faced by the film. It is headed by BJP MP Anurag Thakur and its members are senior BJP leader LK Advani and film actor Raj Babbar,

a Congress leader. Various Rajput groups and political leaders have accused Bhansali of distorting history in the movie by using a romantic dream sequence between the Rajput queen Padmini and Sultan Alauddin Khilji, a claim repeatedly denied by the filmmaker. Historians are divided over whether Padmini actually existed. The Deepika Padukone-Shahid Kapoor-Ranveer Singh film was earlier scheduled to release on December 1. The makers have deferred the release till

they receive a certificate from the CBFC. They recently applied for 3D certification. Meanwhile, CBFC chief Prasoon Joshi, who is also scheduled to appear before the parliamentary standing committee on IT, told the Lok Sabha Committee on Petitions that the censor board had only cleared the trailer and promos of the period film. Some panel members expressed their opposition to the trailer and said it should be banned along with the film, it is learnt. Sources said the CBFC

chief told the panel that he had not seen the film as yet. When some members opposed to the film also asked how the film had reached the UK when it had not been approved here, the CBFC chief explained that it was an independent process. According to procedure, a regional committee would review the film. If necessary, a central committee would then take a view. A final decision would be taken after consulting experts. The Lok Sabha Committee on Petitions had sought a re-



port from the information and broadcasting ministry and the censor board after CP Joshi and Om Birla, two BJP MPs from Rajasthan, filed a plea on "objectionable content" in the film before the panel. The officials, sources said, were of the view that controversies are often created for commercial purposes though it was not clear in this case. ('Padmavati' director Sanjay Leela Bhansali (L) and Central Board of Film Certification chief Prasoon Joshi)