

A HANDFUL OF CORRUPT OFFICIALS HAVE CAPTURED THE CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE, ALLEGES MODI

Modi Slams B.J., Triamool For 'Corruption And Slow Growth'

In Odisha, the prime minister again appealed for a double engine government



Our Political Bureau

New Delhi | Kolkata: Prime Minister Narendra Modi charged the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government in Odisha and the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC regime in West Bengal with corruption and an extremely slow pace of growth which has kept its farmers, youth and tribals in poverty and degradation for the last 25 years. In his election campaign in Odisha, Modi sought votes for BJP to establish a double-engine government that would lift the state from its misery.



Modi with BJP's Puri candidate, Sambit Patra, on Monday

Modi with BJP's Puri candidate, Sambit Patra, on Monday. He said, adding that the BJD ministers have done crores of things but have deprived the people of the benefits of the state's resources. The Centre gave Rs 2,000 crore to Odisha from the Mineral Fund, he declared, but this money meant for the development of schools and village roads did not reach the intended beneficiaries due to the corruption of the BJD government. "BJD has not given anything to Odisha. Farmers, youth and tribals are struggling for a better life. The tribal areas are resource-rich but are still in poverty. Those who have destroyed Odisha should not be forgiven," Modi said. He charged that such a rich state with a great heritage has been destroyed, which is painful. "The BJD government, which is completely in the grip of the corrupt, is responsible for this. A handful of corrupt officials have captured the chief minister's office and the entire government. Even the minor leaders of BJD have become very rich," Modi said.

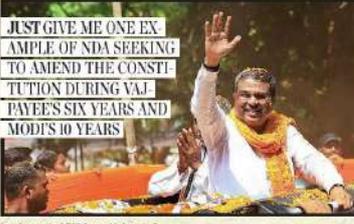
Modi said, "Congress is a sinking ship and Triamool is accompanying them. There is already a hole in their ship and they will drown." Modi said at a rally in Bengal's Durgam.

"Triamool's revenge is at its peak as the people of Bengal are not voting for them. So, sometimes they attack the BJP and Congress. Till yesterday, Triamool was attacking Congress and now they are trying to go with the Congress. Drowning of this ship is obvious," he said. Coming down heavily on corruption, he alleged that "Triamool has fixed rate cards for everything. Schools have not been spared. The Triamool ministers have auctioned jobs, putting the future of the next generation at stake."

ET Q&A

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN UNION MINISTER

'BJP Never Initiated Alliance Talks with BJD'



JUST GIVE ME ONE EX-AMPLE OF NDA SEEKING TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION DURING VAJ-PAYEE'S SIX YEARS AND MODI'S 10 YEARS

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who is contesting from Sambalpur, said the Opposition shouldn't have any issue if the BJP is ambitious. We are going to the people with our strategy and policy. They can also set a target.

On Opposition's accusations regarding the Constitution: Give me one example of the NDA trying to make changes in the Constitution during the six years of the Jayaprakash government and 10 years of the Modi government. On the other hand, it is the Congress which has distorted the Constitution several times. During the Emergency, they attacked the fundamental right to speak and attacked the media's freedom.

On contesting elections and BJP's prospects in Odisha: (I) last contested the LS election in 2009. As a BJP worker, I am contesting as well as campaigning. This time, the people of Odisha are for the BJP. There is a Modi wave.

KEJRIWAL MUST FIRST CONSIDER WHAT HE WILL DO ONCE HE RETURNS TO JAIL. PM WILL PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR SEVERAL YEARS

freedom. In 2013, who tore the cabinet decision during a press conference and called it nonsense? Does it count as honouring the Constitution? The Opposition, especially Congress, has moved its target to attack the Constitution. We are committed to every single word in it.

On Kejriwal's comments on Modi's retirement next year: Kejriwal must first consider what he will do once he returns to jail. The PM will provide leadership for several years.

On the 'Agniweer' scheme: I visited a camp in Sambalpur where the youth are being trained to join as Agniweers. They are excited.

On BJP's attack on Naveen Patnaik: This is an open secret, whether it is chief secretary, DGP or secretary or state ministers, no one has access to the CM. This is not an accusation, but the truth. A cartel is running the CM's office and the government. This cartel has nothing to do with Odisha, and wants to grab power through administrative interference.

On BJP's allegation BJP is talking of Odisha Asmita but there's no Bharat Ratna for Biju Patnaik: Biju Patnaik is a big leader of Odisha, but there are several other big leaders and personalities in the state. We don't see it in political terms. Modi has shown immense respect for Odia.

On BJP's vision for Odisha: Over the last few years, the state couldn't generate enough opportunities to address migration. One third of the state's population is looking for opportunities outside.

Are you BJP's CM face for Odisha? I am a party worker and BJP is not a dynastic party. I do my work and thank my party for giving me opportunities. The roles keep changing, but the role of party worker is constant.

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BJP HAS FIELDIED SITTING MP ANAND SHARMA

Whole Hooda Clan Campaigns for Deepender in Rohtak Prestige Battle

Jatin.Takkar@timesgroup.com

Rohtak | Kosi: Rohtak is seen as pocket borough of Hoodas and after Deepender Hooda losing non-vote in 2019 on Congress ticket, it is a battle of prestige for the entire family and from Deepender's wife to his mother all are hitting the poll ground to ensure his victory.

Deepender's father and former Chief Minister of Haryana Bhupinder Hooda had defeated Jat stalwart and former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal thrice from Rohtak. But in Modi wave of 2019 Lok Sabha election across Hindi heartland, Hooda lost from Rohtak narrowly primarily due to one assembly segment Kosi. As BJP's Anand Sharma got more than seventy thousand votes over Deepender's clan.

This time also the contest is between Sharma and Deepender. And the latter wants to keep the contest local and on the developmental work. Without discussing much national issues, Deepender moving from village to village and addressing families at Chhapra talks about bringing "Chaudhri" back to Rohtak Lok Sabha and the route to Chandigarh (being power) in stages from Rohtak to winning Lok Sabha seat. In a smartly designed campaign, Congress posters in Rohtak Lok Sabha citing various developmental works from IM to starting to highways - appeal to people just to ponder the much worked Deepender did as BJP.

In Haryana where politics is seen from the prism of Jat - Non-Jat - Deepender in all speech after speech talks about 36 biradari (all 36 castes) together.

Deepender enjoys more goodwill than his party on ground, many feel especially youths mostly from Jats sorry for him losing Lok Sabha election.

Rohtak: Rathes a student in MDU university

ROHTAK Lok Sabha Results

VOTE SHARE (%)



accompanied by his two friends Rajat Sharma and Tarun Chugh - all three from different castes describe Deepender as "decent man." "It was not good that he lost this time," he should win, and he had done a lot of work for Rohtak," Rathes says.

On Muslim reservation remarks Congress says it will give quota to Muslims I want to know whose quota will be reduced for this. The backward Muslims already have reservation. The Constitution is clear that no reservation should be given based on religion. It is the Congress who wants to end reservation. The BJP will do everything to protect the reservation given under the constitutional framework.

On Congress saying there is no Muslim quota mentioned in manifesto? They did it in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. PM Manmohan Singh said Muslims have the first right over the country's resources. We say the poor have the first right, whether they are Muslim or Hindu. When we

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On BJP's vision for Odisha

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THE BIG WESTERN ODISHA SEAT

BJP's Odisha Face & BJD's No. 2 Face Off in Sambalpur

BJP's Dharmendra Pradhan is facing BJD's Pranab Prakash Das

Sambalpur: Sambalpur is going to be one of the most watched Lok Sabha constituencies in Odisha where both the BJP and Biju Janata Dal have found their best foot forward.

The BJP candidate, Dharmendra Pradhan, is a union minister and the face of the party in Odisha. The BJD has fielded its organisational general secretary and three-time MLA Pranab Prakash Das, known as Bobby Das, in the party. Das is considered to be the No. 2 after chief minister Naveen Patnaik.

In 2019, BJD candidate Nitesh Gangua Deb won this seat by 9,162 votes. Das is now campaigning for Pradhan in the Deogarh assembly segment, which he had represented before he became an MP in 2019.

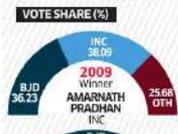
In the past three elections, Sambalpur had given mandate to three different parties, all with a margin below 40,000.

In 2009, Congress candidate Amar Nath Pradhan won by a margin of 14,874 votes, while in 2014, BJD's Nagendra Pradhan won it by 30,576 votes.

Sambalpur is one of the largest Lok Sabha constituencies in Odisha with seven assembly segments. At present, the BJD has MLAs in four assembly seats, while the BJP has two members in three. With two stalwarts contesting the elections, the people of Sambalpur are expecting a fierce fight between the BJP and the BJD.

SAMBALPUR Lok Sabha Results

VOTE SHARE (%)



well as in the assembly. "Throughout my life, my family voted for the BJD. But now we are voting for the BJP. There should be a change in the government," he said. As per Munda, Pradhan is a close aide of Narendra Modi and he can bring development in Sambalpur. In February this year, PM Modi inaugurated the campus of Indian Institute of Management, Sambalpur Pradhan says that he wants to develop this constituency as a knowledge hub in the next five years. "Sambalpur is the capital of West Odisha and it has all the potential to be developed as an educational and knowledge hub. An IIM campus is just the beginning. We will create more job opportunities for the local people in Sambalpur with all round development," Pradhan told ET. Soudamini Bagary, 42 years old, runs a tea stall in Sambalpur town. While she appreciates chief mini-

ster Patnaik for his work and schemes for the poor and women, she has equal liking for PM Modi when it comes to Lok Sabha election. "Desh ke live Modi aacha hai (Modi is good for the country). Naveen Patnaik has done much for the women and poor. I will vote for Padma (Lotta) in the BJP and Shantika (Conch) in the ML election," she says.

Both the BJP and BJD are running a high-pitch campaign with the top leadership of both parties holding public meetings and roadshows. Pradhan in Sambalpur

for the BJD candidate Bobby Das, the campaigning is more about cluster meetings in rural areas and reaching out to voters through the cadre network.

CM Patnaik attended a public meeting and senior BJD leader VK Pandian held a roadshow for him. The BJP is attacking Bobby Das with an outsider tag while pitching Pradhan as the son of the soil in Sambalpur. Das is an IIM from Jaipur in a coastal Odisha.

"Whoever wins, the fight is going to be very close and interesting to watch," said Subodh Rathod, a senior BJP constituency assembly leader in Angul district. Subodh claims to vote for the BJD candidate Bobby Das.

The political dynamics of Odisha is going to be guided from the result of Sambalpur Lok Sabha as both contenders are top leaders of their parties and there is no other seat in Odisha where two state titans are clashing against each other. Voting in Sambalpur is scheduled for May 25.

ELECTION TRACK

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RAJAT SHARMA AND TARUN CHUGH

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