

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

Modi Slams B.J., Trinamool 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 BJD Puri candidate, Sambit Patra, on Monday

Modi said that the people of Odisha got this time, he said, adding that the BJD ministers have been crooked and have deprived the people of the benefits of the state's resources. The Centre gave Rs 100 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 their jobs. The BJD ministers 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 government. Even the minor leaders of BJD have become very rich," Modi said.

Neither the wealth nor the heritage of Odisha is safe in BJD rule, the PM said. He again raised the issue of the missing keys of the Sri Ratan Bhandar (treasure store) of the Jagannath temple, alleging the case has not been resolved for over 100 years.

"A big secret is being kept under wraps by those close to the chief minister and those in power... The whole state wants to know as to what are the contents of the investigation report that the BJD government is suppressing," he said.

In West Bengal, the prime minister alleged that Congress has plans for Muslim reservation and said they will snatch the reservation from SC/STs and Muslims.

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

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who is contesting from Sambalpur, said the Opposition shouldn't have a problem if the BJP is ambitious. In an interview with ET's Kumar Anshuman, the BJD leader also spoke on Opposition's claims and the party's plan for Odisha. Excerpts:

What is your response to the Opposition doubts about NDA's target of 400-plus seats?
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 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.

What's your view on the failed alliance talks with BJD?
After 2019, we worked to establish BJP as the No. 1 party in Odisha. As far as alliance is concerned, we never initiated talks with the BJD. The BJP never showed an intention to form an alliance. However, it is true that there was some confusion. That was because in Parliament we did better floor coordination and got the support of several parties, including the BJD.

On BJD'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 culture and Asmita. In the last 10 years, 49 people from Odisha have been honoured with Padma Shree. For the first time, a tribal daughter of Odisha has become the President. We will have to be holistic in our commitment to the state.

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

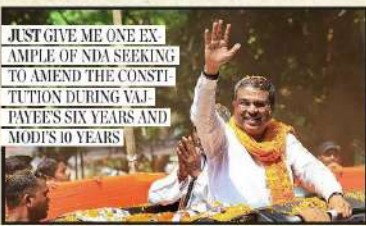
On BJP's attack on Naveen Patnaik
This is an open secret, whether it is chief secretary, DGP or secretary or state ministers, no one has access to the CM. This is not an accusation, but the truth. A cartel is running the CM's office and the government. This cartel has nothing to do with Odisha, and wants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

On BJP's 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.

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

implemented PM Awas Yojna and Ujjwala Scheme, we did not differentiate along lines of religion—it was given to the poor of all communities.

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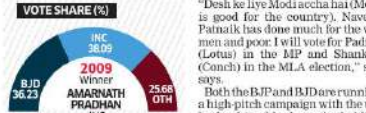
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THE BIG WESTERN ODISHA SEAT

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

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

SAMBALPUR Lok Sabha Results



Rao Inderjit Takes On Cong's Raj Babbar In Fight to Win Gurgaon 4th Straight Time

Gurgaon 4th: In a diverse constituency like Gurgaon which includes the high-tech millennium city and very backward districts like Nuh, the candidates fight to represent them are equally diverse. While the BJP has fielded Union minister and descendant of the local royal Ahir family, Rao Inderjit Singh, the Congress has fielded film star turned politician Raj Babbar.

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.

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 Ganga Deb won this seat by 9,162 votes. Bobby Das in the party, Das is considered to be the No. 2 after chief minister Naveen Patnaik.

In 2009, Congress candidate Amarnath 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.

BJP HAS FIELDED 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 his 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 three times 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.

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 'Chaudhary' back to Rohtak Lok Sabha and the route to Chandigarh (being power) in stages from Rohtak to winning Lok Sabha seat.

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) of Rohtak.

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

Rohtak: Hooda a student in MDU university

ROHTAK Lok Sabha Results



accompanying 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," Rathore says.

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ELECTION TRACK

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