

Arun Jaitley takes a jibe at Opposition

Agency
New Delhi April 13,

Union finance minister and senior BJP leader Arun Jaitley on Saturday put out a fresh blog post titled "India's Opposition is on a 'Rent a Cause' Campaign".

In his blog, Jaitley wrote that there appears to be no running thread in the opposition's campaign "which connects which is being said today or what has been said over the last several months".

"There is no leader, no Gathbandhan, no Common Minimum Programme and no real issue. Not surprisingly there are not many takers for a "failed campaign". It is "Rent a Cause" Campaign," Jaitley said. Saying that in order to "oust a popular Government, an extremely popular Prime Minister, you need some real issues, not fictional issues", Jaitley said that the Opposition had "wasted the past two years... manufacturing issues which don't exist".

"The false campaign on Rafale didn't carry much weight. Loan waiver to industrialists was a lie, the EVM as an instrument of rigging was a bigger lie. Now that they are in the midst of the campaign for over a month what is the issue which they are able to focus on," Jaitley wrote.

Saying that the Opposition



appeared to be in a disarray in many states with "alliances having not worked out", he said that a multi-cornered contest obviously favoured the BJP. "Verbal battles between the Left, Trinamool and the Congress and now AAP and the Congress are increasingly visible. On the leadership issue, the situation looks gloomier than what I had thought. The BSP leader Mayawati, the Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee leave no stone unturned in running down the Congress President," Jaitley wrote.

He said that the opposition had not built up a single issue against the government in the

past five years and that its strategy now was to "pick up an issue for a daily tweet or a press-briefing".

"This is the plight of the opposition campaign," he wrote, adding, "One day Pulwama was questioned as self-engineered. The next day Balakot was questioned as a non-existent operation."

He was referring to the February 14 Pulwama suicide bombing in which 40 CRPF jawans had been killed. The attack had been followed by an air strike by the Indian Air Force on a Jaish-e-Mohammed training facility at Balakot in Pakistan.

He also referred to the recent anti-satellite missile test that

was conducted recently and said, "The anti-satellite missile was passed off as a Nehruvian contribution even though Panditji's correspondence with Dr. Homi Bhabha established to the contrary. One day BJP is accused of whipping up war hysteria, the other day it is dubbed as pro Pakistan."

Referring to the recent questions being raised by the opposition regarding Union textile minister Smriti Irani's educational qualifications, he said that the opposition had forgotten "that a public audit of Rahul Gandhi's academic credentials may leave a lot to be answered. After all, he got an M.Phil without a Masters degree!"

PM Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi to address rallies in Karnataka today

Agency
New Delhi April 13,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress president Rahul Gandhi will today address rallies in Karnataka, ahead of polling for 14 constituencies on April 18, when the southern part of the state will vote in the Lok Sabha elections. Voting in Karnataka was split between two phases, the second and third, and

the two leaders will be addressing constituencies in the southern region over the course of the day.

The Bharatiya Janata Party is contesting against the Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) alliance across the 28 seats in the state.

While Prime Minister Modi will address rallies in Mangaluru and Bengaluru, Gandhi will address public meetings in Kolar, Chitradurga and Mysuru.

The BJP has won a majority of seats in the state over the past three Lok Sabha polls, a trend that the coalition is attempting to reverse. While Gandhi has taken aim at the central government in his speeches, Modi has accused the coalition of being inept and has claimed repeatedly that a vote for the coalition will ensure a "Mahamilawat Sarkar" at the Centre, similar to the one in the Karnataka.

Congress still ready for alliance if AAP sticks to Delhi

Agency
New Delhi April 13,

Congress's Delhi in-charge PC Chacko on Friday said the party was ready for an alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) if it agreed to restrict the partnership only to Delhi. Chacko said that in the "present circumstances", the party would fight the elections on its own in Delhi as AAP is adamant on its "impractical" demands on the seat sharing. "We are compelled to contest the elections in Delhi on our own. The AAP wanted to extend the alliance to other states and that was not practical. Every state is different. If they are ready for an alliance in Delhi, we were and we are still ready," Chacko said.

The Congress leader said that

despite initial reservations on the alliance among the leadership, the state unit of the party was persuaded and everything had fallen in line; but AAP on Wednesday made a public statement that they had called off the talks.

AAP's Delhi convener Gopal Rai, in response to the Congress, and said a tie-up only in Delhi would not save the country from the BJP. "Congress should have thought of cooperating in 33 seats across four states (Goa, Punjab, Delhi and Haryana), instead of getting stuck on their demand for three seats in Delhi," Rai said.

Chacko said the Congress would go ahead with fighting elections in Delhi on its own if AAP does not want the alliance and the candidate list

would be released in a day or two.

In a meeting of the chief election committee (CEC) of the Congress on Thursday evening, the names of candidates from four constituencies were finalised. Former MPs Ajay Maken from New Delhi, JP Agarwal from Northeast Delhi, and Kapil Sibal from Chandni Chowk were the party's choice. Raj Kumar Chauhan, former five-time legislator from Mangolpuri, will be the Congress's face from the reserved constituency of Northwest Delhi, party leaders said. A formal announcement of the candidate list is awaited. Senior Congress leaders said the final decision is still pending for the remaining three constituencies—West, South and East Delhi.

'Congress's NYAY an admission they did injustice for 60 years': PM Modi

Agency
New Delhi April, 13,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday upheld his ante against the Congress with stinging remarks on its poll promise of rolling out a minimum income guarantee scheme if voted to power in the Lok Sabha polls.

"They are now saying 'ab hoga nyay', now there will be justice... This means that they had admitted that they did injustice for 60 years," said

PM Modi. PM Modi invoked former Tamil Nadu chief ministers J Jayalalitha and MG Ramachandran to seek vote for the AIADMK candidate at Theni Lok Sabha seat, where he was addressing an election rally.

"I pay my respects to Jayalalitha and MG Ramachandran who lived and worked for the poor," PM Modi said in the Lok Sabha constituency while seeking vote for AIADMK candidate

and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam's son P Ravindranath Kumar.

Kumar is up against former Union minister EVKS Elangovan, who has been fielded as UPA candidate from Theni. Both sides have replaced their candidates from Theni Lok Sabha constituency. In 2014, AIADMK's Parthipan R, the sitting MP had defeated DMK's Pon Muthuramalingam by over 3 lakh votes.

"Theni is the land of Jayalalitha and MG Ramachandran. The Congress was not able to find a candidate who belongs to this region... They must have sensed the mood of the people in this region," said PM Modi taking a dig at EVKS Elangovan, the Congress leader from Erode district of Tamil Nadu.

PM Modi's election rally at Theni came a day after Congress president Rahul Gandhi's address in the district.

Nation pays homage to martyrs of Jallianwala Bagh massacre on its centenary

Agency
New Delhi April, 13,

In Punjab, Congress President Rahul Gandhi paid homage to the martyrs of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre at the memorial in Amritsar. Today is the centenary of the tragic incident. Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh also accompanied him. British High Commissioner to India Dominic Asquith also

visited the memorial. Earlier on the eve of the centenary, Punjab Governor V.P.S Badnore and Capt. Amarinder Singh participated in the candlelight march in Amritsar.

On April 13th, 1919, hundreds of innocent people were killed and many more injured after British troops led by Reginald Dyer opened fire on a peaceful gathering at Jallianwala Bagh.

Sudan's Ibn Auf steps down as head of military council

Agency
New Delhi April, 13,

In Sudan, the head of country's ruling military council General Awad Ibn Auf has resigned naming Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Burhan as his successor.

The announcement was made by General Auf in a speech broadcast live on state television late on Friday as tens of thousands of protesters rallied in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, demanding a civilian-led transition government.

The announcement came a day after General Auf was sworn in as the head of a transitional military council following the ouster of long-time president Omar al-Bashir. The Sudanese Professionals Association which has spearheaded the nationwide protest campaign hailed Ibn Auf's departure as the victory of the people's will.

The new leader Burhan is one of the generals who reached out to protesters at the week-long encampment near the military headquarters, meeting with them face to face, and listening to their views. Meanwhile, the country's

military council has asked all "political forces" in the country to name two representatives by Saturday for a dialogue on the country's transition, official SUNA news agency reported. One of the members of the council Omar Zain al-Abideen said, there will be a civilian government and they will not intervene in its composition.

Campaigning reaches its peak for second phase of polls in Assam

Agency
New Delhi April, 13,

In Assam, campaigning has reached its peak for the second phase of polls. Five seats- Nagaon, Mangaldoi, Autonomous District, Silchar and Karimganj will be covered in this phase. 50 candidates are in the fray. Citizenship Amendment Bill, development measures and employment are some of the issues that dominated the

poll campaigns in this phase. Senior BJP leader and Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal, NEDA Chairman Himanta Biswa Sarma and state BJP President Ranjeet Kumar Dass are making all efforts to woo the voters. Former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, state Congress President Ripun Bora and former minister Rockybul Hussein are campaigning for the Congress candidates. Apart from them,

PIB
New Delhi April, 13,

As per available data till now, the Voter Turnout Percentage from eighteen States and two Union Territories that went to Polls on 11th April 2019, in the First phase of General Elections to Lok Sabha 2019, has recorded a figure of 69.43%. This percentage is still likely to go up as at the time of compilation, data from some remaining polling parties from remote locations was yet to be consolidated.

It may be recalled that in Phase I, 91 Parliamentary Constituencies from States of Andhra Pradesh (25/25

Voter Turnout Percentage of 69.43% recorded as yet in Phase I GE to Lok Sabha 2019

PCs), Arunachal Pradesh (2/2 PCs), Assam (5/14PCs), Bihar (4/40 PCs), Chhattisgarh (1/11 PCs), Jammu & Kashmir (2/6PCs), Maharashtra (7/48PCs), Manipur (1/2 PCs), Meghalaya (2/2PCs), Mizoram (1/1 PC), Nagaland (1/1 PC), Odisha (4/21 PCs), Sikkim (1/1 PC), Telangana (17/17 PCs), Tripura (1/2 PCs) Uttar Pradesh (8/80PCs), Uttarakhand (5/5 PCs), West Bengal (2/42 PCs) as also Andaman & Nicobar Islands (1/1 PC) and Lakshadweep (1/1 PC) went to Polls.

Out of a total of 13,16,22,586 General Electors from these

Constituencies, 9,13,79,409 electors (comprising 4,64,30,614 Male Electors, 4,49,20,571 Female electors and 1395 electors from Third Gender) cast their votes.

Thus as on date a total of 69.43% voter turnout percentage was recorded across these 18 States and 2 UTs. The top five voter turnout percentage has been - 84.96% from Lakshadweep; 83.79% from West Bengal PCs of Alipurduar and Coochbehar; 83.26% from Tripura West PC; 83.12% from Nagaland; 82.82% from II Outer Manipur (ST) PC of Manipur though some polling parties were yet to contribute their figures to the data.

Simultaneously polling was also conducted on 11th April 2019 for 175 Assembly constituencies of Andhra Pradesh; 60 ACs of Arunachal Pradesh; 28 of the 147 Assembly Constituencies of Odisha and 32 ACs of Sikkim. Across 295 ACs, a voter turnout percentage of 77.38% has been recorded as yet though there could be slight variation in this figure by the time of final counting.

The detailed datasheet available as yet is attached herewith for ready reference. In 2014 General Elections to the 16th Lok Sabha, a final voter turnout percentage of 66.44% was reported across all the nine phases of polling.