

Pinarayi takes fight against Centre over fiscal bias to Delhi

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

A day after the Karnataka government brought its protest to the capital, the Kerala government led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan hit the Delhi streets on Thursday by staging a protest against the alleged 'discriminatory fiscal policies' of the Centre.



narayani said that they are here to ensure the interest of people of the state and it's the BJP that plays divisive politics.

"Isn't it a fact that our borrowings have been limited and that our grants have been denied? How is it politically motivated to point it out," he asked.

"In many states, including Kerala, we have seen governors trying to meddle with the autonomy of the Legislature. Governors are to exercise their duties on the advice of the state cabinets. However, we are seeing this phenomenon of governors in opposition ruled states acting at the behest of the powers that appointed them," said Vijayan.

The protest, attended by three chief ministers along with several opposition leaders turned out to be a show of strength of the INDIA bloc ahead of the 2024 general elections. Along with Kerala ministers and MPs, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, DMK Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, CPI leader D Raja, National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, Kapil Sibal and Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann took part in the stir, which was held at Delhi's Jantar Mantar. However, the main player of the INDIA alliance, Congress, was conspicuous by its absence.

Vijayan said that Kerala's historic battle was aimed at saving the spirit of federalism. Referring to PM Modi's allegations that the protest is to create a narrative of North-South divide, Pi-

Public debt falls within the exclusive purview of state legislatures, says Stalin

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COMING down heavily on the GOI's hindrance to borrow for the state's development projects, Stalin said the Union government ought to orchestrate a cohesive strategy to alleviate this fiscal crisis. "The subject of public debt for financing the public expenditure of states is within the exclusive purview of the state legislatures as per the Constitution," Stalin said.

Hailing the era of VP Singh as PM as the sentinel of social justice, Stalin said the former PM had assured the then CM, M Karunanidhi, that there would be no need for him to visit Delhi even once for state's

demands. Singh promised that his demands would be fulfilled if he just conveyed them from Tamil Nadu.

"Such respect for states was once a hallmark of our PMs. The current PM, however, perceives states as mere municipalities, showing a marked disdain for the CMs. It deeply disheartens me to witness the deteriorating political climate that necessitates you from Kerala to venture to Delhi for protest," Stalin said.

"Today, a 'black shirt demonstration' was held by DMK MPs in Delhi. All the states are compelled to protest against the common grievance of inequitable distribution of funds. We are rapidly approaching a jun-

cture where the BJP-led Union government will be required to answer for its actions before the people of India," he added.

Deputed to take part in the protest by the CM, Tamil Nadu IT Minister P Thiaga Rajan said the agitation is a fight against unfair, unjust, immoral, and self-destructive depreciation of funds by the GOI at historically unprecedented levels.

"At one time, Tamil Nadu used to get about 70% of its revenue from the Union's share of taxes and 30% on central schemes. Now, we get less than half of the revenues and share of taxes. And central schemes are grossly biased against states like TN," PTR said.

'Rationality will suffer if religion is misunderstood'

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THE judge said, "Indian notion of secularism is considerably supported by the state. It does not believe in a strict separation of state and religion. Rather, it seeks to ensure the equality of all religions. The state follows an interventionist attitude if the practice of religion collides with the fundamental rights of an individual."

"If the purpose of religion is not understood, it can take away the sense of neutrality and ability to think in terms of rationality and individuality. That is the reason why Karl Marx said religion is the opium of people. This statement will prove to be true if the real purpose of religion is not under-

stood and it is attempted to be used belligerently by blind adherence to the rightness or virtue as imposed by bare texts. If religion becomes a bellicose jingoism, it can prove to be fatal to the secular fabric of the country," the judge said.

Justice Venkatesh also said the judicial magistrate had issued a well-considered order setting out the reasons that impelled him to issue the summons against Annamalai.

The Salem court had issued summons to Annamalai after finding a prima facie case against him for inciting enmity between different groups under Sections 153 A and 505 (1) (b) of IPC based on a petition filed by rights activist Piyyush Manush.

EXPRESS READ

Threat mail was sent to private school's official ID

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1: A head of one of the private schools told TNIE, "We received an email around 10am that said two bombs were planted in the school. The mail also said taking action swiftly is important and instructed us to call the police. We called the police. The students were moved to the school ground." The email id to which the threat mail was sent is the school's official ID printed in the school diary, the source said.

Minister inaugurates agri summit in Perambalur

Perambalur: Transport Minister SS Sivasankar on Thursday exhorted farmers and students to contribute towards improving social development. The statement came at the inauguration of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce & Industry Agri Summit at a private college here. Discussions ranging from how to get high yield, to protection against pest attacks were held. SICCI president Arun Alagappan was present.

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