

# BJP won majority in polls for construction of Ram Temple: Shiv Sena

**Ayodhya:** Rajya Sabha MP and Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday said that the Ram temple would be constructed in Ayodhya under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the BJP won with a huge majority in general elections for its construction. The remarks came a day before party chief Uddhav Thackeray is scheduled to visit Ayodhya.

Speaking to *ANI*, senior Shiv Sena leader said, "We don't want to take any credit for the construction of Ram temple. Earlier also we had said that it would be constructed under the leadership of Modi and Yogi. The majority in 2019 polls for the BJP led NDA is for the construction of Ram temple."

Talking about Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's visit to Ayodhya on Sunday, Mr Raut said that party chief was fulfilling the promise he made during the last visit.

"Uddhav Thackeray is coming to Ayodhya tomorrow (Sunday). He will offer prayers at the makeshift Ram Lalla shrine in Ayodhya. All 18 newly elected MPs will also visit. This time, the atmosphere is better. Earlier, the atmosphere was tense," he said.

"He had made it clear during the last visit that for us (Shiv Sena), Ram temple issue is not a political matter. It is a matter of faith. He (Uddhav Thackeray) had said that he will come back to this place after elections along with his elected MPs. Hence, he is coming tomorrow to fulfil his promise made during the last visit," he said.

Mr Thackeray, along with his party 18 newly elected MPs, will visit Ayodhya on Sunday, the party had announced on June 7.

“Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Saheb Thackeray will offer obeisance to the Ram Lalla in Ayodhya on June 16. The MPs of Shiv Sena too will be accompanying him for “darshan” of Lord Shri Ram,” a tweet by Shiv Sena Communications read.

Mr Thackeray last visited Ayodhya in November last year and had asked the central government to announce a date for the construction of Ram temple.

He had promised full support if an ordinance was brought for the purpose.

“We want the date when a temple will be made. First, tell us when you will make the temple, then we can talk about other things,” he had said.

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## **Air India spreads its wings, plans flights for Bali, Nairobi and Toronto**

Air India plans to launch services from Delhi to Bali, Nairobi and Toronto in the winter schedule as it looks to consolidate its position as the largest carrier on overseas routes from India.

Currently, there is no non-stop service from Delhi to Nairobi

and Bali while Air Canada flies daily to Toronto. New services are being proposed as Air India expects the return of its seventeen grounded planes in service by October end.

Thrice weekly Delhi-Toronto flight will be launched on September 27, civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri tweeted on Friday. Launch dates for Bali and Nairobi have not been fixed. The airline is also planning Mumbai-Hong Kong flights.

The network expansion will help national carrier grow its market share and capitalise on capacity vacuum created by the collapse of Jet Airways. Improved fleet utilisation, wider network and better yields should help Air India and its chairman Ashwani Lohani is confident Air India will improve its performance in FY 20.

“On average our load factors are 82-83 per cent. Connecting traffic too is growing. Operationally we are doing well and this would get reflected in our financial performance in FY 20,” Lohani said.

Fuel price volatility and continued closure of Pakistan airspace are the main risks and the airline is losing Rs six crore daily as airspace closure has increased flying time of its US and Europe bound flights.

Seventeen planes including its Airbus A320, Boeing 777s and 787s have been grounded for several months because of want of spares and engines. Air India’s engineering department has prepared a schedule to get the planes back into operations making network expansion possible in winter.

In FY 18, Air India has a market share of 10.4 per cent on India’s international traffic. Jet Airways which shut operations in April had a share of around 14 per cent in same year. Despite flight cancellations, Jet had a capacity share of over 12 per cent on all international routes from India in

January and commanded over half seat share on Mumbai -London and Mumbai -Kuwait routes.

In its recent report aviation consultancy CAPA said, “Air India will continue to face strong competition on domestic routes, but now that it has emerged as the largest carrier on overseas routes – where capacity is constrained – international operations could prove to be lucrative.”

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## **Goal is to make India \$5 trillion economy: Modi at Niti Aayog meet**

**New Delhi:** Spelling out his government’s “Vision 2024” at the Niti Aayog’s fifth governing council meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the goal of making India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 is challenging but surely achievable, as he asked states to focus on their core competencies and work towards increasing the GDP right from the district level.

The Aayog also set up a high level committee on agriculture to suggest reforms aimed at benefitting farmers and reviving rural economy.

At the council meeting, the Prime Minister underlined the need for taking effective steps to tackle drought and stressed that Niti Aayog has a key role to play in fulfilling the mantra of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas”.

This was the first meeting of the planning body after the BJP-led NDA formed a new government at the Centre. It was attended by senior Union ministers and almost all the Chief Ministers, except Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal) and K. Chandrasekhar Rao (Telangana). Ms Banerjee had said she would not attend the meeting saying Niti Aayog is a “fruitless” body as it has no financial powers.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh who could attend the meeting due health reasons deputed his finance minister Manpreet Badal.

In his opening remarks, Mr Modi noted that the export sector is an important element in the progress and both the Centre and states should work towards its growth, in order to raise the per capita income. He said a thrust on export promotion at the state level will provide a boost to both income and employment.

Stressing that the focus should be on collective responsibility for achieving short term and long term goals, Mr Modi said the goal to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024, is “challenging, but can surely be achieved”. The size of India’s economy was estimated at \$2.75 trillion at end-March 2019.

On the health front, Mr Modi said tuberculosis should be wiped out by 2025.

Grave concerns were raised by chief ministers of several mineral-rich states over the prevailing slump in mining activities during the meeting.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath said that despite amendments in mining laws, no activity was taking place which had badly hit the sector and states.

Several chief ministers of mineral-rich states echoed his views, seeking urgent attention of the Centre on the issue.

Sources aware of developments said that Mr Nath expressed concern over the fact that despite India being a major producer of coal, the dry fuel was being imported.

The chief ministers were informed by Niti Aayog officials that a report of a task force on mining will come out soon and all the concerns would be addressed in it.

Most of the chief ministers unanimously sought greater devolution of funds from the Prime Minister, to which he is learnt to have said that a final call on it will be taken once the report of the 15th Finance Commission arrives.

The chief ministers were also informed that there would be some amendments to the rules related to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) which would give them better financial leeway to combat natural calamities.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said during the meeting that the state was the second highest revenue generating state through income tax in the country after Maharashtra, yet adequate funds were not being provided to it. He reiterated the demand of full statehood for Delhi.

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## **Indian minister pledges to resolve major expat issues**

From high air ticket prices to Indian destinations from the GCC and to issues faced by non-resident Indians (NRIs)

relating to the Aadhar card, India's newly appointed minister of state for foreign affairs has promised to expedite solutions relating to various issues of expatriates.

V Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, interacted with the media and members of the Indian community on Friday in Dubai.

The minister visited Dubai while on a stopover from his official visit to Nigeria, where he participated in Nigeria's Democracy Day.

His first official trip to the UAE began with a meeting with the blue-collared workers at the Eversendai labour accommodation in DIP in the morning. He also met the members of the Indian business community during a meet organised by the Indian Business and Professionals Council, followed by an official reception at the Consulate-General of India in Dubai.

### **Air travel flexibility a priority**

The minister said making air travel to India flexible and comfortable for NRIs residing in the Gulf is a top priority, as presently Gulf NRIs face multiple issues while planning trips back home, especially the high cost of travel.

Muraleedharan also said escalating airfare is an alarming issue and after his meeting with the minister for civil aviation, the price regulation on air tickets have been placed on a priority list.

He added: "From Gulf region, there are a total of 1,050 flights that travel to various destinations across India every week. The grounding of Jet Airways flights has contributed more towards this problem. I think our priority should be to sort these issues out as soon as possible." He suggested that flights to India from Gulf region, especially to airports in Kerala, faced several issues, and he explained his plans on meeting with the respective authorities to resolve these

issues as soon as possible.

During the interactive session with members of the Indian community, Muraleedharan said he would like to take steps to make Indian airports more traveller-friendly.

He added that several mechanisms were put into place to make travelling easier for Indians, including removing the ceiling on the baggage tax, reducing the number of screening processes, etc. "Our airports should help anyone who wants to travel. We are aiming to provide a friendly atmosphere," he stated.

Meanwhile, in a bid to resume Emirates Airlines services to Kozhikode in Kerala, members of the business community, including Dr Azad Moopen, chairman, Aster DM Healthcare Group, along with James Mathew, senior partner and CEO of Crowe, and representatives from the Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre (KMCC) had a meeting with the minister.

According to officials at the KMCC, the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority has requested India's Ministry of Civil Aviation to grant Emirates a temporary approval to operate 2,500 weekly seats in each direction on the Dubai-Kozhikode route for a period of four months, effective from June 2019 for the summer high peak demand.

"The minister has assured to take it up on priority with the cabinet secretary for civil aviation at New Delhi in two weeks. A response to the letter is anticipated from the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India for getting the necessary approvals from the authorities," said Anwar Naha of the Dubai chapter of KMCC.

### **Status of e-migrate Bill**

Muraleedharan said discussions for the Emigration Bill 2019 are in the final stages. However, it will not be tabled in this parliamentary session. The Ministry of External Affairs

had proposed to introduce the Emigration Bill to replace the existing Emigration Act, 1983.

He said the bill will focus on providing safety to workers aspiring to travel to Gulf countries. "The law would ensure that workers will not be cheated by fraudulent recruiting agents and the government will provide them with job protection and training. The workers will also be given post-departure counselling," he explained.

However, when quizzed about the proposal to register NRI details on the e-migrate platform, Muraleedharan said the government is still mulling over the issue. "We are still discussing whether to make it mandatory or voluntary. However, I do hope we will be able to table this at the earliest possible parliamentary session," he added.

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## **BJP proved that parties can run on values, performance: Ram Madhav**

MUMBAI: BJP general secretary Ram Madhav Friday said his party has proved that political parties can be run on the basis of values and performance.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a three-day-long orientation-cum-leadership development programme at Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini (RMP) at Uttan near Bhayandar in Thane

district. The training programme is being attended by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu and 41 BJP MLAs from his state.

RMP, an RSS-affiliated independent research and training institute, is conducting this training programme, which will have sessions on topics like understanding the roles and responsibilities of an MLA. BJP vice president Vinay Sahasrabuddhe and Madhav inaugurated the programme.

Addressing the lawmakers from the north-eastern state, Madhav said, "You may be quite good popularity-wise, but you should also be as good in terms of performance...BJP is not only a party, but a way of life and a political culture."

"We are one of the 1,600 odd registered parties and we are a party with a difference. We have proved that parties can be run on the basis of values and performance," Madhav said.

He said India was marching ahead to become a super- power as the country was being led by the "most-honest prime minister".

"Our PM Narendra Modi is not just a non-corrupt leader, but more importantly, he is just incorruptible," the Madhav added.

Sahasrabuddhe said the BJP has the "copyright" of the politics of "values and performance".

He said while being a popular elected representative was one thing, being an effective representative was different.

"Politics and principles should go hand in hand. MLAs here present should have a blueprint about the growth of their constituencies for five years," he said.

On the occasion, Khandu expressed hope that the MLAs would gain lot of insights on various fronts in the next three days here.

"I had made a promise during my poll campaign that I will

train my MLAs so that they can perform well in the five crucial years. After the training session ends, a report card of the all the MLAs will be prepared," he said.

Khandu also said that he held talks with a few Bollywood filmmakers and two of them have agreed to shoot their films in his state.

The BJP, led by Khandu, won 41 seats in the 60-member Assembly, in the elections held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections in the northeastern state bordering China.

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## Gathering clouds cast shadow over Paris Air Show

*Cargo performance is an indicator for coming passenger traffic – and it's not looking too good*

*PAUL J. RICHARDS, AFP*

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Slumping orders, production bottlenecks, regulatory pressures and the prospect of fewer flyers: Aviation executives have plenty on their minds as they head to France on Monday for the opening of the Paris Air Show.

It's a starkly different mood from the previous edition two years ago, when airlines worldwide were optimistic about their prospects and placing big orders for new planes.

But industry leaders Airbus and Boeing have instead seen

clients cancel orders for dozens of planes in recent months, managing to sell just a handful of new jets.

While Airbus might claw back some ground with the launch of the A321XLR at the airshow in Le Bourget, just north of Paris, Boeing's future has been clouded by two deadly crashes that have grounded its popular 737 MAX.

With the cancellations, "we're in negative territory for the year, and Airbus has a chance to rescue that a bit, but Boeing does not," said Richard Aboulafia, a longtime industry analyst at the Teal Group in Fairfax, Virginia.

He said that slowing passenger traffic globally – year-on-year growth slowed to just 4.3 percent in April, compared with 6.5 percent growth for all of 2018 – also has airlines worried.

The decline echoes soft global economic growth amid trade tensions between the US, Europe and China, three huge markets for air travel.

And Aboulafia noted that air freight levels are usually good predictors of passenger traffic trends, "and these past couple of months have been even worse for cargo traffic".

The International Air Transport Association reports that freight traffic has been in a downward spiral since the beginning of the year.

"The two most recent months, March and April, were just god awful, and we're going into this show not really knowing what is happening," he said.

– Win back confidence –

Boeing and Airbus can take comfort in the fact that both their order books remain strong after hefty revenue growth last year, when combined they delivered more than 1,600 planes.

And their dominance has been bolstered by the woes at two main

rivals, Canada's Bombardier – which has hived off aviation units while cutting thousands of jobs – and Brazil's Embraer, which is selling its commercial plane division to Boeing.

That leaves them in prime position to meet an expected surge in global passenger traffic, especially in Asia – at least until China's state-owned Comac starts marketing its first jet in 2021.

Analysts say nearly 40,000 planes will be in service by 2038, double the industry's current fleet.

Yet the frenetic production pace has left several Airbus and Boeing suppliers struggling to keep up, leading to delays as "gliders" without engines or other key parts remain parked on tarmacs.

Some pilots and travellers also suspect the rush to build may have contributed to the flawed anti-stall technology in the Boeing 737 MAX.

The so-called Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) is blamed for an Ethiopian Airlines crash in March and an Indonesian Lion Air crash in October, which together claimed 346 lives.

"The 737 MAX crisis has an impact across nearly the entire industry, because aviation security is an essential issue for every player," analysts at AlixPartners said in a research note.

"It's too early to tell what will happen, but winning back passengers' confidence will be a true challenge for the entire industry," they wrote.

– Pollution pressure –

French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to the show's 53rd edition on Monday highlights another headwind: government pressure to limit carbon emissions.

While an official in Macron's office said no announcements on potential jet fuel taxes or emission quotas are planned, he has made no secret of wanting airlines and aviation firms to make more of an effort.

The subject will be on the menu at a dinner Macron will host for executives Sunday night, as France tries to forge a common EU strategy, the official said.

"Aerospace is about two percent of global emissions and 14 percent of those from transportation, so it's not negligible," said Philippe Plouvier, an analyst at the Boston Consulting Group.

"It's an industry that's going to double its emissions by 2040," he said, as growing passenger traffic offsets any expected improvements in engine designs.

On the military front, the defence ministers of France, Germany and Spain will meet in Le Bourget on Monday to sign a formal cooperation accord to build a new European fighter jet which they hope will be in the skies by 2040.

No financing deals or contracts will be announced for the so-called Future Combat Air System, and the production launch is still years away.

But another Elysee official said the cooperation pact would be the latest signal of Europe's determination to unite its defensive capabilities.

"We want Europe to be stronger, able to completely ensure the protection of its citizens, and to intervene jointly," he said.

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