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## Rahul Gandhi raises pitch against Modi in Tamil Nadu

DC CORRESPONDENTS  
CHENNAI/KANYAKUMARI,  
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Congress president Rahul Gandhi kicked off the election campaign for the DMK-led UPA front in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of remote controlling the AIADMK government, failing to bring the promised development to the state and the rest of India, and trying to destroy Tamil culture by imposing the RSS brand of polity.

Addressing the UPA poll rally at Nagercoil in the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha constituency, a stronghold of the BJP, Rahul Gandhi supported the contention of DMK chief MK Stalin that the reins of the AIADMK government were in the hands of the PMO. "Delhi is controlling the state which has never happened before," he said pointing out this made a mockery of an elected government.

Alleging that the Modi government was attempting to distort language, culture and the history of Tamils, Rahul said he along with his alliance leaders — Stalin, Vaiko, Thirumavalavan, Kadher Moideen and others — have been defending the spirit of Tamils in their own way, though they cannot be compared with the iconic leaders like Kamaraj or Karunanidhi, who had protected the Tamils' welfare in every way.

Indirectly alluding to Modi's "Make in India" initiative, Rahul said Congress would do better with a "Make in Tamil Nadu" programme. "Tamil Nadu has the potential to emerge as the manufacturing capital of the world", he declared and vowed to create a brand 'Made in Tamil Nadu' for products manufactured in the state when his UPA



Congress president Rahul Gandhi takes a selfie with students at Stella Maris Women's College in Chennai on Wednesday.

— PTI

● **Indirectly alluding to Modi's "Make in India" initiative, Rahul said Congress would do better with a "Make in Tamil Nadu" programme**

Government takes charge post-poll. And that would generate millions of jobs for the youth now languishing as jobless as his Government would make available ample bank credit to young entrepreneurs, whereas the Modi regime had given away "₹35,000 crores to Nirav Modi, ₹35,000 crore to Mehul Choksi and Ambani ₹45,000 crores of public funds".

The Congress president charged PM Modi with trying to split the country into two nations — one belonging to the super rich flying around in their aircraft and making crores of rupees "for doing nothing" and the "other India wherein youth have no jobs, farmers no future, where people are in severe pain". The UPA

Government at the Centre would launch a scheme to guarantee minimum income for every Indian irrespective of state, religion, caste or language, he said.

In his first rally after his party inked a poll pact with the DMK, Rahul said Modi had claimed he wanted to be "chowkidar and not Prime Minister." "After saying that, the chowkidar gave ₹30,000 crore to Ambani," he alleged. The Prime Minister's "entire foundation is built on lies," he said and quoted Tamil saint poet Tiruvalluvar's verse on truth in Tamil, which meant that truth would triumph (apparently referring to the Rafale deal). "And the truth will put Narendra Modi in jail," he declared. ■ P2

● **PM was very angry, I showed him some affection with a hug: Rahul**

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**Rahul promises 33% reservation for women in govt jobs**

Chennai, March 13: Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday announced that if his party comes to power it will reserve 33 per cent of all government jobs at the national level for women. In the first such poll promise for women, Gandhi said there were not many women in leadership position.

"I don't see them leading enough companies. I don't see them leading enough states. I don't see enough of them in the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas," he said while interacting with students of Stella Maris College for Women in Chennai. "One of the things that we have decided that in 2019 we are going to pass the women's reservation bill in Lok Sabha," Rahul said. — PTI ■ P2

**Rahul will be PM after LS polls, says DMK chief Stalin**

Nagercoil, March 13: Sticking to his Rahul Gandhi for PM pitch, DMK President M K Stalin Wednesday said the Congress chief will assume the top office within a few weeks.

Sharing the stage with Rahul Gandhi at a grand UPA poll rally here, Stalin declared that the coming Lok Sabha election was a war to dislodge Prime Minister Narendra Modi and asserted the UPA would repeat its 2004 success by winning all 40 seats.

"Within a few weeks, Rahul Gandhi will become the Prime Minister. In your (Gandhi's) hands the country will be safe we believe," the DMK chief said. — PTI ■ P2

■ Call me Rahul, makes me comfortable, not sir'

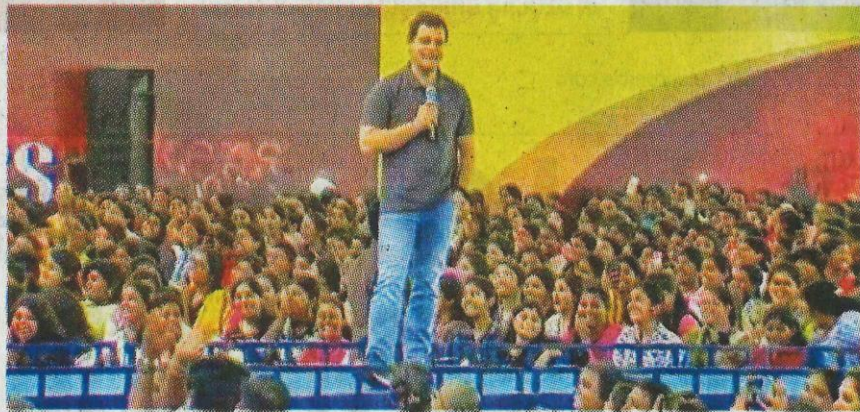
# Probe Vadra, probe Modi too: Cong prez

KATHELENE ANTONY | DC  
CHENNAI, MARCH 13

Asserting that law must not be applied selectively, Rahul Gandhi said that PM Modi too should be probed for alleged corruption in the Rafale deal just as his brother-in-law Robert Vadra is under investigation for alleged money laundering and land deals. "I will be the first person to say it... Investigate Robert Vadra but also investigate Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said at a lively interaction with students of Stella Maris College for Women here on Wednesday.

"Call me Rahul instead of 'sir', makes me more comfortable," said the Congress president, when the first question was posed to him by a student at the gathering, which largely involved an interaction through a question-answer session. "How many times have you seen the Prime Minister of India standing in the middle of 3,000 women like this? Have you seen the Prime Minister of India like this, being open to any question from anybody?" he asked, in an obvious attempt to show his USP.

"He understood his audience well and spoke about specific topics like women empowerment and the education system in the country," said Karishma Angela Vincent, a third-year student. He also promised that 33 per cent of government jobs at all levels will be reserved for women if the Congress comes to power. "Frankly, I don't see enough women in leadership positions. This is a starting point and we cannot have women



President of the Indian National Congress Rahul Gandhi interacted with students at Stella Maris Women's college on Wednesday. — DC

empowerment in India without a change in attitude and there is a lot to change with this attitude because I'm a believer that women, generally, are smarter than men," Rahul said as a response to that question.

Further highlighting the divide created by the current government, Rahul Gandhi said that there is an ideological battle going on in India. "The religious, cultural divide is clear, he said and underlined the fact that the idea of 'nationalism' in the country is being defined by two ideologies. One is a unifying ideology which says that all people of the country should live together and shouldn't be dominated by one idea. The other ideology the other is that of the Modi Government. If one defies them, they are termed 'anti-national,' he said and the ideological shift is harm to development," Karishma said.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, third-year sociology student Abhinayaa Sampath said that the question was a follow-up after a slew of them on demonetization

## WHY YOU HUGGED MODI?

On a more candid note, a student in the audience asked Rahul Gandhi about his now-infamous hug with Prime Minister Modi last year, to which Congress president said that he watched a 'very angry' Modi in Parliament, targeting his late father Rajiv Gandhi and mother Sonia.

However, deep inside, he said, he felt affection for Modi and he thought Modi was angry "because he is not able to see the beauty of the world". "The reason is that they have not been loved. So, the truth is the Prime Minister unfortunately for whatever reason did not have the type of love that he should have had and that's why he generates this anger.

and the recent Pulwama attacks. "Rahul Gandhi was speaking about how money is abused in the hands of the rich. Through that, many more

So, I genuinely feel love for the Prime Minister,"

"So I thought that at least from my side, I should show him some affection," he said.

"I genuinely feel love for the Prime Minister," Rahul Gandhi said, to which the audience roared with laughter, to which he responded, "I genuinely do."

"I learnt from Mr Modi. I can't hate Mr Modi. Can you hate people who teach you things? Your biggest teachers are the people who attack you, the people who abuse you. They are your biggest teachers," he said.

"If they give you hate, and you give them hate, you learn nothing. If they give you hate, and you hug them. You learn a lot," he added.

questions, including the one on Robert Vadra was shot at him, to which he replied that everyone should be investigated with such ease," she said.