



ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

24, Akbar Road, New Delhi - 110 011
(Phone : 011-23019080, 23019056)

Mallikarjun Kharge
President &
Leader of Opposition (Rajya Sabha)

10th April, 2024

Hon'ble President,

You are aware, Indian Democracy has conventionally kept our Armed Forces away from any partisan politics. In the past successive Indian governments kept Armed Forces and its affiliate institutions away from shadows of varying political ideologies.

2. You would appreciate the widely accepted fact that this deliberate clear compartmentalization was in line with the highest democratic values and based on international experiences. This indeed kept our democracy thriving robustly, even as regimes across the globe fell to military interference, subversion of democracy and martial law.

3. In this context, I want to bring to your kind notice an investigative report based on an RTI reply, which described that Sainik Schools are being privatised using a new PPP model introduced by your government, and now 62% of these schools are said to be owned by the BJP-RSS leaders.

4. There are 33 Sainik Schools in the country. These were fully government funded institutions operated under the aegis of Sainik Schools Society (SSS), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

5. In 2021, the central government brazenly initiated the privatisation of Sainik Schools. As a result thereto, Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed for 40 out of the 100 new schools, based on this model, where the Union Government provides "an Annual Fee Support of 50% of fee (subject to an upper limit of Rs.40000/- per annum for 50% of the class strength (subject to an upper limit of 50 students) per year from Class 6 onwards till class 12, on Merit-cum-Means basis". This in effect means, that for a school that has classes till 12th standard, SSS offers to provide support of maximum Rs 1.2 crore per annum, among other incentives.

6. The report also found that out of the 40 MoUs that have been signed, 62% have been signed with individuals & organizations belonging to the RSS-BJP-Sangh Parivar. This includes a Chief Minister's family, several MLAs, BJP office-bearers and RSS leaders.



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7. This is a blatant step to politicise the independent Sainik Schools – a preparatory platform which plays a leading role in sending cadets for the National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Naval Academy. Sainik Schools were established by India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru in 1961 and they have been the beacon of military leadership and excellence since then.

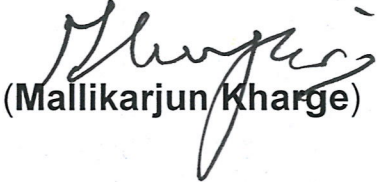
8. It is evident and therefore I ask, if this has been effected to ideologically indoctrinate Armed Forces at the entry level. No political party has ever done this, as there is general national consensus to keep the valour and courage of our Armed Forces away from partisan politics.

9. It is not surprising that the union government has broken this well enshrined convention. Having undermined institutions after institutions, in the grand plan of RSS to hurriedly thrust its ideology, they have dealt a body blow to the very nature and ethos of the Armed Forces. Imparting ideologically slanted knowledge in such institutions shall not only destroy inclusiveness but also damage the national character of the Sainik Schools, by influencing their character through partisan religious/corporate/family/social/cultural credos.

Therefore, in National Interest, the Indian National Congress demands the complete rollback of this privatisation policy and annulment of these MoUs, so that children studying at Armed Forces Schools retain desired character, vision and honour required for the service of the nation.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Mallikarjun Kharge)

Smt. Draupadi Murmu,
Hon'ble President of India.