

Modi: Attack me, but don't question integrity of Army

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Srinagar/Pithoragarh: Addressing his final two rallies in Uttarakhand before the state goes to polls on February 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised the emotive issue of national pride in the context of surgical strikes on Sunday. "While the world's security agencies are studying about methods of our armed forces and how they conducted the strikes, some people are questioning the entire exercise. They are saying why is it that if the strikes happened, not a single of our soldiers died. Attack me if you want to, but don't ever question the integrity of our armed forces."

The Prime Minister attacked the Harish Rawat government by claiming that "dev bhoomi (land of gods) had become loot bhohmi (land of plunder) where mining, liquor and transfer postings had become industries to loot the state."

At Srinagar in Pauri Garhwal, Modi also blamed Rawat for stalling the state's development. He accused Congress of opposing Uttarakhand's creation and said that in an about turn, the party had now aligned with SP in UP. "Congress members remained silent when SP wreaked havoc in Rampur Tiraha during the statehood agitation when women were raped and bullets were fired at innocents. The same Congress has joined hands with SP."

Asking voters to support BJP in all the eight assembly constituencies of Pauri district, Modi said, "I will take special care of Uttarakhand because it is now 16 years old and at an important juncture. A lot of development needs to be done so that migration ends forever and everyone gets opportunity and facilities in the hills."

While raising the issue of migration in Pithoragarh, the PM quipped that even Rawat had migrated from Dharchula

in Pithoragarh district, in an apparent reference to the CM contesting from seats in the plains this time and not Dharchula, his earlier seat. To connect with the region's substantial defence population, Modi spoke about his government's implementation of OROP and steps like empanelling more than 500 hospitals for their treatment. He claimed the government had been sitting on various hydro projects worth Rs 42,000 crore in Tehri and Pancheswar.