

Indian opposition mocks Modi's liking for getting global gongs

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As Narendra Modi touched down in Seychelles last weekend, it bestowed one of its “highest” honours upon the Indian prime minister.

Modi beamed as he accepted the Guardian of the Blue Horizon award from Patrick Herminie, the president of the Indian Ocean nation, complete

with a trophy and certificate. But observers soon pointed out several things appeared to be off about it.

The certificate misspelled “republic” as “repubblic”, and even “Seychelles” as “Seycheeles”. The award, it transpired, was created just three days before Modi's arrival and he was the first and only recipient.

To add to the furore, when run through software, the certificate was widely flagged as AI-generated.

The opposition Congress party was quick to jump on the controversy, claiming: “Give him [Modi] any award, and he'll come running.”

Modi's Bharatiya Janata party hit back, saying it was a “proud moment for India” for him to receive the award for his “green leadership”.

On Thursday, the Seychelles foreign ministry claimed that a “working draft” had accidentally been circulated and that an “authentic and duly approved” version had now been issued, adding: “The Guardian of the Blue Horizon distinction is genuine.”

As critics have pointed out, Modi has shown a notable penchant for receiving awards, at home and

abroad, over his 12 years in power. Last month, days before his visit to Israel, the Israeli parliament quickly created what it claimed to be one of the country's highest honours, the medal of the Knesset, which was bestowed on Modi when he landed. Again, he is the only recipient to date.

In 2019, Modi also became the first



◀ *Narendra Modi has racked up a number of honours where he was the first and, so far, only recipient*

recipient of India's Philip Kotler presidential award, for his “outstanding leadership of the nation”. According to the government's press release, the honour was to be bestowed annually to the leader of a nation. No other leader has since been given the award and its website lies dormant.

Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, the author of a biography of Modi, said the global push for prizes was symptomatic of his personality-driven politics. “The intention behind collecting these awards ... is to convey ... that Modi is being honoured across the world because of his greatness and that India's rising clout is because of Modi's personality,” he said.