





## IN BRIEF

## Body of man found inside parked car

**New Delhi:** The body of a 34-year-old man was found inside a parked car in Delhi's Nehru Place area on Thursday, an official said. The official said the initial probe revealed that the man committed suicide by trying to immolate himself inside the car. As the vehicle did not catch fire, he suffered nasal bleeding due to hypoxia stress and asphyxiated to death. The deceased was identified as Dhruv Mahajan, a resident of the Dayanand colony in the Lajpat Nagar area. Sharing the details, DCP Rajesh Deo said that on Thursday at 9:40 a.m., a police control room (PCR) was received in Kalkaji police station that "a body, with blood splattered around it, was lying inside a parked car". Upon reaching the spot, which was in front of Pahadpur Business Centre beside Devika Tower in Nehru Place, a body was found on the driver's seat with blood all around including the nose. "Since all the gates of the car were locked, the car was opened by breaking the rear glass and it was found that the male was dead on the steering wheel with burn injuries on the face, thigh and both hands," said the DCP.

## 2 Chinese among 4 held for smuggling

**New Delhi:** Two Chinese nationals were among four passengers who were arrested for allegedly smuggling gold worth ₹5.45 crore at the international airport here, the customs department said on Thursday. The accused were intercepted after their arrival from Hong Kong on Tuesday. The detailed examination of their baggage and personal search resulted in recovery of 8.2 kg gold, having tariff value of ₹5.45 crore, it said. "All four passengers (three women and a man) were from the same family and were involved in smuggling the foreign-origin gold," the statement issued by the customs department said. The accused have been arrested and the gold was seized, it added.

## House catches fire after blast in AC

**Ghaziabad:** A fire broke out at a house in Vasundhara area here following a blast in the compressor of an air conditioner on Thursday, the police said. No one was injured in the blaze but a portion of the house was gutted, they said. Chief fire officer Rahul Pal said, "The fire caused by the blast in the compressor of the air conditioner, which was installed on the first floor, spread to the second floor of the house." "Our team that reached the spot managed to control the fire before it could do any major damage," he added. The residents of the house had a narrow escape as they climbed on to the terrace, the officer said. — PTI

## NEWLY-ELECTED BJP MPs FROM DELHI CALL ON L-G

**New Delhi:** The seven newly elected BJP MPs from Delhi on Thursday called on lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena at Raj Niwas, and discussed various issues including "water shortage crisis" in the city. The L-G congratulated the new Lok Sabha MPs from the city and hosted a lunch for them, the Raj Niwas officials said. "Newly elected Members of Lok Sabha from Delhi called on Hon'ble Lt Governor today," Raj Niwas said in a post on X and shared Mr Saxena's photo with the BJP MPs. Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, elected from South Delhi, said the BJP MPs paid a courtesy visit to the L-G. "The water shortage crisis in Delhi and various other issues were discussed in the meeting. The BJP MPs were also guided by Saxena for development of Delhi," he said. The Supreme Court earlier in the day, while directing the Himachal Pradesh government to release 137 cusecs of surplus drinking water for the national capital by June 7, said there should be no wastage of water by the Delhi government since there is an "acute water crisis". The BJP registered a clean sweep in Delhi in the May 25 Lok Sabha elections, third time in a row, winning all the seven seats by defeating the AAP-Congress alliance candidates.



A child waits to collect water from a municipality tanker at Chanakyapuri area in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

## Delhi sees a cool down as temp drops 3 notches

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Delhiites breathed a sigh of relief as the scorching heat took a slight break on Thursday, with the maximum temperature dropping from 44° C to 41.2° C, a notch above normal, according to the weather department.

The national capital is expected to receive light rain along with a dust storm or thunderstorm accompanied by gusty winds at a speed of 30 to 40 kmph during the late evening, the weather office predicted.

The city is experiencing a change in the weather due to the impact of a new western disturbance, according to the India meteorological department (IMD).

The maximum temperature was four notches above normal on Wednesday.

The city also witnessed rain and dust storms late on Thursday, bringing relief to Delhiites from the sweltering heat.

On Thursday, Delhi recorded a low of 24.6° C, three notches below the normal.

The relative humidity oscillated between 39 per cent and 57 per cent, according to the IMD bulletin.

While the Safdarjung

## Amid heatwave, Centre asks UTs, states to review health facilities

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

With many parts of the country in the grip of a heatwave, the Centre has asked states and Union territories to conduct follow-up reviews to ensure dedicated heat stroke rooms at all health facilities besides implementing critical fire and electrical safety measures.

Dr Atul Goel, director-general of health services, Union health ministry on Thursday conducted a virtual review meeting with states and UTs to assess the preparedness for heat-wave conditions and fire safety measures adopted by various healthcare facilities across the country.

Observatory, the city's primary weather station, noted a high of 41.2° C, Delhi's other weather stations such as Najafgarh and Narela recorded maximum temperatures of 44.4° C and 42.8° C, respectively.

The Aya Nagar station noted a high of 43.2° C, Ridge 40.6° C, and Palam 42.3° C, the bulletin said.

The capital was on yellow alert (be aware) on Thursday.

State health departments have been issued advisories and asked to implement guidelines on strengthening health systems preparedness for heat-related illnesses (HRI) besides issuing a public health advisory with do's and don'ts.

They have been urged to follow the guidelines on emergency cooling for severe heat-related illnesses and autopsy findings in heat related deaths.

The health ministry has earlier in March asked states to take proactive measures to prevent devastating incidents caused by extreme heat. This was followed by another letter on May 29 for taking all preventive measures in respect to fire safety.

For Friday, the MeT has forecast a partly cloudy sky with a dust storm or thunderstorm along with light showers, accompanied by strong surface winds at speeds of 25 to 35 kmph.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to hover around 43° C and 29° C, respectively.

## 6 Parl breach accused to be tried under UAPA

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena has accorded sanction to prosecute six persons under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for their alleged involvement in the Parliament security breach incident, Raj Niwas officials said on Thursday. In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament attack, two persons had jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery and opened canisters that emitted a yellow-coloured smoke, triggering panic among the MPs on December 13 last year. Six persons —

## ■ MLAs to hold meetings with workers on Saturday, Sunday

## AAP part ways with Cong, will go solo in state polls

AVINASH PRABHAKAR  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Aam Aadmi Party's Delhi state convener Gopal Rai on Thursday said his party's alliance with the Congress was only for the Lok Sabha elections and clarified that the ruling party in the city will go solo in the next year's Assembly polls.

The development comes after the AAP-Congress combine drew a blank in the Lok Sabha polls in Delhi, with BJP effecting a clean sweep on all seven parliamentary seats for a record third time.

After a meeting held with party MLAs and senior leaders at Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence here, Mr Rai said the party gave full support to the INDIA bloc in the Lok Sabha polls.

Following the Lok Sabha polls, a meeting of all the MLAs was called to discuss the poll results at the CM's residence.



Gopal Rai

"The INDIA bloc was only contesting the Lok Sabha polls. Several parties fought elections together and AAP was also a part of it. As of now, there is no alliance for the Delhi Assembly polls," he said while speaking to the media after the meeting.

He asserted that the biggest advantage of the AAP-Congress alliance has been that the victory margins of the BJP candidates in Delhi have reduced.

Emphasising that all the MLAs in the meeting agreed that people's mandate in the Lok Sabha polls was against "dictatorship," Mr Rai said, "We

fought the elections in the most adverse circumstances. Our top leaders are in jail. The victory margin has reduced on all the seats."

Speaking on the occasion, he said there was disappointment among AAP workers after Mr Kejriwal's arrest but the party remained united even in difficult circumstances and put up a good fight against "dictatorship."

"It was decided in the meeting that on June 8, we will hold a meeting with councillors and on June 13, a meeting will be held with all party workers of Delhi. Since Kejriwal is in jail, our struggle will continue," the AAP Delhi convener said.

Mr Rai informed that it was also decided that all party MLAs will hold meetings with workers on Saturday and Sunday to speed up the development works since the Model Code of Conduct has been lifted.

## Gang war continues in Tihar, rivals stab another prisoner

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

The war between Tillu Tajpuriya and Gogi gangs took another victim when a prisoner was stabbed in a fight that broke out inside the Tihar Jail No. 3, according to the police.

The injured, Hitesh, a murder case undertrial, was rushed to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where he is under treatment, it said on Thursday.

The fight had allegedly broken out on Wednesday around 11.15 am between Hitesh, a member of Gogi gang, and two others from Tillu Tajpuriya gang, an officer said.

A police source said that Hitesh was stabbed with a weapon similar to an ice-pick.

"On Wednesday, a matter was reported in Hari Nagar police station from DDU that an injured man from Tihar Jail has been brought to the hospital. Based on that, the local police reached the hospital and inquired about the matter," DCP (West) Vichitra Veer said.

"The names of the persons who attacked Hitesh have come as Gaurav Lohra and Gurinder. As of now, the confirmation of the identity of the attackers is a matter of investigation. Hitesh sustained injuries and was shifted to the DDU Hospital," he said.

The officer said Hitesh has been in jail since 2019, while Gaurav and Gurinder are undergoing trial in cases of murder

and attempted murder.

"Based on the nature of injuries, a case under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered and the investigation is being conducted," the DCP added.

A source from inside the prison said that Hitesh was talking with other inmates when the two approached him and started an argument with him.

"Soon the verbal spat turned into a scuffle and one of the accused stabbed him with an ice-pick. Hitesh was immediately rushed to a hospital and jail authorities informed the matter to the police," the source said.

There are no VIP leaders lodged in jail number 3, the person said.

## 3 held for using forged Aadhaar card to enter Parliament complex

**New Delhi, May 6:** Three labourers trying to enter the high-security Parliament complex by allegedly using "forged" Aadhaar cards were apprehended by the CISF personnel, official sources said on Thursday.

The Delhi police has arrested the three persons identified as Kasim, Monis and Soyeb and has charged them under various sections of the IPC related to forgery and cheating.

Manoranjan D., Sagor Sharma, Amol Dhanraj Shinde, Neelam Ranolila,

Sources said the trio were intercepted and detained by CISF personnel at the flap gate entry of the Parliament House on Tuesday when they had lined up for security and identity card checks.

The three were trying to gain entry into the Parliament complex by showing their Aadhaar cards. The CISF personnel found the cards to be doubtful and on further scrutiny found that those were forged, the sources said. — PTI

Lalit Jha and Mahesh Kumawat — are accused in the case.

## CIC can't comment on usage of MPLADS by MPs, says HC

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

The chief information commissioner (CIC) has no jurisdiction to comment on the utilisation of MPLADS funds by MPs as the scope of the Right To Information (RTI) Act is limited to providing access to information under the control of public authorities, the Delhi high court has held. The court expunged certain remarks made by the CIC

while dealing with an RTI application seeking information pertaining to utilisation of funds under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), and said the authority has no jurisdiction to comment adversely upon the functioning of any public authority.

It, however, retained the CIC's direction for disclosure of MP-wise, constituency-wise and work-wise details of the funds.

In its order, the CIC had observed that some MPs were "deliberately accumulating" their MPLADS funds for the last year of their term to gain advantage at the time of the next elections and suggested the ministry of statistics and programme implementation to prevent this "abuse" of the funds, and implement the guidelines for distributing the money equally for each year of the five-year term.

## More women voted than men in 7th phase of LS polls, says EC

**New Delhi, Jun 6:** The women voter turnout was more than that of men in the seventh phase of the Lok Sabha elections held on June 1, according to data released by the Election Commission (EC) on Thursday. The women voter turnout was 63 per cent and that of men was 61.48 per cent. In the sixth phase, 61.95 per cent men and 64.95 per

cent women voted, according to EC data.

The overall voter turnout of the 2024 general election was 65.79 per cent, it said.

In the seventh phase, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh were among the states that had a higher women voter turnout. — PTI

## BJP is alternative Delhiites looking for: Sachdeva

**New Delhi, June 6:** Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva on Thursday said that the Lok Sabha election results show that people of the national capital are looking for an alternative for the assembly polls due next year. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which won all seven seats in Delhi in the 2014 and 2019 general elections, completed its third consecutive sweep in the city on Tuesday.

"That alternative is the Bharatiya Janata Party," he said.

"Our opponents used to say that vote split paved the way for the BJP's victory in the Lok Sabha polls but this time both the AAP and the Congress were defeated despite alliance," Mr Sachdeva said in a press conference.

## AAP MP says JD-U's demand for Agnipath review correct

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Thursday said the JD(U)'s demand for review of Agnipath scheme is "100 per cent correct" and stressed that the scheme should have been withdrawn earlier.

Earlier in the day, JD(U) leader K.C. Tyagi told reporters here that the party has demanded a review of the Agnipath scheme, and will "pursue" the caste census issue.

Talking to a news agency, Mr Singh said, "Agniveer is betrayal with Mother India and the Army. The Prime Minister should have withdrawn it earlier."

"Earlier a jawan was trained for a year but under this scheme (Agnipath), you reduced the training period to six months. Every youth is ready to sacrifice his or her life for the country. But you are weakening the army. This demand from JD(U) is 100 per cent correct," the AAP leader added.

In June 2022, the government rolled out the Agnipath recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three armed services.

The scheme provides for recruiting youths between the age bracket of 17-and-half years and 21 for four years with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years.

## 21 students from Aakash institute secure AIR 1 in Neet examination

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

A whopping 21 students of Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) created history by securing AIR rank 1 in Neet UG examination 2024 by scoring 720/720 each. Out of these 21, 14 are classroom students and seven are from Aakash's distance learning programme (DLP).

Aakashians who have secured the AIR 1 are Mridul Manya Anand (Delhi), Ayush Naugraiya (Jhansi), Akshat Pangaria

(Haldwani), Aditya Kumar Panda (Chennai), Arghyadeep Dutta (Kolkata), Saksham Agrawal (Siliguri), Sujoy Dutta (Delhi), Aryan Yadav (Lucknow), Manav Priyadarshi (Ranchi), Palansha Agarwal (Mumbai-Nerul), Dhruv Garg, Samit Kumar Saini and Iram Quazi (Jaipur) and Kriti Sharma (Surat) and many more students.

The students attributed their remarkable success to their rigorous understanding of concepts and strict adherence to a disciplined study schedule.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. DEE-TRS-GZB adding for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender against Tender No. 230-TRS-GZB-2023-24-39. The details are as under:	
1. Name of the work:	Hiring of experienced monkey handler for deployment in Electric Loco Shed Ghaziabad to tackle monkey menace' in two shifts for a period of 24 Months.
2. Approx. cost of work:	Rs. 8,74,823.52
3. Earnest Money to be deposited:	Rs. 17,509.00
4. Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender:	27.06.2024 (11:00 Hrs.)
5. Date & Time of opening of tender document:	27.06.2024 (After 11.00 Hrs.)
6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen:	www.ireps.gov.in
Note: (i) The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> for participating in e-tender system. (ii) For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. (iii) No manual offers are acceptable. (iv) Cost of Tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.	
No. 230-TRS-GZB-2023-24-39 Dated: 03.06.2024	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	



# NEET (UG) 2024 BLOCKBUSTER RESULT

## HIGHEST NUMBERS ACROSS INDIA

# ALLEN

**26** Students secured  
**All India Rank 1**  
with perfect 720/720 Marks

**40** Students in Top  
100 All India Rank

**138416** Total Students  
Qualified  
Classroom Course : 85572 | Distance Learning : 52844



Scan to see  
our Toppers'  
success stories

**738**  
STUDENTS  
SCORED 700 &  
ABOVE MARKS

ALLEN NEET (UG)  
2024 Results  
Certified by

Official result validator  
**EY**  
Building a better  
working world



As per results compiled till 6th June 2024 (4:10 PM)

## ALLEN DELHI : SPECTACULAR NEET (UG) 2024 RESULT IN THE VERY FIRST YEAR



AIR  
**1**



✓ **11** Students Scored  
700 and above Marks

✓ **48** Students Scored  
680 and above Marks

✓ **140** Students Scored  
650 and above Marks

✓ **336** Students Scored  
600 and above Marks

**2300+** ALLEN Delhi Classroom  
Students Qualified

Authenticity of Result: Power of **ALLEN**

Heartiest Congratulations!

## ADMISSIONS OPEN (CLASSROOM COURSES)

NEET (UG) | JEE (Main+Adv.) | Olympiads | Class 8 to 12 & 12 Pass

GET UP TO **90%** SCHOLARSHIP

Based on JEE & NEET (UG) 2024 Score or appear in ASAT



Scan to Register

## REPEATER COURSE FOR NEET (UG) 2025

For Class 12 Pass / NEET 2024 Appeared / Ex-ALLEN Students

Get up to 90% Scholarship based on NEET(UG) 2024 Score

Batches Starting: **12 JUNE 2024** onwards



Scan to Enrol

**TALLENTEX 2025** Register now & avail early registration fee benefit, visit [tallentex.com](https://tallentex.com)

Scholarship based on your performance in JEE & NEET (UG) 2024 Score / 10th & 12th Board Marks and for more details on upcoming batches, visit [allen.ac.in](https://allen.ac.in)

## ALLEN STUDY CENTERS IN DELHI - NCR

DWARKA | FARIDABAD | GHAZIABAD-RDC | GHAZIABAD-VASUNDHARA | GURUGRAM  
JANAKPURI | KALU SARAI | LAJPAT NAGAR | MALVIYA NAGAR | NOIDA (U.P.) | NSP  
PREET VIHAR | PUNJABI BAGH | SOUTH EXTENSION (A.O.) | BAHADURGARH (A.O.)

**95136 85900**  
[allen.ac.in/delhi](https://allen.ac.in/delhi)

## REGISTERED & CORPORATE OFFICE

KOTA: 0744-3556677, 2757575  
Web.: [allen.ac.in](https://allen.ac.in)

Disclaimer: We provide an academic ecosystem and environment to prepare students for their target examinations. Studying in a coaching institute does not guarantee selection for the examination. Selection depends on preparation, admission seats in competitive exam and the number of applicants appearing. EY has examined and validated ALLEN's method for identifying eligible students who have enrolled in their paid programs.



SHORT TAKES

Girl commits suicide over poor Neet score

**Kota:** An 18-year-old Neet aspirant died allegedly by jumping from the ninth floor of a building here, police said on Thursday. The incident occurred a day after the National Testing Agency (NTA) declared the Neet-UG results, in which the victim, Bagisha Tiwari, scored 320 out of 720 marks. This marks the tenth suspected suicide by a coaching student in Kota this year, they said. The girl, hailing from Reva district in Madhya Pradesh, was reportedly depressed over her poor performance in Neet, as per police. Bagisha, who had been preparing for the medical entrance test for the last three years in this coaching hub, allegedly jumped to death from the building where she resided, under Jawahar Nagar police station limits on Wednesday, they said. She lived her mother and brother, circle inspector at Jawahar Nagar police station Harinarayan Sharma said. Bagisha jumped despite a bystander's attempt to intervene, Mr Sharma said. — *PTI*

Monsoon likely to hit Mumbai by June 10

**Mumbai:** Southwest monsoon reached Maharashtra on Thursday, bringing respite to the state where many parts have been reeling under scorching heat and severe water shortage. India meteorological department (IMD) scientist Sunil Kamble said the monsoon has reached Sindhudurg district in south Konkan and Sangli and Kolhapur in western Maharashtra. It is likely to reach Mumbai between June 9 and 10, he added. Several parts of Maharashtra have been witnessing severe water shortage, with high temperatures exacerbating the situation. As on Thursday, 11,565 villages and hamlets in 34 districts were being provided water through government and private tankers, according to official data.

NIA raids premises of Goldy Brar's aides

**New Delhi:** A day after chargesheeting Goldy Brar in the Karni Sena chief murder case, the National Investigation Agency on Thursday searched several locations in Punjab at the premises of associates of Goldy Brar in another case, and appealed for information about the terrorist and his gang. A total of nine locations associated with foreign-based designated individual terrorist Goldy Brar and his aides were searched by NIA sleuths in a Chandigarh related extortion and firing case and it covered the districts of Mohali, Patiala, Hoshiarpur and Fatehgarh Sahib, as part of its sustained crackdown on individual terrorists engaged in criminal-terrorist activities in India. Incriminating material including digital devices have been seized, the agency said.

‘Send Delhi more water’

■ **Continued From Page 1**  
said, “As and when the surplus water is released with prior information to Haryana by the state of HP the state of Haryana shall facilitate the flow of surplus water so released by HP to Hathnikund and to Wazirabad so that it reaches Delhi uninterruptedly and is made available for the citizens of Delhi for drinking water.” “A status report be submitted before this court on Monday (June 10),” it said, telling the Delhi government to ensure water received for the parched national capital is not wasted. The top court said the Delhi government and the respondents, including Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, shall file their compliance affidavits by Monday and posted the matter for further hearing on June 10. The bench was hearing a plea filed by the Delhi government seeking a direction to Haryana to release the surplus water provided by HP to the national capital to mitigate its ongoing water crisis. While hearing the matter on June 3, the SC had asked for an emergent meeting of the UYRB on June 5 to address the issue. The UYRB was set up in 1995. One of the main functions of the board is to regulate the allocation of available flows amongst the beneficiary states and also review the progress of all projects up to and including the Okhla barrage in Delhi. The beneficiary states include UP, Haryana, Rajasthan, HP and the NCT of Delhi. During the hearing on

In a first, CRPF promotes 2,600 cooks, water carriers

*1st time in history of paramilitary force in last 85 yrs*

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

As many as 2,600 cooks and water carriers, the lowest rung of constabulary that constitutes an essential backbone of the CRPF, have been promoted from constables to head constables for the first time in the history of the country's largest paramilitary force in the last 85 years. The Central Reserve Police Force has a total authorisation of 12,250 personnel for the two specialised cadres that handle the extensive network of kitchens, canteens and similar administrative works for the about 3.25 lakh men and women strength force raised in 1939.

Through an order on Wednesday, 1,700 cooks and 900 water carrier personnel have been promoted from their constable designation to the next rank of head constable. This has happened for the first time in the 85-year history of the CRPF, a senior officer said. These personnel have been part of the force since its raising in 1939 in the British era. They were given specific cadre names

Army conducts survey on Agnipath scheme

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

At a time when there is political pressure on the government to roll back the Agnipath scheme, Indian Army is carrying out internal survey on how the Agnipath scheme is panning out.

“The feedback is being taken from the Agniveers themselves, the field units where the Agniveers are deployed, the recruiting agency and other stakeholders,” sources said.

The feedback is being shared with the defence ministry and other stakeholders.

The feedback from the Indian Army is likely to

of cook and water carrier in 2016 when the 7th Pay Commission recommendations were implemented by the Union government, the officer said.

A senior officer of the force said that these per-

help the new government to carry out any review on the policy. “The survey is being taken to see how the policy is being implemented on ground and what changes are needed,” sources said.

“Whenever any new scheme is implemented, army takes out the feedback to see how the scheme is going on and if any changes needed to be made. This feedback is a continuous process” explained sources. “However, it is to be understood that Indian Army is one of the three services where the Agnipath scheme is being implemented,” sources said.

sonnel, who were recruited in the lowest rung of the hierarchy, could never be promoted and were made to retire in the same rank in which they were hired even after about 30-35 years on average.

Srinagar tense over ‘blasphemous’ post

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, JUNE 6

The classwork at Srinagar's Government Medical College (GMC) has been suspended till Saturday after the campus witnessed protests over an alleged blasphemous social media post reportedly by a non-local student.

The authorities at the city's National Institute of Technology (NIT), too, have announced the suspension of classes on June 6 and said that undergraduate, post-graduate or Ph.D. students residing outside will be allowed to

enter the campus.

Strong contingents of police have been deployed outside the Srinagar campus of the University of Kashmir and several other educational institutions, which the officials privately termed as a “precautionary measure” amid the tensions and anger in the student community over the alleged blasphemous post.

Meanwhile, the J&K police upon receiving a communication from the GMC Srinagar administration filed an FIR under Sections 153,153A, 295A, 505 (2)(b) of the Indian Penal Code at the con-

cerned police station.

The police has appealed to the people “to desist from spreading rumours or false information and said they must not fall prey to false propaganda of anti-social elements”.

The police has also warned of legal action against those who are found to be involved in provocative acts or instigation.

The officials at the GMC said that the student whose post was seen as being insulting to Prophet Muhammad by fellow students and some faculty members has been sus-

■ Muizzu a surprise addition in guest list, Mauritius PM too invited

Bhutanese King, Hasina, Ranil, Prachanda to join Modi's oath

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

India's Neighbourhood First policy towards countries friendly to it will be on full display when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is sworn in for his third term at a ceremony expected to take place on Saturday.

Mr Modi has invited the PMs of Nepal, Bangladesh and Mauritius, the Sri Lankan President and the King of Bhutan for his swearing-in ceremony. All five leaders — Nepal's Pushpa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda”, Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck are expected to attend.

As per reports on Thursday evening, Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu has also been invited to attend the ceremony although there was no official confirmation from New Delhi.

It may be noted that relations with the Maldives,

Zelenskyy invites Modi to attend peace summit

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Ukraine while urging India to attend the peace summit for resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict that will be hosted soon by Switzerland.

India's south-western maritime neighbour, had deteriorated since last year due to the policies and utterances of Mr Muizzu who is widely perceived to be a pro-China leader. However, Mr Muizzu has been lately trying to mend fences with New Delhi. It may be noted that Mr Modi earlier on Wednesday had also thanked the Maldivian President for his congratulatory message after which the invitation was reportedly extended.

In addition, there is also a possibility that

“I spoke with Mr Modi to congratulate him on his election victory. I wished him a speedy formation of the government and continued productive work for the benefit of the Indian people. We discussed the upcoming Global Peace Summit. We rely on India's participation at the highest level, Mr Zelenskyy said.

Bhutanese PM Tshering Tobgay could accompany his monarch to New Delhi. According to reports, both the Bangladesh PM and the Sri Lankan President have confirmed their participation. Some media reports also indicated that Ms Hasina will arrive in New Delhi on Friday.

India enjoys close and friendly ties with Bangladesh, Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Bhutan and the leaders of these nations also have a close camaraderie with Mr Modi.

Biden dials Modi to discuss way ahead his 3d term

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

The United States on Thursday said that President Joe Biden has discussed the forthcoming visit of National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan to India with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the congratulatory phone call made in the wake of the NDA's electoral victory.

In a statement, the White House said, “President Joseph R. Biden, Jr spoke today with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to congratulate him and the National Democratic Alliance on their historic victory in India's general election. The President also commended the people of India for participating in the largest democratic exercise in human history, with nearly 650 million going to the polls to vote.

Water sprinklers at Kuno to save cheetahs from heat

Centre takes stock of work done to fight heat

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Union Cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba on Thursday chaired a meeting of the National Crisis Management Committee to review preparedness to deal with heat waves and forest fires.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC) made detailed presentations on the current situation of heat wave and forest fires respectively, including steps being taken to deal with them, across the country, the officials said.

including a couple which have been released in the wild, are healthy”, the forest officer said.

The Cheetahs, brought from Namibia and South Africa to KNP, have adapted well with their new home, the forest officer said.

Seven adult cheetahs and three cubs have died in the park for various reasons so far.

Meanwhile, Gandhi

The IMD informed that 10-22 above normal heat wave days were observed in different parts of the country between April to June 2024.

It was also informed that as per forecast for the month of June, above-normal heatwave days are likely over most areas of Northwest India and neighboring areas from north Central India. This year, the monsoon is likely to be normal and above normal in most parts of the country. Regular alerts on heat waves are being sent by IMD.

The NDMA also informed that a series of preparatory meetings have been conducted by Central departments and

Sagar wildlife sanctuary in Mandasaur district in Madhya Pradesh is being developed to build it as the second home of cheetahs in the country.

“We are ready to receive cheetahs to their new home in the wildlife sanctuary.”

“All the works undertaken for the purpose have been completed”, a forest officer of Mandasaur district said.

JD-U, LJP seek wider debate on Agnipath, UCC & ‘One Election’

■ **Continued From Page 1**  
(short-term Army recruitment) Agniveer scheme. Our party wants those shortcomings to be removed, on which people have objections,” Mr Tyagi told reporters. He also said he is not opposed to the Uniform Civil Code, but all stakeholders should be consulted on it. “On the UCC, CM (Nitish Kumar) had written to the Law Commission. We are not against the UCC. But there should be consultations with all stakeholders, chief ministers, political parties and different sects, and a consensus should be reached,” he said.

On the issue of a caste census, the JD(U) leader further said: “No party in the country has denied a caste census. Bihar has shown the way, the Prime Minister also did not oppose... It is the demand of the time, and we will pursue it.” “We are now eyeing up to three Cabinet berths”, a senior JD(U) leader said. Another top party leader said it is hopeful of a “respectable” representation in the Union council of ministers. “The matter of Cabinet berths will be decided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and our party chief Nitish Kumar ji. But, it should be respectable,” Shrawan Kumar, JD(U) leader and Bihar rural development minister, said.

He also said the matter of representation in the Union Cabinet should be decided keeping the 2025 Bihar Assembly polls in mind.

In 2019, a “token representation” of just one berth had been turned down by Mr Nitish Kumar.

JD(U) sources said the party was keen on portfolios such as railways, rural development, agriculture, water resources and heavy industries, but they have left it to the PM. Among the frontrunners for ministerial berths in the party are Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Jha, Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, Ram Nath Thakur (son of Dalit icon Karpoori Thakur), Kaushalendra Kumar, Rampriti Mandal, Ms Vijaylaxmi Devi and Ms Lovely Anand. One of the berths could possibly go to a woman and one from an extremely backward caste.

On its support to the BJP as a member of the National Democratic Alliance, a senior JD(U) leader also said: “There is no pre-condition, there is unconditional support. But it is in our mind and heart that Bihar should be given special status. After bifurcation, the situation Bihar has faced cannot be corrected without granting it special status.”

The support of allies like the JD(U) is crucial for the BJP as it could not reach the majority mark on its own in the recently concluded LS polls. With 12 MPs, the JD(U) is the second biggest BJP ally after the Telugu Desam Party's 16 MPs, and leaders of the saffron party are holding talks with others of the NDA group over ministerial berths and other issues.

Top BJP brass huddle on options, PM's oath on Sun

■ **Continued From Page 1**

join the PM for a meeting with President Droupadi Murmu on Friday to present her the list of parliamentarians supporting Mr Modi. Amid hard bargaining by allies TDP and JD(U) for plum portfolios, the BJP top brass, it is learnt, is reluctant to give up on the “top four” ministries — home, finance, defence and external affairs. The NDA has 293 MPs, comfortably above the majority mark of 272 in 543-member LS.

The BJP's top brass meeting with the party leaders is seen as part of the party's exercise ahead of the formation of the new government. Preparing to take the oath for a third straight term as the head of the coalition government, Mr Modi chaired a meeting of the ruling alliance's members on Wednesday, who unanimously elected him as its leader. With 12 MPs, the JD(U) is the second biggest BJP ally after the TDP, which has 16 parliamentarians. The regional party is looking to get some key ministerial berths to reclaim the lost ground in Bihar, where it has performed well after being seen to have fallen way behind the BJP and the RJD over the last few years.

The new BJP-led government will critically depend on the support of the JD(U) and the TDP for survival. And therefore, the BJP leaders are in touch with their NDA allies over ministerial berths and other issues. Other than some plum portfolios, Mr Naidu is said to be keen for the Centre to provide Andhra Pradesh financial assistance in building its capital in Amravati. He also wants the new government to take steps to fulfil the Centre's commitment to the state when Telangana was carved out of it, sources said.





## SHORT TAKES

## K'taka minister in coop fraud row quits

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka Minister B Nagendra, facing allegations in connection with an illegal money transfer case involving a state-run corporation on Thursday resigned from the ministry, in a setback to the Siddaramaiah-led government. The Scheduled Tribes welfare minister tendered his resignation letter to the chief minister and said he would come clean in the case. The illegal money transfer issue, involving Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes development corporation, came to light, after its accounts superintendent, Chandrashekhar P, died by suicide on May 26, leaving behind a death note. The note revealed the unauthorised transfer of ₹187 crore belonging to the state-run corporation from its bank account, and from that, ₹88.62 crore was illegally moved to various accounts allegedly belonging to "well-known" IT companies and a Hyderabad-based cooperative bank.

## 280 MPs elected for 1st time in Lok Sabha

**New Delhi:** Actor Arun Govil, who played the role of Lord Ram in the popular TV serial *Ramayan*, dalit rights activist Chandrashekhar Azad 'Ravan' and erstwhile royal Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar are among the 280 first-term members of the Lok Sabha. Former CMs, RS members, entrepreneurs and even an ex-HC judge made their maiden entry into the 543-member Lower House of Parliament. The first-term LS members account for 52 per cent of the total members. Uttar Pradesh, the largest state that sends 80 members to the LS, has 45 first-term members in the Lok Sabha including BJP's Govil from Meerut seat, Congress' Kishori Lal Sharma, who defeated BJP's Smriti Irani in Amethi, and Azad Samaj Party's Chandrashekhar Azad 'Ravan' from Nagina seat. — PTI

## Prajwal's SIT custody extended till June 10

**Bengaluru:** A court here on Thursday extended till June 10 the SIT custody of former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing charges of rape and sexual abuse against several women. He was produced before the special court for elected Representatives which had on May 31 remanded him to SIT custody till June 6. The 33-year-old grandson of JD(S) patriarch and former PM H.D. Deve Gowda had failed in his bid to retain the Hassan LS seat. The extension of custody was granted on Thursday, with the court acknowledging the need for further investigation. The SIT sought additional time to gather more evidence and interrogate the accused comprehensively. SIT officials arrested Revanna soon after he landed at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport from Germany on May 31. — PTI

## SAJAD A. LONE ON BREAK FROM ACTIVE POLITICS

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, JUNE 6

After finishing third in the just-concluded Lok Sabha elections, Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference chief Sajad Ahmad Lone has announced a temporary retreat from active politics for self-reflection. On Thursday, he wrote on "X", "I will be away for a few days. Taking a break to step back, pause and reflect." Mr Lone fought the election from his home constituency Baramulla, securing 173,239 votes. Independent candidate Engineer Sheikh Abdur Rashid won the election after defeating his nearest rival former chief minister Omar Abdullah by a margin of over 2.04 lakh votes. "Winning and losing is part of life. A setback, Yes, but should it allow us to lose sight of our larger goal - the empowerment of our people, their dignity, development and making their voices heard - No!" He added, "Elections were merely a vehicle towards this larger goal, never an end in itself. If at all this setback should invigorate us further, strengthen our commitment, conviction and resolve towards realising our collective goal."



Sajad Ahmad Lone

# ■ 'Worried about terrorism in Punjab' ■ CISF woman constable suspended, booked Kangana slapped at Chd airport

SANJAY KAW NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Bollywood actress and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut, who recently won the Mandi Lok Sabha seat, was allegedly slapped by a woman constable of the CISF at the security area of the Chandigarh International Airport.

The constable has been suspended and an FIR lodged against her. A probe panel has also been set up by the CISF to investigate Ms Ranaut's claims.

The constable allegedly assaulted Ms Ranaut while frisking her at the airport before she boarded her flight to Delhi. In a video, CISF constable Kulwinder Kaur is heard saying her mother was among those who attended the farmers' agitation when the actor had made a statement suggesting that such women take ₹100 to sit in on the protest.



A screen grab of a video of actor and newly-elected BJP MP Kangana Ranaut after she was allegedly slapped by a CISF woman constable at the Chandigarh International Airport on Thursday.

After landing in Delhi, Ms Ranaut released a video in which she said: "First of all, I am safe, I am perfectly fine... As soon as I came out after the security check, the lady in the second cabin, a CISF security staff, came from the side, hit me on my face and started abusing me. When I asked her why she did so, she said that she supports the

farmers' protest. I am safe but I am concerned about the terrorism and extremism that is increasing in Punjab."

Reacting to the incident, former Himachal chief minister Jai Ram Thakur said, "It is very unfortunate. Nobody has the right to harm anyone. She was heading towards Delhi to attend a party meeting."

National Commission for Women chairperson Rekha Sharma said it is a serious matter as the people who are responsible for security at the airport are breaching it. "Strict action should be taken against the lady CISF personnel. We at @NCWIndia have taken up this matter with @CISFHQrs," Ms Sharma said in a post on X.

In 2020, Ms Ranaut had allegedly misidentified a woman farmer from Punjab who was taking part in the protests and called her Bilkis Bano, an elderly woman who had become one of the faces of the anti-Citizenship Amendment Law protests earlier in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh. She had also said the woman was "available for ₹100". This had triggered a much-talked-about exchange on X between her and singer-actor Diljeet Dosanjh.

In February 2021, reacting to the support for the

protests by international pop sensation Rihanna, Ms Ranaut had called the agitators "terrorists" and said they were trying to divide India.

Replying to a post on X by Rihanna, Ms Ranaut had called the singer a "fool" and said, "No one is talking about it because they are not farmers they are terrorists who are trying to divide India, so that China can take over our vulnerable broken nation and make it a Chinese colony much like USA... Sit down you fool, we are not selling our nation like you dummies."

When an X user had pointed to a 2019 tweet by Ms Ranaut in which she had appeared to express her appreciation for Rihanna, the actor had responded with a post bordering on the abusive in which she said she had taken over the account only recently and did not listen to English music much.

## Rahul seeks probe into stock market crash & exit polls

Cong convenes CWC meet on June 8

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday hurled serious allegations that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah were "directly involved" in the June 4 stock market crash and sought a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe into it.

Meanwhile, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) will meet on Saturday in Delhi to discuss the post-poll scenario as clamours grow louder for Mr Gandhi to take up the coveted post of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. The post had evaded the party in the last two Lok Sabhas as it did not have sufficient numbers. Top Congress leaders besides other leaders, are expected to participate in the deliberations.

Addressing a press conference Mr Gandhi said, "Why did the PM and Union home minister give specific investment advice to the five crore families investing in the stock market? Is it their job to give investment advice? Why were both interviews given to the same media, owned by the same business group, which is also under the Sebi investigation for manipulating stock? We demand a JPC into this."

The former Congress chief said that the party was convinced that it was a scam and somebody made thousands of crores



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

of rupees at the cost of Indian retail investors

Hitting out at the exit pollsters, Mr Gandhi said, "What is the connection between the BJP, the fake exit pollsters and the dubious foreign investors, who invested one day before the exit polls were announced and made huge profits at the cost of 5 crore families?"

Mr Gandhi pointed out that when the actual results were way off the mark from the exit poll claims, the market crashed leading to a loss of ₹30 lakh crores to the retail investors.

He observed that all this was deliberately and wilfully planned and executed. He claimed that the BJP knew that its seats were not going to be more than 220 from their internal survey and the feedback received from intelligence agencies, but despite that, the exit polls were made to show that the BJP was winning a large number of seats.

## Bihar's BJP chief in Delhi amid talk of his demotion

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Amid the reports of his simmering differences with the chief minister Nitish Kumar, Bihar deputy chief minister and BJP state unit chief Samrat Choudhary has reached the national capital after being summoned by the party's central leadership.

It was learnt that the BJP was mounting pressure for his removal from the post of state unit chief. However, when contacted, a senior BJP functionary toned down the differences and said that Mr Choudhary could be removed under the party policy of "one man one post." Bihar has two deputy chief ministers in the Nitish ministry. Both the deputy chief ministers are from the BJP. Another deputy chief minister Vijay Sinha is also reaching Delhi to meet the party's central leadership.

Mr Choudhary reached the national capital Thursday evening and set to meet the BJP's top leadership. Sources said that Mr Choudhary will be meeting central leadership and discuss BJP electoral performance in Bihar and other issues concerning state politics.

Sources in the Bihar BJP unit termed Mr Choudhary's visit to New Delhi as a simple routine work and said that it has nothing to do with his differences with CM Mr Kumar.

## Smriti, Chandrasekhar may stay in Cabinet despite loss

SHASHI BHUSHAN NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Union ministers Smriti Irani and Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who are among over a dozen-old Central ministers who lost the Lok Sabha elections, are likely to be retained in the new council of ministers led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Sources told this newspaper that Ms Irani, who lost from Amethi, and Mr Chandrasekhar, who lost from the Thiruvananthapuram seat, are likely to be inducted into the new NDA government.

Ms Irani, who had defeated Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 LS polls, lost to Congress candidate Kishori Lal Sharma by a margin of 1,67,196 votes, while Mr Chandrasekhar lost from Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram to former Union minister and Congress candidate Shashi Tharoor by over 16,000 votes.

"It is the Prime Minister's prerogative to



Smriti Irani

choose his council of ministers and both Ms Irani and Mr Chandrasekhar are likely to be part of the government and will be sworn in as ministers with others," sources said.

As per sources, both leaders will be rewarded owing to the tough fight they gave to their rival candidates.

"Though they (Ms Irani and Mr Chandrasekhar) lost, they gave Congress candidates a run for their money," sources said.

Party insiders also claimed that one or two more ministers, who also lost the polls, may be included depending on their past performance.



Rajeev Chandrasekhar

"One or two more ministers who lost may also get the opportunity to serve the country in the new government under Prime Minister Mr Modi," sources added.

Along with Ms Irani and Mr Chandrasekhar, Arjun Munda, Mahendra Nath Pandey, Ajay Mishra, Kailash Choudhary, Kaushal Kishore, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, Sanjeev Balyan, Rao Saheb Danve, R.K. Singh, V. Muraleedharan, L. Murugan, Subhas Sarkar and Nishith Pramanik are other Central ministers who lost in their respective seats.

## ■ Rumours are floated by godi media of Modi: Sena(UBT)

## 'Uddhav is not joining BJP-led NDA'

PRASAD PATIL MUMBAI, JUNE 6

The Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) on Thursday rubbished claims that Uddhav Thackeray is mulling to return to the National Democratic Alliance. The party said "rumours" are being floated after the BJP failed to get a clear majority, but Uddhav has no plans to go back to the NDA.

Sanjay Raut said that though Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "forcibly" forming the government for the third time, it will not survive for long. He claimed he has reliable information that the RSS is looking to replace Mr Modi. According to some



Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray with newly-elected MPs of MVA Nagesh Bapurao Patil Ashtikar and others at Matoshree in Mumbai on Thursday. — PTI

reports, the BJP has started back-channel talks with Mr Thackeray to bring him back in the NDA and a Union minister has been entrusted with the job. However, the Shiv Sena

(UBT) rejected the reports. Party spokesperson Priyanka Chaturvedi posted on her social media account that rumours are being floated by the "godi media" of Mr Modi.

## Model code of conduct lifted, EC meets Prez

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and ECs Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu on Thursday met President Droupadi Murmu and handed over the list of candidates who won the Lok Sabha elections.

Accepting the recommendation of the Union Cabinet, Ms Murmu had ordered the dissolution of the 17th LS on Wednesday.

The EC lifted the MCC, came in force on March 16, on Thursday. The Election Commission said as results of Lok Sabha elections and assembly polls in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, along with some Assembly bypolls have been declared, "model code of conduct has ceased to be in operation with immediate effect".

## 5 MLAs of Ajit camp absent from NCP meet

**Mumbai:** Smarting already under the heavy drubbing in the Lok Sabha polls, NCP chief Ajit Pawar received a further jolt as five of his MLAs reportedly skipped the meeting of party legislators on Thursday. According to sources, out of 41 MLAs deputy speaker of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha Narhari Zirwal, Rajendra Shingane, Dharmarao Atram, Sunil Tingre and Anna Bansode were not present for the meeting.

## Pradhan, Pujari, Murmu lead Odisha CM race, oath June 10

Panda, Majhi, newly-elected LS members, ex-babus in fray

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 6

People in Odisha are waiting with bated breath to know who will be the new chief minister of the state to succeed the outgoing CM Naveen Patnaik. At least half-a-dozen names, including that of the newly-elected Lok Sabha members, MLAs and former bureaucrats, are doing the rounds in political circles.

The highly probable names, among others, include Dharmendra Pradhan, Baijayanth Jay Panda, Girish Murmu, Suresh Pujari and Mohan Charan Majhi.

Mr Pradhan, Union minister for a decade and the party's LS member from Sambalpur, has years of experience in BJP organisational affairs and governance system. He was the BJP's poster boy in the 2019 polls. Besides, Mr Pradhan has been the party's poll in-charge in Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Odisha. His high background and rich profile, including



Dharmendra Pradhan

administrative experience, are seen to give him an edge. The other draw, according to political analysts, is that Mr Pradhan's seat, Sambalpur, is considered one of the safest seats in the state.

The other key BJP leader of the state, Baijayanth Jay Panda, is the BJP's MP from Kendrapara. He also holds the position of BJP national vice-president. He has been elected to the Lok Sabha thrice from Kendrapara Lok Sabha seat. Besides, he was elected to Rajya Sabha for one term.

The third is veteran MP, former Union minister and tribal face Jual Oram, who just won the election from the Sundergarh Lok Sabha constituency.



Suresh Pujari

Former Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and ex-governor of J&K, Girish Murmu's name is also being widely discussed. Mohan Charan Majhi, a four-time MLA from Keonjhar. He is a known Scheduled Caste leader. Two-time MLA Mukesh Mahaling, two-time MLA and SC leader Suryavanshi Suraj and Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha MP Aparajita Sarangi are also in the race for CM.

The state leadership Manmohan Samal is camping out in Delhi to resolve the knotty issue. If a final call is taken within the next two days by the party's central leadership, the oath ceremony could be held on June 10, sources said.



Girish Murmu

## Engineer Rashid moves court for interim bail

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

After winning the Lok Sabha elections from Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla constituency, terror funding accused Abdul Rashid Sheikh has approached Delhi's Patiala House court seeking interim bail to take oath as a MP.

Additional sessions judge Chander Jit Singh on Thursday has sought the response of the NIA in the matter, which will be heard next on Friday.

Popularly known as Engineer Rashid, he is currently in Delhi's Tihar under the UAPA in an alleged terror-funding case. His lawyer Vikhyat Oberoi said that they are seeking interim bail or custody parole to take oath and perform other parliamentary functions.

## Quoted article: Omar on PDP's 'echoing divisive politics' claim

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JUNE 6

National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah using direct quotes from an article published in a news portal that said Independent candidate Engineer Abdur Rashid Sheikh's election victory shows Kashmiri secessionism is far from spent is roiling Kashmir politics with the former chief minister being openly accused of echoing divisive politics by his opponents.

Mr Abdullah, who lost to Eng. Rashid in the just-concluded Lok Sabha elections in Baramulla by a margin of over 2.04 lakh votes, had in a post on X quoted from an article published which said, "Rashid's victory, without doubt, will empower secessionists, and give Kashmir's defeated Islamist movement a renewed sense of hope. Efforts to draw secession-



Omar Abdullah

ism back into electoral politics led New Delhi to support the rise of the People's Democratic Party, and its alliance with the BJP. That, however, ended up empowering violent secessionists, not mainstreaming them — a warning of the unpredictable outcomes of trying to manipulate politics."

He, however, clarified that what his post had said were not his own views, but he had only quoted from a published article. "The articles I've put here are not my views, but they are a point of view. I may agree with parts, disagree with parts but they are an

opinion."

But as some news agencies attributed these lines quoted from the digital platform to Mr Abdullah, PDP leader Waheed Ur Rehman Farra, too, took to "X" to say that he was extremely disappointed with the former CM's "regressive stance".

"Extremely disappointed with @OmarAbdullah's regressive stance, echoing the divisive politics of 1987, and dubbing a democratic expression as an 'Islamist wave'. His family's history with the Muslim Conference clashes with calls for the exclusion of PDP, Er Rashid, and JEI (Jamaat-e-Islami), and will put Kashmir into perpetual conflict with the state. A more prudent approach, akin to @MehboobaMufti's plea for Er Rashid's release, would have been acknowledgment of mandate," he said.



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	75,074.51	0.93
Nifty 50	22,821.40	0.89
S&P 500*	5,354.79	0.01
Dollar (₹)	83.47	0.10
Pound Sterling (₹)	106.77	0.23
Euro (₹)	90.85	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	72,700.369	0.51
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	79.11	0.89
IN 10-Yr bond yield	7.016	-0.01
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.301	0.012

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Persistent brings GenAI Hub to drive AI adoption

Persistent Systems announced the launch of GenAI Hub, a platform geared to drive the creation and deployment of generative AI (GenAI) applications within enterprises. The platform integrates with an organisation's existing infrastructure, applications, and data, enabling the speedy development, industry-specific GenAI solutions. It has launched GenAI Hub to power a new era of enterprise AI adoption.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: Kaushtik Mitter, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

Air travel grows 5.1% in May, sees improved pricing

Mumbai, June 6: Domestic air passenger traffic grew 5.1 per cent year-on-year to an estimated 13.89 crore in May and was significantly higher by around 14 per cent than pre-Covid levels, credit ratings agency Icra said on Thursday.

Icra also said the outlook on the Indian aviation industry is stable amid the continued recovery in domestic and international air passenger traffic with a relatively stable cost environment and expectations of the trend continuing in FY25.

The airlines' capacity deployment in the previous month increased 6 per cent year-on-year and about 2 per cent higher than April 2024, it added.

According to the agency, the domestic air passenger traffic for FY24 was around 15.4 crore, with a year-on-year growth of around 13 per cent.

It thus surpassed the pre-Covid levels of around 14.2 crore in FY20, the ratings agency said, adding that the international passenger traffic for Indian carriers stood at around 2.9 crore last fiscal, registering a year-on-year growth of around 24 per cent. Moreover, the industry witnessed improved pricing power, reflected in the higher yields, it said.

The momentum in air passenger traffic witnessed in FY24 is expected to continue into FY25. However, further expansion in yields from current levels may be limited, it added.

Average ATF price stood at ₹103,499/KL in FY2024, 14 per cent lower than



● THE MOMENTUM in air passenger traffic witnessed in FY24 is expected to continue into FY25. However, further expansion in yields from current levels may be limited.

₹121,013/KL in FY2023 but significantly higher by 58 per cent than pre-Covid levels of ₹65,368/KL in FY2020, according to Icra.

In Q1 FY25, the average ATF price remained higher by 5.4 per cent on a year-on-year basis. In June 2024, it declined by 6.5 per cent sequentially, the agency said.

Fuel cost accounts for around 30-40 per cent of airlines' expenses. Around 45-60 per cent of operating expenses, including aircraft lease payments, fuel expenses and significant portion of aircraft and engine maintenance expenses, are denominated in dollar terms.

While domestic airlines have a partial hedge to the extent of their earnings from international operations, overall, their net payables are in foreign currency, it said, adding that the airlines' efforts to ensure fare hikes, proportionate to their input cost increases, will be the key to expanding their profitability margins. — PTI

MERCHANDISE EXPORTS LIKELY TO RISE 8% TO \$112 BN IN Q1

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 6

The current account balance (CAB) is expected to have registered a surplus of around \$6 billion or 0.6 per cent of GDP in the last quarter of FY24 after a gap of 10 quarters, finds India Ratings. It also expects the merchandise exports to grow 8 per cent to around \$112 billion in 1QFY25.

After Q1FY22, CAB would be in a surplus for the first time in 4QFY24. In the preceding quarter it was in a deficit of \$10.5 billion or 1.2 per cent of GDP. CAB for FY24, however, would be in a deficit of 0.6 per cent of GDP. "This would be the lowest since FY17 if we exclude the Covid-19 impacted FY21", said Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist, Ind-Ra.

The merchandise exports grew 4.9 per cent in 4QFY24. The favourable base effect and steady demand from the US, the UAE and the Netherlands helped goods exports grow at the sharpest pace in five quarters. Sequentially, goods exports were at a seven-quarter high of \$120.4 billion in 4QFY24.

On the other hand, merchandise imports grew 2 per cent in 4QFY24. However, sequentially, goods imports were down to \$170.7 billion in 4QFY24 from a four-quarter high of \$174.4 billion in the previous quarter.

Markets recoup losses from Tuesday selling

Volatility index falls 11 per cent to 16.8 on domestic buying

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 6

The Sensex further regained the counting day losses to close above the 75,000 level at 75,074.51, gaining 692 points or 0.93 per cent. The Nifty-50 index closed at 22,821 gaining 201 points or 0.89 per cent.

Market now has attained pre exit poll levels and may see some consolidation ahead of the weekend event of Government formation as well as after Friday's RBI policy meet outcome, said analysts.

"The benchmark indices maintained their positive momentum, as the new coalition is about to swear in, which is predicted to be a stable government. However, anxiety persists over the new cabinet being put in place and policy measures expected to



● IT SECTOR stocks were in demand with the BSE IT index up 2.86 per cent on positive global cues as early interest rate cut hopes by the US Federal Reserve were rekindled.

be announced in the coming budget. Meanwhile, the market is awaiting fresh signals from the RBI's comments on liquidity," said Vinod Nair, head-Research, Geojit Financial Services.

The volatility index too fell 11 per cent to 16.80.

However, the current market rise is purely on domestic buying as foreign portfolio investors continue heavy profit booking since counting day with ₹6,867.72 crore

net selling on Thursday. Domestic institutional investors were net buyers by ₹3,718.38 crore.

IT sector stocks were in demand with the BSE IT index up 2.86 per cent on positive global cues as early interest rate cut hopes by the US Federal Reserve were rekindled. "Investors heaved sigh of relief as the confidence strengthened post two key allies pledged their support to form a new government with the BJP. Even

global factors contributed to today's rally as the hopes revived for rate cut possibility in US Fed's September meet, after weaker than expected jobs data. All eyes will be on government formation this weekend along with the ECB meeting today and RBI policy outcome and commentary on Friday," said Siddhartha Khemka, head - Retail Research, MOFSL.

Global cues were also supportive helping IT stocks to regain momentum after a lull period.

"World equities were on the verge of an all-time high ahead of what was widely expected to be the European Central Bank's first interest rate cut in nearly five years," said Deepak Jasani, head - Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Govt: EV infra big opportunity

FC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

The commerce ministry on Thursday said that India would offer huge investment opportunities worth over \$500 billion, particularly in the clean energy value chain, including renewables, green hydrogen and EV by 2030.

This was stated by commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal who was in Singapore for the two-day meet of the Indo-Pacific economic framework for prosperity (IPEF) clean

economy investor forum. IPEF bloc account for 40 per cent of the world's economic output and 28 per cent of trade.

The meeting held to mobilise investments into sustainable infrastructure, climate technology, and renewable energy projects from investors, companies and start-ups.

"India offers more than \$500 billion, particularly in the clean energy value chain including renewables, green hydrogen and EV and its infrastructure transition, by 2030," the

● INDIA OFFERS more than \$500 billion, particularly in the clean energy value chain including renewables, green hydrogen and EV and its infrastructure transition, by 2030.

secretary said.

The ministry, however, said that in the sustainable infrastructure track, after the screening, "four companies from India were shortlisted for pitch-

ing their concepts on energy transition, transport and logistics, and waste management/waste to energy to global investors.

"Similarly in the climate tech track, Indian start-ups and companies were selected to pitch their innovative ideas, technologies and solutions that contribute to mitigating or adapting to climate change," it said, adding that the forum resulted in \$23 billion investment opportunities for sustainable infrastructure projects in the Indo-Pacific.

WORLD

SHORT TAKES

EUROPEAN PARL POLLS KICKS OFF IN NETHERLANDS

Brussels, June 6: Voting began in the Netherlands on Thursday at the start of a four-day election across the European Union to a new European Parliament that will face mounting security, industrial and political challenges.

Voting to the EU legislature will be held in Ireland and the Czech Republic on Friday, Malta, Slovakia and Latvia on Saturday, and in the rest of the 27 EU countries on Sunday. The Dutch vote encapsulates the EU's main internal political challenge — the rising popularity of euro-sceptic and nationalist far-right parties that want to dismantle the EU for within.

External challenges facing the EU included industrial competition from China and the United States, a security threat from Russia and the existential threat of climate change.

KREMLIN: KYIV BACKERS WILL HAVE TO RECKON

Moscow, London, June 6: The Kremlin said on Thursday that Western nations which supply Ukraine with weapons to strike Russian territory will have to reckon with Russia, after President Vladimir Putin said he was considering arming the West's enemies in retaliation.

Russia said on Thursday it had detained a Frenchman suspected of gathering information about the Russian military, a serious charge at a time of acute tension between Moscow and the West over the war in Ukraine. A Swiss-based nonprofit, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), said the arrested man was its employee and named him as Laurent Vinatier, 47, an adviser on Russia and Eurasia.

Speaking with senior editors of international news agencies in St Petersburg on Wednesday, the Russian leader said Moscow was thinking about supplying advanced long-range weapons — of a similar nature to those the West is giving Ukraine — to the West's adversaries around the world. Putin in his comments mentioned long-range missiles being supplied to Ukraine by the US.

40 killed in Gaza school strike, Israel says Hamas men killed

Houthis unveil solid-fuel 'Palestine' missile resembling Iran's hypersonic

Cairo, Jerusalem, Dubai, June 6: Israel hit a Gaza school on Thursday with what it described as a targeted airstrike on up to 30 Hamas fighters inside, and a Hamas official said 40 people, including women and children were killed as they sheltered in the UN site.

Yemen's Houthi rebels have unveiled a new, solid-fuel missile in their arsenal that resembles aspects of one earlier displayed by Iran that Tehran described as flying at hypersonic speeds. The rebels fired its new Palestine missile, complete with a warhead painted like a Palestinian keffiyeh checkered scarf, at the southern Gulf of Aqaba port of Eilat in Israel on Monday.

The Houthi group launched two joint military operations with the Iraqi Islamic Resistance against ships at Israel's Haifa port. "They first targeted two ships carrying military equipments in the port of Haifa, while the second targeted a ship that violated the decision to ban entry to the port," Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree said.

Talks involving Qatari,



NYPD officers stand in between pro-Israel and pro-Palestine protesters during a rally at Baruch College in New York City, on Thursday.

Egyptian and U.S. mediators aimed at reaching a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza war were still underway on Thursday but had shown no sign of a breakthrough, two Egyptian security sources said.

Video footage showed Palestinians hauling away bodies after the attack, which took place at a sensitive moment in mediated talks on a ceasefire that would involve releasing hostages held by Hamas

and some of the Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

The United States issued a joint statement with other countries on Thursday calling on Israel and Hamas to make whatever compromises were necessary to finalise a deal after eight months of war in the Gaza Strip.

Ismail Al-Thawabta, the director of the Hamas-run government media office, rejected Israel's assertion that the UN school in Nuseirat, had hidden a

Hamas command post. "The occupation uses ... false fabricated stories to justify the brutal crime it conducted against dozens of displaced people," Thawabta said.

Israel's military said its fighter jets had carried out a "precise strike" and circulated satellite photos highlighting a building where it said the fighters were based. "We're confident in the intelligence," military spokesperson Lt Col. Peter Lerner said. — Agencies

U.S. SANCTIONS PALESTINIAN GROUP LION'S DEN

Washington, June 6: The United States on Thursday imposed sanctions on Palestinian militant group Lions' Den, the state department said, in the latest move aimed at those Washington says threaten peace and stability in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The group is the first Palestinian target of sanctions under an executive order on West Bank violence issued by President Joe Biden in February, which had previously been used to impose financial restrictions on Jewish settlers involved in attacks on Palestinians.

Department spokesperson Matthew Miller cited attacks by Lions' Den in the West Bank since 2022. "The US condemns any act of violence committed in the West Bank," he said, "and we will use the tools at our disposal to expose and hold accountable those who threaten peace and stability there," Miller said. — Reuters

After cop killed, Germany set to deport criminals

Berlin, June 6: Chancellor Olaf Scholz vowed on Thursday that Germany will start deporting criminals from Afghanistan and Syria again after a knife attack by an Afghan immigrant last week left one police officer dead and four more people injured.

The brutal attack in Mannheim, which was captured on video and quickly went viral online, shocked the country.

Scholz addressed Parliament in a speech focused on security on Thursday, just days before European elections in which far-right populists across the continent are expected to make big gains.

"It outrages me when someone who has sought protection here commits the most serious crimes. Such criminals should be deported, even if they come from Syria and Afghanistan," the chancellor said to the applause of lawmakers. The 25-year-old attacker, who killed a 29-year-old police officer who was trying to stop him, came to Germany in 2014 as an asylum-seeker. "Serious criminals and

terrorist threats have no place here," Scholz added. In such cases, Germany's security interests outweigh perpetrator's interests.

Migration has been one of the major topics during the European poll drive that far-right and mainstream parties have been exploiting to garner votes from Europeans who have felt disgruntled by millions of new arrivals looking for refuge from wars, hunger, climate change or trying to build up a better future for themselves.

Referring to Friday's knife attack, Scholz said that what happened in Mannheim — the fatal knife attack on a young policeman — is an expression of the misanthropic ideology of radical Islamism. There is only one term for this: Terror. Let's declare war to terror. Germany does not currently carry out any deportations to Afghanistan or Syria. The German government does not have any diplomatic relations with the Taliban in Kabul, and considers the security situation in Syria too fragile to allow deportations there. — AP

Under-five kids' food poverty an issue: UN

United Nations, June 6: More than one in four children under the age of five globally live in "severe" food poverty, Unicef has warned — meaning more than 180 million are at risk of experiencing adverse impacts on their growth and development. "Severe child food poverty describes children who are surviving on severely deprived diets so they're only consuming two or less food groups," Harriet Torlesse, a lead writer of a new Unicef report published on Wednesday, told AFP. "It is shocking in this day and age where we know what needs to be

done." Unicef recommends that young children eat foods daily from five of eight main groups — breast milk; grains, roots, tubers and plantains; pulses, nuts and seeds; dairy; meat, poultry and fish; eggs; vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables; and other fruits and vegetables.

But 440 million children under the age of five living in about 100 low- and middle-income countries are living in food poverty, meaning they do not have access to five food groups each day. Of those, 181 million are experiencing severe food poverty, eating from at most two food groups. — AFP





THE ASIAN AGE

7 JUNE 2024

Welcome return to doubts & dissent of coalition era

When India went to sleep on June 3, it was the last night of a decade marked by the “supremo syndrome” — where one leader, his image, the power of his words and his organised following could overshadow the structure of a multi-party parliamentary democracy, thanks to his party’s dominating majority in the Lok Sabha.

When India woke up on June 4, it was a new era. The voices of the 650 million-odd Indian voters had unequivocally rejected the theory that an entire nation could trust just one person, one leader, so much so that no one else mattered.

Now, we are back to a familiar scenario of coalition governments that ran the country during the 1990s and 2000s, where independence was replaced by interdependence, and each party consulted its allies and even the Opposition.

The era of unilateral decision-making featuring sudden, unexpected announcements as a direct address to citizens is gone. Instead, two senior players who are highly skilled at their game — Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar and N. Chandrababu Naidu who is soon to take the oath as Andhra Pradesh CM for the fourth time — will bring back the aspect of negotiation — marked heavily by the spirit of give and take — to each decision.

**The bulldozer now has brakes. At least, two of them. But perhaps several. And once a bulldozer has brakes, it becomes just a lawnmower. The change will be felt most by the two top men in the power structure.**

The bulldozer now has brakes. At least, two of them. But perhaps several. And once a bulldozer has brakes, it becomes just a lawnmower. The change in the impact and intensity of its power will be felt by the two top men in the structure of governance — who will take time to acclimatise to the shift in their status — as the ruling BJP adjusts to its new position of the larger party in a coalition government.

The biggest beneficiaries of this shift will not only be the alliance partners, or the states of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, eager for long to receive their special category status, but also the Opposition, which has grown stronger, and the various institutions, estates and pillars of democracy — all of which found themselves a shade paler in the era of illumination of the

top leader.

One of the hallmarks of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been to take bold decisions and spring them with surprise timing, stunning everybody. This alliance government will remove those fangs of surprise. Ideas and proposals being discussed will get leaked in advance, public debate and even dissent will mark their attendance before the decision is made.

Another feature of the Modi government, total secrecy, will be defenestrated. Access to allies and partners will mean everyone can peep in a priori, and join the discussion table. That table of power, its duopoly over, will mean every interest group finding voice and representation. Any major disruption, such as a change in the Constitution, will impact not the future of the country but the longevity and life of the government first. Thanks to the return of the coalition era, we are already hearing about demands from partners for the post of Lok Sabha Speaker, deputy speaker, and different portfolios. The coalition era, its doubts and uncertainty, is portending a return of affairs human, which is all too human.

Democracy will enjoy its good health, its leisurely stroll in the park, watching dissent shoot up through the fountainhead of liberty, while the damaged statue of the superman will only have birds perched on its shoulders for company, singing woe-fully of the bygone decade.

Surprises in SA, Mexico

The year of the great global elections in a raft of countries ranging from the most democratic to the least has thrown up many surprises, but perhaps the best of them could be the Mexicans electing Claudia Sheinbaum as their first woman president in 200 years. The swing from the right of, say, the Russian elections, in a centrist move might gladden the hearts of many around the world rendered anxious by the possible fallout of elections in a direction more inclined to authoritarianism.

Mexico’s president-elect, a Jew with a doctorate in energy engineering and vast experience in politics as mayor of Mexico City, may have to deal first with rampant violence in a country, with drug wars the everyday normal leading to kidnappings and murder, and more than 30 politicians killed in its latest election cycle. It is interesting that the winner’s closest rival was another woman in Ms Xóchitl Gálvez, but it is being freely said that Ms Sheinbaum would be saddled with working in the shadow of her mentor and current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

The other end of the spectrum to more liberal politics in Mexico was the South African elections in which the African National Congress, once led by the heroic vanquisher of apartheid Nelson Mandela, suffered a major setback in losing its majority after nearly three decades in power and having to explore the politics of coalition.

The discredited former President Jacob Zuma appears to have wreaked his revenge against President Cyril Ramaphosa with his fledgling party securing nearly 15 per cent of the vote. In a rapidly declining economic setting in which inequality is at its starkest with more than half the Black population living in abject poverty and joblessness being extremely high in the country, the task for any coalition government is cut out if it is to avoid social strife amid an already bleak scenario of endemic crime.

The ANC seems to have achieved little in six years after Mr Ramaphosa took over from Mr Zuma even as the nation has suffered from long power cuts and virtually no water as in Cape Town and other regions. When finding a way back to power with a workable coalition itself is a herculean task, the lot of anyone heading the country at this juncture can be imagined.

THE ASIAN AGE

KAUSHIK MITTER  
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR  
Printer & Publisher

THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:  
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.  
Published and Printed on behalf of and for  
Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.  
London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.  
RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Subhani



Who’s ‘Desh ka Huzoor’? India gets its voice back



Shobhaa’s Take

You know what they say about the morning after the night before? The haze and daze that greet you, can either fill you with heady euphoria or deep shame. The raunchy boudoir of politics with strange bed partners creates its own thrills and frissons. I am giddy with hope and optimism now, after the astonishing numbers of the world’s biggest elections rolled in earlier this week. Never have I felt as proud to be Indian. To have lived long enough to witness a vibrant democracy in action — unfettered and unafraid of consequences. Who would have thought??? Who would have dared to dream that such an unexpected result would finally put an end to ten years of repression? Well... I exaggerate. And have spoken too soon. But even the possibility of coming this close to achieving partial victory, had seemed remote till the counting started early on Tuesday morning. This is not the time to gloat or dance on graves. But it is certainly the time to allow ourselves much needed exultation... to exhale again... to dream again!

The 20.4 crore Muslims of India are the biggest winners of this election. Their faith in the Constitution and its principles has been restored. After living in fear of complete marginalisation for a decade and more, our Muslim co-citizens must be heaving a sigh of relief. Their lives and livelihoods are safe, regardless of who forms the next government. These legitimate fears were deliberately ignored and downplayed as the BJP bosses went ahead with their brand of aggressive Hindutva. Look where it got them! A resounding defeat in Ayodhya! What

could be a bigger slap? Lord Ram presiding in his magnificent temple must be smiling at the new “vaatavaran”, in not just his birthplace, but the entire country. Compassionate Hinduism has won over Hate Hinduism. India has got its voice back. Goodbye, laryngitis. Let’s identify the heroes of Elections 2024, before we get to the villains. I would say it’s the young of India — even those who held back their votes as a form of silent protest. Disgruntled, disgusted and disenchanted, the young had resigned themselves to living in an India without jobs and decent employment. Why vote for the same old self-seeking leaders who talk big, announce mega plans but have failed to create jobs for millions of educated, bright people? The same youngsters with degrees going door to door seeking employment as drivers and domestic help?

The only way for this segment to vent frustration was through the social media. The strongest resistance to the status quo came from anonymous content creators posting reels and hosting podcasts that spoke their language and breached barriers. Twenty-nine-year-old Youtuber, vlogger and activist Dhruv Rathee, with combined views of 4.41 billion (you read that right) became an overnight icon, all thanks to his forthright analysis of current politics. Rathee’s *Modi: The Real Story* received 27 million views, and his impact on voters has been nothing short of powerful. By comparison, an irrelevant and compromised Arnab (Goswami) made an utter fool of himself with his ludicrous conspiracy theories, including the latest one which insists that AI had worked for the

**The strongest resistance to the status quo came from anonymous content creators posting reels and hosting podcasts that spoke their language and breached barriers**

Congress Party and sabotaged the BJP. Laughing stock? No. Much worse!

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has emerged as the single most influential star campaigner, responsible for the dramatic turnaround not just for the Congress Party, but more specifically for her brother Rahul Gandhi. Pappu can win, *sala!* This was proved by her consistent and convincing communication as she travelled tirelessly to deliver the message. Without her stellar presence in the campaign, Rahul’s 4-lakh-plus lead in Rae Bareilly would not have happened. It’s doubtful that the Congress Party, without the Priyanka factor, itself would have racked up a total of 99 seats. Call it a “fractured mandate”, call it anything. But, thanks to her, the mighty throne shook! That’s more important. Rahul Gandhi, blunt and moofat as always, articulated it best at the post-results press conference on Tuesday: “The people of India have said unanimously — ‘We don’t want Narendra Modi and Amit Shah involved in the running of this country.’” There! Finally, someone has put it into words.

Rahul Gandhi had dressed an impressive 108 rallies, dressed casually in his trademark white T-shirt — no elaborate get-ups and costumes. His “*Khata khat, Khata khat, Khata khat*” chant echoed across India and galvanised voters. What happens next will be determined by the frenzied horse-trading that will be going on.

Personality cults work in our sentimental country. But megalomania backfires. Had Narendra Modi, with his bombastic one-

man show, curtailed his braggadocio, and not linked his party’s win to his own selfish victory, perhaps his “*400 Paar*” boast would not have sounded this hollow. It is precisely his non-stop chest-thumping (56 inches, no less, remember?) that came to bite him. Plus, the most idiotic error of all — marginalising Yogi Adityanath — the boss of Uttar Pradesh. Why? Because Yogi was the only threat to Mr Modi’s supremacy. Look what happened! Disaster with a capital “D”. The obvious insecurity and paranoia of one man (Namo) cost the party dearly.

The RSS bosses aren’t amused.

It is being whispered that heads will roll. Quickly at that. Demotions are underway. Two biggies (yes, those two) will be cut down to size and sent into van-vaas. One of them is good at meditation, but not mediation. The other has not heard of the word “penance”. Vocab reboot, underway. *Ab tera kya hoga, Kaliya?*

The question of picking the next “*Huzoor*” in the political “*Heeramandi*” still remains. There are enough courtesans waiting for the right “*sahab*” (bidder) to show them the money. The ultimate “*palti*” — Nitesh Kumar — will have no hesitation bed-hopping and sleeping with the enemy. The dodgy “morality” of netas has never been an issue — it’s a part of their character. But right now, people are demanding a DNA test to determine who’s the real father of the BJP. Is it the one spreading the “immaculate conception” story? The man who aspired to replace God??? Or...?

Till then, folks... the heat is on. And as a popular meme goes: *Ab ki baar, Chocobaar*. No debate: Old-fashioned Chocobars are yummier to lick this summer than filthy derrieres.

Today, Indians everywhere can stand tall. We have earned the respect of the world by defeating hate.

Instagram handle @ShobhaaDe; Twitter handle @DeShobhaa

LETTERS

VISIONARY NAVEEN

Naveen Patnaik single-handedly transformed Odisha. His administration turned Odisha into a disaster management model, reduced poverty from 70 per cent to 10 per cent, ensured food security and launched the Mission Shakti programme, empowering women through self-help groups. His focus on infrastructure improved connectivity and living standards. He is also credited with India’s hockey revival, a huge feat. Known for clean governance and consistent welfare schemes, Mr Patnaik’s leadership earned him five consecutive terms as CM, leaving an unparalleled legacy of a giant amid dwarfs.

Amarjeet Kumar  
Hazaribagh

DIFFICULT TIMES

APROPOS the article, “Pyrrhic victory”, all calculations have been upset by the unexpectedly poor showing of the BJP in the elections. Perhaps the media failed to show the real picture for whatever reason. There was a deliberately constructed image that Mr Modi could not be defeated. Mr Modi himself had alluded to his not being biological. This image has now been shattered and the PM Modi who had an autocratic style of functioning all through his tenure would be hard pressed to keep the coalition in good humour for the entire tenure. But expecting him to change his style of functioning would be like asking, can a leopard change its spots?

Anthony Henriques  
Mumbai

HOPE FROM MPs

IT IS QUITE appropriate to appreciate the Opposition’s role and strength in Indian democracy if it takes up cudgels for the people on margins smartly. However, a lot has to be done on the part of the Treasury benches by rising above the divisive politics of caste, religion, region and language and making a consensus to bring newer bills aimed at the public good in Parliament via discussions. The whole nation eagerly waits for newer standards of parliamentary democracy set by elected members of all hues. But the ruling party has a greater responsibility indeed.

Brij Bhushan Goyal  
Ludhiana

Shashidhar Nanjundaiah



This election in India challenged the narrative of trust & distrust

From the look on the faces of Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge at the June 4 press conference as captured and amplified by our media platforms, an uninitiated observer might mistakenly think the Congress Party had won the general election. The statements from the party’s leaders, too, reflect this euphoria: “This is both a political and a moral defeat for (Narendra) Modi,” declared Congress leader Jairam Ramesh. “It’s time to pick up your bags and head to the Himalayas.”

Politically, the INDIA bloc is claiming it rescued democracy and the Constitution. True. But there is a little more to the phenomenon.

Mr Ramesh found at least a partial vindication later that day. In Varanasi, a constituency of nearly 20 lakh voters, Mr Modi won by a margin of 1.5 lakh votes, while up the road in Rae Bareilly, a constituency of less than 10 lakh voters, Rahul Gandhi won by an astounding 3.9 lakh votes. The mere reinsertion of the checks-and-balances process into the system seems to be a cause for celebration, yet a comparison begs several questions. After early counts showed a robust performance by INDIA, by the afternoon, when one of my sources said the Election Commission was delaying the counting, the numbers began to differ across YouTube channels, although they eventually fell in line, more or less.

A widespread suspicion of election malfunction continues to lurk, going by social media comments. The chief election commissioner chose to

dismiss this declined trust in the form of a poorly penned poem. He even categorised the “mischievous narratives” under a set of M-words (M is the letter of the month, it seems) to watch for — muscle, money, misinformation and MCC violations — terming the allegations a “design” of “fake narratives” that had emerged to undermine the election process. This is a surprising counter, since fuelling baseless suspicions about the election process would only precipitate in widespread abstention stemming from voters’ mistrust in the system, thus hurting the challengers.

Essentially, the assertions by our agencies of democracy are exhortations for our faith premised on the idea that despite the fact that the commission’s reluctance to share full voter data, we must continue to exercise our franchise and unwaveringly trust the word of promise. The “Trust Me” narrative also resonates with Mr Modi’s favourite rhetorical strategy for years. In many ways through political rhetoric, the ruling side asks us to trust Mr Modi (and by binary default, therefore, not the Opposition). However, if the same person acts contrarily (for example, denying that his oratory was ever religiously divisive), trust suffers.

These calls for trust have never been more stentorian. In our modern world of scepticism, we are attuned to ask questions that elicit transparent undeniable proof from sources. Whether it is politicians or agents of democracy, the attempt at dismantling modern structures by pre-modern,

monarchic ordains is afoot, not by chance but as a part of the larger revisions of our socio-political framework. Thus, there is a problem we must have with trust.

Similarly, think of the machinations of the exit polls — a mediated effort that keeps a party in power by allowing them better leverage to negotiate with fair-weather allies. Such short-term tactics may keep the media commercially afloat and a party in power, but the very meaning of news media may have changed in the meantime. We inherently trust news narrations, but the consequence of the derailing of media events like the exit polls damages the credibility of the vehicle of such undemocratic propaganda. That is why media trust is in doldrums in countries where democratic claims prevail. Still, it seems, when trust is in deficit, doubt will do. Is press freedom in India now in decline just because some agency says so? Rather, you need to trust us (not them).

Our world is scrambling to take sides, as binary forms have emerged in notions that were not hitherto seen in binary ways. From vaccines to news reports, accepted modern phenomena have become unstable and debatable. Newsrooms in India grapple with news that arrives, packaged, from official sources. Sometimes, these official sources might deny already reported news, whereupon the platform might use the official sources, not their own report, as the correct version. What happens when there is an erosion of that impersonal, institutional trust based in rationality?

The “problem of trust”, as Adam Seligman called it in his 1997 work of that title, is that oftentimes, trust and rationality do not align with each other. This situation is begging demagogues to take advantage. Trust can sweep an inherent irrationality under the veneer of trust; hence, we are more accustomed now more than ever before to political statements like “trust me, I will make it happen (in 50 days or 25 years). But it seems trust can even override truth — if the promised thing is not accomplished, our trust continues, until a moment of truth, so to speak. Compounding our reliance on trust is the incredulity of vaccine claims by public health agencies during the Covid-19 pandemic while not completely revealing observations that seemed to be side effects of those vaccines. Now, we do not know what to trust.

Having cast a vote of warning to the Narendra Modi-run establishment, has India’s citizenry finally begun to distrust? Having traversed a rather long and laborious voyage of trust, sometimes founded on rationality and at other times on irrationality, is it finally returning to a dependence on evidence that seems logical? If so, it may explain the underlying reason why so many of us are heaving a sigh of relief.

The writer is professor and dean of Hyderabad-based Mahindra University’s School of Media, and the author of *News Aesthetics and Myth: The Making of Media Illiteracy in India*, which will be published soon. Views expressed are personal.



SHORT SINGLES

Ireland ready for newbies Canada

Ireland will bank on their experienced batters Andy Balbirnie, Paul Stirling and Harry Tector to recover from the pummeling given by India and get their T20 World Cup campaign back on track when they face a dangerous Canada in New York on Friday.

Ireland went down by eight wickets against India on Wednesday, while Canada will be eager to recover after a seven-wicket loss to co-hosts USA.

Playing in their eighth T20 World Cup, Ireland have often struggled to make an impression in the event despite several of their key players playing in English county. In fact, they have made it to the ‘Super 8’ only once in 2009.

Tector, a veteran of 77 T20Is, too failed to kick on as Ireland were bowled out for a sub-100 total by the disciplined Indian bowlers, and they require an urgent turnaround.

Ireland will be playing their second match at this venue inside two days and they will be keen to execute the learnings from that.

World Cup newcomers Canada, on the other hand, too are coming off a big defeat against the United States in a high-scoring Group A match in Dallas.

Pant to continue at No. 3: Rathour

India will continue with wicket-keeper-batter Rishabh Pant at No. 3 in the T20 World Cup following his gritty performance against Ireland, said batting coach Vikram Rathour, who also expressed his delight at having a fully-fit Hardik Pandya back in the fold. Both Pant and Pandya, who returned to top-flight cricket in the IPL, are making a comeback to international cricket after a long gap.

The duo delivered the goods in India's eight-wicket thrashing of Ireland in their opening game here on Wednesday.

The Ireland match was Pant's first game for India since December 2022 when he was involved in a horrific car accident.

“Yes, he has been batting really well. The two games (warm-up and Ireland) he has played, he has looked really, really good,” Rathour told the media after the match here at the Nassau County Cricket Stadium.

“Yes, at the moment he is our No. 3 and it helps that he is a left-hander,” Rathour added, in a way cementing the combination of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli at the top.

Pakistan complain about NY hotel

The ICC has moved the Pakistan team to another hotel in New York after the Pakistan Cricket Board complained about a 90-minute drive to the ground for their forthcoming Twenty20 World Cup games.

A source at the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Thursday that after chairman Mohsin Naqvi intervened, the Pakistan team was moved to a hotel which is just a five-minute drive from the purpose-built stadium on Long Island in Westbury, New York.

Pakistan are scheduled to play their group games there against archrivals India in New York on Sunday before taking on Canada at the same venue on June 11.

The PCB source spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

The Indian cricket team, who are playing their three group games in New York, are staying in a hotel which is just 10 minutes from the ground. India won their first match there on Wednesday.

LIFE’S A PITCH!

New York strip tease has batsmen on the hop

MOSES KONDETY  
NEW YORK, JUNE 6

The scores, they are a changing... rock star Bob Dylan may well be tempted to tweak the lines of his famous number if he were commissioned to write a song on the ongoing T20 World Cup.

The drop-in pitch has been a big let down so far with teams batting first struggling to reach the 100-run mark. In the two matches played at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium here, Sri Lanka and Ireland were bowled out for 77 and 96 against South Africa and India respectively.

The uneven bounce arising out of cracks on the wicket has left the batsmen dancing, and all cracked up.

Both winners — South Africa and India — found the lowly targets not easy to chase. India captain Rohit Sharma in fact took a hit on the bicep while batting and had to retire hurt after making a not-so-fine 52 on Wednesday. He looks good though, and should be fine for Sunday's crucial game against Pakistan.

When his opinion on the pitch was sought after the Ireland game, Indian batting coach Vikram Rathour was stoic. “Trying to control the controllables,” he said.

“It was a challenging wicket as far as batting is concerned. We need to find a way to deal with it



Captain Rohit Sharma plays a shot against Ireland during a T20 World Cup match at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York on Wednesday.

and I think we have enough skills and experience in the team to do that. We should be fine,” he assured.

Is the risk of injuries to batsmen a concern? “We have good batters who can bat well on any kind of surface. I think that has been our strength for many, many years. I think we can adapt really well to different conditions, and I

think on this surface you really need to adapt well and take it head-on and not worry about it too much,” Rathour was non-committal.

Asked if these were ideal conditions to promote cricket in new territories, the former international said: “I am sure it has been challenging for the curators or for ICC to create something here in the past

6-7 months or whatever time they have taken. It was never going to be easy. But it is exciting to be at a place like USA... we can see there's a lot of excitement. We're meeting a lot of people who are really excited because cricket has come to the USA or New York for the first time.”

What could be an ideal total in such conditions?

● The drop-in pitch has been a big let down so far with teams batting first struggling to reach the 100-run mark. In the two matches played at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York, Sri Lanka and Ireland were bowled out for 77 and 96 against South Africa and India respectively.

“At one stage, we were talking about if we can get to 130-140 and back that up in the execution of our skills from a bowling point of view,” said Ireland coach Heinrich Malan.

Rathour's reply to the question of runs was different. “As many as we can get. I'm not going to put any number to that. We need to bat well and maximise whatever we can get,” he said in the context of the Pakistan game.

The ICC acknowledged the pitch glitch. On Thursday afternoon, it released a statement that read: “T20 Inc and the ICC recognise that the pitches used so far at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium have not played as consistently as we would have all wanted. The world-class grounds team have been working hard since the conclusion of yesterday's game to remedy the situation and deliver the best possible surfaces for the remaining matches.”

KENJIGE HELPS USA RESTRICT PAK TO 159/7

**Dallas (USA), June 6:** Left-arm spinner Nosthush Kenjige scalped three wickets for 30 runs as heavyweights Pakistan found it difficult to press the accelerator to be restricted to 159 for seven in their T20 World Cup match here on Thursday. USA's decision to bowl first was bang on target as Mohammad Rizwan was dismissed in the second over, caught by Steven Taylor off Saurabh Netravalkar (2/18).

It was tough going for Pakistan as they lost Usman Khan as he mis-hit a Kenjige delivery only to slice it to Nitish Kumar at long-off in the next over.

Fakhar Zaman tried to force his way with his aggressive instincts but fell short when he pad-dled-swept a simple catch to Taylor off Ali Khan in the fifth over as Pakistan slumped to 26 for 3. Shadab Khan (40 off 25) finally eased the pressure off Pakistan.

— PTI

**Brief scores:** Pakistan 159/7 in 20 overs (Babar Azam 44, Shadab Khan 40; Nosthush Kenjige 3/30) vs USA.

SWIATEK SEES OFF GAUFF TO REACH FRENCH OPEN FINAL

**Paris, June 6:** Iga Swiatek continued her bid for a fourth French Open title on Thursday with a dominant victory over Coco Gauff to reach another final at Roland Garros.

The world number one is just one match away from becoming the first woman to win the tournament in three straight years since Justine Henin in 2007 after a 6-2, 6-4 victory.

“It was intense, in the second

set, it was kind of tight because we were breaking each other, but I'm glad I was consistent in my tactics and just went for it in the end,” she said.

Swiatek saved a match point against Naomi Osaka in the second round last week but has barely broken sweat since, losing just 14 games across the next four rounds.

— AFP

Chhetri hangs boots as India play out draw

**Kolkata, June 6:** The talismanic Sunil Chhetri's last international match ended in an anticlimax as a profligate India were held to a goalless draw by visiting Kuwait in their 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifier here on Thursday. In a country deprived of major footballing success, it was not a fitting farewell for a man who had created an alternative universe for the spectators of the beautiful game in this part of the world.

The result put India in an extremely difficult position to make it to the third round of the qualifiers.

After the draw, India have collected five points

and play Asian champions Qatar in their final match on June 11. Kuwait, who have four points, will face Afghanistan on the same day.

The 39-year-old Chhetri ended his glorious 19-year international career as the fourth most prolific scorer in international football with 94 goals, behind Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (128), Iran legend Ali Daei (108) and Argentine wizard Lionel Messi (106).

It's an astounding feat for a player from a country like India and FIFA had acknowledged Chhetri's legendary status when he announced his international retirement on May

16. Chhetri bid an emotional adieu to the international game in front of a jam-packed 68000-capacity Salt Lake Stadium with his parents Kharga and Sushila, wife Sonam Bhattacharya and a host of officials and former players in attendance.

He will, however, continue playing club football for “two more years”. He has a contract with the Indian Super League side Bengaluru FC till next year.

Chhetri had scored in his debut match against Pakistan on June 12, 2005 in Quetta in a 1-1 draw but not on Thursday, though the game ended in a draw this time also.

— PTI



India captain Sunil Chhetri in action against Kuwait during their FIFA World Cup Qualifier match at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on Thursday.

SARABJOT WINS GOLD AT WORLD CUP IN MUNICH

**Munich, June 6:** Sarabjot Singh on Thursday opened India's account at the ISSF World Cup here with a gold medal in the men's 10m air pistol event, emerging triumphant in a field that featured a reigning world champion and a four-time Olympian.

The 22-year-old Indian shot 242.7 in the eight-man final, leaving behind his nearest competitor Bu Shuaihang of China by 0.2 points.

Germany's Robin Walter won bronze.

— PTI