

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Modi Govt Intoxicated On Power: Cong On Reduction In Number Of Subsidised Ujjwala Refills

NEW DELHI, JUN 9: The Congress on Tuesday hit out at the government over its reduction of the number of subsidised refills of LPG gas cylinders under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and alleged that it only sheds "crocodile tears" on the plight of women while being "intoxicated on power".

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the reality of the Modi government's poverty-reduction campaign is that first, the right to work under MGN-REGA was snatched away from the poor and now, even the morsel of food is being taken away.

"2016: Modi-ji claimed that the Ujjwala Yojana would liberate women from the smoke of wood-burning stoves. There was a promise of 12 subsidised cylinders a year. However, last year, that number was reduced from 12 to 9. 2026: Now, the number of subsidised cylinders has



been further cut from 9 to just 4. In short a promise of 12, but an intention of giving only 4," Kharge said in his post in Hindi.

The Congress president said the LPG prices have been hiked repeatedly and 5.56 crore beneficiaries are unable to afford refills.

"Forced to abandon cylinders, mothers and sisters are compelled to return to tradi-

tional stoves....while the Modi government — which sheds crocodile tears over their plight — is intoxicated by power!" Kharge said.

His remarks come days after the price of a 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinder in Delhi was raised to Rs 942 from Rs 913, while beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) will continue to pay an effective Rs 642 per

cylinder after receiving a subsidy of Rs 300 per refill on the first four refills annually, down from 9 refills announced last year.

The increase follows a Rs 60-per-cylinder hike on March 7, taking the cumulative hike to Rs 89 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-run oil marketing companies were estimated to be losing about Rs 703 on every LPG cylinder sold before the latest revision.

The government has said Indian households continue to pay among the lowest prices for cooking gas globally despite a sharp rise in international PG prices triggered by disruptions in West Asia.

In a statement, the government said the cost of supplying a domestic LPG cylinder has risen to more than Rs 1,600 following a surge in international prices that followed the outbreak of war in West Asia at the end February. (Agencies)

Mamata meets Sonia amid rebellion in Trinamool

NEW DELHI, JUNE 9:

A day after an opposition INDIA bloc meeting stressed unity and better coordination among the alliance partners, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi at her 10, Janpath residence.

Sources said the two leaders are learnt to have discussed the strategy between the two parties going forward after the opposition bloc meeting, and following an exodus of Trinamool members after the party's defeat to the BJP in the recent Bengal polls.

The meeting followed after



Gandhi, the chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and Banerjee met each other warmly with a hug at

the opposition bloc's meeting here on Monday.

The Congress shared pictures of the bonhomie be-

tween the two leaders.

The meeting comes in the wake of a rebellion within the Trinamool, with several party MPs deciding to form a separate group and align with the ruling NDA.

A majority of Trinamool's 80 MLAs have already formed a separate group led by Ritabrata Banerjee as the leader of opposition in the state Assembly.

This was the first closed-door meeting between Banerjee and Gandhi after Trinamool's defeat in the polls, and alleged attacks on party workers and MP Abhishek Banerjee after the elections. (PTI)

Bihar CM indulging in cheap politics: Tejashwi on security downgrade, Rabri's bungalow row

PATNA, JUN 9: RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday hit out at the Bihar government for allotting a bungalow occupied by his mother and former CM Rabri Devi to a minister and downgrading security cover for his parents, alleging that Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary was indulging in cheap politics.

Yadav accused the BJP-led NDA dispensation of patronising corrupt officials and criminals, and claimed that the law and order has "completely collapsed" in the state.

"Samrat Choudhary is playing cheap politics...What is the need for security? Those who are afraid have kept security. The people are with us... Although Samrat Choudhary has become chief minister, yet he is not a chief minister; he is a cheap minister," Yadav said while speaking to reporters.

His comment comes after the building construction department, through a May



27 order, allotted the 10, Circular Road bungalow, which Rabri Devi has been occupying for two decades, to BJP leader and state minister Nand Kishor Ram.

The state government also downgraded the security cover given to RJD supremo and former CM Lalu Prasad and his wife Rabri Devi.

A high drama was witnessed at the residence of Rabri Devi on June 6 when several RJD leaders stood guard, claiming their leader had "returned" her security

cover in protest against "shabby" treatment from the NDA government.

Talking to reporters here, Yadav, the RJD national working president, said, "The NDA government in the state is least bothered about the problems being faced by the people. Its leaders are busy patronising corrupt officials and criminals. The law and order has completely collapsed in the state."

He also accused the NDA dispensation of not being

concerned about the welfare of the people.

"Whatever issues Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary and other NDA leaders are discussing have no connection with the common people," he said.

Yadav also alleged that the state's economic condition was in a "pathetic condition".

"The government treasury is empty. It has no money to do any work. The government had promised to give the second instalment of financial assistance to women (to run businesses) and increase pensions to the people, but they have been cheated," Yadav added.

Speaking on the downgrade of security to Lalu Prasad and Rabri Devi, RJD MP Misa Bharti told reporters, "The NDA government in the state is busy providing security cover to criminals and those who are corrupt. That's the reason they downgraded the security cover of Lalu and Rabri." (AGENCIES)

PoK killings: Protests in front of Pakistan consulate in UK

LONDON, JUNE 9: Kashmiri protesters on Tuesday staged a demonstration in front of the Pakistani Consulate in Bradford, the UK, over the firing on mourners at a funeral in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in which at least 11 people were killed.

This came days after 30 British MPs sought diplomatic intervention over the massive human rights abuses in PoK.

The clampdown in PoK came amid a planned protest rally by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) for subsidised flour and electricity. The JAAC was outlawed on Friday by authorities, citing concerns over public order and security.

Protesters on Tuesday gathered outside the Pakistani Consulate in Bradford and accused the Pakistani authorities of using excessive force against civilians participating in demonstrations across PoK.

Organisers, many of them from the Kashmiri diaspora, claimed that several civilians were killed and injured during the firing by Pakistani security forces, particularly in



Rawalakot, where protests have intensified since June 5.

This came even as nearly 30 British MPs led by Bradford East MP Imran Hussain, a parliamentarian with roots in PoK, urged the UK government to intervene diplomatically amid reports of arrests, communication blackouts, and escalating tensions in the region.

The clampdown by the Pakistani administration in the illegally occupied territory came as the JAAC planned a protest march to get the government to implement a 38-point agenda,

which demands subsidised flour and electricity. A

The unrest in PoK was reportedly triggered by demands for basic rights, economic relief, affordable electricity, and greater accountability from the authorities. PoK activists involved in the movement alleged that security crackdowns over the past two days had resulted in more than 100 deaths and numerous injuries.

The unrest comes amid growing international scrutiny of developments in PoK. The grievances channelled in the protest are not

new. There have been several agitations in the past on the shortage of electricity and food.

A British parliamentary group of around 30 MPs formally raised concerns over reports of communication disruptions, arrests, and increasing tensions in PoK.

In a letter sent to the UK Foreign Office, Bradford East MP Imran Hussain, who chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Kashmir, cited reports of a communications blackout as part of a broader lockdown in the region.

NIA Raids In Punjab, Haryana To Probe Terror-Gangster Nexus Cases Linked To Pak-Based Terrorist

NEW DELHI, JUN 9: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday searched multiple locations in Punjab and Haryana in connection with three terror-gangster network cases related to Pakistan-based terrorist Shahzad Bhatti.

NIA teams conducted co-ordinated searches at multiple premises at 18 locations in nine districts of the two states and examined several persons to gather relevant information.

They also seized several digital devices and documents, along with information linked with various communication networks, financial transactions and

activities of persons under the agency's scanner in the three cases, a statement issued by the probe agency said.

All the information and evidence collected during the searches have been sent for scrutiny as well as forensic and technical examination to unravel the larger cross-border conspiracy.

Notices have been issued to certain individuals to join the investigation for further examination as part of NIA's ongoing probe aimed at unravelling the larger conspiracy behind the network operated by gangster-turned-terrorist Bhatti from across the bor-

der, the statement said.

"Today's searches were focused on identifying Bhatti's associates and others linked with the terror conspiracy related to all the three cases," it said. NIA's investigation so far in the case has traced the March 2025 grenade attack at the residence of social media influencer Roger Sandhu in Jalandhar, Punjab, to Bhatti.

In April 2026, NIA had charged Bhatti as an abscorder, and one other accused in the case.

The anti-terror agency has further found that Bhatti had also masterminded the November 2025 explosion at the Women Police Station,

Sirsa, Haryana and the January 2026 blast at Baldev Nagar police station in Ambala, Haryana.

In the Sirsa case, NIA had charged sheeted nine individuals, including Bhatti and another Pak-based handler Sohail Ahmad alias Sohail Baloch, in May 2026. The Baldev Nagar police station case relates to a car bomb explosion, in which one arrested accused was found to have been in touch with Bhatti.

Investigations in these cases are continuing as part of NIA's aggressive efforts to trace all linkages in the terror attacks, the statement added. (AGENCIES)

Poaching fears for Rajya Sabha polls: MP Congress to move MLAs to Karnataka

BHOPAL, JUN 9: Madhya Pradesh Congress leaders on Tuesday alleged poaching attempts by the BJP ahead of the June 18 Rajya Sabha polls and said the party has decided to move its MLAs to Congress-ruled Karnataka to prevent cross-voting and keep its camp united.

The 230-member state assembly makes up the electoral college for the Rajya Sabha election. With the assembly's effective strength at 229, a candidate requires 58 first-preference votes to secure election to the Upper House of Parliament.

The ruling BJP, which has 164 MLAs, is assured of winning two seats with 116 votes and has fielded party national general secretary Tarun Chugh and state unit secretary Rajneesh Agrawal.

The BJP later also fielded Mahesh Kewat, chairman of the Madhya Pradesh Fishermen Welfare Board, as its third candidate.

The Congress has nominated former MP Meenakshi Natarajan and expressed confidence of retaining enough support to secure her election, while Kewat's entry has added a new dimension to the con-

test.

The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) held a meeting late Monday night at the residence of Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar. The legislators were consulted on the proposal to move them out of Madhya Pradesh until polling, according to sources.

All Congress MLAs were being shifted to Bengaluru in party-ruled Karnataka, Saansar legislator Vijay Revanath Choure told PTI.

Congress MLAs Yadavendra Singh and Babu Jandel also confirmed that the legislators were being moved to Karnataka.

Speaking to PTI, LoP Singhar alleged that the BJP was trying to "buy" Congress MLAs and said all of them will be shifted to a party-ruled state.

He claimed some party MLAs told him that BJP members approached them with "bags full of notes," but they turned them away.

The BJP's "conspiracies" will fail on the voting day, the Congress leader asserted.

Yadavendra Singh said some MLAs were not in favour of being moved out, but since it was the party

high command's decision, everyone was being shifted.

He claimed the BJP was attempting to poach them, so the party's top leaders decided to keep the MLAs together in a Congress-ruled state.

The BJP is attempting to create a rift within the Congress camp, the Opposition party leaders have alleged.

Of the three vacant seats in the state, the BJP can comfortably win two, while the Congress has an upper hand in terms of numbers for the third seat.

Nearly 60 Congress MLAs attended the meeting at Singhar's residence late Monday night. One party MLA did not attend the meeting because he was in Delhi, while senior leader Kamal Nath participated online.

Currently, the effective strength of the 230-member state assembly is 229. The BJP has 164 MLAs, and the Congress has 64, while the Bharat Adivasi Party holds one seat. Congress MLA Rajendra Bharti's membership from the Datia constituency has been revoked, leaving one seat vacant.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has barred

Mukesh Malhotra, Congress MLA from Vijaypur in Sheopur district, from voting.

A petition has also been filed in the HC seeking the termination of the assembly membership of Nirmala Sapre, MLA from Bina in Sagar district. She is likely to vote for the BJP candidate in the Rajya Sabha election.

Sapre also met with Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday.

Amid this scenario, Congress's effective tally could get reduced to 62, but it would still have 4 more votes than required to win the election.

Each candidate for the three Rajya Sabha seats requires 58 votes to win. Consequently, the BJP needs 116 votes to win two seats. After garnering 116 of the total 164 votes, the BJP will have 48 remaining votes.

The Congress appears to be taking a cautious approach in view of the 2020 political crisis, when the BJP toppled the Kamal Nath-led government by bringing Jyotiraditya Scindia and 22 other MLAs into its fold. Scindia is currently a minister in the NDA-led Union cabinet. (Agencies)

Ministry, NTA, NMC Officials To Face Par Panel On Health Over NEET Re-Exam

NEW DELHI, Jun 9: Top officials of the Health and Education ministries, National Testing Agency and National Medical Commission will brief a parliamentary panel on Wednesday over the conduct of the NEET-UG re-examination on June 21.

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare has summoned the secretaries of Higher Education and Health, besides top officials of the NTA and NMC, to brief the panel on the NEET re-exam.

This is the third parliamentary panel before whom the top officials of the ministries and NTA (National Testing Agency) and NMC (National Medical Commission) are appearing.

Top officials of the Union

Health and Education ministries, as well as of NTA and NMC, have already appeared before the Parliamentary Committee on Education and the Committee on Government Assurances, and told them that their complete focus for now was to hold the June 21 NEET-UG re-test in penpaper format. CBI Director Praveen Sood has also appeared before a parliamentary panel about the progress made in the probe into the NEET-UG paper leak case and the steps being taken to arrest all those behind the paper leakage.

The summoning of officials on June 10 comes in the wake of the cancellation of the NEET-UG exam held on May 3 following reports of a paper leak. Some students have also committed suicide after the exam cancellation, and there are growing concerns among the student community over the re-examination of the NEET exam.

The Parliamentary Committee on Health, which looks into the functioning of the Union Health ministry, will now question the officials on the examination and its conduct.

The panel will hear the views of the Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) and the Secretary, Department of Higher Education (Ministry of Education), along with senior officers of NMC and NTA on 'Conduct of NEET examinations under NMC Act, 2019'.

Their deposition before the panel comes as part of a detailed examination of the subject 'Organizational Structure, Mandate and Functional Proficiency of

Regulatory Institutions pertaining to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare'. The Parliamentary Committee on Health will meet on June 10 afternoon in the Parliament House Annex.

The Parliamentary Committee for Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, headed by Congress member Digvijaya Singh, has already asked the NTA to define what constitutes a "paper leak" in its definition and whether any paper leaks have occurred in exams it conducted since 2018, sources said.

The panel's questionnaire follows NTA officials' appearance before it last week, where they contended that there was no paper leak from their system, claiming that some questions from a guess paper were in circulation, sources said.