

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Not just system failure, but blow on dreams of millions: Rahul on paper leaks, cancelled exams

NEW DELHI, JUNE 15: Ahead of his first student convention in Kota, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said every paper leak and cancelled exam is not just a failure of the system but a blow on the dreams of millions of youth of the country.

In a post on X in Hindi, Gandhi said it is not the fruit of hard work that students get but the punishment for daring to dream.

"One thing I want to say to every young person in this country - today, in this nation, it's not the fruit of hard work that you get, but punishment for daring to dream.

"Every paper leak, every cancelled exam, every stalled recruitment - these aren't just failures of the system, but blows struck against the dreams of millions," he said in his post.

"I know you're exhausted. You're angry. But remember this - when the government refuses to listen, you have to



raise your voice louder.

"That's why I'm calling on all of you - June 17, Kota. Students' Echo. Let's come together and become a roar that can't be ignored. Starting from Kota - then reaching every corner of the country," the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

Gandhi assured the youth that this is a fight for their future and he stands with them.

The Congress has announced that the first phase of a nationwide campaign

against paper leaks and examination irregularities will begin with Rahul Gandhi addressing a series of student conventions. The first such address will be in Kota on June 17.

The movement will seek to unite students beyond political affiliations and provide a platform for affected youth to share their experiences and demand accountability for "repeated examination failures and paper leak scandals", the party has said.

Gandhi will address a se-

ries of large student conventions starting with Kota (June 17), Allahabad (July 10), Patna (July 11) and Delhi (July 14), bringing together students, aspirants, youth organisations, educators and all those directly affected by the alleged examination scandals. The campaign will highlight the hardships faced by millions of young Indians whose futures are being repeatedly jeopardised by paper leaks, rising examination costs and the government's "failure" to ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and education system, the Congress has said.

As part of this nationwide campaign, the party will reiterate Gandhi's call to mobilise students through extensive outreach by the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), Youth Congress, Pradesh Congress Committees, District Congress Committees and local units across the country. (PTI)

BJP functionary beaten to death in Dehradun; 4 held, house of accused demolished

DEHRADUN, JUN 15:

A 44-year-old local BJP functionary was beaten to death and three members of his family were injured in an attack on their home by a group of people in Bairagiwala village here, sparking violent protests, even as authorities arrested four suspects and demolished their alleged illegal structures on Sunday.

Protesters, including members of Hindu right-wing groups, allegedly pelted stones and set the house of one of the accused on fire, demanding strict action against those involved in the killing.

According to police, the incident occurred on Saturday evening between 6 pm and 6.30 pm after an argument broke out between the victim Vinod Kumar and Imtiaz of the same village over irrigating a field.

Following the quarrel, a group of more than 40 people armed with lathis, wooden planks, hammers and shovels stormed Vinod's house and assaulted the family. Vinod died after being struck on the head with a hammer.

Tension escalated in the area after the killing as angry locals blocked a road, prompting a heavy police deployment.



On Sunday morning, right-wing groups held a protest to demand action against the accused. Senior officials arrived at the site, and authorities demolished alleged illegal structures belonging to the main accused, including a shop and a boundary wall, amid slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram' from the crowd.

However, irate protesters demanded the demolition of the house of the main accused. They pelted stones and vandalised property before setting it on fire, forcing police to resort to a lathi charge.

The Dehradun-Herbertpur highway remained blocked for more than three hours as locals placed boulders and sat on the road, halting vehicular movement.

The police and local administration officials tried to

pacify the protesting villagers and relatives of the victim.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel and Dehradun Police conducted a flag march in Vikasnagar to maintain law and order.

The protesters later agreed to vacate the highway, allowing vehicular movement to resume.

Subsequently, the administration launched another drive and demolished the entire house of the main accused in the evening.

Vikasnagar MLA Munna Singh Chauhan, who reached the village, assured the people that the accused would not be spared and appealed for peace.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami condemned the killing, stating that the "jihadi and violent mindset attempting to disrupt the peace and social harmony of

Uttarakhand would not be tolerated under any circumstances".

He assured that those who challenge the law will face severe punishment to deter recurrence of such incidents.

According to the police, the two sides shared a history of animosity and had engaged in heated exchanges regarding irrigation water over the past few days.

Vinod, along with his brothers, Ashok and Rajesh, and sister-in-law Sushma, sustained severe injuries in the attack and were rushed by villagers to Lehman Hospital, where Vinod was pronounced dead during treatment.

Based on a complaint lodged by the victim's brother, Ashok, the Sahaspur police registered a case under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including sections 103 for murder, 109 for attempt to murder, 191(2) for rioting, and 3(5) for joint liability, officials said.

The FIR names 12 suspects and 30 to 40 unidentified people. The named accused are Razaq, Imtiaz, Aman, Yunus, Shahbaz, Sharafat Ali, Masoom, Adil, Shamoos, Salman, Javed, and Intezar.

SC to hear plea seeking strict use of Aadhaar only as identity proof

NEW DELHI, JUNE 15: The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Tuesday a plea alleging misuse of Unique Identification Authority of India-issued Aadhaar cards as proof of citizenship, domicile and residential address, and seeking directions to restrict its use strictly for identity verification.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice V Mohana is likely to hear the PIL filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

It has sought directions to the Centre, states and the Election Commission to ensure that Aadhaar is used as a proof of identity and not as a proof of citizenship, domicile, address and date of birth. The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Dubey, also sought directions that the use of Aadhaar as a proof of date of birth and residence in the application form for new



voter registration be considered against Section 9 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016, Section 23(4) of the RPA, 1950 and Article 14 of the Constitution.

"Section 9 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016 expressly states that 'Aadhaar is not the evidence of citizenship or domicile'. The Unique Identifica-

tion Authority of India Notification dated August 22, 2023 clearly states that 'Aadhaar is proof of identity, not of citizenship, address or date of birth'..." "Despite this, Aadhaar is not only being used as a proof of age, citizenship and domicile for school admission, property purchase and

to obtain a birth certificate, ration card, driving licence but also being used in the Application Form for New Voter Registration (Form-6) as a proof of date of birth & proof of residence. And thus, infiltrators & illegal immigrants are obtaining various documents using Aadhaar," the plea said.

The petition contended that the existing verification mechanism under Form-6 is inadequate and might allow individuals without proper supporting documents to be included in the electoral database. The plea sought a comprehensive overhaul of the verification framework used in electoral processes and proposed the establishment of a high-powered monitoring committee comprising a retired Supreme Court judge along with cybersecurity and forensic experts to oversee reforms. (PTI)

Cong slams PM Modi's 'blind devotion to Israel', says national interest demands greater balance

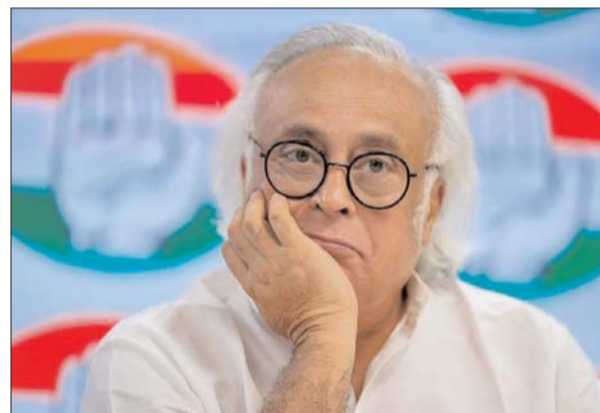
NEW DELHI, JUN 15:

The Congress on Monday hit out at the Modi government's handling of the foreign policy, saying Pakistan seems to have acquired a new regional and global influence and this coupled with China's deep embedding in Pakistan's strategic apparatus, poses a formidable geopolitical challenge for India.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said the news that the US and Iran will be signing an agreement on June 19 in Geneva to halt hostilities in West Asia is to be welcomed, even though the full details are yet to be made public officially.

"There is universal hope that the two countries (as also Israel) will abide by the accord -- even though it is of an interim nature -- and that the accord will lead to a more permanent normalization," Ramesh said on X.

While the unrestricted reopening of the Strait of Hormuz will certainly bring great relief to India, it does not mean the structural problems the economy faces will soon be surmounted, the Congress general secretary in-charge communications said. "These concerns clearly predate the current war in West Asia that began just two days after Prime Minister Modi's visit to Israel. The rupee had been under con-



siderable pressure for over a year and the gap between the demand and supply of dollars had been growing. Rates of private investment -- a most crucial determinant of GDP growth -- have been tepid for many years," Ramesh said.

"This is the result of sluggish growth in demand that, in turn, is the outcome of stagnation in real wages over the past decade; Modi Government's failure to check the dumping of imports from China that has resulted in a record trade deficit and endangered growth of job-generating MSMEs in particular; overall investment climate vitiated by unchecked powers given to tax authorities and investigative agencies," he said.

, which had been successfully isolated by India after its orchestration of the terror attacks in Mumbai in Novem-

ber 2008, now seems to have acquired a new regional and global influence, the Congress leader claimed.

"This, coupled with China's deep embedding in Pakistan's strategic apparatus, poses a formidable geopolitical challenge for India's foreign policy," Ramesh said.

"It is too much to expect Mr. Modi to rethink his blind devotion and unconditional support to Israel. But humanitarian considerations and longstanding commitments apart, our national interest demands greater balance than Mr. Modi has shown," he said.

Ramesh's remarks came after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that a peace deal between the US and Iran has been reached, and it will be officially signed off in a ceremony in Switzerland on June 19. In a post on X in the early

hours of Monday, Sharif said, "Following intensive talks, we are pleased to announce that the Peace Deal between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran has been REACHED." He added that both sides have declared the "immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon.

The official signing ceremony will be on June 19 in Switzerland, he said. Sharif thanked the US and Iran for their commitment to finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict. He also extended sincere appreciation to "our brothers in this mediation effort, the great leadership of the State of Qatar", for their support in reaching this agreement.

The US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28 that saw Tehran lose several of its top leadership, including the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Larjani, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Commander Mohammad Pakpour, Defence Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh, among others. Khamenei's son, Mojtaba, is now the supreme leader, but has not been seen in public since the war began. (Agencies)

Infra development will be northeast's growth engine, says Gadkari; announces road projects

SHILLONG, JUNE 15: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday announced a slew of road projects for the northeast region and said infrastructure development here will serve as the "growth engine".

He was speaking at the inaugural session of the North East India Infrastructure Summit and Exhibition 2026, being hosted on June 15-16 at the Lariti Performing Centre in Shillong.

Gadkari emphasised the central government's commitment to the region's development. "We're committed to ensuring progress of the northeast region, equivalent to other states," he said.

Announcing a series of road infrastructure projects, the minister for road, trans-



port and highways said, "Infrastructure development in northeast will serve as growth engine for the region."

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and Meghalaya

Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, along with several other dignitaries, were present on the dais.

Speaking on the occasion, Sangma said, "Earlier, we didn't dare to dream, but

now we are, and that's a confidence we wish to convey to the investors looking to invest in our region."

The mega summit aims to shine a spotlight on the growth potential of the eight northeastern states.

Earlier in the day, Gadkari also attended a CEO roundtable and inaugurated an exhibition by various companies for the summit hosted at Lariti Performing Centre here. Ahead of the inaugural session, Meghalaya Chief Secretary Shakil P Ahammed described the summit as a first-of-its-kind event and a "historic moment" for the region.

"The northeast is no more the periphery, but the pole of India's future and growth," he added. (PTI)

TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee appears before ED for questioning in primary school jobs case

KOLKATA, JUNE 15: Sleuths of the Enforcement Directorate on Monday began interrogating Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee in connection with their probe into the alleged primary school recruitment scam, an official said.

The questioning took place a day after Banerjee had a similar session for nearly eight and a half hours with the state CID regarding the forgery of MLAs' signatures on documents related to the appointment of the Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly.

The official said the federal probe

agency has listed two dozen questions for the TMC's Diamond Harbour MP in connection with the scam, the official said.

"The entire session will be video-graphed, verified, and cross-checked with other evidence and the versions of other accused persons arrested in this matter," the official told PTI.

They will also confront Banerjee with financial documents, digital records and statements from other accused persons to trace the alleged proceeds of crime, he added.

"Our focus is on the money trail. Who handled funds, how they moved across

accounts and entities, and whether these transactions were layered to conceal their origin," the officer said.

The agency would seek clarifications on "inconsistencies observed between earlier submissions and fresh materials recovered during searches".

Banerjee reached the ED's CGO Complex office around 11 am following a summons issued in the money laundering probe linked to irregularities in primary teacher recruitments, he said.

The questioning will also cover the role of intermediaries and beneficiary entities flagged during forensic analysis.

NEW DELHI, JUN 15:

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed further proceedings before the high courts on petitions challenging the provisions of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice V Mohana agreed to hear the Centre's petition seeking to consolidate and transfer all pending pleas challenging the Act from various high courts to the apex court.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that the issue relates to constitutional validity of a central Act.

"Issue notice," the bench said, adding, "further proceedings before the high courts shall remain stayed". On May 27, Mehta had mentioned the matter before the top court and sought an urgent listing of the transfer petitions.

The top law officer had said that since multiple high courts were currently seized of the matter, there was a significant risk of "divergent views" and conflicting judicial rulings on the validity of the federal legislation.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026, has come under intense legal scrutiny from human rights

activists and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The primary bone of contention is the removal of the concept of "self-identification" of gender, a right previously upheld by the Supreme Court in its landmark NALSA judgment.

The 2026 Amendment reportedly mandates medical or administrative interventions for gender recognition, which the petitioners argue violates the right to dignity, privacy, and bodily autonomy.

On May 4, the apex court had sought responses from the Centre and others on separate pleas challenging the validity of the Transgender Persons (Protection

of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026.

On March 25, Parliament passed a bill to amend the law on the protection and rights of transgender persons, which excludes social orientations from the ambit of the statute. It received the President's assent on March 30. The Act provides for graded punishment based on the gravity of harm inflicted on such people.

The petitioners challenging the validity of the Act have referred to the apex court's 2014 judgement which had upheld the transgender persons' right to decide their self-identified gender. (Agencies)