

# Voters can check length of queues at polling booths, says Punjab CEO



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
CHANDIGARH: The voters in Punjab can check the length of queues at the polling booths from the comfort of their homes on June 1, said state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C after launching the 'voter queue information system' on Saturday.

Giving details about the system, Sibin C said the voters need to send a message by typing 'vote' to WhatsApp number 7447447217.

"They will then receive a link that, when clicked, presents two options 'location' and 'booth', he said.

For the location-wise option, the voters will share their location, which will then display a list of polling booths near their house on the mobile screen, he added.

By entering booth number, the voters will receive real-time information on how many people are standing in

the queue at that booth, he said. For the booth-wise option, the voters will first select the state of Punjab, followed by their district.

"This will bring up all the assembly constituencies in that district. After selecting their assembly constituency and entering booth number, the voters will be able to see the number of people currently queuing to vote at their booth," he said.

The Punjab CEO said necessary arrangements are being made to protect the voters from the heat on June 1.

The 'voter queue information system' will help the voters decide the best time to visit their polling booth, avoiding long queues and reducing waiting time in the heat, he added.

Polling for 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab will be held in the last phase on June 1.

# US Ambassador Eric Garcetti proposes development of "QUAD satellite" with India-US partnership

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
BENGALURU: US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti has proposed to develop a "QUAD satellite" involving the partnership of India and the US.

During his official trip to Bengaluru on Friday, he visited the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) headquarters and met with Chairman S Somanath and discussed the ongoing cooperation between India and the US in the field of space.

In a statement, the space agency said the US Ambassador proposed the development of a "QUAD satellite".

During the meeting, the ISRO chairman pointed to the opportunity to develop advanced detectors and packaging technologies with US-India academic institutions.

He also emphasised the



importance of building and standardising docking interfaces across human space programs to enable the utilization of space platforms by other countries and joining hands to build a navigation system on the moon, either in orbit or on the surface.

Taking to 'X', Garcetti on Saturday shared how he was honoured to meet the ISRO Chairman and how they were committed to further

Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology," he said.

According to ISRO, the discussions that followed highlighted both countries' mutual interests and shared goals in advancing space science, technology, and the space economy.

Ongoing associations through various Joint Working Groups, Artemis Accord, NISAR, and the use of the Laser Reflectometer Array on Chandrayaan-3 also figured in the discussions.

Garcetti also inquired about the role played by the Department of Space in fostering commercial space activities.

Chairman Somanath elaborated on this, saying that for the first time, payload technology and space-bound hardware are being built in Indian facilities that are outside ISRO labs.

ISRO plans to source payloads and satellites for its programmes from Indian companies and enable them to enter the global market.

Other talks included NASA's participation in India's proposal for a G-20 satellite for environment and climate change, and encouragement of cooperation between commercial companies from both countries for quicker and more effective outcomes.

Gaganyaan cargo module as an option for transfer of cargo to ISS.

The Ambassador expressed his admiration for ISRO's accomplishments and its role in global space exploration.

The meeting also touched upon future programmes, including the exchange visits of both sides' professionals, continuation of balloon experiments, and identifying milestone events.

# Teen's family driver was offered cash, gifts and later threatened to take blame for crash: Police

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
PUNE: The father and grandfather of the 17-year-old minor allegedly involved in the Porsche crash offered cash and gifts to their family driver and later threatened him to take the blame for the accident, said Pune police chief Amitesh Kumar on Saturday.

The driver and his family will be given police protection he said.

The blood and DNA sampling reports in the case are expected next week, said Kumar.

Police arrested the grandfather for alleged wrongful confinement of the driver in his bid to coerce him to claim that he was driving the car at the time of the accident on May 19, he said.

"After the accident, the driver gave a statement at the police station that he was at the wheel when the accident took place. But it



was revealed that a teen was driving the car," said the police commissioner.

Kumar said after the driver left the Yerwada police station, where the case was registered, and was on his way, both accused whisked him in a car to his house on the premises of their bungalow, confiscated his phone and confined him there.

"He was pressured to give the statement to police as per their directions," he said. The driver was offered gifts and cash and later threatened to take the blame, the official said.

The driver's wife reached

the place the next day and freed him, said the police chief.

"The driver was frightened. He was summoned and his statement was recorded on Thursday. After corroboration of facts, an offence against the juvenile's father and grandfather was registered," he said.

In this matter, the police have registered a case against the teenager's father Vishal Agarwal and grandfather on a complaint by the family driver.

Agarwal, a real estate developer, and his father

have been booked under IPC sections 365 (kidnapping with intent secretly and wrongfully to confine a person) and 368 (wrongfully concealing or keeping in confinement), he said.

Agarwal is already in judicial custody.

The family driver has given a statement saying he was not driving the car when it met with the accident and that the teen's kin were using pressure tactics to push him to take responsibility for the crash.

The driver and his family will be provided police protection, said Kumar, adding that he was in shock after his "wrongful confinement".

The Pune police on Friday suspended two cops, including an inspector from Yerwada police station, for delayed reporting and dereliction of duty in the case.

Kumar said the policemen faced action as their conduct was not appropriate.

The Porsche, allegedly driven by the teenager, who the police claim was drunk at the time, killed two motorbike-borne software engineers in the Kalyani Nagar area of the city in the early hours of Sunday (May 19).

A local court in Pune on Friday remanded the six accused arrested in the case, including the teenager's father, in judicial custody. The teenager is in an observation home till June 5.

The Madhya Pradesh-based parents of the two IT professionals who were killed in the accident have demanded that the Supreme Court monitor the probe and the trial be held in their state.

# Urban voters get free ride on polling day in Ranchi



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
RANCHI: In a bid to increase polling percentage in urban booths of Ranchi, the district administration tied up with a bike-taxi aggregator, to provide free pick-and-drop facilities to urban voters, an official said on Saturday.

The service will be provided in Ranchi's 181 polling booths across the city.

As many as 2,377 polling stations have been set up for the election on Ranchi Lok Sabha seat. Of which, 949 were urban booths and 1,428 were rural polling booths.

"I appreciate the initiative of the Ranchi administration for providing free pick-and-drop facility during the election. I just applied the 'vote now' code on the Rapido application and received the service from home free of cost," said Sumit Kumar, a voter.

Rapido Jharkhand Head, Jay Kumar Gaur, told PTI, "Around 800 motorbikes were put into service of the voters by the Rapido. The service was aimed to bring the voters to polling booths and contribute in enhancing the polling percentage."

Assistant Returning Officer (ARO), Ranchi, Utkarsh Kumar told PTI, "We have taken various initiatives in a bid to ensure hassle-free voting in polling booths. Besides five model booths and one unique booth, basic minimum facilities such as drinking water and sheds were ensured at almost all booths."

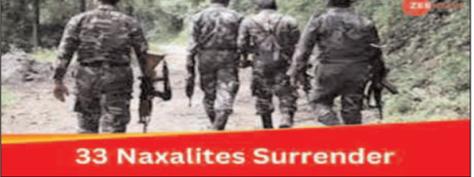
He said that the motorbike service also contributed a lot.

"Our overall aim is to increase the polling percentage this election," he said.

The Ranchi Lok Sabha seat registered 64.49 per cent voting in 2019, 63.68 per cent in 2014, 44.56 per cent in 2009, and 55.69 per cent in 2004.

The Ranchi Lok Sabha seat has a total of 21.88 lakh voters, including 10.80 lakh women voters. As many as 27 candidates are in the fray from the constituency.

# 33 Naxalites surrender before security forces in Chhattisgarh



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
BIJAPUR: As many as 33 Naxalites, three of them carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 5 lakh, surrendered before security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Saturday, police said.

The Naxalites turned themselves in before senior officials from the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), citing disappointment with atrocities committed by Maoists on tribals and "hollow" Maoist ideology, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said. They were also impressed by the police's rehabilitation policy, he said.

Of 33 surrendered cadres, two women were active in various wings and outfits under the Ganggaloor area committee of Maoists, he said. Raju Hemla alias Thakur (35), a member of PLGA (People's Liberation Guerilla Army) battalion no. 1, and Samo Karma, a

member of platoon no. 1 of Maoists, were carrying a reward of Rs 2 lakh each, he said.

Sudru Punem, the head of RPC (revolutionary party committee) Janata Sarkar of Maoists, carried a bounty of Rs 1 lakh, he said.

The trio carrying rewards were allegedly involved in attacks on security personnel in the past, the official said.

The surrendered Naxalites were provided Rs 25,000 each, and they will be rehabilitated as per the government's policy, police said.

With this, 109 Naxalites have so far quit violence in the district this year, while 189 have been arrested, they said.

# LS polls: Kejriwal snubs ex-Pak minister; says won't tolerate interference by sponsors of terrorism

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday chastised former Pakistan minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain after he called for the defeat of "forces of hate and extremism" in the Lok Sabha elections, saying the polls are India's internal matter and it will not tolerate interference by the "biggest sponsors of terrorism".

In the sixth of the seven-phase elections, 58 parliamentary constituencies, including seven in Delhi, went to polls on Saturday.

After casting his vote, Kejriwal, who is the AAP's national convener, shared a picture on X of his family members showing fingers marked in ink and said he voted against "dictatorship, inflation and unemployment".

Sharing Kejriwal's post on



X with the hashtags "MorePower" and "IndiaElection2024", Hussain said, "May peace and harmony defeat forces of hate and extremism."

Minutes after Hussain's post, Kejriwal hit back at him, saying his post was unnecessary.

"Chaudhry Sahib, the people of my country and I are fully capable of handling our issues. Your comment is not needed. The situation in Pakistan is very bad right

now. You take care of your country," Kejriwal said on X.

In another post, the chief minister said the elections are India's internal matter and the country will "not tolerate interference by the biggest sponsors of terrorism".

Responding to Kejriwal's posts, Hussain said, "CM sb! Indeed electioneering is your own issue but hope you will appreciate extremism be it in Pakistan or India is a borderless phenomenon and dangerous for everyone be it BD (Bangladesh), India or Pak so everyone with some conscience must be concerned... (sic)."

"The situation in Pakistan is very far from ideal but individuals must strive for a better society wherever they are," he said.

Hitting out at Kejriwal, the BJP alleged that Pakistan has also jumped in support of the AAP leader's politics of corruption.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said his party has been saying that "Kejriwal is hand in glove with the country's enemies".

"Chaudhry Fawad Hussain is speaking now. He had also written a social media post on Kejriwal's release. Five phas-

# Vote for BJP to free Odisha from captivity: Smriti Irani

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
BHUBANESWAR: Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Smriti Irani has urged people to vote for the BJP to liberate Odisha's future from BJD's "captivity".

Speaking at an election rally in Kujang within Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha constituency on Saturday, Irani said, "There's talk that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik lacks the freedom to express himself and meet others independently. The entire BJD leadership is in captivity. Free Odisha's future from this confinement by pressing the lotus button on June 1."

She declared that if voted to power, the BJP would appoint



an Odia CM. Irani accused BJD leaders of involvement in a Rs 32,000-crore chit fund scam, a Rs 60,000-crore mining scam, and criticised the state's ruling party for awarding them poll tickets. "How long will Odisha endure all this?" she questioned.

Irani alleged that the BJD government had fostered land, coal, sand, and mining mafias in the state, with ministers, MLAs, supporters, and remote controllers from Tamil Nadu working incessantly to plunder the state's resources.

In contrast, she highlighted

Narendra Modi's commitment to building a developed India by 2047. "To witness a deluge of development, vote for the lotus on June 1 and establish a double-engine government in the state," she urged.

Turning to the issue of the missing key to the Ratna Bhandar (treasury) of Lord Jagannath, Irani queried, "How was the key misplaced? Why has the judicial commission report on the missing key case been suppressed?"

She issued a warning to the remote-controlled government, stating that if any irregularities were found in the management of the Ratna Bhandar, Modi's government would hold them

accountable.

Irani accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of clandestinely supporting the BJD and contrasted the mining revenue of Odisha during the UPA regime with the substantial increase under the Modi government.

"During the UPA regime, Odisha was getting only Rs 5,000 crore mining revenue a year, which shot up to over Rs 50,000 crore after the Modi government came to power," she added.

The BJP leader appealed to the public to vote for Modi, highlighting his initiatives such as free rations, drinking water, solid housing, and financial aid to farmers.

# Dombivli factory blast: Owner remanded in police custody till May 29



**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
THANE: A court in Maharashtra's Thane district on Saturday remanded in police custody till May 29 the owner of the chemical factory in Dombivli where an explosion killed nine persons and injured more than 60.

The accused, Malay Mehta (38), owner of Amudan Chemicals, was produced before the magistrate court in Kalyan, a spokesperson of the Thane city police said.

The police sought Mehta's custody for 14 days and informed the court that they had to visit the factory site and find out if more persons were involved in the crime, he said.

The extent of damage because of the explosion was

enormous, and the police wanted to examine the role of many in the incident, the official said.

Mehta's lawyer argued that the company had all the requisite permissions and followed all regulations.

There was also an intervener in the matter who supported the police plea for custody and interrogations.

After hearing all the counsels, the magistrate remanded the accused in police custody till May 29, the official said.

The crime branch's Ulhasnagar unit has taken over the investigation.

The police have registered an FIR against the company owners, directors, management staff and officials supervising the factory.

The accused have been booked for culpable homicide (section 304), voluntarily causing hurt and negligent conduct with respect to combustible matter and explosive substances under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Besides the IPC, the police have also invoked charges under the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act and Explosive Substances Act.

According to the FIR, the company had not taken precautions over mixing chemicals, final products, and their storage, knowing well that any lapses might lead to an explosion, which could affect and damage the company and structures around it.

These lapses led to the explosion on Thursday, resulting in deaths on the premises and companies around the factory, the FIR said.

The impact of the blast was so severe that it shattered window panes of houses and damaged cars, roads and electric poles in the vicinity, it said.

# Four students of Ahmedabad medical college suspended for ragging

**STATE TIMES NEWS**  
AHMEDABAD: Four students, including two women, of a medical college here have been suspended for allegedly ragging juniors, an official has said.

The college, located in the

Maninagar area of the city, is run by AMC Medical Education Trust, an entity of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Following an inquiry, the college administration suspended four students pursuing Master of

Surgery said dean Dr Dipti Shah on Friday.

While two students were suspended for two years and one year, respectively, the other two were suspended for 25 days, she said.

"Four first-year students

and their parents had approached us with a complaint against these four seniors on May 21. We called a meeting of the college council and heard all of them. After a detailed inquiry, the council unanimously took a decision

to suspend the four as we believe in zero tolerance for ragging," said Dr Shah.

The seniors would ask junior students to carry out tasks like writing a prescription several times and also verbally abuse them, the dean said.

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