

# 42.6 p.c. polling in Rae Bareli

Turnout less than in 2004 when Sonia was elected from the constituency

**RAE BARELI:** Nearly 42.6 per cent of the 13,61,411 voters on Monday exercised their franchise in the byelection in Rae Bareli, from where Congress president Sonia Gandhi is seeking re-election to the Lok Sabha.

Polling, which began on a brisk note in the morning, lost steam by afternoon. The Election Commission increased the poll timing by an hour.

In the 2004 general elections, in which Ms. Gandhi was elected from the constituency for the first time, the turnout was 48 per cent. She won by around 2,49,000 votes.

The Congress was trying for a higher turnout to ensure her election by a record margin now.

While polling was peaceful by and large, a ruling Samajwadi Party leader, Jaishanker Vajpayee was shot by three armed men at Indira Nehar Pullia. He was hit in the left arm. The local SP leadership said Mr. Vajpayee, along with another leader Dinesh Singh, had caught a few outsiders campaigning for the Congress. But the Uttar Pradesh Home Department said the shooting incident was not poll-related.

Voters, including several women, had started lining up outside booths an hour before polling began at 7 a.m.

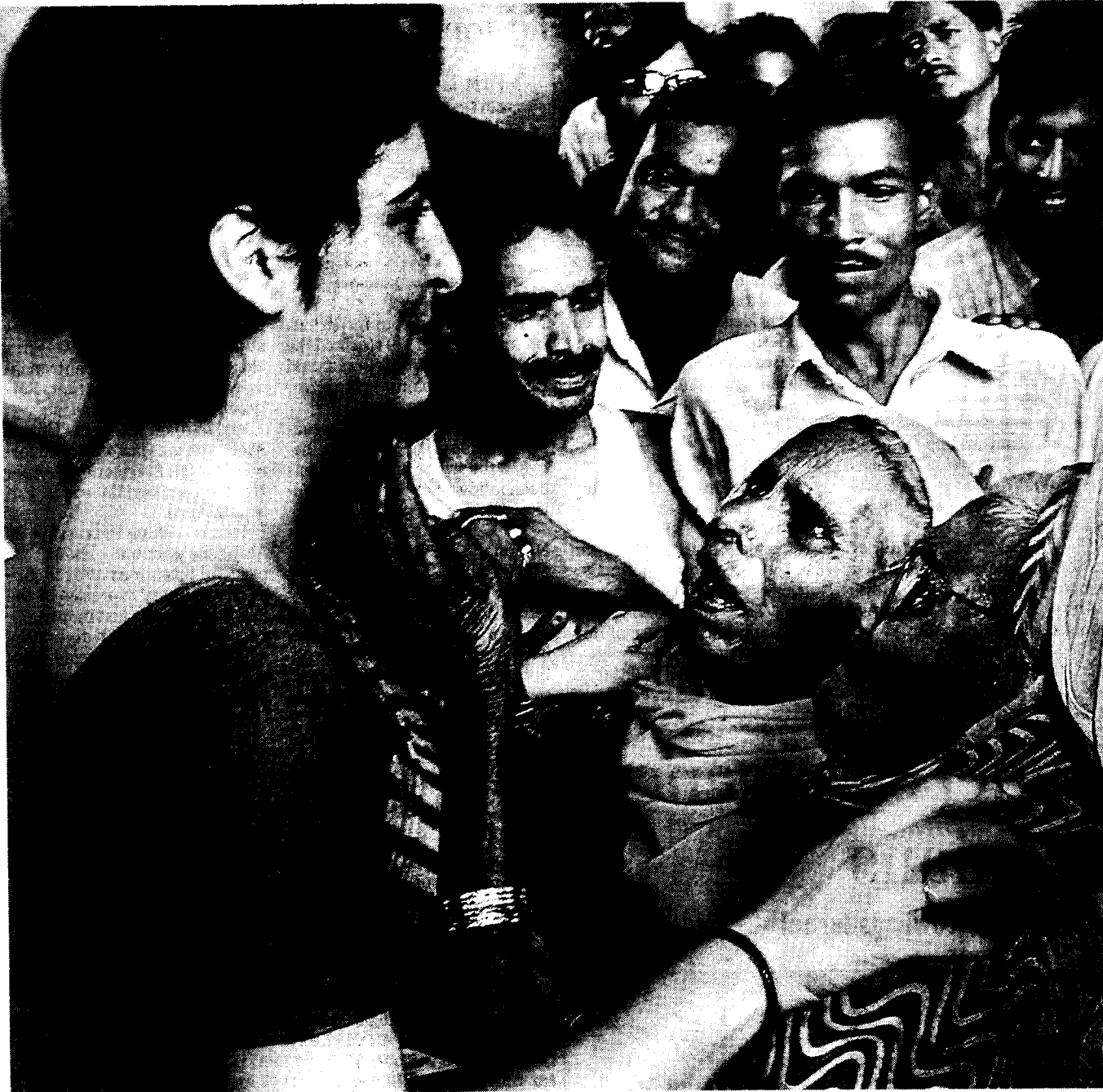
Most voters said they wanted to exercise their franchise before noon to avoid the heat. "But it seems the heat took its toll on the voting percentage," a district administration official said here.

During the first four hours, over eight per cent of the electorate cast their votes. Women account for a little less than 50 per cent of the voters.

Other prominent candidates are the Bharatiya Janata Party's Vinay Katiyar, the SP's Rajkumar Chaudhury and Prabha Singh Lodh, a nominee of the former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti contesting on the Apna Deh ticket.

## Trading charges

Ms. Gandhi's daughter and election agent Priyanka Vadra alleged that bogus votes were cast at a booth in Maharajganj. She lodged a complaint with the observer blaming a sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) for the episode. An SDM from Mohanlalganj (Lucknow) is



**FOR MOTHER'S SAKE:** Priyanka Vadra, polling agent for Congress president Sonia Gandhi talks to elderly women outside a polling booth in Rae Bareli on Monday. — PHOTO: NAND KUMAR/PTI

posted as in-charge of Maharajganj. Ms. Vadra, who hit the road early in the day, toured booths in the Bachrawan Assembly segment. She told reporters that the queues outside the booths indicated the people's enthusiasm. Electronic voting machines at some booths were not functioning "but officials are rectifying the flaws."

The SP alleged that Ms. Vadra

was influencing voters even as "Congressmen accompanying her were indulging in rigging."

Beni Prasad Verma, SP leader and father-in-law of Mr. Rajkumar Chaudhury, told reporters that Ms. Vadra was moving in a motorcade of 12 vehicles to influence voters. "The 80 men travelling with her are rigging booths."

Ram Sharan Das, SP MLC and

State unit president, faxed a complaint to the Election Commission. Mr. Verma alleged that the presiding officer at booth number 78 at Mainpuri, along with his staff, cast fake votes in favour of Ms. Gandhi.

The SP said the Superintendent of Police and the district magistrate/returning officer were not doing their duties impartially. "They are IPS and IAS offi-

cers. They can be influenced by the Department of Personnel in the Union Government."

Mr. Chaudhury, who visited the booth in the Government Inter College, also spoke about faulty EVMs.

Rae Bareli police chief B.D. Paulson told reporters that about 200 troublemakers had been put under house arrest. — UNI

# Jaya, Karuna take battle to air waves

J. S. T. Prasad

K R Sreenivas | TNN

**Chennai:** The last day of campaigning for Tamil Nadu's May 8 elections was full of drama. Right through Saturday, TV channels—Sun TV (DMK) and Jaya TV (AIADMK)—used air waves to out do each other in poll propaganda.

Sun TV showed re-runs of the footage of DMK president M Karunanidhi and MDMK head Vaiko's arrest under Pota by the Jayalalithaa government. It also telecast the footage of Vaiko—now in alliance with the AIADMK—hitting out at Jayalalithaa following his arrest. The aim: a reminder to the people about what had happened during the AIADMK regime.

In a bid to expose Vaiko's flip-flops, Sun showed him attacking Jayalalithaa soon after meeting Karunanidhi on February 22, 2006, and followed it with his meeting with Jayalalitha on March 3, 2006. The clippings showed Vaiko saying the AIADMK government would get routed and the Democratic Progressive Alliance (DPA) led by DMK would storm back to power in the 2006 elections. This was followed by a commentary saying Vaiko had dumped the DPA for the AIADMK because he did not get the one extra seat that he had bargained for with Karunanidhi.

Not to be outdone, Jaya TV showed clippings of how Karunanidhi had written the screenplay for the movies *Kalaigarnar* and *Kanamma* which were produced by the brother-in-law of Nalini, one of the main accused in the assassination of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. Pointing out that Karunanidhi had helped Nalini's family, Jaya TV questioned the DMK leader's role in the murder.

Not just on TV, the two parties also fought it out on the streets of Chennai. While Karunanidhi hit the trail as early as 7.30 am, going on a whirlwind tour of the me-



## TN parties get EC notices

The Election Commission has issued notices to Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalithaa and the DMK for allegedly using more vehicles than permitted during electioneering. In two separate notices to the ruling AIADMK, the EC pointed out that Jayalalithaa had used nearly 80 vehicles during her visit to Krishnagiri district on May 1 and 2. As per the standing instructions, not more than three vehicles are allowed in a convoy. In a notice to the DMK, the EC said about 34 vehicles had been used by Union communications minister and DMK leader Dayanidhi Maran during the poll drive in Krishnagiri on May 3. AGENCIES

tropolis, Jayalalithaa began her day at 1 pm. Both were aggression personified.

Meanwhile, adding to the list of sops, Jaya announced on Friday night that the AIADMK would give free computers to all those who had passed plus-II. Her last minute announcement seems to have been well received. She had earlier announced four grams of gold for mangalsutras for all women who were to get married. This was a counter to the DMK's announcement of enhanced assistance of Rs 15,000 instead of the present Rs 10,000 to below poverty line women who were getting married. Jayalalithaa has also promised to end the monopoly of cable TV channels and do away with set top boxes, presently being used in Chennai.

08 MAY 2006

THE STATESMAN

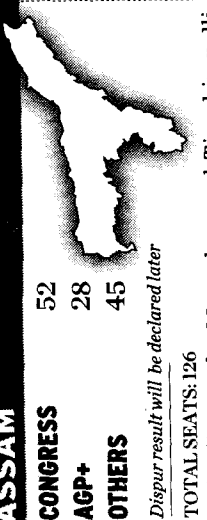
## Time to deliver on promises

**R**egaining power is easier than retaining it. The victory of the Democratic Progressive Alliance led by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam is essentially a vote for change in Tamil Nadu. In keeping with the trend set in the 1989 Assembly election, the DMK denied the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam a second consecutive term. But Verdict 2006 is not an unconditional popular endorsement of the victor. Despite putting together a formidable alliance arithmetic, the DMK and its allies faced stiff resistance from the AIADMK across the State. The closeness of the contest was reflected in the five percentage point difference between the two alliances and in the thin victory margins in several instances. Corrective measures initiated by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa during the last two years, and commendable tsunami rehabilitation and flood relief, helped the AIADMK reduce the 17 percentage point gap that sank her party in the May 2004 Lok Sabha contest in Tamil Nadu. Further, a sizable section of the protest vote went to actor Vijaykant's Desiya Murpokku Dravidar Kazhagam, which polled more than the margin of victory in several constituencies. Unsurprisingly, the DMK failed to get a majority of its own. For the last three decades, the DMK and the AIADMK have been taking a big chunk of seats on the strength of clever alliances (witness 1984, 1991, 1996, and 2001) or a fragmentation of the popular vote (as in 1977 and 1989). With merely a one-third vote share, each has been able to rule in turn. The chief ally, the reunited Congress, which has more than pulled its weight in this contest, must put an end, amicably of course, to this artificial situation. It must participate in the State government — so that it becomes a majority and stable government but also because desirable checks and balances can thus be introduced in the Centre-State as well as Congress-DMK equations.

After a long time, Tamil Nadu will have a strong opposition in the Assembly. Octogenarian M. Karunanidhi, who will become Chief Minister for a record fifth time, has led an impressive campaign from the front. He knows he must pay heed to the social churning across the State and to the changing mood of the people. He needs to focus the attention of the new government, in equal measure, on development and issues of livelihood and mass deprivation, which came to the fore in the election campaign. As an elder statesman, he must also do his best to put an end to vendetta politics and reduce the hostility and tension levels in the State's politics. One of the ways the DMK neutralised the chemistry the AIADMK supremo was able to generate on the ground was to come up with an election manifesto that has been described, with some exaggeration, as the 'real hero' of the election. The winner now needs to deliver — and the first step must be forming a government that will reflect coalition arithmetic and new political realities.

12 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

TAMIL NADU		PONDICHERY		WEST BENGAL		KERALA		ASSAM		RAE BARELI	
DMK+	163	CONGRESS+	20	LEFT FRONT	235	LDF:	98	CONGRESS	52	MASSIVE WIN FOR SONIA	
AIADMK+	69	AIADMK+	7	TRINAMOOL	29	UDF:	41	AGP+	28		
DMDK	1	OTHERS	3	CONGRESS	21	DIC (K):	1	OTHERS	45		
OTHERS	1	TOTAL SEATS: 30		OTHERS	8	TOTAL SEATS: 140		TOTAL SEATS: 126		Dispar result will be declared later	
TOTAL SEATS: 234		Printed at Chennai, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Madurai, Delhi, Visakhapatnam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Vijayawada, Mangalore and Tiruchirappalli									

# Karunanidhi to be Chief Minister for fifth time



**BACK AT THE HELM:** DMK president M. Karunanidhi who is set to become Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for the fifth time, waves to supporters at the party headquarters in Chennai on Thursday. — PHOTO: M. VEDHAN

AIADMK, with 61 seats, will be a strong Opposition in the Assembly

Suresh Nambath with Bureau reports

**CHENNAI:** In a vote for change, the Democratic Progressive Alliance (DPA) led by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam has obtained a comfortable majority in the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections winning 163 of the 234 seats. DMK president M. Karunanidhi is set to become Chief Minister for the fifth time with his party totalling 96 seats, 22 short of a simple majority.

In Pondicherry, the Congress-DMK alliance won 20 of the 30 seats in the Territorial Assembly.

The contests in Tamil Nadu were close, and only 4.75 per centage points separated the two fronts. According to provisional figures, the DPA had a vote share of 44.58 per cent, and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)-led front 39.83 per cent. In three constituencies, the margin was less than 100. The elections were held on May 8.

"Our alliance boat could only sail so far in the money-storm

that hit [the State]," Mr. Karunanidhi told presspersons on Thursday afternoon after the trends firmed up. The DMK would decide on government formation after discussions with the allies, he added.

The Congress, which won 34 seats, is considering joining the government. The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) with 18 seats, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) with nine, and the Communist Party of India with six are ready to support a DMK government from outside. All the allies have submitted letters supporting the DMK to Governor Surjit Singh Barnala.

Mr. Karunanidhi will stake his

claim to form the government on Friday after the DMK Legislature Party meeting. The swearing-in is to be held at the Nehru indoor stadium here at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

"I have done my best"

Soon after the results were declared, Chief Minister and AIADMK leader Jayalithaa sent in her resignation to the Governor. In a statement, she said: "I accept the verdict of the people." While thanking those who voted for her alliance, she added: "I have no regrets as I demit office. I have done my best for the people of Tamil Nadu."

Although it lost the election,

the AIADMK will have a strong presence in the Assembly — it has won 61 seats. Twelve of the 21 Ministers who contested the election won. The party's main ally, the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam headed by Vaiko won six seats and another ally, the Dalit Panthers, two.

The new entrant in Tamil Nadu politics, Desiya Murpokku Dravidar Kazhagam led by actor Vijayakant, garnered 8.33 per cent votes. But only Mr. Vijayakant won a seat in Vrithachalam.

A surprise was the victory of a CPI(M) rebel, T. Ramachandran, in Thalli. He defeated the official CPI candidate Nagaraja Reddy.

In his post-victory press conference, Mr. Karunanidhi said the ruling and Opposition parties could cooperate on the marriage scheme for poor women and make their mutual antagonism, which was "not witnessed in other States," a thing of the past.

## Moily coming today for talks

Special Correspondent

meet DMK president M. Karunanidhi here on Friday.

Talking to *The Hindu* over phone from New Delhi, Mr. Moily said the Congress fully supported Mr. Karunanidhi in government formation.

**CHENNAI:** Congress Working Committee member M. Veerappa Moily, who is in charge of the party in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, will

The Hindu

2 MAY 2005

# Karunanidhi, Ministers sworn in

9.57 P.M. 14/5  
+PD -1  
Orders signed for Rs. 2 a kg rice, waiver of farm loans, one more egg in noon meal

R.K. Radhakrishnan

**CHENNAI:** Minutes after Tamil Nadu Governor S.S. Barnala administered the oath of office and secrecy to Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam president M. Karunanidhi and his 30-member minority Government here on Saturday, Mr. Karunanidhi announced the waiver of cooperative loans for farmers and reduction in the price of PDS rice to Rs. 2 a kg.

Addressing people at a packed Nehru Indoor Stadium after the swearing-in ceremony was over, Mr. Karunanidhi, who took oath as Chief Minister, said that his party had promised that it would make available rice supplied through the Public Distribution System at Rs. 2 a kg. It was now sold at Rs. 3.50 a kg.

## Rice scheme from June 3

He was fulfilling the promise, Mr. Karunanidhi said, and added that rice would be made available at this price from June 3 (his birthday). This would entail an additional expenditure of Rs. 550 crore a year to the exchequer.

The DMK manifesto had made another promise: writing off of cooperative loans for farmers. His second order was to give effect to that — waive the loans taken till March 31, 2006. Lakhs of farmers would be benefited by this move, he said. This would cost Rs. 6,866 crore which the Government would bear.

The third promise to be implemented was the supply of an additional egg each week in the nutritious noon meal programme. Declaring the birthday of Kamaraj (July 15) as Education Day, Mr. Karunanidhi said that the two eggs a week scheme would be implemented from Kamaraj's coming birth anniversary.

After his short speech, the Chief Minister said that he was signing the orders on these three announcements before the peo-



**NEW DISPENSATION:** Tamil Nadu Governor Surjit Singh Barnala with Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi at the swearing-in of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Government in Chennai on Saturday. Congress leader Veerappa Moily, Pattali Makkal Katchi founder Ramadoss and Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee are seen from right.  
PHOTO: S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

ple and proceeded to affix his signature on three files.

Earlier, the function commenced with Chief Secretary N. Narayanan reading out the name of the Chief Minister-designate. The Governor and the Chief Minister-designate proceeded to their respective lecterns. The Governor administered the oaths of office and allegiance, and secrecy to the Chief Minister-designate.

The Chief Minister signed both the copies of the oaths,

greeted the Governor, waved to the crowd and resumed his seat. Mr. Narayanan read out the names of the 30 other Ministers-designate, one by one in the order of seniority set out by Mr. Karunanidhi.

After the ceremony, many party leaders, MPs and civil society leaders came forward to greet the Chief Minister and his team.

Congress Ministers in the Manmohan Singh Cabinet, Pranab Mukherjee and Jaipal Red-

dy; Indian Union Muslim League general secretary and Union Minister, E.Ahamed; leaders of parties in the Democratic Progressive Alliance and the Union Ministers from Tamil Nadu were among those who witnessed the function. A massive crowd had gathered at the venue in the morning. Scores of people watched the proceedings live on television as the stadium could not accommodate all.

The police had a tough time regulating the crowd. There was

chaos for a while as the police looked helplessly at surging DMK cadres trying in vain to gain access to an already overflowing stadium, and pulling down barricades.

Immediately after the function, all the Ministers, led by Mr. Karunanidhi drove to Fort St. George, where the Secretariat is located and assumed office. Before heading for the function, Mr. Karunanidhi paid floral tributes at the memorials of Periyar, Anna and Kamaraj.

# 45 die in fire at Meerut fair

Suspected to be caused by short circuit at electronic goods fair

**MEERUT:** At least 45 people were charred to death and scores injured in a fire that tore through a consumer electronic goods fair at a park here on Monday evening.

The fire, suspected to be caused by a short circuit, broke out in one of the stalls around 5.30 p.m. when the place was packed with visitors to the 'Brand India' fair where multinational companies had displayed their products.

The fire also led to the explosion of cooking gas cylinders at some makeshift eateries set up at the fair site. The blaze soon engulfed the area turning Victoria Park, the venue of the fair,

five fire tenders, including some from nearby districts, were pressed into service to douse the flames.

deal with the blaze. One of the stall owners said he saw sparks in a stall, and then people running as it turned into a major fire.

**Steel frames alone remain**  
Blackened steel frames were all that remained of the tents that had been set up at the fair, which began three days ago and was to end on Monday.

**Victoria Park was packed with visitors when the fire broke out**

**Fire led to explosion of gas cylinders in the eateries**

into an inferno. Bodies charred beyond recognition lay scattered as fire fighters, with the help of locals and police, battled to contain the leaping flames. There was only one entry and one exit point as the entire venue was air-conditioned.

The fire was brought under control around 8 p.m. Twenty-

The fire and explosion of cylinders set off panic and a near-stampedede situation inside Victoria Park as people scrambled for safety.

The Uttar Pradesh Government ordered a high-level inquiry into the incident and announced an ex-gratia of Rs. 5 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased, Rs. 50,000 to those seriously injured and Rs. 25,000 to those with minor injuries, official sources in Lucknow said. — PTI

# Mehar murder case rocks U.P. Assembly

Govt. says no to CBI probe; two cops suspended

**LUCKNOW:** The Mehar Bhargava murder case rocked the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on Monday with the Government rejecting the Opposition demand for a CBI probe into it even as the House was told that two police sub-inspectors had been suspended on charges of sloppy investigation.

The Government said the Special Task Force would assist the police in the probe.

Keeping in view the seriousness of the matter, the Speaker, Mata Prasad Pandey, directed the Government to make a statement on the issue.

Raising the matter during zero hour through an adjournment notice, Congress leaders Pramod Tewari, Jagadambika Pal and others alleged that the prime accused in the case, Sachin Pahari, enjoyed the patronage of an influential mafia-don-turned-MLA close to the ruling Samajwadi Party.

"The fact that the main culprits were able to escape after perpetrating the crime and the subsequent transfer of the investigating officer smacks of political influence," Mr. Tewari alleged.

He demanded that the name of the MLA, allegedly providing patronage to the killers, be revealed. Mr. Pal demanded adequate security for the Bhargava

- 'Prime accused enjoys MLA's protection'

- BJP, BSP also seek CBI inquiry

- Special Task Force to assist police

- Walkout by Congress members

family apprehending threat to them.

BJP and BSP members also demanded a CBI probe into the matter alleging that the State police was incapable of working out the case.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Mohammad Azam Khan, while condemning the incident, assured that the culprits would be nabbed soon.

He denied that there was any pressure on the police in this regard and said the two main culprits were history-sheeters and efforts were on to nab them.

Rejecting demand for a CBI inquiry into the matter, the Minister said the State police were capable of working out the case.

However, the Speaker directed the Government to make a statement in the House in this regard.

Not satisfied with the Government's response, Congress

members staged a noisy walk out in the House.

Meanwhile, State DGP Yashpal Singh said the STF would also assist the police in working out the murder case.

Inspector General of Police, Lucknow zone O. P. Tripathi had already been entrusted with the supervision of the investigation.

Police teams had also been despatched to different places to nab the two main culprits Sachin Pahari and Amit Singh while three named persons in the FIR had been arrested, police sources here said.

## Public outcry

Public resentment has started showing up in different forms here following the death of Mehar Bhargava. Shocked over the incident, the residents of Lucknow have decided to unite and raise their voices against the crime.

The local citizens will be holding a candle-light meeting in the city. Other means of public communication like SMSs are also being used to garner people's solidarity against the crime.

## Mulayam's promise

Sensing the public mood, Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav not only visited her residence but assured speedy action against the prime accused in the case. PTI/UNI

# 32 U.P. MLAs told to sit as separate group

## Supreme Court restrains Speaker

J. Venkatesan

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday asked 32 of the 37 MLAs in Uttar Pradesh, who had merged with the Samajwadi Party, to sit as a separate group of MLAs of the Loktantrik Bahujan Dal (LBD) till the court disposed of the matter.

A Bench of Justice K.G. Balakrishnan and Justice P.P. Naolekar passed this interim order on a batch of special leave petitions against a judgment of the Allahabad High Court quashing the orders passed the Assembly Speaker declining disqualification; recognising split as well as merger. The Bench also restrained the Speaker from passing orders on the applications pending before him pursuant to the High Court directions.

The Bench permitted 32 MLAs of the breakaway group to exist as an independent group as per the order of the Speaker, dated September 6, 2003, to preserve their political status in the Assembly. The judges also allowed five of the 37 MLAs, who had resigned from the Ministry and the post of chairmen of various boards subsequent to the High Court order, to function as Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLAs. Considering the fact that important issues were involved in these appeals, the Bench referred the matter to the Chief Justice for posting them before

a larger Bench for an urgent hearing.

### Whip from two parties

Earlier, counsel for petitioners Harish Salve sought stay of the impugned judgment on the ground that if a stay was not granted, the petitioners would have to face a whip from two parties, as they would be neither in the BSP nor in the Samajwadi party. He said in the alternative the Speaker should be restrained from passing any order on the basis of the directions issued by the High Court.

Senior counsel K. K. Venugopal, appearing for the BSP, opposed the stay and said that pursuant to the High Court judgment, all the 37 MLAs should be treated as BSP MLAs. He said the Speaker had bungled in deciding the issue whether the provisions of the anti-defection law covered the members of the breakaway group or not.

### "Deliberate delay"

He argued that initially the strength of the breakaway group was only 13, and the BSP filed a petition before the Speaker seeking their disqualification but he deliberately kept the entire issue pending till their strength went up to 37. Thereafter, he passed the two orders recognising the breakaway group as LBD and also their merger with the SP same day.

25 MAR 2006

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## UP bill exempts 79 posts as offices of profit

**Lucknow:** In an attempt seen as an exercise to prevent disqualification of Rajya Sabha member Jaya Bachchan, the Uttar Pradesh assembly on Thursday passed a bill exempting 79 posts, includ-



**Jaya Bachchan**

ing the chairmanship of state film development council held by her, from being regarded as offices of profit.

The state legislature (prevention of disqualification amendment) bill, 2006, which seeks to give retrospective effect to its provisions from January 2003, was passed by voice vote amidst resistance from opposition. An opposition amendment was also rejected.

Once the governor approves the bill, 79 posts of chairmen, deputy chairmen and directors of various corporations and PSUs will no longer be regarded as offices of profit and the word 'allowances' payable to incumbents will be replaced by 'honorarium'.

The opposition members alleged that the bill had been brought by the state government to save some individuals, apparently referring to Samajwadi Party member Jaya Bachchan, whose disqualification has been recommended by the Election Commission.

The Commission's recommendation to President A P J Abdul Kalam came on a petition from a Congressman Madan Mohan who had contended that she should be disqualified as she was holding an office of profit as chairperson of the UP Film Development Corporation. TNN & Agencies

# 3 dead as anti-Bush protests take communal colour in Lucknow

up. 8/

SANJAY SINGH/  
MANISH SAHU

9/2

LUCKNOW, MARCH 3

THREE persons were killed and over 24 injured today as anti-Bush protests assumed communal colours and violence spread to various parts of the city. Pitched battles took place between the protestors and shopkeepers after the latter were told to down shutters in protest against the Bush visit.

The violence took place on the day of the visit of the President A P J Abdul Kalam and former prime minister Atal Vajpayee to the city.

Trouble began in the afternoon in the Nazirabad area after a procession reached there after Friday

prayers to protest against the Bush visit.

"The agitators first tried to force a group of shopkeepers to down their shutters. The shopkeepers refused leading to a clash," said a shopkeeper in the area. Within minutes,



Protesters clashed with those who didn't

violence gripped a major part of the Aminabad and its adjoining areas such as Wazirganj, Qaiserbagh, La Touche Road and Maulviganj. It continued for four hours.

Police opened fire in the air in Maulviganj areas as the mob exploded crude bombs and opened fire. Nine persons received bullet injuries and have been admitted to the Trauma Centre.

The Aminabad branch of Bank of Baroda was set afire while about two dozen vehicles, parked in front of the branch, were charred. Several shops were also set on fire in Aminabad. The local VHP has called a strike tomorrow.

04 MAR 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

# উত্তরপ্রদেশে রাষ্ট্রপতি শাসন চেয়ে দাবি তুলল বিজেপি-ও

নয়াদিল্লি, ২ মার্চ: বসপা-র বিক্ষুব্ধ  
বিধায়কদের ঘিরে উত্তরপ্রদেশের  
রাজনৈতিক সঙ্কট আরও তীব্র হয়েছে।

তার সঙ্গেই তীব্র হচ্ছে রাষ্ট্রপতি  
শাসন জারির দাবিও। সঙ্কট মেটাতে  
কালই রাজ্যে রাষ্ট্রপতি শাসনের দাবি  
জানিয়েছিল কংগ্রেস। একই দাবিতে  
সরব হয়েছিল বসপা-ও। আজ  
বিজেপি মুলায়মের ইস্তফা চেয়ে  
রাষ্ট্রপতি শাসন চেয়েছে। বিজেপি-র  
সহ-সভাপতি কল্যাণ সিংহের মতে,  
কোনও অবস্থাতেই এই সরকারকে  
রেখে দিয়ে রাজ্যে বিধানসভা নির্বাচনে  
যাওয়া উচিত নয়।

সমাজবাদী পার্টির নেতা ও  
উত্তরপ্রদেশের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মুলায়ম  
সিংহের অভিযোগ, “উত্তরপ্রদেশে  
রাষ্ট্রপতি শাসন জারির জন্য বড়বন্দ  
চালাচ্ছে কংগ্রেস। আমাদের উপরে  
চাপ তৈরি করা হচ্ছে। কিন্তু আমরা এই  
চাপের কাছে মাথা নোয়াবো না।”

রাষ্ট্রপতি শাসন জারির দাবি তীব্র  
হওয়ার পাশাপাশি, বিধানসভার  
স্পিকার মাতাপ্রসাদ পান্ডের রায়  
নিয়োগ তীব্র ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করে তাঁকে  
বরখাস্ত করার দাবি তুলেছে বহুজন  
সমাজ পার্টি। রাজ্যপালের কাছে গিয়ে  
মায়াবতী হুমকি দিয়ে এসেছেন,  
ইলাহাবাদ হাইকোর্টের রায়কে বুড়ো  
আঙুল দেখিয়ে স্পিকার একতরফা  
ভাবে শাসক দলকেই সাহায্য করে  
চলেছে। যে ভাবে মুলায়মেরা আস্থা  
ভোটে জিতেছেন তা ‘অসাংবিধানিক  
এবং অনৈতিক’ বলে ব্যাখ্যা করে  
মায়াবতীর দাবি, এই অবস্থায়  
স্পিকারকে সরানো না হলে তাঁরা

আদালতে যেতে বাধ্য হবেন। হুমকি  
নয়, ইলাহাবাদ হাইকোর্টের রায়কে  
চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়ে শীর্ষ আদালতের  
দ্বারস্থ হচ্ছেন মুলায়মেরা। বসপা থেকে  
আসা ৪০ বিধায়কের অন্যতম রাজেন্দ্র  
সিংহ রানা ইতিমধ্যেই ইলাহাবাদ  
হাইকোর্টের রায়কে চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়ে  
সুপ্রিম কোর্টে আবেদন জানিয়েছেন।

স্পিকার কাল সন্ধ্যায় জানিয়ে  
দিয়েছিলেন, ২০০৩ সালে বহুজন  
সমাজ পার্টি ভেঙে আসা ৪০ জন  
বিধায়কদের গোষ্ঠীকে একটি আলাদা  
দল হিসাবেই তিনি গণ্য করছেন। ওই  
দলের নাম ‘জনগণতান্ত্রিক বহুজন দল’  
বলে জানিয়েছিলেন মাতাপ্রসাদ।  
বস্তুত, ইলাহাবাদ হাইকোর্টের রায়ের  
পরে কোণঠাসা হয়ে পড়া মুলায়ম  
সরকারের কাছে স্পিকারের এই ব্যাখ্যা  
ছিল অস্বীকৃতির মতো। কারণ,  
হাইকোর্টের রায়ের পরেই গত কাল  
আর আজ মিলিয়ে তিন জন মন্ত্রী-সহ  
পাঁচ জন বিধায়ক ফের বসপায় ফেরার  
কথা ঘোষণা করেন।

স্পিকারের ঘোষণার পরে কিছুটা  
নিশ্চিন্ত হয়ে আজ সকাল থেকেই সঙ্কট  
কাটিয়ে ওঠার যাবতীয় চেষ্টাও শুরু  
করে মুলায়মেরা। প্রথমেই ভাঙন  
ঠেকাতে ২৯ জন বিক্ষুব্ধ বহুজন সমাজ  
পার্টির বিধায়কদের সাংবাদিকদের  
সামনে প্যারেড করায় সমাজবাদী  
পার্টি। সেখানেই সপা নেতৃত্ব ঘোষণা  
করে, ৩৩ জন বিধায়কের সমর্থনই  
তাদের দিকেই রয়েছে। পাশাপাশি,  
দলত্যাগ বিরোধী আইনের আওতায়  
ওই পাঁচ জন বিধায়ককে খারিজ  
করারও দাবি জানায় সমাজবাদী পার্টি।

# Mulayam wins trust vote

98x HD-1  
up 113

## Allahabad High Court disqualifies 40 BSP rebel MLAs, who joined SP in 2003

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** The Mulayam Singh Yadav-led Uttar Pradesh Government on Tuesday sought and won a trust vote in the Assembly within minutes of the Allahabad High Court verdict on disqualification of 40 rebel Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) members who had joined the Samajwadi Party in 2003.

Delivering a judgment on a petition filed by the BSP, the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court, by a majority of 2:1, held the merger invalid.

It, however, did not decide on the question of the MLAs' disqualification. It referred the matter back to the Assembly Speaker, asking him decide on disqualification.

### Whip defied

Even as the BSP, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the Congress demanded Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav's resignation, the Government moved and won the confidence vote with 207 votes to nil in an Assembly with a current strength of 402. Apparently, the 40 MLAs in question had voted with the Government, defying a whip issued by the BSP.

The entire Opposition, including the BJP and the BSP staged a walkout. The Congress, an "outside supporter" of the Government, was absent although only two days ago party leader Salman Khursheed had said that the party would withdraw support to the Government. Mr. Yadav moved the confidence motion minutes after

• **Government wins confidence vote 207-0**

• **Opposition, including BJP, BSP stages walkout**

the judgment was delivered, taking the Opposition and his political detractors by surprise.

The BSP, which had issued a whip to all its members, including the rebel MLAs, claimed that by defying the whip, the 40 MLAs had further strengthened its view that the Speaker must disqualify them.

### No threat to Government: Amar Singh

Asserting there was no threat to the Mulayam Singh Government, party general secretary and spokesman Amar Singh said in New Delhi that the party would take a collective decision on approaching the Supreme Court on the High Court verdict.

On the demand for Mr. Yadav's resignation on moral grounds, Mr. Singh retorted: "Did the Prime Minister or the Home Minister resign after the Supreme Court judgment on dissolution of the Bihar Assembly?"

The Mulayam Singh Yadav Government depends for its survival on the continued support of the Rashtriya Lok Dal's 15 MLAs and its chief Ajit Singh has not yet shown any sign of withdrawing support, though he has warned his party men to be prepared for early elections.

See also Page 5



# DMK poll slogan: Television set for free, rice at Rs 2 a kg

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, MARCH 29

**I**n a bid to beat Chief Minister and AIADMK supremo Miss J Jayalalithaa at her own game, the DMK today released a highly populist election manifesto, promising colour television sets to all households that did not have one and 'quality rice' at Rs 2 per kg through fair price shops. Smarting from her party's debacle in the 2004 Lok Sabha election, Jayalalithaa in her manifesto a day before had offered numerous sops to the people of Tamil Nadu.

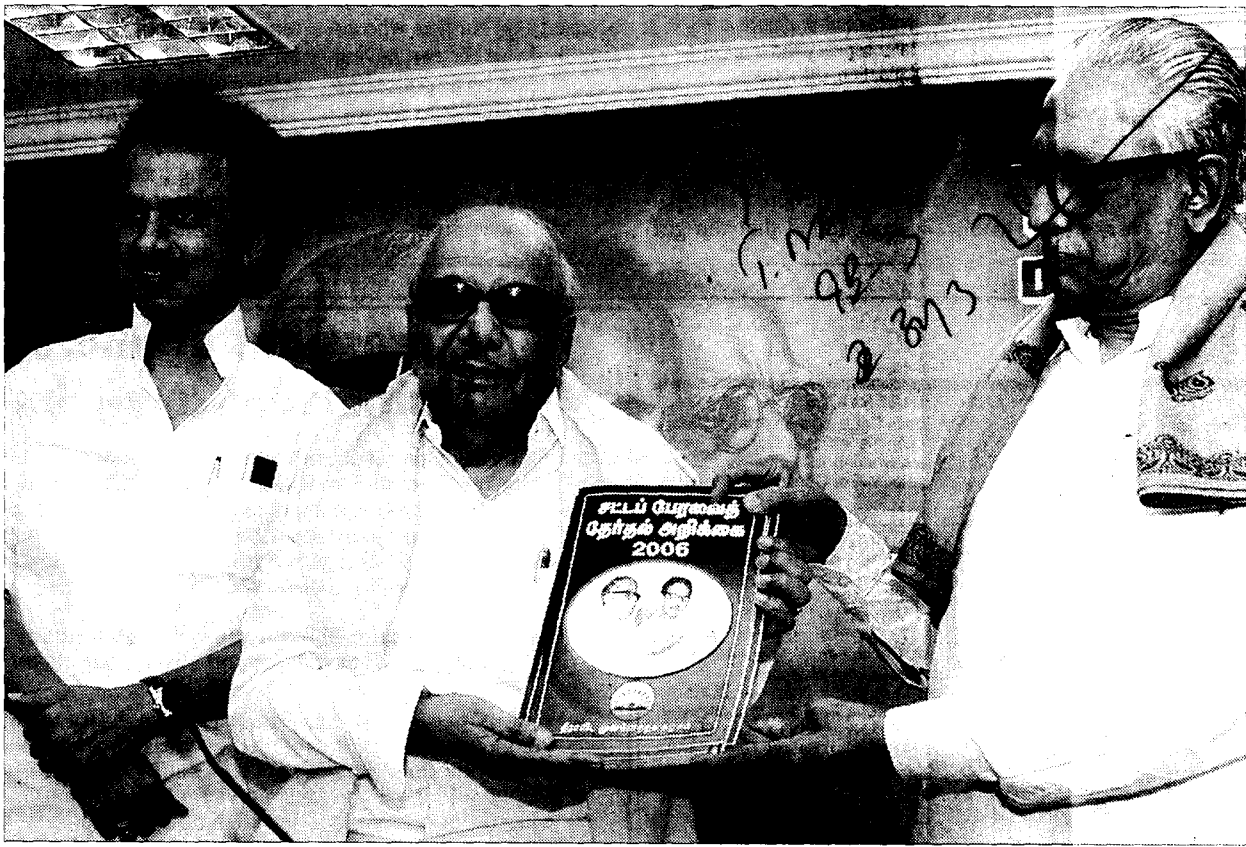
In a throwback to the 1960s when the DMK founder leader, C N Annadurai, swept to power defeating the Congress with the slogan 'three measures of rice for Re 1,' the DMK manifesto, displaying a desperation to return to power, said: "We will provide quality rice at Rs 2 per kilo to make women feel happy at heart."

Incidentally, when the DMK came to power in 1967 on its rice slogan, it failed to keep its promise as it could offer only one measure of rice for one rupee.

The cost of rice presently is Rs 3.50 a kg in ration shops in Tamil Nadu. Presently, the cheap rice subsidy causes a Rs 1,500-crore dent a year to the state coffers. The promise of Rs 2 a kg could well double the subsidy component.

The AIADMK manifesto assured that it would continue supplying rice at the present rate of Rs 3.50 per kg, "the lowest price for rice in the country under the public distribution system (PDS)." The manifesto, released by DMK president M Karunanidhi, also promised to provide a free colour TV to every family "for women's recreation and general knowledge". The scheme would be implemented on the occasion of the birthdays of the two Dravidian leaders, Periyar and Annadurai. Karunanidhi later clarified that the colour televisions would be provided for every household that did not have one.

To further cheer women, the party also held out promise of free gas stoves to all poor



## Ailing Kalimuthu out of fray

**CHENNAI:** AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa dropped her party presidium chairman K Kalimuthu from the list of party candidates for the Assembly election, apparently concerned about his state of health. The sudden development came as a surprise since Kalimuthu, recently given the highest party post, is said to be closest to her.

A party release announced that the former Assembly Speaker, the party's nominee for the Madurai Central constituency, was being dropped from the list of candidates. No reason was attributed for the decision. He was replaced by former MP T K Jakkian.

Kalimuthu has been in and out of hospital

recently. Sources said Jayalalithaa was concerned to see the senior leader looking "so frail and unwell" when he came to the party office on Tuesday morning to release the party manifesto.

A source said Jayalalithaa first enquired about Kalimuthu's health from senior doctors at the Apollo Hospital where he had undergone treatment recently. She subsequently summoned the loyalist to her Poes Garden residence on Tuesday night, expressing concern and advising him to take rest.

Three other candidates, whose names appeared in the original list of 182, released on Monday have also been replaced.

women and a monthly maternity assistance of Rs 1,000 three months prior to delivery and three months after that. The Kannagi statue, which symbolized 'Tamil women's chastity,' would be back on the Marina Beach if the DMK was voted to power, its manifesto promised. The highly controversial move on the part of the Jayalalithaa government to remove the statue, triggered statewide protests by DMK sympathisers.


While the reason ostensibly was that the statue, located at a main junction, caused accidents, there was

much talk then that astrologers advised Jayalalithaa to have it removed believing it to be inauspicious for the state's leadership.

The DMK promised free power to weavers in Tamil Nadu, which would put a further burden on the State Electricity Board, already suffering a subsidy component of Rs 1,200 crore due to free power for farmers and small huts and low tariff for a section of domestic consumers. There were sops for government employees (a promise to restore all benefits and concessions withdrawn by the AIADMK gov-

ernment), unemployed youth (Rs 300 a month dole), women members of self-help groups (Rs 45 a day as training allowance as against Rs 7.50 now), students (two eggs a week instead of one presently in the free nutritious meals in government and aided schools) and the film and television industry (assurance to reduce outdoor shooting charges hiked by the Jayalalithaa government).

The DMK said it would fill up three lakh vacancies in government departments and provide free computer training to youth in rural areas, besides



- Gas stoves for poor women
- A monthly maternity assistance of Rs 1,000 for three months prior to delivery and three months after that
- Controversial removal of Kannagi statue from Marina Beach to be reversed because Kannagi symbolises "Tamil women's chastity"
- Free power to weavers
- All benefits and concessions withdrawn by AIADMK to be restored to govt employees
- Rs 300 monthly dole for an unemployed youth
- Rs 45 daily training allowance for women in SHGs
- Law to provide separate quotas for Muslims and Christians in state appointments and educational institutions after a Constitutional amendment

reducing educational fees. Wooing the minority sections, the DMK manifesto promised a legislation to provide separate reservation for Muslims and Christians in state appointments and educational institutions, after getting the Centre to amend the Constitution to allow such quotas.

MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2006

## After Vaiko's

## crossover

**T**he contest for Tamil Nadu's May 2006 Assembly election has taken a startling turn with Vaiko's Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam reversing its announced decision to stay in the Democratic Progressive Alliance headed by M. Karunanidhi and walking over to Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's camp. Does this mean the unravelling of a mighty alliance that swept all before it only 22 months ago? Or will it, as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leaders have claimed, ease the tensions within the DPA and give it just the "breathing space" and peace of mind Mr. Vaiko's Hamlet-like states of indecision denied it for some months? The electoral record provides some, although not too much guidance. Since its founding in 1994, the MDMK has fared extremely poorly in the two State Assembly elections (1996 and 2001) it contested more or less on its own strength: it is yet to win an Assembly seat and its independent strength, concentrated in southern Tamil Nadu, seems to hover around five per cent of the popular vote. On the other hand, it has scored well, as a small part of major alliances, in the last three of the four Lok Sabha elections it contested (1996, 1998, 1999, and 2004). The MDMK leader seemed to be on a personal high after he emerged from 19 months of incarceration under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for verbally supporting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. But with both victim and the head of the Government that jailed and prosecuted him dramatically putting that chapter behind them, his opponents will have a field day reminding the electorate of Mr. Vaiko's high-voltage campaign against Ms. Jayalalithaa and speculating on the considerations that took him into her camp. How will all this play out over the next two months?

Much water has flowed down the Cauvery, the Palar, the Ponnaiyar, the Pennar, the Vaigai, and the Tamiraparani since the DPA took all 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu on the strength of a popular vote share of 57.40 per cent. Even if the victory of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in the two subsequent Assembly by-elections is considered not very significant, there have been several political indications that ground realities have changed. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, who has apparently drawn lessons from a total debacle, has systematically rolled back or reversed policies and actions that were unpopular or perceived to be so. The restoration of the original free power scheme for farmers; the lowering of power tariffs and bus fares; the withdrawal of cases against journalists; dropping punitive action against government employees; restoring and even enhancing their benefits; and scrapping the controversial anti-conversion legislation — these are some of the major steps taken in the wake of the 14th general election. If conventional arithmetical assumptions can be made on a template of established or indicated vote shares for various parties, the DPA would seem to have an edge — even after the exit of the MDMK's 'five per cent.' However, in the 1980 Assembly and 1998 Lok Sabha contests, such calculations were upset by something resembling chemistry (so much so that, in 1998, even exit polls went completely wrong). Will it be arithmetic or chemistry on May 8? It may be too soon to tell but what seems guaranteed is a tough and interesting contest, which may turn out to be a watershed in Tamil Nadu's political history. We must hope this election will revolve round issues that matter for the all-round development of the State and its place in the Indian sun — and for the welfare of the masses of its people.

# Vaiko strikes alliance with AIADMK

## MDMK to contest 35 seats

Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI:** The Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) has struck an alliance with Tamil Nadu's ruling All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK).

MDMK general secretary Vaiko called on AIADMK general secretary and Chief Minister Jayalalithaa at her Poes Garden residence here on Saturday and together they announced that the MDMK would contest 35 seats in the May 8 Assembly elections.

Mr. Vaiko later told a press conference that despite electoral ties with the AIADMK, the MDMK would be "part and parcel of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA)" and would continue to extend issue-based support to the Manmohan Singh Government from outside just as the Left parties were doing. "We will convey our decision to the UPA chairperson at the appropriate time," he added.

In a brief interaction with the media at Ms. Jayalalithaa's residence, the two leaders described the alliance as "formidable" and said they were confident it would sweep the polls. They said activists of the two parties would work wholeheartedly for each other's victory.

Ms. Jayalalithaa said: "We do not believe in turning back. We believe in looking at the future and the future is going to be glorious for the AIADMK and the MDMK."

At his press conference at the MDMK office, Mr. Vaiko said the AIADMK would win enough seats to form its own government. Under no circumstances would the MDMK participate in the government. A party panel to be formed shortly would hold talks with the AIADMK to iden-

• **DMK's attitude to MDMK hurt party leaders and cadres**

• **Karunanidhi a prisoner of circumstances: Vaiko**

• **MDMK to remain part of UPA**

tify the seats. The party general council would meet in Chennai on March 11.

He explained in detail the circumstances that led to the exit of the MDMK from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)-led Democratic Progressive Alliance (DPA) and the clinching of an accord with the AIADMK.

Mr. Vaiko said DMK president M. Karunanidhi was a "prisoner of circumstances," being subjected to various pulls and pressures.

The party decided to quit the DPA, as it was not sure whether Mr. Karunanidhi would be able to allot the seats to the MDMK as per its wish list. Even if these seats were granted, the question arose whether the party cadres at the grassroots level would work together, he said.

More than the actual number of seats to be allotted to the MDMK, it was the treatment meted out to it over the past two years that hurt the party leaders and cadres. Even the announcement at Tiruchi on Friday was made in a "take it or leave" attitude.

In Tiruchi, Mr. Karunanidhi made it clear that his party would oppose the continuance of the MDMK in the UPA after joining hands with the AIADMK. Quoting a Tamil proverb, he asked, "Will a person who does not listen to his mother, listen to a son?"