

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Why Isn't PM Sacking Education Minister Despite Repeated Paper Leaks, Asks Rahul

NEW DELHI, MAY 17: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi why he was not sacking Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan despite repeated paper leaks in his tenure.

In a post on X, Gandhi also questioned the "silence" of the prime minister on the matter.

"NEET 2024: Paper leaked. Exam not cancelled. Minister did not resign. CBI set up an investigation. A committee was formed.

"NEET 2026: Paper leaked. Exam cancelled. Minister still did not resign. CBI is investigating again. Another committee will be formed," Gandhi posted on X. The National Testing Agency cancelled the National Eligibility cum Entrance Exam (Undergraduate) held on May 3 amid allegations of irregularities. The reexam has been scheduled for June 21.

"Mr Modi, the country is asking you some questions—answer them! Why are paper leaks happening repeatedly? Why are you silent time and



again on this 'Pariksha pe Charcha'? Why aren't you dismissing the education minister who keeps failing repeatedly?" The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha asked, using the hashtag "#SackPradhan".

"Pariksha pe Charcha" is a programme in which the prime minister interacts with students, parents and teachers. The initiative aims to reshape the examination experience of students by fostering confidence, positivity, and holistic well-being.

On Saturday, Gandhi de-

manded that the prime minister should immediately sack Pradhan or take responsibility himself.

He also alleged that the "BJP-RSS nexus" has destroyed India's education system and said the hard work of 22 lakh NEET aspirants has gone to waste.

"The whole country knows that two days before NEET, its question paper was being distributed on WhatsApp. Dharmendra Pradhanji says he has nothing to do with the matter. The (Parliamentary) Committee had made rec-

ommendations but he put it in the dustbin on the pretext that opposition people were on the committee and that it was of no use," Gandhi said in a video statement.

"The truth is that you (government) have damaged the core of India. This is a nexus of the RSS, the BJP and their people that have been installed in universities, vice chancellors and professors, to mint money," the former Congress president said, adding that all people involved in the alleged paper leak be put in jail.

Experts Call for Stronger Cyber Security, Resilient Telecom Infrastructure at IEI Seminar

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAY 17

Emphasising the urgent need for resilient digital infrastructure and robust cyber security systems, experts on Sunday called for coordinated efforts to strengthen telecom networks and safeguard critical digital services during a seminar organised by The Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu Centre.

The seminar was held in connection with World Telecommunication and Information Society Day on the theme "Digital Lifelines – Strengthening Resilience in Connected World".

The programme was attended by engineers from various departments and organisations, senior professionals and members of the IEI Jammu Centre committee.

Chief guest Dr. Piyush Singla highlighted the steps being taken by the government to promote digital governance and resilient technological infrastructure in



Jammu and Kashmir. He informed that the J&K State Data Centre has achieved ISO certification and said the UT's digital applications are among the best globally. He also stressed the importance of cyber hygiene and responsible data usage.

Presiding over the function, Er. Anil Verma expressed concern over excessive dependence on Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies. While acknowledging the benefits of modern digital ecosystems, he cautioned that overreliance on technology may adversely affect human thinking and innovation. He called for the

development of mechanisms to strengthen resilience against technological dependency and enhance the country's cyber security framework.

Keynote speaker Ajay Khajuria underlined the strategic importance of global communication networks, noting that nearly 95 per cent of worldwide internet connectivity relies on submarine cables. He advocated for resilient infrastructure through alternative fibre routes, backup power systems and geographically separated data centres to ensure uninterrupted services during disruptions.

During the seminar, technical presentations were delivered by Er. B. L. Rawal, Er. Gopal Krishna Sharma, Er. Ranjeev Sawhney and Er. Joy Ganjoo.

The speakers advocated recognising telecom as an essential service, avoiding complete shutdowns and establishing a separate Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) for Jammu and Kashmir. They also stressed the need to protect digital infrastructure from floods and other natural calamities, stating that digital resilience has now become a public safety necessity.

220 million people are suffering from hypertension in India

NEW DELHI, MAY 17: India is facing a major public health crisis, with nearly 220 million people estimated to be suffering from hypertension, while only 10 to 12 per cent can keep their blood pressure under control, a leading cardiologist has warned.

World Hypertension Day is observed every year on May 17, and forms part of Hypertension Awareness Month.

Dr Tarun Kumar, a professor and cardiologist at the Medanta - The Medicity Heart Centre in Gurugram, said that more than half of those living with the condition are unaware they have it.

Dr Tarun Kumar said an estimated 220 million Indians suffer from hypertension, often described as a "silent killer" because symptoms frequently go unnoticed until serious complications develop.



"India can be called the hypertension capital of the world," Kumar said, adding that more than half of people with hypertension remain unaware of their condition.

He said the problem extends beyond diagnosis, as many patients discontinue treatment after being prescribed medication.

"Among those who start treatment, nearly 50 per cent stop taking medicines, while

almost half of those continuing therapy still fail to achieve adequate blood pressure control," he said.

The result is that only a small fraction of patients are able to maintain blood pressure within recommended levels, increasing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, kidney failure, and other cardiovascular diseases. According to current medical guidelines, normal blood pressure is below 120/80 mmHg, while

readings of 130/80 mmHg or higher are classified as hypertension and require medical attention.

Dr Kumar said lifestyle changes alongside medication were critical in preventing and managing the condition. He recommended the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, which includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and seeds.

He also advised reducing sodium intake to below 2,300 milligrams per day, with greater benefits seen when intake falls to around 1,500 milligrams, while avoiding foods high in saturated fats and added sugars.

"Regular blood pressure monitoring, adherence to prescribed medication, and healthy eating habits are crucial to reducing the growing burden of hypertension in India," Kumar said. (UNI)

Seminar Stresses Women's Central Role in Nation Building and Cultural Preservation

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, MAY 17

Eminent historians, academicians and members of civil society on Saturday underscored the pivotal role of women in preserving Bharat's civilisational ethos and steering the country towards the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 during a national seminar organised at Keshav Bhawan, Amphalla.

The seminar on "Contribution of Women in Viksit Bharat 2047: A Historical Perspective" was organised by the Bhartiya Itihas Sankalan Samiti (BISS), Jammu Kashmir Ladakh Prant, in collaboration with the Centre for Comparative Religion & Civilisation, Central University of Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Dr. Balmukund Pandey said that women have historically acted as the moral and cultural anchors of Indian society. Referring to the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, he said the ideals upheld by women continue to inspire society even today and shape the values of future generations.



Keynote speaker Anuradha Rajhans said that women are playing a decisive role in strengthening the social and ethical foundations necessary for a developed Bharat by 2047. She emphasised that women must continue to assert themselves in diverse fields to contribute effectively towards nation-building.

Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh from the Centre for Comparative Religion & Civilisation, Central University of

Jammu, highlighted the growing contribution of women in sectors such as education, science and public life, stating that government initiatives aimed at women empowerment have produced encouraging results.

Earlier, Prof. Anita Billawaria, in her welcome address, spoke about the rich legacy of women warriors and reformers in Jammu and Kashmir and stressed the need to document their contributions in nationalist

history. During the programme, the nationalist fortnightly The Chancellor was also released. Editor Anuja Khushu said the publication would focus on issues concerning national interest, security and contemporary developments in Jammu and Kashmir following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A.

The seminar concluded with an interactive session and a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Mahesh Kaul.

Fire Breaks Out In Delhi-Bound Rajdhani Express In MP's Ratlam; Rail Traffic Hit

RATLAM/KOTA, MAY 17: A fire broke out on a Rajdhani Express train heading from Thiruvananthapuram to New Delhi in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district on Sunday morning, damaging two coaches and affecting traffic on the Mumbai-Delhi route for several hours, officials said.

While no casualties were reported in the fire, a van carrying repair and other equipment to the site later overturned in the district, injuring five railway staffers, they said.

Schedules of more than 10 trains on the Mumbai-Delhi route were affected due to damage caused to the overhead equipment in the incident. Rail traffic was later restored after more than seven hours, even as an investigation was underway into the cause of the blaze.

The Thiruvananthapuram-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express (train no. 12431) had departed from Ratlam Junction at around 3.45 am.

The blaze erupted at 5.15 am in the B-1 coach of the train between Vikramgarh Alot and Lunirichha stations under the Kota division of the railways and also damaged the luggage-cum-guard



van behind the coach. West Central Railway's Chief Public Relation Officer Harshit Shrivastava told PTI over the phone.

The coach, carrying as many as 68 passengers, was evacuated within 15 minutes, and there were no casualties, officials said.

Railway authorities immediately switched off the overhead electric supply, and the fire was doused.

The affected coach was later detached from the rake, and the train headed for its onward journey at around 9.45 am, Shrivastava said.

Arrangements were made to accommodate the passen-

gers in other coaches for their onward journey up to Kota in Rajasthan, Kota railway PRO Ravindra Lakhara said.

Some trains were halted at different stations following the incident, and the movement was restored after more than seven hours, the officials said.

The fire affected the movement of 13 passenger trains. The repair work of the overhead equipment on the (Delhi-bound) up line, on which the train caught fire, was completed around 1 pm. On the down Delhi-Mumbai line, it was done at 8.30 am," Lakhara said.

Ratlam Divisional Railway Manager Ajay Kumar Kalara was monitoring the situation. A relief train and a tower wagon were sent for rescue and restoration work.

In a related incident, five railway staffers were injured, one of them critically, as a van carrying essential equipment for overhead electric line repair overturned on its way to Alot from Shyamnagar in Ratlam when a cow suddenly strayed into the middle of the road, they said.

The injured persons were rushed to the hospital and were subsequently referred to Kota in Rajasthan, officials said. (Agencies)

MLA, ADC attend public Grievance Redressal Camp at Bhaderwah

BHADERWAH, MAY 17: A Public Grievance Redressal Camp was organized today at Community Hall, Bhaderwah, to provide a platform for direct interaction between the administration and the public, facilitating the prompt redressal of public issues.

The camp was attended by the MLA Bhaderwah, Daleep Singh Parihar and Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bhaderwah, Sunil Kumar Bhutyal. Among others present were the DFO Bhaderwah, Tehsildars of Bhaderwah and Bhalla, SDPO Bhaderwah, Executive Officer of the Municipal Committee Bhaderwah, CDPO Bhaderwah, BMO Bhaderwah, SHO Bhaderwah, officers from the BDA, Assistant Executive Engineers and various district and sectoral officers.

A large number of public representatives and local residents participated in the programme, highlighting demands related to road connectivity, electricity supply, drinking water,



healthcare facilities and other urgent developmental concerns. During the programme, a pledge under the Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan was administered to promote awareness against drug abuse.

MLA Bhaderwah, Daleep Singh Parihar emphasized the importance of sustained public outreach programmes in ensuring people-centric governance. He reiterated his commitment to addressing public concerns and ensuring that the developmental aspirations of the people are fulfilled in a timely manner.

He stressed that coordinated efforts between public representatives and the administration are essential for accelerating developmental works and improving public service delivery. ADC Bhaderwah, Sunil Ku-

mar Bhutyal assured the public that all genuine issues and demands raised during the camp would be taken up with the concerned departments for timely resolution. He emphasized that such grievance redressal camps serve as an effective bridge between the administration and the people, helping identify and address issues at the grassroots level.