

# NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

## Over 93.95 cr Ayushman Bharat accounts created, 5.33L health facilities registered: Health Ministry

**NEW DELHI, JULY 10:** The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) has emerged as one of the world's largest digital health ecosystems, with over 93.95 crore accounts created, 105 crore health records linked, and 5.33 lakh health facilities and 9.85 lakh healthcare professionals registered on the national digital health registries, the Union health ministry said on Friday.

The initiative has also enabled 2.72 lakh healthcare facilities to adopt ABDM-enabled software, generating around 24 crore scan and register tokens for faster OPD registration and facilitating seamless, consent-based exchange of health information across the healthcare sector, according to an official statement.

The observations were made at the third meeting of the Mission Steering Group chaired by Union Health Minister J P Nadda, which reviewed the progress of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and deliberated on the roadmap for further strengthening India's digital health ecosystem.

Addressing the meeting, Nadda underscored the transformative role of digital public infrastructure in im-



proving access to quality healthcare, enhancing continuity of care and empowering citizens through secure and consent-based access to their health records, the statement said.

He emphasised that technology must continue to serve as a powerful enabler for achieving universal health coverage while ensuring inclusiveness, accessibility and ease of use for every citizen. During the meeting, the Mission Steering Group reviewed the progress on the decisions taken during its previous meeting, including capacity-building initiatives, strengthening of state-level implementation mechanisms, integration of digital health platforms across government programmes, en-

hanced participation of private healthcare providers and international collaborations for knowledge exchange in digital health.

The Mission Steering Group appreciated the rapid expansion of ABDM across states and Union territories through initiatives such as Model Districts, Model Facilities and Aarogya Setu 2.0, while strengthening integration with flagship government health programmes, including Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, CGHS, ESIC and Nikshay, the statement said.

The members observed that these initiatives are making healthcare more accessible, interoperable and citizen-centric by enabling secure digital health records, faster service delivery and

seamless access to healthcare services nationwide, it said.

The meeting also deliberated on measures to accelerate adoption of ABDM across the country, including proposals to expand digital health services, improve interoperability, promote adoption of nationally notified digital health standards, strengthen governance mechanisms and enhance citizen convenience through seamless digital access to health services.

Concluding the meeting, Nadda said, "While a robust digital health infrastructure has been created under ABDM, the next phase must focus on maximizing its adoption and utilization across the country."

"Strengthening the health sector is integral to realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, and ABDM will serve as a critical pillar in that journey," he said.

The Minister expressed confidence that through continued collaboration among the Centre, states, Union territories and all stakeholders, India will build a resilient, inclusive and future-ready digital health ecosystem that reflects the vision of 'Viksit Bharat', the statement said.

## NCP (SP) not involved in any merger talks with Congress: Lok Sabha MP Supriya Sule

**PUNE, JULY 10:** Nationalist Congress Party (SP) working president Supriya Sule on Friday dismissed speculation about a merger of her party with the Congress, asserting no proposal had been exchanged between the two sides and they would continue to work together as allies.

The NCP (SP) and the Congress are constituents of the Opposition alliance Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra and the INDIA bloc at the national level.

"The NCP (SP) is not involved in any merger talks. We have neither received any proposal from the Congress nor have we given them any proposal regarding a merger," Sule insisted while talking to reporters here.

The Lok Sabha MP from Baramati in Pune district maintained the NCP (SP) and the Congress shared cordial relations and regularly coordinated on political matters. Political Analysis Reports



"Whenever I come to Delhi, I seek an appointment to meet (Congress MP) Priyanka Gandhi, and we discuss political, social and economic developments in Maharashtra," she said.

Sule stated that she also held regular consultations with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on issues concerning Maharashtra.

"In several Joint Parliamentary Committees, we (NCP-SP and Congress) are working together and often decide our stand on various

issues. I also consult Rahul Gandhi and discuss issues related to Maharashtra," she said.

Referring to the close ties between the two parties, Sule noted Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi attended the wedding of her daughter Revati with businessman Sarang Lakhani last month in Mumbai and blessed the couple.

"As allies, the NCP (SP) and the Congress were together, are together and will

remain together," she asserted.

Veteran politician Sharad Pawar, the father of Sule, co-founded the NCP in 1999 after breaking away from the Congress. The party suffered a split in July 2023 when former Deputy Chief Minister late Ajit Pawar joined hands with the ruling Shiv Sena-BJP in Maharashtra.

The faction led by Ajit Pawar retained the party name and symbol, while the group headed by Sharad Pawar came to be known as the NCP (SP).

Talking to PTI last week, Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan urged chiefs of regional outfits that were formed after breaking away from the Grand Old Party, to return to the parent organisation.

Chavan, a former CM, made the appeal while emphasizing the need to strengthen the Congress to take on its ideological opponents with renewed vigour. (PTI)

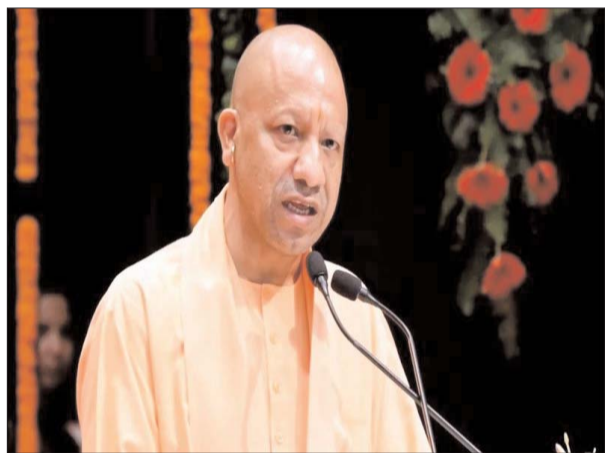
## Akhilesh govt banned Kanwar Yatra while BJP welcomed devotees with flower petals: Adityanath

**BASTI (UP), JULY 10:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday targeted Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, alleging that the previous government imposed restrictions on Hindu traditions, such as the Kanwar Yatra, while the BJP government welcomed kanwariyas with flower petals. Executive Branch

Addressing a gathering in Basti after inaugurating and laying the foundation of 77 development projects worth over Rs 504 crore, Adityanath mocked Yadav, claiming that the SP chief is now "waiting to participate" in the very same Hindu event which his government had allegedly banned.

"When Shiv devotees, the kanwariyas, carry water from Saryu in Ayodhya to Bhadeshwarnath Dham (in Basti) to perform 'jalabhishek' of Lord Shiva, we shower flowers upon them from a helicopter. But the (former) Samajwadi Party government had banned this 'Kanwar Yatra'."

"They used to say that the 'Kanwar Yatra' should not take place. They used to impose restrictions on Durga Puja, disallowed the celebra-



tion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, and banned the 84-Kosi Parikrama. Now, no one can impose such restrictions. No one can stop it now," he said.

Taking a jibe at Yadav, the UP chief minister said, "I feel that, in the near future, the Samajwadi Party president, too, is waiting to wear saffron attire and join you in the Kanwar Yatra. He seems to be hoping for an invitation, so that he can also go and shower flower petals."

He also levelled serious allegations on the Samajwadi Party (SP), saying that whenever the Waqf Board designated a piece of land as a "graveyard", the SP members would displace the poor,

Dalits, and the marginalised people from that land.

"Earlier, land was encroached upon in the name of graveyards, and the poor were harassed. If the Waqf Board declared a plot to be a graveyard or Waqf land, no one dared to object, and the Dalits, the poor, and the marginalised were uprooted. It was these SP people who carried out such work," he said. Hitting out at other opposition parties as well, he said, "This was the very 'contract' held by the SP, BSP, and Congress."

The UP CM said, "The 84-Kosi Parikrama begins at Makhaurhaa Dhaam. You can see the magnificent work being undertaken there. That

is the difference. The Samajwadi Party government used to obstruct the 84-Kosi, 14-Kosi, and Panchkosi Parikramas. Under our 'double-engine' BJP government, these (parikramas) are not stopped."

He added that the double-engine government respects faith and develops grand infrastructure facilities to support it.

"That is why precisely the 84-Kosi Parikrama route is being developed magnificently for the convenience of pilgrims and to serve as a ring road for Ayodhya," he added. Citing examples of various initiatives in the realm of faith, Adityanath said that the renovation of approximately 1,500 temples across Uttar Pradesh has been completed to date.

"The state is the same, and the people are the same. Yet, once the faces in the government changed, results began to appear. Funds that were previously spent on constructing boundary walls for graveyards are now being used for the rejuvenation of sacred sites like the Bhadeshwar Nath temple and the Makhaurhaa Dhaam temple," Adityanath said. (PTI)

## CJP Protest: Wangchuk Says Hunger Has 'Stabilised', Warns Against Any Attempt To Remove Him

**NEW DELHI, JULY 10:** Educator and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Friday said his hunger had "stabilised" as he entered the 13th day of his indefinite fast and asserted that his constitutional right should not be violated by attempting to remove him from the protest site.

He has been fasting in support of the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) agitation at Jantar Mantar, demanding Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation and government accountability over alleged examination irregularities, which entered its 21st day. Executive Branch

"Today is the 13th day (of the fast). I am feeling okay. My hunger has stabilised. The initial days are difficult as the body adjusts to fasting. There is some tiredness, but otherwise I am fine," Wangchuk told reporters.

He said he has lost muscle along with fat during the prolonged fast but continues to feel energetic.

"I have lost muscle along with fat. My bones are beginning to show, but I still feel energetic," he said.

Asked about the possibility of the administration intervening if his health deteriorated, Wangchuk said he was at the protest site voluntarily and there was no reason for the authorities to remove him. <

"I don't know why they



should try to remove me. I am here willingly and there is no threat to my life. If they remove me, it will be a violation of our rights," he said.

"We are holding a peaceful protest. The country and the world are watching the state of our democracy. This is not a favour. It is our right. We have the right to hold a peaceful protest under Article 19, and I hope that right continues to be respected," he added.

Wangchuk said he was continuing the fast in support of students seeking accountability over alleged examination irregularities as well as to press for an early resolution of issues concerning Ladakh.

"I am standing here in support of the students, for accountability in issues related to education. The issue of Ladakh has also progressed through talks, and now it should be brought to a conclusion. The Monsoon Ses-

sion is a very good time to finalise it," he said.

Referring to the student suicides -- allegedly linked to the NEET-UG cancellation in May -- Wangchuk said the protest aimed to ensure that such incidents were not repeated.

"As you know, 20 students have committed suicide. It should not happen that next year the number rises to 40 or 80. We are sitting here to prevent such situations," he said.

He also said accepting Pradhan's resignation before the Monsoon Session would help the government regain the confidence of young people.

"If they accept the education minister's resignation, they may become popular among the youth again. Right now there is a lot of anger among young people, which will harm them politically. They should do it for their own benefit before Par-

liament meets. If they don't, we will do whatever else we have to do," he said.

CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka said Wangchuk has lost about 7.5 kg since beginning the fast and that his blood sugar levels remain consistently low.

"As the days go by, his energy is decreasing. He has considerable weakness while walking and finds it difficult to speak. It is a deteriorating situation. Our medical team is closely monitoring him, and we hope the government will listen to us soon," Ranka said.

Ranka reiterated outfit's demands -- the resignation of Pradhan and Rs 1 crore compensation for the families of students who died by suicide.

He said the government had not initiated any dialogue with the protesters and that the CJP would go ahead with its proposed march to Parliament on July 20 if there was no response.

The CJP protest began on June 20 over alleged examination irregularities.

Wangchuk joined the agitation on June 28 and has remained on an indefinite fast since then. On Thursday, the outfit announced a peaceful march to Parliament on July 20, the opening day of the Monsoon Session, saying students, parents and citizens from across the country would be invited to participate. (AGENCIES)

## First batch of Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra pilgrims reaches Tibet

**PITHORAGARI, JULY 10:** The first batch of pilgrims undertaking the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra entered Tibet from Uttarakhand on Friday morning after crossing the Lipulekh Pass, situated at an altitude of 17,500 feet, officials said.

Officials from the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) -- the nodal agency for the yatra -- stationed at the Dharchula base camp said the 48-member batch crossed the Lipulekh Pass at 9.05 am.

Dhan Singh Bisht, the officer-in-charge of the Dharchula camp, said, "Apart from the 48 pilgrims, the first batch includes a doctor and four support staff members."

The first group initially comprised 49 pilgrims, but one had to return from the Gunji camp due to a personal issue.



Bisht mentioned that the journey of the second batch, comprising 47 members, was slightly delayed due to a

landslide at Lakanpur, beyond Dharchula. However, he said the group would reach Gunji by Friday

evening and, after an overnight halt, resume their journey on Saturday morning. (PTI)

## SC To Hear Pleas Seeking Probe Into Ram Temple Donations Row On July 13

**NEW DELHI, JULY 10:** The Supreme Court would hear a batch of pleas seeking a fair and time-bound probe into the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya on July 13.

On July 7, an Ayodhya court granted one-day police remand for three of the eight accused arrested in connection with the alleged theft of donations at the Ram temple. The court authorised the remand for Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra and Karunesh Pandey.

On June 29, a local court had sent all the eight accused to 14-day judicial custody.

According to the Supreme Court website, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana will hear as many as three petitions filed on the issue when the apex court reopens on

Monday.

Narendra Kumar Goswami, one of the three petitioners, has moved the top court seeking a CBI probe into the incident. He also sought a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit of the finances of the Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Theerth Kshetra Trust, which manages the affairs of the Ram temple.

The second petition has been filed by Ajay Kumar Rai and Dinesh Kumar Yadav seeking similar measures.

Besides seeking an apex court-monitored CBI probe, the third petition, filed by RJD MP Sudhakar Singh, has sought a forensic audit of the entire finances of the temple trust.

Earlier, a partial working day bench headed by Justice B V Nagarathna had asked one of the petitioners to mention the case for urgent

hearing on a later date.

The petition, filed by practising advocates Ajay Kumar Rai and Dinesh Kumar Yadav, said a CBI-led multi-disciplinary special investigation team (SIT) should investigate the alleged financial irregularities and other purported illegalities concerning the affairs and administration of the Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Theerth Kshetra Trust.

Rai, in his petition, has sought directions to the Centre, the Uttar Pradesh government and the Trust for constituting and operationalising such regulatory, supervisory and audit mechanisms as may be necessary to safeguard public interest and maintain the confidence of millions of devotees and donors.

"Whether or not the reports regarding missing funds and other alleged ir-

regularities concerning the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Theerth Kshetra Trust are ultimately found to be true, such reports have caused deep concern among the generations that struggled for the restoration of the glory of Ayodhya," the plea said.

It also said the SIT constituted by the Uttar Pradesh government commenced its inquiry into the matter without the registration of an FIR or any regular criminal case.

The plea said the veracity of reports concerning alleged missing funds and other purported irregularities involving the Trust ought to be independently verified through a professional investigation conducted by a unified agency possessing the requisite expertise, resources and institutional mechanisms for handling complex financial and criminal investigations.