

PM's Response Insufficient, Won't Leave Jantar Mantar Until Pradhan Resigns: CJP

NEW DELHI, JUL 23:

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on action against paper leaks did not address the issue of accountability and reiterated its demand for Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.

Modi, in a post on X on Thursday morning, announced setting up of fast-track courts to ensure swift and stringent punishment for those involved in paper leaks, and said, "nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth".

Reacting to the prime minister's post on X, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke shared an image of Pradhan carrying the caption, "Hi, my name is nothing", while the CJP posted, "Dharmendra Pradhan Must Resign."

CJP national spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka welcomed the prime minister's response but said it came after nearly one-and-a-half months of protests and did not answer the central question behind repeated paper leaks.

"The first thing is that it is good that after one-and-a-half months of protests, the prime minister has finally taken notice. Perhaps his foreign visits are over and he has returned to India, which



is a good thing," Ranka said.

"But what punishment are you imposing after the paper leak has already taken place? That is not going to solve the problem of paper leaks. The real question is why paper leaks are happening in the first place. That question must be answered," he said.

"Applying ointment after an injury is one thing, but the real fight is about preventing the injury from happening in the first place. The injury keeps happening because the people running the system are neither accountable nor competent. Therefore, these measures are not sufficient by any means," he said.

Ranka claimed that public anger over the issue was now increasingly being directed at Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, with more protesters raising slogans against him.

"We will not leave this place until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns," he said.

"...A large number of people are here with passion and determination, and everyone is demanding his resignation. But as the days pass, the issue is no longer confined to Dharmendra Pradhan," Ranka said.

Ranka alleged that the agitation had widened beyond the demand for the education minister's resignation and was now increasingly targeting the Centre's leadership. "The focus is now shifting towards the prime minister. If you listen to the slogans here, you will find that people's anger is increasingly being directed at

him over why he is not listening to them. The government should understand this because people have now started asking questions directly to the Prime Minister," he said. The CJP-led agitation began on June 20 and is demanding accountability over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, reforms in the education system and the resignation of Pradhan.

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who joined the agitation on June 28 and has been on an indefinite hunger strike since then, has offered to end his fast if the Centre assures that no punitive action or FIRs are initiated against peaceful protesters who participated in the movement. (Agencies)

'Fight To Safeguard Democracy' Mehbooba Extends Support To CJP Protesters At Jantar Mantar

NEW DELHI, JUL 23:

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday expressed her support for the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) demonstrating against alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations, and described the agitation as a fight to safeguard the Constitution and democracy.

Addressing the protesters at the Jantar Mantar, Mehbooba praised the youth for enduring harsh weather conditions while demanding justice and transparency in the recruitment process, saying their struggle would discourage corruption, paper leaks and other injustices.

The protesters led by the CJP have been camping at the Jantar Mantar since last month demanding accountability over the NEET paper 'leak' and resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, among others.

Calling it a defining moment for the country's youth, Mehbooba alleged that the nation witnessed increasing incidents of "divide and rule" politics, exam paper leaks, corruption and crimes against women over the past several years.

"This is what we have seen in the country for the last 12 years – divide and rule. Sometimes 'chanda chori' (donations theft), sometimes



paper leaks, sometimes rapes. Even cows are safer than children in our country today," she said.

The PDP chief also criticised the judiciary and the Centre, claiming that the concerns of the protesting students did not receive adequate attention despite their prolonged agitation.

"Our judiciary says 'we don't have time for that'. So, if these people don't stand up today against this brutality, against this injustice, I think our country will become worse than it was in 1947.

"A change has to happen... These people (youth) will bring it. If we need to save the

Constitution, these people will do it," Mehbooba said.

She also said that many parents spend lakhs of their hard-earned money to educate their children, and if the youth do not stand up against injustice today, the country will face serious consequences.

Mehbooba also warned that if the Constitution is not saved today, those at the helm of affairs will turn the rest of the country into an "open jail", drawing a parallel to Jammu and Kashmir.

However, she expressed hope that the protesting youth will not bow down, and said the government

should also refrain from messing with them as they are the "biggest power".

The country witnessed similar protests in the neighbouring countries, Mehbooba said, but made it clear that she does "not want that to happen in our country". She also accused the government of displaying arrogance by failing to respond to the grievances of the protesters, many of whom, she said, have been camping at the protest site in extreme heat for several days.

"The power of the youth is the greatest power. This arrogance will not last long," Mehbooba said. (Agencies)

Heavy rain aggravates Assam's flood situation; govt announces Rs 4 lakh ex gratia

GUWAHATI, JUL 23:

Heavy rainfall battered several districts in Assam on Wednesday, aggravating the flood situation in the state that has affected 5.65 lakh people, with Sivasagar district being the worst-hit.

As many as 21 deaths were reported on Tuesday, according to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA). Sivasagar reported 13 fatalities, Charaideo five, Golaghat two and Jorhat one.

With these deaths, the toll in this year's flood in the state rose to 31. One more has died in urban flooding in Guwahati. Around 70 people are missing.

Aggravating the situation, the India Meteorological Department issued an 'Orange Alert' on Wednesday, asking people to be prepared for calamity, and a 'Yellow Alert' for the next four days as it predicted thunderstorms, lightning and heavy rains at isolated places.

The flood issue rocked the Assam Assembly with the opposition bringing an Ad-



jourment Motion, to which the government said the scale of the natural calamity has caught the administration off guard as these 12 districts had not witnessed such a deluge in over 60 years.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited several flood-affected areas in Upper Assam districts, and announced an initial ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh to the kin of each dead in the deluge.

The flood has caused ex-

tensive damage. I have assured the affected families that they are not alone in this crisis. Our government is standing with them in every step of rehabilitation and rebuilding of livelihoods," he told reporters in Sivasagar.

Over complaints that a large section of people were not receiving relief, Sarma said that there have been difficulties in providing aid in villages which are under water. "We have not been able

to reach many places as there are no roads or any mode of communication. We cannot airdrop food items as it will fall in deep waters. We are waiting for the water to recede and trying our best to reduce the people's difficulties," he added.

After visiting Nazira in Sivasagar, Sarma said the situation is very concerning as at least 50 people are still missing while 18 bodies have been found so far.

Expressing Solidarity With Protesting Students, SC Advocates Recite Constitution's Preamble

NEW DELHI, JUL 23:

Advocates at the Supreme Court on Thursday recited the Constitution's Preamble as part of their "Save Democracy, Save Constitution" campaign in support of the Jantar Mantar protest and opposing the police action on protesters.

Senior advocates Indira Jaising and S Muralidhar led the recitation by the lawyers during the apex court's lunch recess.

President of the Supreme Court Bar Association and senior advocate Vikas Singh was also present there.

Talking to reporters, Jaising said, "We are here to stand with the students. We are here to stand on the side of justice. We are here to demand justice for the students. We are not here to agitate for ourselves. This is not about us."



"This concerns the rights of students, and it is the duty of lawyers to stand before the Supreme Court and demand justice for them.

The role and function of the Supreme Court of India is to dispense justice. That is why we are here, in the tem-

ple of justice, with our demands," she said.

The CJP, an organic movement against paper leaks and alleged irregularities in the examination system that started with a comment from Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, referring to youngsters

as "cockroaches", has been sitting at Jantar Mantar since June 20.

The protest gathered traction as activist Sonam Wangchuk and a group of students from the Left-affiliated AISA started a hunger strike. (Agencies)

PM takes credit for 'going to Mars', must now take responsibility for his actions: Priyanka

NEW DELHI, JULY

23: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday over students' protest, saying he takes credit for "going to Mars", so now it is time for him to take responsibility for his actions.

Speaking with reporters in Parliament House complex, she said the prime minister has posted on social media that he cares for children when just last night he got them "teargassed and beaten up".

"Have you ever seen in the history of our democracy that MPs from the ruling side are standing outside and protesting. Since how many sessions is this going on and they are not able to run this (Parliament session). What is happening outside. He is weak and coward," she said, attacking the prime minister.

Asked about reports of internet being shut down in certain areas of central Delhi, Priyanka Gandhi said, "Are we living in a democracy? Think about it, children are protesting...they have cut the internet, what are they doing? Students are not terrorists. Their parents would be worried, their families would



be worried, they cannot contact anyone. They are putting teargas on them, they are beating them. What kind of democracy is this."

Questioning the media, she said has it asked how the prime minister is posting on social media that he cares for children when last night he has "teargassed the students and beat them up".

"He (PM Modi) takes credit for going to Mars, he takes credit for every achievement which is the achievement of our youth and the achievement of our

people. He takes credit, doesn't he? So now is the time for him to take responsibility for his actions," Priyanka Gandhi asserted.

"It is him who is getting people beaten up. Under his nose, 152 papers have leaked and there have been zero convictions, who is responsible? If Modi ji is responsible for us going to Mars, if Modi ji is responsible for every achievement that an Indian makes, whether it is in the Olympics or in the Asian games, then Modi ji is responsible for what is hap-

pening today," she said.

"Modi ji is responsible for our youth feeling that there is no future, Modi ji is responsible if our children who are demonstrating, he has cut off the internet and he is teargassing them and having them lathi-charged. If something happens to even one of them it is his responsibility," she asserted.

Earlier in the day, Priyanka Gandhi said students have lost faith in the system.

The time has come for the Government to listen to the grievances of the people, Priyanka Gandhi said.

Her remarks came after Modi said on X that nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth.

"We have decided to set up fast-track courts to ensure swift and stringent punishment for those involved in paper leaks. Have directed the concerned authorities and officials to take all necessary steps in this regard," Modi said. This continues our series of steps for safeguarding the interests of students, the prime minister said. "Those who try to harm the future of our youth will not be spared," Modi asserted. (PTI)

PM's fast-track court announcement does not address protesters' key demand: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, JUL 23:

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on setting up fast-track courts for paper leak cases did not address the protesting students' primary demand for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

In a video message on X, Kejriwal said this is not what the students had demanded.

Referring to Modi's remarks made earlier in the day, the former Delhi chief minister said, "This morning, the prime minister announced that fast-track



courts will be established for paper leak cases. What happened to Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation?"

The country already has

fast-track courts for several matters, he said, and questioned their effectiveness.

Kejriwal said Modi did not mention incidents of stu-

dents being injured during the protest march on Monday in his message to the youth.

Earlier in the day, Modi said the welfare of the country's youth is the top priority of his government and asserted that anyone trying to harm their future will not be spared.

His outreach to the youth came three days after thousands of students led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) took part in the 'Sansad Chalo' march against irregularities in the NEET exam and to demand the resignation of Pradhan.