

Union Cabinet clears bill for tougher punishment in paper leak cases

tracting five to 10 years of imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 1 crore. It also empowers authorities to frame norms for examination security, including biometric registration, candidate screening, question paper handling, invigilation and post-examination procedures.

The law identifies 15 offences, including leaking question papers, tampering with OMR sheets, creating fake web-sites, issuing fake admit cards and other forms of examination fraud. It also provides for penalties on service providers involved in unfair practices and recovery of examination costs.

Despite the enactment of the 2024 law, paper leaks have once again become the centre of a political storm after allegations of irregularities in the NEET-UG examination triggered nationwide student protests.

The issue has gained further momentum with the emergence of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a youth-led movement that has expanded its demands beyond paper leaks to seek accountability for examination irregularities and the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Opposition parties have also demanded Pradhan's resignation and sought a discussion in Parliament on the issue, while Parliament has witnessed repeated disruptions over the controversy.

In major crackdown, NTA terminates 47 officials

Higher Education and TK Anil Kumar will be the new School Education Secretary.

Vineet Joshi, who was Higher Education Secretary, has been transferred to the Secretary in the Department of Panchayati Raj.

A Fast Track Court has been set up at Rouse Avenue Court to try offences under the Public Examinations (Prevention of unfair means) Act, 2024 and other related offences at Rouse Avenue. All the related cases will be transferred to the special designated fast-track court.

The judge incharge of the Mediation Centre, Tis Hazari Court, Anu Grover Baliga, has been transferred to Rouse Avenue Court as Special Judge by the Delhi High Court.

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved amendments to the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, amid continuing nationwide protests over the NEET examination paper leak.

The proposed amendment Bill is likely to be taken up for consideration and passage in Parliament on Monday.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda and Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Friday met with representatives of CJPand assured them that the government will respond to their demands related to examinations.

Speaking to reporters after the nearly two-hour-long meeting, Nadda said the CJP delegation had raised three main demands and five suggestions for reforms in the examination process.

"The meeting went on for almost two hours...They had 3 main demands and 5 reform suggestions for exams. We have told them that we will meet them again tomorrow afternoon and tell them about the discussion we had among the Government," he said.

This was the government's second meeting with the CJP delegation.

NH reopens after 3 days

slides and shooting stones, was thrown open to vehicular traffic at about 6 pm. More than 1,000 vehicles were said to be stranded at Ramban, Nagrota, Jammu, Udhampur, Lakhampur and Samba due to the highway closure. Commuters were advised to avoid travel until the road was declared safe.

Govt issues August roster for ministers

tion & social welfare departments, would be here from August 10 to 14.

Javed Ahmad Rana, minister for jal shakti, forest, ecology & environment and tribal affairs departments, would remain available from August 17 to 21, and Javid Ahmad Dar, minister for agriculture production, rural development & panchayati raj, cooperative and election departments, from August 24 to 28.

DGP reviews search operations along faultlines

vailing security situation, reviewed operational strate-

gies, and discussed measures to strengthen anti-terror operations and maintain heightened vigilance across vulnerable areas.

The officers emphasised seamless coordination among all security agencies to ensure effective response and sustained peace in the region

The DGP was accompanied by IGP, Kashmir Zone, VKBirdi, and DIG, Central Kashmir Range, Rajiv Pandey. The review meeting was also attended by the SSP, Budgam, and commanders of the Special Operations Group (SOG).

Rs 15.22 cr approved for augmentation of Kathua Grid Station

liability and stability of the transmission system, reduce overloading, and enhance the overall quality of electricity supply to consumers at Kathua and adjoining areas.

The initiative forms part of the government's sustained efforts to modernise and expand Jammu & Kashmir's power infrastructure, ensuring dependable, efficient, and quality electricity supply while supporting the region's economic growth and development.

Union Minister Ravneet Bittu resigns

ters with immediate effect, an official statement said. The President is at present abroad on a three-nation tour.

Bittu, who had been a part of the Union Council of Ministers since 2024, was likely to focus on forthcoming elections in Punjab next year.

Grandson of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh, he joined BJP in 2024 and unsuccessfully contested Lok Sabha elections.

He was nominated to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan for the remainder of the term of a seat vacated by Congress leader KCVenugopal.

India accuses China of illegally occupying Indian territories in J&K, Ladakh

ment and development."

"China and India are partners, not competitors, and opportunities, not threats, for each other," Wang was quoted as saying in the Chinese statement, which added that institutional mechanisms had gradually restarted, border regions had maintained peace and tranquility, and bilateral trade had reached record levels.

"These achievements have not come easily and should be cherished," the Chinese Foreign Minister noted.

Characterising both nations as key representatives of emerging markets and the Global South, Wang expressed that both sides should "prioritise human well-being, demonstrate their responsibility as major powers, consolidate the positive momentum of bilateral relations, strengthen coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs, and make positive contributions to promoting multipolarity and the democratisation of international relations."

The Chinese foreign ministry readout further stated that Beijing remains willing to collaborate with New Delhi to execute leader-level consensus, maintain regular high-level interactions, broaden trade, media, and cultural links, handle sensitive friction points properly, and "explore a correct way for neighbouring major powers to coexist peacefully, based on mutual respect, mutual trust, common development, and common prosperity."

Sinha visits family of martyred cop

He paid heartfelt tributes to the martyred cop and conveyed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family."The entire nation is proud of the braveheartwhose courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty will remain etched in our collective memory," he said.

"Qureshi's ideals of love for duty and honour for the motherland will continue to inspire generations in building a peaceful and prosperous Union Territory," the LG said and assured the family that the administration stands firmly with them and will ensure their well-being and dignity.

He also assured full support to the family until the martyr's son finishes his studies and becomes eligible for a compassionate government appointment.

On the occasion, he highlighted the significant progress achieved under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in dismantling the terror ecosystem and reaffirmed his resolve to eliminate terrorism from Jammu &Kashmir.

Sinha urged the entire society, especially youth, to draw

strength from the martyr's dedication and devotion to Maa Bharti and remain united in the fight against terrorism.

ED searches 9 locations in J&K, Punjab; freezes Rs 49.9 lakh

kg of heroin.

The Punjab-side network, headed by Satnam Singh and Manjit Singh alias Maan, used forged documents, fake vehicle papers, concealed cavities, multiple vehicles and cash transactions to transport and distribute heroin

Multiple other instances were found relating to transportation of heroin from Srinagar/JSK to Punjab through an organised network headed by Satnam Singh and Manjit Singh alias Maan, wherein transporters were deployed to collect heroin consignments, cumulatively more than 60 kg from Kashmir-side operatives and deliver the same in Punjab for further sale and distribution The Proceeds of Crime so generated via heroin sales were used to fund terror activities.

According to the release, ED investigation revealed banking transactions, including high-value cash deposits in accounts of Manj Singh Maan and cash deposits in the account of Sarabjeet Singh. The searches conducted by ED, particularly in border/LoC-adjointing areas, against the narco-terror funding network, are significant as they target the source-side logistics and local facilitators linked with the cross-border narcotics supply chain.

During the searches, several incriminating documents and bank account records were recovered and seized under the provisions of the PMLA, 2002. Also, several bank accounts cumulatively having an amount of Rs 49.9 lakh approximately have been frozen.

Further investigation was in progress.

Amarnath Yatra likely to resume as weather improves

district and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district. The yatra will conclude on August 28.

Authorities have put in place multi-layered security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and at all transit camps to ensure the safe and smooth movement of the yatra convoys. A multi-tier security setup has been activated in and around the Bhagwati Nagar base camp.

The commencement of the yatra had marked the beginning of the country's one of the most revered spiritual pilgrimages and reflects the coordinated efforts of the administration and all stakeholder departments to facilitate a secure, seamless and memorable pilgrimage experience for every devotee.

Traffic restrictions will remain in force on various stretches of the highway till August 28, with daily advisories and sector-wise cut-off timings to regulate traffic, officials said.

13 killed as falling boulders crush cab in HP

ing the impact, the rear section of the vehicle caught fire, officials said.

Bystanders and Army personnel attempted to extinguish the flames at the spot. Videos of the incident also surfaced, showing the vehicle almost flattened and engulfed in fire.

Rescue operation was launched soon after the incident and the injured were shifted to hospital.

US imposes 10 pct tariff on Indian imports over forced labour concerns

sponded by levying 10 per cent tariffs on all countries that expire on Friday (July 24).

India has contested both the investigations initiated by the USTR and insisted that these issues can be discussed as part of the bilateral trade agreement that is under discussion.

The U.S. is India's second-largest trade partner and the largest destination for exports. In 2025, bilateral goods trade was pegged at nearly \$141 billion, with India's exports pegged at \$87.3 billion, according to commerce department data.

Not holding debate on NEET will send wrong message: Rijiju

Do".

When Gandhi wanted to speak, Jagdambika Pal, who was presiding the House, said he will give him a chance after minister's table parliamentary documents but the House was later adjourned for the day till Monday and the Con-

gress leader couldn't speak.

For the past five days, the House has been witnessing repeated adjournments due to opposition protest over the NEET paper leak issue.

Earlier as the House met for the day, Speaker Om Birla mentioned that the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas is to be observed on Sunday and paid tributes to gallant armed forces personnel.

The opposition members soon started raising slogans demanding Pradhan's resignation and Birla reminded them that he has already assured them of a debate on the issue of paper leaks in accordance with the House rules.

He said the Question Hour is an important part of House proceedings where members can hold the government accountable and urged the opposition not to disrupt proceedings.

The Question Hour has not been completed on any of the five days so far. The Monsoon session ends on August 13.

Shakti Peeths spiritual pillars of India's cultural heritage: Kavinder

eternal force of creation, knowledge, compassion, courage and national consciousness. It represents the spiritual energy that has guided Indian civilisation through the ages," the governor said.

He said the seminar would provide an opportunity to study the concept of Shakti from philosophical, historical, cultural and civilisational perspectives. The historical, archaeological and cultural significance of the Shakti Peeths should be researched in a scientific and authentic manner, he added.

"Our heritage is preserved not only by protecting monuments but also by safeguarding the traditions, knowledge systems and cultural practices associated with them. Modern technology should be harnessed for the digital documentation and preservation of these sacred sites for future generations," he said.

"At a time when the world is increasingly embracing India's knowledge traditions, yoga, Ayurveda and spirituality, the philosophy of Shakti offers a universal message of respect for women, harmony with nature, inner strength and global well-being," he said.

Calling upon young scholars to actively engage in research on Sanskrit literature, Shakti traditions, tantra philosophy and Indian Knowledge Systems, Gupta said the National Education Policy-2020 had created new opportunities to integrate India's ancient wisdom with modern academic research.

"The future of India will be brighter when our youth remain connected to their cultural roots while pursuing excellence in modern education and research," he said.

Expressing confidence in the outcome of the seminar, he said the deliberations and research presented during the four-day event would make a meaningful contribution to the preservation, promotion and global recognition of India's spiritual and cultural heritage.

He congratulated the organisers for hosting such an important seminar and wished it a great success.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included Dantakali Shakti Peeth, Nepal, representative Rajendra Prasad Pokharel, deputy commissioner, Reasi, Kumar Abhishek, Udhampur-Reasi range DIG Shiv Kumar, SMVDU VC(Prof) Pragati Singh,Kashmir,Central Sanskrit University (Shri Maharaja Ranbir Kumar Campus) Director (Prof) Satish Kumar Kapoor, Sangaridevi Sakthi Peedam, Sri Lanka, Vice-Secretary N Thivakaran.

SC bars uploading court proceedings on social media

ceedings on social media.

"As an interim measure, it is directed that there shall be no extraction, modification, dissemination... posting, reposting and uploading of audio-video visual recordings of judicial proceedings on social media or other digital platforms without prior permission of the secretary general of this court or the registrar general of the jurisdictional high courts," the bench said.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for the petitioner, highlighted the misuse of videos of court proceedings on social media and other digital platforms.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta agreed with Singh and said there has to be some regulation.

Javed Rana visits landslide-hit Nandi Chool, consoles bereaved families

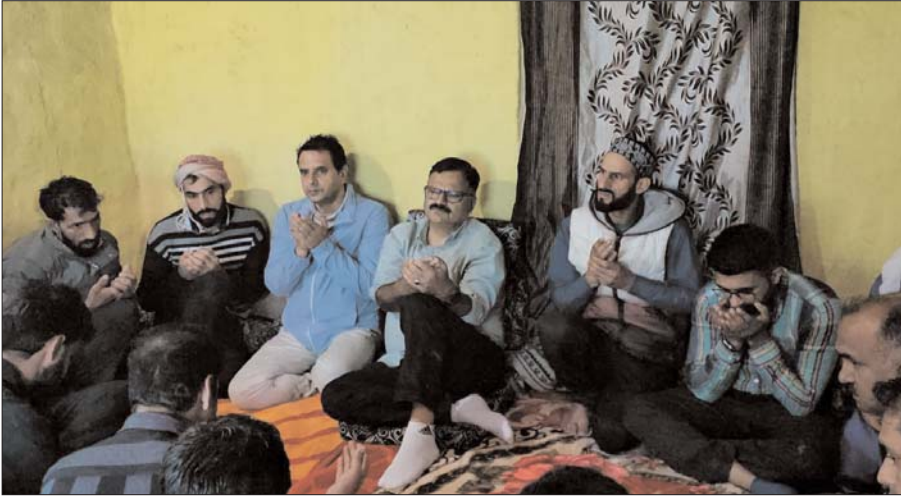
POONCH, JULY 24:

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today visited remote Nandi Chool area of Tehsil Mandi in Poonch district, to meet the families devastated by the recent landslide and flash floods that resulted in the loss of several lives and caused extensive damage.

Amid the grief-stricken surroundings, the Minister met the bereaved families, listened to their accounts of the tragedy and expressed deep sympathy with them. He conveyed his heartfelt condolences, assuring the affected families that the Government stands firmly by them during this difficult time.

Expressing profound grief over the loss of lives, the Minister said the tragedy had deeply saddened the entire district.

"No words can truly lessen the pain of losing a loved one but I want every



bereaved family to know that the Government stands firmly with them in this hour of grief. We are committed to extend all possible support and ensure that every affected family receives the assistance needed to rebuild their lives with dignity," said Minister Rana.

Taking stock of the situation on the ground, the Minister directed the district administration and concerned

departments to ensure immediate relief, proper rehabilitation and timely disbursement of ex-gratia relief to the next of kin of the deceased. He also issued instructions for a thorough assessment of damages and swift restoration of essential services in the affected areas. The Minister further directed the officers of the Jal Shakti, Irrigation & Flood Control and Forest Departments to take immediate

preventive measures in vulnerable areas to avert further loss of life and property during the ongoing monsoon season.

Raiyaz Bashir Naz, former DDC and other prominent citizens accompanied the Minister during his visit. The officers of the Revenue, Rural Development, PWD, Jal Shakti, Irrigation & Flood Control and Forest Departments were also present on the occasion.

SRINAGAR, JULY 24:

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today held a public grievance redress programme at the Civil Secretariat here, where he met scores of public delegations and individuals from across Kashmir and listened to their grievances, demands and developmental concerns.

The delegations, representing Kupwara, Baramulla, Sopore and several other districts of Kashmir Division, projected a wide range of issues pertaining to public infrastructure, rural development, agriculture, civic amenities, employment, social welfare and other matters of public importance.

Giving a patient hearing to each delegation, the Minister reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to responsive,



transparent and people-centric governance. He assured the delegations that all their genuine demands would be examined on merit and addressed in a time-bound manner.

The Minister issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for speedy redress of several grievances. He instructed them to maintain close co-

ordination with the district administrations to ensure swift disposal of public issues. He emphasized that the Government remains steadfast in its resolve to strengthen the public service delivery by addressing the concerns of people at the grassroots level.

Javid Dar said that such public hearing programmes provide an effective plat-

form for understanding the aspirations and difficulties of the people and help the Government formulate timely and result-oriented interventions. He stressed that every effort must be made to ensure that the benefits of government schemes and developmental initiatives reach the deserving sections of society without delay.