

Pradhan Resigns As Education Minister, CJP Says Two More Demands Pending

NEW DELHI, JUL 25: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan stepped down from his post on Saturday, 35 days after a clamour for his resignation over irregularities in the exam system and the NEET paper leak galvanised thousands of students in an unprecedented protest spear-headed by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). As Pradhan said it was not a matter of "individual prestige" for him and cheers broke out at Jantar Mantar, ground zero of the organic protests, the CJP made it clear this would not be the end and the movement that had spread across the country could well continue.

"We have two more demands. We will not go like that. We are cockroaches, once they enters they don't leave," CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said after news came in that the government had relented and the minister had finally resigned.

The CJP's Cockroach is Back X handle posted a "Demands Update", which put a tick against the first in the list – Pradhan's resignation. It marked the two other demands – Rs 1 crore to the families of all students who died by suicide and no action against any of the student protesters with a "PENDING".

Pradhan's resignation came just before CJP representatives met Union ministers Jitendra Singh and J P Nadda for another round of talks to figure out an amicable solution to the impasse. The talks were held at Vithalbhai Patel House near Jantar Mantar, in accordance with the CJP's demand for a neutral venue.

In his detailed note in Hindi announcing his resignation, the minister said he was disturbed to see the series of events that unfolded in the last 10 days.

"I took responsibility of NEET paper leak from day one," he said.

It is his resolve not to let the country's youth get ensnared in a web of confusion, he said.

"Considering the situation at Jantar Mantar and across the country-with the aim of preventing anti-national forces from exploiting it, preserving national unity, ensuring that not a single Indian student's future gets



entangled in legal complexities, and allowing our children to devote their time to studies and focus on building their careers-I have submitted my resignation to prime minister," he said.South Asians & Diaspora

The two-time Education minister, who was faced with a similar controversy in 2024 over alleged NEET and NET paper leaks, added that he respects the aspirations, sentiments, and legitimate expectations of the country's youth.

"I have always held unwavering faith in the strength of our democracy and have deeply respected the aspirations, dreams, and expectations of the youth. They are not merely India's future; they are the torchbearers, creators, and architects of a new and developed India," he said.

The CJP-led protests at Jantar Mantar, demanding Pradhan's accountability over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak and irregularities in the CBSE's on-screen marking process besides seeking wider reforms in the conduct of public examinations, started on June 20.

All roads led to Jantar Mantar it seemed as climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and several students went on a fast unto death and many thousands of people gathered there.

One month later, they took to the streets in response to a "Sansad Chalo" call, only to be pushed back by police batons and teargas. Several police personnel were also injured.

It could well have been the

pivot, the violence, videos of which were circulated widely, infusing fresh life as it were into the protests and sparking similar demonstrations elsewhere in the country.

Marking their moment of triumph at Jantar Mantar, protesters broke out into dance, cheering and waving the tricolour. They were seen hugging each other as songs such as "Chak De India" played in the backdrop

Many held up portraits and posters of Dr B R Ambedkar as the gathering celebrated the minister's resignation, which they described as a victory for their agitation.

Addressing the gathering, Dipke said, "We have b***** done it. Pradhan's resignation is proof that if you don't get scared, you can win..."

"They used to say that this government does not see resignations. We say the world bends if there is someone who can make it bend."

He also had words of thanks for Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, whose comment terming unemployed youth cockroaches sparked the organic movement.

"If you had not called us 'cockroaches', I would not have returned to India. If you had not called us 'cockroaches', the youth of the country would not have come out on the streets. If you had not called us 'cockroaches', Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation would not have happened."

In a post on X, Wangchuk described the development as "a victory of democracy,

direct democracy... straight from the streets".

Wangchuk, who held a 26-day indefinite hunger strike, called it "a victory of peace, patience and perseverance".

"Congratulations CJP, Gen Z of the nation and thank you all citizens for shedding fear and the fear of fear and rising up from every corner of the nation," he said.

"From accountability, now to reforms," he added.

The opposition, which had been seeking Pradhan's resignation, a debate in Parliament and had come out strongly in support of the violence against the students, was quick to respond.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi should apologise to youth. There should be strict action against those who unleashed lathis and pellet guns," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said after the resignation.

He described it as the "victory of truth" and said Modi's stubbornness had been defeated.

"Big win for democracy, congratulations to the entire country," AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal said.

In Karnataka, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday said the Congress will protest till the issues concerning students are addressed and protests are an integral part of democracy.

"They (Centre) are unable to bear the embarrassment. The Prime Minister has finally opened his eyes. We have been demanding a discussion in Parliament that the Union minister should resign," he told reporters. (Agencies)

Special CP, Two Officers Injured In Stone-Pelting At Jantar Mantar After Pradhan's Resignation

NEW DELHI, JUL 25: A special commissioner of police was among three police officers injured after a section of protesters allegedly pelted stones at security personnel at Jantar Mantar shortly after the announcement of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation on Saturday, police sources said.

The incident prompted security forces to lob tear gas and resort to a mild lathicharge to bring the situation under control, sources added.

The violence erupted when a section of the gathering allegedly turned aggressive as senior police officers were overseeing crowd management at the protest site, the sources said.

According to the police source, the special commissioner of police, Anil Shukla of the Special Cell, along with other senior and field officers, was at the forefront of efforts to regulate the crowd and prevent any breach of security arrangements.

As officers moved closer to the protesters to maintain order, some demonstrators raised slogans while another group allegedly began pelting stones without any provocation, said the source.

The special commissioner



sustained injury during the stone-pelting and was immediately evacuated by police teams to a nearby hospital for treatment.

The other police officers also suffered injuries in the incident and were shifted to the hospital. Their condition is said to be stable, he added.

The stone-pelting triggered brief chaos at the protest site, following which security personnel fired tear gas and carried out a mild lathicharge to disperse the violent section of the crowd and prevent further escalation.

Police personnel quickly secured the area and pushed

the protesters back, restoring order within a short span of time, the source said.

"The situation is completely under control now. Adequate police force remains deployed in and around Jantar Mantar to maintain law and order," he added.

The source said senior officers continued to monitor the situation on the ground even after the clashes ended, while additional reinforcements were deployed at strategic locations as a precautionary measure.

Police have launched an investigation into the stone-pelting incident and are ex-

amining available evidence, including video footage from the spot, to identify those responsible for attacking police personnel.

So far, Delhi Police have registered 15 FIRs in different police stations in the New Delhi district. Heavy security arrangements have been made to maintain law and order.

According to the police, over 200 police personnel have sustained injuries so far. Police said during the ongoing protest, over 65 protesters have sustained injuries, and added that legal action is being taken. (Agencies)

Time Has Come To Remove This Govt, 'Daro Mat': Rahul Gandhi After Pradhan's Resignation

NEW DELHI, JUL 25: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday congratulated students and youth over Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation and urged other groups to show courage and stand up, saying it is time to remove the government.

He said two demands are still pending: action against all people who committed "atrocities" against the students protesting against paper leaks and an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the students.

In a video message posted on X after Pradhan's resignation, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha said, "Daro mat (don't be afraid). Let's get rid of this regime that is attacking India, destroying our Constitution, capturing all our institutions."

Pradhan resigned from his post on Saturday following student protests across the country for his ouster over the NEET paper leak issue. Gandhi said his resigna-



tion is a huge step towards rebuilding the education system.

"It's a symbolic step because he was a symbol, but it is still a big step," he said. "I want to congratulate every single student, every single youngster who came out on the streets and fought for democracy, fought for the future of this country and defended the Constitution. I am proud of you. Well done."

The Congress leader also

said Pradhan's resignation is a signal to other communities - farmers, labourers, poor people -- that is being oppressed by the government. "There is wisdom and courage in standing up," Gandhi said.

Gandhi reminded the government that two of their demands were still pending. "The first and most important one - anybody who has raised a finger on our students, beaten them, shot at

them, has to be held accountable; and people who have organised it, people who've implemented it - all have to be punished."

The Congress leader added that the prime minister, "out of respect for the students and out of respect for the future of India", has to apologise to the students who were "brutalised and attacked".

"Well done to students across the country; we are proud of all of you. Heartiest congratulations to every young person, every student who took to the streets and stood firm to protect democracy, the Constitution, and their future," he said.

"For other sections of society -- farmers, labourers, the poor, every person whom this government has suppressed and crushed -- ?true courage lies in standing firm in a constitutional manner for one's dignity... The time has come to remove this government. 'Daro mat', " Gandhi posted. (Agencies)

More health workers strike as Ebola cases in Congo near 3,000, including over 1,300 deaths

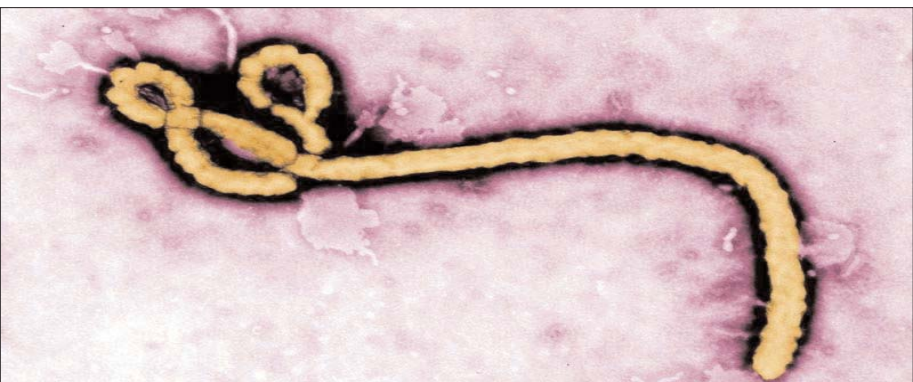
BUNIA (CONGO), JULY 25: Health workers at an Ebola treatment centre in eastern Congo went on strike Saturday over payment issues, disrupting care for patients in the epicenter of the country's rapidly growing outbreak.

The number of confirmed cases of Ebola in Congo has reached 2,973, including 1,309 deaths, according to government data released Friday in what authorities say is the fastest-growing outbreak on record.

Activities at the Elikya Ebola Treatment Center in Bunia, Ituri province, were largely paralysed after doctors, nurses and security staff stopped work.

About a hundred health workers protested outside the treatment centre on Saturday. They said the unpaid bonuses were undermining morale and disrupting patient care, and called on Congolese authorities to settle the arrears so they could resume their work.

In a statement issued Friday, staff said they had unanimously voted to strike from Saturday until "concrete solutions" were found to resolve



"two months of unpaid performance bonuses".

week, health workers at Bunia General Hospital, the region's largest medical centre, went on strike over unpaid salaries. Some had told The Associated Press they have not received any payment since they started work at the onset of the outbreak.

The World Health Organisation says more than 100 healthcare workers have been infected since the beginning of the outbreak.

The Central African nation has been battling the Ebola outbreak caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus since May 15. A total of 766 patients remain in isolation or in hospitals, while 540 have recovered so far, according to data

from Congo's Ministry of Health. The eastern province of Ituri accounts for nearly 90% of confirmed cases.

The outbreak continues to spread faster than health officials can track despite an expanding response.

A key challenge is that health authorities have yet to identify the outbreak's patient zero, while displacement from armed conflict and mining-related movements have made it difficult to trace thousands who have come in contact with infected individuals. The response is being hampered by a funding gap, attacks on health centres, an ongoing conflict in eastern Congo and mistrust among local communities.

Response efforts have also been challenged by the lack of approved vaccines or treatments for the Bundibugyo virus, unlike the more common Zaire virus for which there is a vaccine and which was responsible for most of Congo's past 16 outbreaks of the disease.

Enrollment in a highly anticipated study of two possible Ebola treatments recently started in Ituri.

The WHO says the global risk of the outbreak spreading outside Central Africa is low, noting Ebola spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person rather than through the air, making it much harder to spread than respiratory viruses. (AP)

Students Are India's Future, Modi Is Past; Past Can Never Fight Future: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI, JUL 25: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said that students are the future of India while Narendra Modi is the past, and the past can never fight the future.

Speaking to the media after meeting a group of protesting students at his residence, including a young girl who had injured her leg, Gandhi said their demand for the ouster of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan is non-negotiable, and nothing short of it will be acceptable.

Claiming that he had heard that a section of the Union Cabinet is suggesting moving Pradhan to another ministry, Gandhi said any such move will be of no help.

"The demand of the students is to sack Dharmendra Pradhan, and that is non-negotiable," he said.

"There are three non-negotiable demands (of the



students). Dharmendra Pradhan, who is corrupt, incompetent and misaligned, must be sacked," Gandhi said.

The Congress leader also said that he told the students that no amount of pressure by the Centre can force their removal from the protest site at Jantar Mantar.

the students the future of the country, he said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the past and the "past can never fight the future".

"I told the students not to worry. No amount of strength can move them from there (Jantar Mantar). They can shut down (internet) and intimidate, but the

students will not go away," Gandhi said.

The remarks come amid raging protests in the capital led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), demanding reforms in the examination system and the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak, among others. (Agencies)