

Rahul Sits On Dharna At Police Station, Demands FIR Over Pellet Gun Use During Delhi Protest

NEW DELHI, AUG 21: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday sat on a dharna at the Parliament Street police station here seeking the registration of an FIR over pellet injuries suffered by a youth during the CJP-led July 20 protest and said "brutality" against a peaceful protest is a "serious crime".

The leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said neither Union Home Minister Amit Shah has offered an explanation on the use of pellet guns at the protest, nor has Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologised.

Gandhi, accompanied by the pellet victim, 19-year-old Sahil Lochab, first visited the Mandir Marg police station and sought the registration of the FIR. After his demand was not accepted, he went to the Parliament Street police station and met Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Sachin Sharma.

After the discussion with Sharma failed to yield results, the Congress leader, along with Lochab, sat on a dharna at the police station, which also houses the DCP office.

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other senior party leaders also joined the dharna.

Lochab suffered pellet injuries to the eyes and abdomen during the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led protest against the NEET paper leak and alleged examination irregularities, and



later underwent surgery at the AIIMS Trauma Centre.

In a post on X in Hindi, Gandhi said, "On July 20, the police attacked Sahil, who was peacefully protesting at Jantar Mantar, with a pellet gun. Severely injured by the pellets, Sahil's vision in one eye is now at risk."

"Such brutality against a peaceful protest is not just illegal -- it is a serious crime. Neither has Home Minister Amit Shah offered any explanation to the students for this cruelty, nor has the Prime Minister apologised to them," he said.

Now, when Sahil wants to file an FIR for justice, even that is not being allowed, Gandhi said.

"In this way, the Constitution and constitutional rights are being trampled.

@AmitShah ji, why are you so scared of justice? This fear shows that you are admitting to your crime," the Congress leader said.

He asserted that he will ensure justice for Lochab and every other student victim like him.

"The FIR will be filed. A judicial inquiry will take place. And action will be taken against everyone -- from top to bottom -- who is guilty of this brutality. We will ensure justice for Sahil, and every student victim like him," Gandhi said.

A police source said, "The New Delhi DCP is in touch with Gandhi. As the Crime Branch of the Delhi Police is probing all the complaints, the complaint of Lochab will also be forwarded to the Crime Branch for further investigation."

Sources said that Lochab went to police with his lawyers on August 14 and gave a written complaint, but no FIR was registered.

The matter was pursued again on August 17 through email and phone, but there was no acknowledgement from police.

It was then that Lochab sought Gandhi's help and the Congress leader went with him to demand the registration of an FIR on his complaint, they said.

The DCP, however, did not give details of the case officer or the FIR number, the sources said.

The CJP-led agitation culminated in the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as Union education minister on July 25. (Agencies)

RSS chief to visit US, Canada, UK as part of centenary-year outreach

VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG 21: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat will visit the US, Canada and Britain as part of the Sangh's centenary-year global outreach programme, a senior Sangh functionary said on Friday.

Addressing a press conference after the three-day all India coordination meeting here, RSS Sah Sarkaryawah CR Mukunda said the foreign visit has three main objectives - presenting a factual and positive perspective on India, Hindu society and the RSS, conveying the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and increasing dialogue with mainstream society on the interests and rights of Hindus and people of Indian origin.

He will visit the US, Canada and Britain as part of the Sangh's centenary-year



programme," Mukunda said. He said Bhagwat would participate in the Universal Oneness programme in New York and community leadership programmes in Toronto

and London.

The visit would also seek to address misconceptions and misinformation about India, Hindu society and the RSS prevalent in various parts of the world, Mukunda said.

The RSS chief would convey the message of global unity and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam given by India's sages and seers, he said.

outreach would also focus on dialogue with mainstream society in the three countries on the interests and rights of Hindus and people of Indian origin living around the world, he added. (PTI)

Venugopal Alleges Amit Shah Directed Delhi Police Not To Register FIR Over Student's Pellet Injury

ALAPPUZHA (KERALA), AUG 21: AICC general secretary KC Venugopal on Friday alleged that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has directed the Delhi Police not to register an FIR on a complaint filed by a 19-year-old youth who suffered pellet gun injuries during the NEET paper leak protest in the national capital.

Venugopal, who is also an Alappuzha MP, was responding to questions about Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi staging a dharna outside Parliament Street police station in New Delhi, demanding registration of an FIR over the injuries suffered by Sahil Lochab during a July 20 protest.

Venugopal said Gandhi had accompanied Sahil and his mother to the police station after no case registered on his complaint. He said Sahil had suffered a pellet injury to his eye and was facing the possibility of losing his eyesight.

"The mother and the boy came and gave a complaint, so an FIR must be registered and investigated," he said.

Venugopal alleged that the police's refusal to register a case was based on instructions from Shah. police did not refuse to register the case on their own. We spoke to the police officers over the phone, and it became clear that they had been instructed from above not to register the case. They would not name the person who had issued the instruction, but it is clear that the direction came from Amit Shah," he alleged.

Venugopal questioned the government's action against students and asked why they were being "hunted down".

"Why are these poor students being hunted down like this? We don't understand. Can't this be stopped?" he said.

He also questioned who had ordered the use of pellet guns during the protest. "We have a right to know, and the nation has a responsibility to know, who gave the instruction to use this. No one answered," he said.

Venugopal alleged that Sahil had approached the police station a week earlier



and filed a complaint, but the police had not registered a case.

He said Sahil, his mother and their lawyer subsequently approached Rahul Gandhi, who decided to accompany them to the police station.

"Without getting an answer on this issue, there is no question of Rahul Gandhi leaving from there. There is no question of leaving without an FIR being filed. Let them arrest and send him to jail there if they want," Venugopal said.

Venugopal alleged that the Prime Minister and Home Minister were avoiding questions from students, while the Leader of the Opposition had to protest outside a police station to seek justice for them.

"If a situation has arisen in India where the Leader of the Opposition has to sit in protest at a police station to get justice for students, understand that this is the hallmark of this government. We will leave only after getting an answer," he said. (PTI)

Sibal asks Shah if Modi as CM, Vajpayee as PM sang full version of Vande Mataram

NEW DELHI, AUG 21: Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Friday hit back at Home Minister Amit Shah for his "anti-national" barb at the Congress over its decision to sing only two stanzas of Vande Mataram, asking whether Narendra Modi as the Gujarat chief minister or Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the prime minister sang its full version.

Sibal questioned if the BJP leaders who did not sing the full version of Vande Mataram were also "anti-national".

"Amit Shah on: CWC decision on two-stanza Vande Mataram. Calls it 'anti-national'.



tional'. My question: Did: BJP in private or official functions sing all stanzas since 1950? Modiji as Gujarat CM? PM Vajpayee?" the Independent MP asked in a post on X.

"You anti-national then? Exposing your vote-bank politics!" Sibal said.

The row over Vande Mataram intensified on Thursday with Shah launching a no-holds-barred attack on the Congress, alleging that its decision to sing just two stanzas of the national song was "anti-national" and aimed at appeasing its vote

bank in defiance of the law.

The Congress hit back, with senior leader Jairam Ramesh calling BJP leaders "fraudulent nationalists".

The war of words followed the Congress Working Committee's decision on Wednesday to sing only two stanzas of the national song, instead of its full rendition.

Defending the Congress decision, Ramesh said the 1937 resolution recommending that only the first two stanzas of Vande Mataram be sung at national gatherings represented the considered position of several leading figures of the freedom movement. (PTI)

Student Wellbeing Dips In Senior Grades, Girls Report Greater Anxiety: Study

MUMBAI, AUG 21: Student wellbeing across India plummets from 62 per cent in Grade 8 to 43 per cent in senior grades, as anxiety, low energy, frustration, loneliness, and sadness peak among students in Grades 11 and 12, a study has stated.

Findings from the 'Student Well-being Pulse Report 2026' showed that girls bear a heavier burden of anxiety and low confidence than boys, yet only six per cent of all surveyed students reach out to formal school counsellors for assistance.

According to the study conducted by the IC3 Institute, a global volunteer and member-driven education community, there was a consistent decline in wellbeing, happiness, confidence and motivation as students progressed through school.

The overall wellbeing fell from 62 per cent in Grade 8 to 43 per cent in Grade 12, while happiness declined from 65 per cent to 48 per cent, confidence from 64 per cent to 47 per cent, and motivation from 64 per cent to 49 per cent, the report stated.

The report is based on responses from 8,515 students



across India.

When students seek help, they most commonly turn to friends and family (49 and 44 per cent respectively), and a smaller proportion also reach out to teachers (13 per cent) and school counsellors (6 per cent), while 2 per cent seek support from therapists, it stated.

Notably, 52 per cent of students believe that therapy or counselling would be helpful, indicating openness to structured support when accessible.

As students move through senior school, we see wellbeing, confidence and positive emotions decline, even as academic and career decisions become increasingly consequential. At the same time, many students continue to carry their

concerns on their own," IC3 founder Ganesh Kohli said.

He noted that schools, families, counsellors, universities and the wider education community all have a role to play in creating environments where students can seek guidance early.

The report further revealed that career guidance has emerged as an area where access and need do not fully align. Only 52 per cent of students report receiving structured career counselling in school, while 33 per cent said they feel anxious specifically because of unclear career guidance.

Access varies significantly across states, ranging from 61-62 per cent in states such as Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand to below the national

average in Bihar and Kerala.

Career-related anxiety is particularly high in Bihar, where 43 per cent of students report feeling anxious due to unclear career guidance.

The report also found the broader strain students experience in managing their daily lives, with 55 per cent of students reporting getting six hours or less of sleep a night, with academic pressure, overthinking and screen use among the key factors.

While students relied on accessible coping mechanisms such as music (69 per cent) and physical activity (57 per cent), fewer turned to structured practices such as sleep hygiene or mindfulness.

The report found that girls reported a greater share of the burden, including higher anxiety, frustration and sadness and lower levels of calmness and confidence.

Only 52 per cent of girls reported feeling confident often or always, compared with 64 per cent of boys, while career-related anxiety is reported by 35 per cent of girls compared with 31 per cent of boys, added the report. (AGENCIES)

Tight Security At Chandigarh-Mohali Border Points As Qaumi Insaf Morcha's Punjab Bandh Kicks In



CHANDIGARH, AUG 21: Shops and markets remained shut at some places in Punjab on Friday morning while security was tightened at the Chandigarh-Mohali border points in the wake of a 'Punjab Bandh' call given by the Qaumi Insaf Morcha to press for the release of 'Bandi Singhs' (Sikh prisoners).

The call for the bandh has been given from 7 am to 2 pm.

Heavy police deployment has been made at many places in the state, including Amritsar, Ludhiana and Jalandhar, to maintain law and order. Chandigarh Police personnel, including the Rapid Action Force (RAF), have been deputed along the barricades put up at the Mohali-Chandigarh border points.

Supporters of the Qaumi

Insaf Morcha parked their vehicles at several places, including Mohali and Patiala, to create blockades, causing inconvenience to the commuters. Shops at several places, including Sangrur and Mohali, remained shut. However, medical shops remained open.

A federation of private schools has already announced a school holiday on Friday in the wake of the bandh call, while the Panjab University has rescheduled exams scheduled for the day.

Morcha leaders have sought support from every section of society, including traders, shopkeepers, commercial establishments, transporters and educational institutions, to make the bandh a success.

However, essential services such as medical emer-

gencies, travel to airports, exams and wedding ceremonies have been allowed, the Morcha leaders said.

Several organisations, including the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Shiromani Akali Dal (Punjab Surjit General) and Shiromani Akali Dal Waris Punjab De have extended their support to the bandh call. Farmers' bodies like Bharti Kisan Union (Rajewal) have also come out in support of the shutdown, while Kisan Mazdoor Morcha leader Sarwan Singh Pandher has urged people to make it a success.

The Morcha has been demanding parole for Jagtar Singh Hawara, who is serving a life sentence for the assassination of then Punjab chief minister Beant Singh in 1995.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has already met Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, favouring a 10-day parole for Hawara so that he could meet his ailing mother.

Besides Hawara, the Morcha has been demanding the release of other 'Bandi Singhs', including Balwant Singh Rajoana and Devinderpal Singh Bhullar.

Rajoana is a convict in the 1995 assassination of Beant Singh, while Bhullar is serving a sentence in connection with a 1993 bomb blast case in Delhi.

The Qaumi Insaaf Morcha has been holding a prolonged protest at Sector 52-53 in Chandigarh and the adjacent YPS Chowk in Mohali since January 7, 2023, as part of its campaign for the release of Sikh prisoners. (Agencies)