

BJP leader Ashok Chavan praises Pradhan; hails Centre for prompt action to tackle paper leaks

NANDED: BJP leader and former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan hailed Dharmendra Pradhan, who resigned as Union education minister on Saturday, for his “long and enduring association” with student movements and asserted few leaders had remained as closely connected with the aspirations and concerns of young people.

He also said the Union government acted promptly and responsibly in addressing alleged irregularities in the NEET examination.

The Centre remains committed to safeguarding the future of students and ensuring transparency in the examination system, he said at a press conference here.

In a post on X, Chavan said Pradhan’s tenure as education minister reflected a commitment to strengthening India’s education ecosystem and preparing it for the future.

“Whether one agreed with every decision or not, there can be little doubt that he approached the responsibility with conviction, energy and a clear sense of purpose,”



Chavan said hailing Pradhan.

The Rajya Sabha MP said leadership in the education sector was rarely easy as it involved balancing competing expectations while keeping the interests of millions of students at the centre.

“Shri Dharmendra Pradhan embraced that responsibility with dedication and perseverance,” Chavan said.

Pradhan leaves behind an important conversation on the future

of education in India, which would continue to evolve in the years ahead, Chavan said while thanking him for his years of service and commitment to students and education, and for his contribution to nation-building.

“The Central government took responsibility from day one and acted decisively to uphold the integrity of national competitive examinations,” Chavan said.

The government will not allow

the country’s youth to be misled and is firmly committed to maintaining complete transparency in the examination process, the Rajya Sabha MP added.

The Modi government has approved stringent legal provisions to curb examination malpractices, including punishment of up to 10 years’ imprisonment and fines of up to Rs 10 crore for those found guilty, he said.

Such a legislation and Pradhan’s resignation will help restore the confidence of students and parents and bring the controversy to a close, Chavan said at the press conference.

He also said this (resignation) was not about anyone’s victory or defeat.

These decisions have been taken solely in the interest of the nation and its youth, Chavan asserted.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Ambadas Danve, in a post on X, said Pradhan’s resignation is a win for those students who stood firmly for 20-25 days with their demands through an agitation.

CM says probe into TMC’s Sebaashray ‘scam’ underway; dubs Abhishek ‘fraudster nephew’

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Suven-du Adhikari on Saturday termed TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee’s health-care outreach initiative ‘Sebaashray’ a “massive scam” and the Lok Sabha MP a “fraudster” while asserting that “once in jail, he would not be out soon”.

The Diamond Harbour MP, who is the nephew of TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, unveiled the initiative, offering free consultations, diagnostic tests and medicines, in January 2025 when the Trinamool Congress was in power in the state.

Multiple FIRs have been filed against him over alleged irregularities in health camps, including a woman complaining she lost her leg and a three-year-old girl her arm due to “botched” treatments.

In a detailed statement in the Assembly a day after BJP MLA Debangsu Panda raised the issue, the chief minister alleged the camps illegally used government infrastructure and were



marred by medical negligence and serious regulatory violations.

During his address in the Assembly over the issue, Adhikari repeatedly referred to Abhishek Banerjee as the “fraudster nephew”.

“A major scam has come to light involving the fraudster nephew’s Sebaashray camps. Several complaints have been lodged... the fraudster nephew and his associates who committed irregularities in these medical camps will not be spared.

“We are being meticulous, collecting every piece of evidence and proceeding

under the BNS. Action will be taken at the appropriate time. No guilty person will be spared,” he said.

Displaying photographs in the House, Adhikari claimed that several patients had suffered permanent disabilities after undergoing treatment at the camps.

“Look at this child whose hand is gone. Look at another child who has been crippled. Look at this woman who has lost her leg,” he said, alleging that the injuries resulted from illegal and negligent medical procedures.

Adhikari said, “This is a case of murder. No one will be able to save the fraudster nephew. Once he goes in, he will not be able to come out.”

The government was building a strong criminal case on the matter, Adhikari said the CID, the Special Task Force, district police and medical experts were jointly conducting an extensive probe, the chief minister told the Assembly.



Pradhan put nation above self: Fadnavis

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday praised Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for stepping down from his post, saying the BJP leader placed national interest above personal considerations.

In a statement, Fadnavis credited Pradhan with leading key reforms in the education sector, including the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), the launch of PM SHRI Schools, expansion of ITTs abroad and conducting national entrance examinations in 19 languages.

“Shri Dharmendra Pradhan ji has undertaken several important reforms in the country’s education sector. He played a pivotal role in implementing the National Education Policy,” Fadnavis said.

Referring to Pradhan’s resignation, which came after the nationwide protests spearheaded by the Cockroach Janta Party over the NEET paper leak scandal, the chief minister said it reflected his commitment to the larger good of society.

“By submitting his resignation today, he has once again demonstrated that for a BJP worker, the nation always comes first. He placed the nation’s interest above personal gain, which is the hallmark of a true BJP karyakarta (volunteer),” Fadnavis said.

“The entire BJP family stands firmly with him,” he added.

All 18 Metro stations reopen after four days as CJP withdraws protest



NEW DELHI: All 18 Delhi Metro stations in central Delhi, which had remained shut due to security reasons, reopened on Saturday after the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) withdrew its protest, ending four days of restrictions. In a post on X, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) announced that all metro stations were now open and normal entry and exit had resumed.

The stations reopened after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned, after which the CJP announced the withdrawal of its protest and demonstrations began dispersing from the Jantar Mantar area.

The stations that had remained closed over the past four days were Lok Kalyan Marg, Rajiv Chowk, Patel Chowk, Ramakrishna Ashram Marg, Barakhambha Road, Supreme Court, Seva Teerth, Janpath, Man-di House, Central Secretariat, ITO, Delhi Gate, Indraprastha, Khan Market, Jor Bagh, Shivaji Stadium, Jhandewalan and New Delhi.

The stations had been shut due to security arrangements in central Delhi amid the CJP protest, which drew large gatherings near Jantar Mantar over the past few days.

The CJP has led a sit-in at Jantar Mantar since June 20, demanding 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.

Facing spiralling protests for his ouster over the NEET issue, Pradhan resigned on Saturday, saying it is not a matter of “individual prestige” for him and he wanted to prevent anti-national forces from exploiting the situation at Jantar Mantar and across the country.

35 deaths reported in 2 days, say officials; post-flood restoration work gathers speed

AHMEDABAD: Thirty-five rain-related deaths have been reported in Gujarat in the past two days, officials said on Saturday even as the downpour in the state eased, prompting authorities to speed up work on damage assessment surveys and post-flood cleanliness.

Twenty-nine of these deaths have taken place in Valsad and Navsari, two of the worst affected districts, with over 7,000 persons rescued in the last few days, they added.

As flood waters began receding, authorities started work on surveying damage to crops, houses and public properties as well as cleaning and spraying of pesticides to prevent spread of water-borne diseases, officials pointed out.

“A total of 35 rain-related deaths have been reported so far

in the state in the last two days as bodies washed away in flood waters were recovered and missing persons were accounted for after the rain stopped and rescue operations concluded,” Relief Commissioner Gaurang Makwana said.

He said most of the deaths occurred due to drowning and being swept away by strong currents. More than 7,000 people were rescued, with the highest numbers coming from Navsari and Surat.

Around 42,000 people were relocated, he said, adding that rescue operations were now drawing to a close.

As many as 18 teams of NDRF and 32 teams of the state’s SDRF were deployed in different affected districts for rescue and relief operations along with teams of Indian Army, Coast Guard and local swimmers.

Pradhan’s resignation victory of students’ struggle, marks end of BJP’s arrogance: Jitu

BHOPAL: Madhya Pradesh Congress on Saturday termed Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation a historic victory for crores of students, parents and youth, claiming it marked the beginning of the end of the BJP government’s “arrogance”.

Pradhan resigned from his post earlier in the day following protests by students across the country over irregularities in the exam system and the NEET paper leak.

In a statement, the party’s MP president Jitu Patwari claimed that the BJP government’s “stubbornness, arrogance and authoritarian attitude” had finally given way to public pressure.

He claimed that 21 students had died, more than 152 examination paper leaks had taken place during the BJP’s tenure, 7.5 crore students and their families had been affected, and over 50 examinations had been cancelled.

Patwari accused the ruling party of repeatedly jeopardising the future of the youth.

Drawing a parallel with farmers’ agitation a few years ago, Patwari said just as the Narendra Modi government had been forced to retreat during that movement, it had now bowed to the democratic struggle and anger of students.

He credited Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for consistently raising students’ concerns “from Parliament to the streets” and demanding accountability over alleged irregularities in the education system. Patwari alleged that several cases of paper leaks and corruption in the education sector had links with the BJP and its associates, accusing the government of protecting the guilty instead of taking strict action. The Congress leader said Pradhan’s resignation was “only the beginning” and asserted that the Congress would continue its fight until transparency was ensured in the education system, strict action was taken against the paper leak mafia and their alleged political patrons, and justice was delivered to affected students.

UP oppn parties hail Pradhan’s exit, say it’s victory of children who stood their ground

LUCKNOW: Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh termed the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday a “victory of children who fought on the streets” and the result of a “revolution”.

State Congress president Ajay Rai credited the victory to “lakhs of hardworking students who stood their ground on the streets” as well as Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, “who strongly raised the matter at the national level”.

“Undoubtedly, this is our victory, a victory of our leader Rahul Gandhi, who strongly raised this matter at the national level. Unlike others who left the field, Rahul Gandhi remained firm and stood with the protesting students,” Rai told PTI videos.

He pointed out that on Friday, the youth who sustained pellet injuries in police action against protesters during the July 20 Parliament march was

introduced to the entire nation by Gandhi.

“This is definitely a victory of the children who were fighting on the streets. Even the common man wanted Dharmendra Pradhan to resign. We demand that a probe be initiated and action taken against him (Pradhan),” Rai said.

In an X post in Hindi, the state Congress chief said, “The BJP government, which tried to suppress the truth through the use of batons, tear gas and police repression, has finally been forced to bow before the resolve of the youth!”

“This victory belongs to lakhs of hardworking students across the country who stood their ground on the streets, day and night, for the sake of their future. Our leader Rahul Gandhi and every Congress worker stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the youth and will continue to do so,” Rai said in the post.

He added that the demand is now clear: There must be

a thorough investigation into the entire system, and no one found guilty of jeopardising the future of the youth should be spared.

Reacting to the news of Pradhan’s resignation, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav told reporters in Azamgarh, “This has come about because of the revolution.”

“The opposition had sought that the demands of the students and youth be met, foremost among them being the resignation of the minister (Pradhan),” Yadav said.

He said the students and youth deserve great congratulations for this.

“Ultimately, the Bharatiya Janata Party -- the world’s largest party -- has been forced to yield as the youth movement spread. This is a major victory for the youth,” the Samajwadi Party chief added.

Congress MP from Amethi, Kishori Lal Sharma, remarked that the resignation should have come much earlier.

Five dead as car falls into reservoir in Rajgarh district

RAJGARH: Five men were killed after their speeding car veered off the road and plunged into a reservoir in Madhya Pradesh’s Rajgarh district on Saturday, police said.

The accident took place near Bhilkhedhi junction under the Khujner police station limits, about 30 km from here.

The car was travelling from Pachore towards Khujner when the driver lost control and the vehicle fell into the roadside Bhilkhedhi dam, Station House Officer Ravi Thakur told PTI over phone.

The deceased were identified as Govind Tiwari (55), Kamal Tiwari (57), Shankar Lal (57), Rohit Khatri (25) and Arvind Khatri (30), all residents of Shajapur district, the officer said.

Police, assisted by local residents and the administration, pulled out the submerged car. All five occupants were found dead inside, Thakur said.

The bodies were sent to the Khujner hospital for post-mortem examination.

First phase of SIR completed, draft electoral roll on July 31

CHANDIGARH: The draft electoral roll will be published on July 31 as the first phase of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) has been completed in Haryana.

Haryana Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) A Sreenivas said here on Saturday that 20,629 Booth Level Officers (BLOs) distributed enumeration forms to more than 2.06 crore electors, out of which about 1.72 crore enumeration forms have been digitised.

However, the names of over 33.84 lakh could not be recorded. Of these, nearly 13.75 lakh had permanently shifted, 7.66 lakh were found to have passed away, 2.04 lakh were already registered as electors, 9.36 lakh were found absent, while nearly 1 lakh electors did not submit their enumeration forms due to other reasons.

Sreenivas said the draft electoral roll will be published on July 31 and will be made available on the official website and at all designated publication centres.

He said that claims and objections may be filed from July 31 to August 30. If the name of any elector does not appear in the draft electoral roll, he or she may submit Form 6 to



get the name included again. The name will be included in the final electoral roll.

The Haryana CEO also clarified that the name of any elector will not be deleted without giving an opportunity of hearing.

If an elector is aggrieved by the decision of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), an appeal may be filed before the district magistrate within 15 days. If the grievance still persists, a further appeal may be filed before the Chief Electoral Officer within 30 days.

The final electoral roll will be published on October 3. Along with the period for fil-

ing claims and objections, the notice phase and disposal of objections will continue up to September 28.

During the notice phase, BLOs will issue notices to those electors whose particulars could not be matched with the electoral roll prepared during the previous SIR or where any discrepancy has been found in mapping.

He said that eligible persons may apply for inclusion of their names in the electoral roll through Form 6. Young citizens who attained 18 years of age on or before July 1, 2026, have also been provided the facility to enrol themselves as electors by submitting Form 6.

Those whose names have been left out of the electoral roll or who could not submit their enumeration forms may also submit Form 6.

He said that electors whose names are already included in the electoral roll may submit Form 7 for deletion of their names. Form 8 may be used by electors to make corrections in their Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) or to rectify any error in the electoral roll. This facility will also be available online.