

Pralhad Joshi takes over as Edu Minister

NEW DELHI: Newly ap-
pointed Union education
minister Pralhad Joshi has
taken charge, officials said on
Sunday.

Joshi was appointed edu-
cation minister after Dhar-
mendra Pradhan resigned
from the post on Saturday.

Joshi has been given ad-
ditional charge of the educa-
tion ministry besides his role
as the consumer affairs min-
ister.

Pradhan resigned from
his post on Saturday follow-
ing the Cockroach Janta
Party-led student protests
across the country, demand-
ing his ouster over the NEET
paper leak controversy.

In his resignation letter,
Pradhan said it was not a
matter of "individual pres-
tige" for him, and that he was
disturbed to see the series of
events that unfolded over the
last 10 days.

Joshi has been given ad-
ditional charge of the Educa-
tion Ministry besides his role
as Consumer Affairs Minis-
ter. "I have just got to know
that the Prime ► P11

PM announces Task Force on exam reforms India reaches new milestone in Defence Production: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Min-
ister Narendra Modi on
Sunday announced consti-
tution of a high-powered
task force, headed by Infosys
co-founder Nandan
Nilekani, on reforms to be
carried out for the examina-
tions conducted by the NTA.

The task force will give
suggestions on maximum
use of technology for setting
up a robust and transparent
examination system, he said
in a video message posted on
his Instagram handle.

A multidisciplinary
group of domain experts will
be part of the task force.

Besides Nilekani, its
other members are former
chairman of ISRO S So-
manath, former director of
Intelligence Bureau Tapan
Deka, director of IIT Chen-
nai V Kamakoti, former edu-
cation secretary Anita Kar-



wal and logistics expert Am-
rit Lal Meena.

The prime minister's an-
nouncement came a day af-
ter the 36-day agitation, led
by the Cockroach Janta
Party (CJP), ended with the
resignation of Dharmendra
Pradhan as the Education

Minister.

"A high-powered task
force on examination re-
forms under the leadership
of Nandan Nilekani consti-
tuted," Modi said.

The prime minister said
the government will work on
suggestions of the task force

to establish a foolproof ex-
amination system.

It will help revamp the
NTA examinations espe-
cially technology perspective
and for structural reforms in
the system, he said.

Earlier, PM Modi today
asserted that India is contin-
uously scaling new heights
in defence production, mili-
tary exports, and also in the
field of political cooperation
with friendly nations.

Addressing his monthly
ration broadcast 'Mann Ki
Baat', he also paid tributes
to those who sacrificed their
lives during the Kargil war in
1999.

Referring to the 'Kargil
Vijay Diwas', the prime min-
ister said there are certain
days in people's lives that do
not require a calendar to be
remembered.

"Today, the 26th ► P11

Deterrence Without Reform: Why Exam Fraud Law must go beyond punishment?



Shivang Satya Gupta
Editor-in-Chief

India's examination sys-
tem is not merely an aca-
demic process—it is the
foundation upon which
millions of young Indians
build their aspirations.
Every competitive examina-
tion represents years of sac-
rifice by students and their
families, and every paper
leak strikes at the very heart of
meritocracy.

Over the past decade, In-
dia has witnessed an alarm-
ing rise in examination
fraud. Recruitment tests,
university entrance exami-
nations, and professional ad-
mission tests have repeat-
edly been compromised by
organised criminal syndi-
cates. Since 2015, at least fif-
teen major examination
leaks have disrupted recruit-
ment and admission cycles
across several states, collec-
tively affecting an estimated
1.5 crore candidates.

The NEET-UG 2024
controversy exposed the
magnitude of the challenge.
An examination involving
nearly 24 lakh registered
candidates became the sub-
ject of national debate, judi-
cial scrutiny, and an exten-
sive investigation. Admini-
strative machinery re-
mained occupied for
months, while students were
left in uncertainty about
their future.

Recognising that con-
ventional criminal provi-
sions were insufficient, Par-

liament enacted the Public
Examinations (Prevention of
Unfair Means) Act, 2024.
For the first time, examina-
tion fraud was treated not
merely as cheating against
an individual but as a direct
assault on the integrity of
public institutions.

The question, however,
is not whether the law is
tough but the real question is
whether toughness alone
can prevent the next leak.

The 2024 legisla-
tion marks a significant shift in
legislative thinking. Unlike
ordinary cheating provisions
under the Bharatiya Nyaya
Sanhita (BNS), the new law
specifically targets organised
examination fraud.

Individuals or coaching
centres involved in unfair
means face imprisonment
ranging from three to five
years and fines up to ₹10
lakh.

Where organised syndi-
cates, insiders, or criminal
networks are involved, pun-
ishment increases dramati-
cally to imprisonment of five
to ten years, accompanied by
a mandatory minimum fine
of ₹1 crore and provisions for
attachment or forfeiture of
illegally earned assets.

This legislative frame-
work clearly signals Parlia-
ment's intent to classify ex-
amination fraud alongside
serious organised economic
crimes rather than treating it
as routine academic miscon-
duct.

Critics often focus exclu-
sively on the length of im-
prisonment. That criticism
ignores the unprecedented
scale of damage caused by a
single paper leak. Unlike or-
dinary fraud, examination
leaks do not produce one vic-
tim. They affect an entire
generation appearing in that
examination.

Lakhs of honest students
suffer psychological distress,
lose valuable academic time,
incur additional financial ex-
penses, and often face delays
in admissions or recruit-
ment. Governments spend

enormous public resources
conducting investigations,
litigation, and, where neces-
sary, re-examinations. The
financial structure of organ-
ised leak syndicates also ex-
plains why Parliament chose
such stringent penalties.

Investigations into sev-
eral examination scams have
revealed criminal networks
charging extraordinarily
high sums from candidates.
In such circumstances, a to-
ken monetary penalty would
merely become another
operational expense.

A mandatory ₹1 crore
fine, combined with asset
forfeiture, seeks to destroy
the economic viability of or-
ganised paper-leak syndi-
cates.

Viewed through this
lens, the punishment ap-
pears proportionate to the
scale of institutional dam-
age. Where the legisla-
tion becomes less convincing is in
what it does not address.

No examination paper
leaks because a criminal
merely wishes to leak it.
Every leak first requires an
institutional vulnerability.
That vulnerability may arise
during paper printing, trans-
portation, storage, digital
transmission, server access,
insider collusion, or exami-
nation-centre management.

The present law focuses
almost entirely on punishing
those who exploit these
weaknesses. It pays compar-
atively little attention to
eliminating the weaknesses
themselves.

There is no compre-
hensive statutory framework
mandating encrypted ques-
tion-paper architecture,
end-to-end digital chain-of-
custody, tamper-proof audit
systems, compulsory cyber-
security certification, bio-
metric access controls, or in-
dependent security audits
before every national exami-
nation.

Without these preven-
tive safeguards, the law
raises the cost of getting
caught but does ► P11

27th Kargil Vijay Diwas Def Minister lays wreath at War Memorial in Ladakh ‘Op Sindoor’ showed India’s resolve; talks with Pak only on POJK: Rajnath

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

DRAS: Defence Minister Ra-
jnath Singh on Sunday
slammed Pakistan for mak-
ing terrorism a "part of its
state policy" and said there
will be no talks with the coun-
try other than on Pakistan-
Occupied-Kashmir, which is
a "part of India illegally occu-
pied" by it.

In his address at the
Kargil War Memorial here,
the defence minister also said
that Operation Sindoor
clearly demonstrated ► P11



Prez, PM pay ‘tributes’ to bravehearts

NEW DELHI: On
Kargil Vijay Diwas, Presi-
dent Droupadi Murmu
on Sunday paid tribute to
the valiant warriors who
laid down their lives for
the protection of the
motherland, and said the
nation shall forever re-
main indebted ► P11

Marriage brings discipline, instils Dharma: Bhagwat

HYDERABAD: RSS
Chief Mohan Bhagwat on
Sunday said marriage is a
discipline which instils
dharma, while the reality
of live-in relationships
can be seen all over the
world.

Speaking at an event
on 'contemporary moth-
erhood' organised by
Vishwa Mangalya Sabha
here, he also said Gen Z is
imitative, emotional and
does not think with a
calm mind, and what
comes across to them as
genuine appeals.

"Marriage is a disci-
pline which instils
dharma. Its ► P11

Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra surpasses 4-Lakh mark

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The ongoing Shri
Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026
achieved a significant mil-
estone on Sunday as total pil-
grim turnout surpassed the
four-lakh mark.

In a post on X, the Lieut-
enant Governor has wrote:
"By Lord Shiva's divine grace,
the holy Shri Amarnath Ji Ya-
tra has crossed a remarkable
milestone and more than 4
Lakh pilgrims have already
completed the sacred journey.
Till now, 4.14 Lakh devotees
have received Darshan. I bow
with reverence to Baba Amar-
nath for this blessing and ex-
tend my heartfelt thanks to
everyone who helped make

this journey a truly divine
experience for all."

Earlier, a fresh batch of
4,474 pilgrims left the base
camp here early on Sunday for
the annual Shri Amarnath Ji
Yatra in the Kashmir Valley
after clearance of a major
landslide along the Jammu-
Srinagar national highway, of-
ficials said.

The 19th batch of pilgrims
left the base camp in a convoy
of 166 vehicles under tight se-
curity for Baltal base camp in
Ganderbal district at 2.40 am,
the officials said.

There was no pilgrim
movement from Jammu to
Pahalgam base camp in
Anantnag district due to on-
going repair works ► P11

LG attends Harbah Festival at Anantnag Real devotion lies in service to humanity, selfless love, and ‘mutual respect’: Sinha

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant
Governor Manoj Sinha on
Sunday attended the sacred
Harbah festival at Anant-
nag and paid obeisance to
Mata Sidh Lakshmi. He
also extended greetings to
all the devotees who partici-
pated in the annual
Hawan.

Speaking on the occa-
sion, the Lieutenant Gov-
ernor said the Harbah festival
is a profound moment of
devotion, gratitude, and in-
ner experience. He empha-
sized that Teerathraj Lok



Bhawan at Anantnag, with
its tranquil and divine sur-
roundings, stands as a liv-
ing symbol of India's eter-

nal spiritual tradition.
"Every stone, every
stream, and every breath
here conveys the immortal

consciousness of our
sanatan culture and spiri-
tual heritage which has
guided humanity for cen-
turies along the path of
truth, compassion, and
dharma," he said.

Highlighting the his-
torical significance of the
sacred temple, he recalled
its ancient name
Lokpunya as mentioned in
Kalhana's Rajatarangini.
The Lieutenant Governor
noted that the annual
Hawan and flag hoisting
are rekindling the flame of
devotion, service, sacri-
fice, patience ► P11

Shah: Students are more important than any post

NEW DELHI: Union Home
Minister Amit Shah has
said that the country, youth and
students are far more important
than any position for BJP work-
ers and the resignation of
Union Education Minister
Dharmendra Pradhan exem-
plifies this principle.

His remarks came after
Pradhan resigned on Saturday
amid mounting pressure due to
the protests over the NEET pa-
per leak controversy.

"The Modi government re-
spects the sentiments of the
country's youth and is com-
mitted to implementing the nec-
essary reforms against paper
leaks," he said in a post on X
late Saturday night.

"For the BJP, the nation,



our youth and students hold far
greater importance than any
position," he said.

The decisions taken by
Prime Minister Narendra Modi
to ensure strict punishment for
those guilty of paper leaks are
commendable, Shah said.

"I am fully confident that
these steps will ensure com-
plete justice for the students
who succeeded in the ► P11

NC demands apology from Mehbooba

SRINAGAR: president
Mehbooba Mufti has landed
at the centre of a fresh politi-
cal storm after drawing a par-
allel between Gen Z protest-
ers at New Delhi's Jantar
Mantar and agitators in
Kashmir, asserting that force
was justified in the Valley un-
der the guise of fighting mili-
tancy.

Her comments, made
during her Jantar Mantar ap-
pearance earlier this week, in
which she attempted to de-
fend past crackdowns on lo-
cal demonstrators, drew
swift, sharp backlash ► P11

Partition biggest historical blunder; retrieval of PoJK only pending issue: Dr Jitendra Singh

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Union Minister of
State (Independent Charge)
for Science & Technology,
Earth Sciences and MoS in
Prime Minister's Office Dr.
Jitendra Singh on Sunday de-
scribed India's Partition as
"the greatest blunder of his-
tory" and said that the re-
trieval of Pakistan-occupied
Jammu & Kashmir (PoJK)
remains the only pending is-
sue between India and Pak-
istan.

He said that the security
landscape of the country has
undergone a decisive trans-
formation under the leader-
ship of Prime Minister
Narendra Modi, with India's
response to external aggres-



sion evolving from a reactive
approach to one marked by
resolve, preparedness and de-
cisive action.

Dr Jitendra Singh was
addressing the 27th Kargil Vi-
jay Diwas commemoration
organised by the Jammu
Kashmir Peoples' Forum in
collaboration with the POJK

Youth Forum, a unit of Mir-
pur Balidan Bhawan Samity,
at the Kashmiri Cultural Cen-
tre, New Delhi. Member of
Parliament Ms. Bansuri
Swaraj attended the pro-
gramme as the Guest of Hon-
our, while Col. K.K. Sharma
(SC, SM & Bar), a Kargil War
Veteran, presided over the

function. The event was or-
ganised under the leadership
of Sh. Mahinder Mehta, Con-
venor of the Jammu Kashmir
Peoples' Forum, along with
the POJK Youth Forum, to
pay homage to the brave sol-
diers who made the supreme
sacrifice during the 1999
Kargil conflict.

Describing Kargil Vijay
Diwas as an occasion of re-
membrance as well as re-
newed national resolve, Dr.
Jitendra Singh said the vic-
tory symbolises the in-
domitible courage of the In-
dian Armed Forces and the
nation's unwavering com-
mitment to safeguard India's
unity, sovereignty and terri-
torial integrity. He said the
lessons of Kargil ► P11

Good Food

Say No to
Maida Bathura.

Say Yes to
Healthy Whole
Wheat Khameera

NATURALLY FERMENTED

Light, Fluffy & Easy to Digest

GOOD FOR
GUT HEALTH

MADE WITH
WHOLE WHEAT

NATURALLY
FERMENTED

NO MAIDA
NO PALM OIL

Why Khameera?

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Perfect balance of taste & health

Perfect
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BREAKFAST!

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WEEKEND RIGHT,
THE HEALTHY WAY!

WHOLESDOME FOOD,
HAPPIER WEEKENDS!

Healthy Food for a
Happy You!

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SEC 2
CHANNI HIMMAT

NH
DHAMMI NAGROTA

NH
KARTHOLI
BARI BRAHMANA

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