

FAIR REPORT

THE DAWN OF A FEARLESS PEN

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Cabinet Bombshell: Ravneet Singh Bittu Resigns, Exit Sets Off Political Tremors

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

In a dramatic political development that has sent shockwaves through the national political landscape, Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu resigned from the Union Council of Ministers on Friday. President Droupadi Murmu accepted his resignation with immediate effect, marking the end of Bittu's tenure in the Union Cabinet.

The abrupt resignation has triggered intense speculation in political circles, particularly with key electoral battles approaching. While the government has not disclosed the reason behind Bittu's departure, the timing of the move has fuelled discussions about a possible Cabinet reshuffle and the BJP's evolving political strategy.

A prominent Sikh face in the BJP, Bittu crossed

over from the Congress ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and was later inducted into the Union government. Despite losing the parliamentary election, he remained an influential figure in the party after being nominated to the Rajya Sabha.

His unexpected exit has now raised several unanswered questions. Is the resignation linked to a larger organisational overhaul? Is the BJP preparing to assign Bittu a more significant political role, particularly in Punjab? Or does it signal the beginning of a wider restructuring within the Union government? As New Delhi waits for an official explanation, Bittu's resignation has emerged as one of the most consequential political developments of the day, setting the stage for fresh speculation over the BJP's next strategic move.



SWORDS, AXES & SHIELDS

Two fighters battle during the International Medieval Combat Federation's World Championship at Spotttrup Castle in Spotttrup of Denmark.

Resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan non-negotiable: CJP to union ministers

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Friday told the government that its demand for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation is non-negotiable and asked for a public apology to the protesting students who were "brutally thrashed" on July 20.

In a meeting with Union ministers J P Nadda and Jitendra Singh, the CJP also demanded Rs 1 crore compensation for the families of those who committed suicide after the cancellation of the NEET test on May 3, its spokesperson Saurav Das said. The two-hour meeting held at the Vithalbhai Patel House was aimed at finding an amicable solution to protests over the NEET paper leak and other irregularities in the exam system.

Nadda said the ministers heard their demands and conveyed that they will get back to the CJP. "We will again meet on Saturday," he said. "We told Union minis-



ters that our demand for the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan is non-negotiable," Das told reporters after the meeting. The CJP, which has been spearheading the protests that started at Jantar Mantar on June 20, was also represented by its spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka. Besides the demand for Rs 1 crore compensation for families of suicide victims, Das said the CJP is also asking that FIRs against protesters should be withdrawn.

In a letter to the government, the CJP spelt out its stand. It acknowledged the "government's eagerness to find a mutually beneficial solution" and said, "Over the last few days, we have held extensive consultations with supporters and members across the country and protesters at Jantar Mantar. We have arrived at a clear consensus that our demands, namely the resignation of Mr Dharmendra Pradhan, Rs 1 crore compen-

sation for NEET victims, and no legal action against protesters, are non-negotiable."

"Furthermore, the Government of India, the head of the Rapid Action Force, and the Delhi Police Commissioner ought to publicly apologise to the students who were brutally thrashed by their forces," it said. Worldnews coverage The organisation also requested that the demands be accepted at the earliest. If not, the

movement would only grow bigger and spread across the country, it said. "Further, we would appreciate the government's response to our five-point demand charter on examination reforms. The charter will prove critical in bringing about the larger structural reforms needed in the education system," the letter stated.

This was the third official meeting between the CJP and the government.

Nadda held two back-to-back meetings with Das and Ranka on July 20 at the minister's residence. That was the day thousands of protesters responded to the call 'Sansad Chalo' and began marching towards Parliament only to be pushed back by police batons and teargas. Scores of people were injured. Friday's meeting took place hours after activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his 26-day hunger strike late on Thursday night following government assurances on his key demands.

Rajasthan Crosses Major Water Milestone:

CM Bhajan Lal Sharma Says 1.5 Million Families Get Tap Water Under Jal Jeevan Mission

FAIR REPORT
JAIPUR

Highlighting the Rajasthan government's push to strengthen water security, Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Friday announced that more than 1.5 million families across the state have been provided access to safe drinking water through household tap connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission, describing the achievement as a major step towards ensuring universal access to clean water. Addressing the inaugural session of the Rajasthan Water Conclave 2026, Sharma said the state government has been working relentlessly to expand potable water infrastructure, particularly in water-scarce regions. He asserted that the mission is not merely about laying pipelines but about improving public



health, enhancing rural livelihoods and ensuring sustainable development.

The Chief Minister said that besides expanding tap water coverage, the government has undertaken several key initiatives in the water sector aimed at strengthening long-term water security. These include measures for water conservation, augmentation of drinking water supply, and the creation of resilient infrastructure to address Rajasthan's recur-

ring water challenges. Emphasising that water management remains one of the government's top priorities, Sharma said the administration is pursuing an integrated approach that combines infrastructure development with conservation and efficient resource management. The Rajasthan Water Conclave 2026 brings together policymakers, water experts, industry leaders and stakeholders to deliberate on sustainable water governance.

Constable Quits in Rare Show of Solidarity: Uttarakhand Policeman Hands Resignation to Abhijeet Dipke at Jantar Mantar

FAIR REPORT
NEW DELHI

In a dramatic development that injected fresh momentum into the ongoing students' protest at Jantar Mantar, a serving constable of the Uttarakhand Police publicly submitted his resignation letter to activist Abhijeet Dipke, declaring that his conscience compelled him to stand with the agitating students rather than remain in uniform.

The symbolic act unfolded before protesters and onlookers, drawing loud applause as the con-

stable handed over the resignation letter, describing it as a decision taken "in support of the students' movement." The unprecedented gesture quickly became one of the most talked-about moments at the protest site, with participants hailing it as a rare instance of a serving police personnel openly siding with demonstrators.

The resignation comes amid an intensifying agitation led by Dipke and student groups, who have been pressing their demands through sustained

protests at Jantar Mantar. Organisers described the constable's decision as evidence that the movement was resonating beyond student circles and finding support among individuals serving within government institutions.

While the resignation has generated significant attention on social media, there was no immediate official response from the Uttarakhand Police regarding the constable's status or whether the resignation had been formally accepted. Under service rules, the submission of a

resignation letter does not automatically terminate government service, and acceptance by the competent authority is generally required.

The episode is likely to deepen the political and public debate surrounding the protest, raising questions about morale within public institutions and the broader appeal of the students' campaign. Whether the constable's decision remains an isolated act or inspires similar expressions of solidarity will be closely watched in the coming days.



States Focus



SIX-MONTH EXTENSION FOR BENGAL CHIEF SECRETARY: GOVT

The Union Government on Thursday approved a six-month extension in service for West Bengal Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Agarwal beyond his scheduled date of retirement on July 31, according to an official order. The extension will take effect from August 1 and remain valid till January 31, 2027, following approval by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), a senior official said on Thursday.

The state Government had forwarded a proposal to the Centre on July 15 seeking an extension for Agarwal, who assumed charge as the chief secretary on May 11 this year. A senior state Government official said the extension would ensure continuity in the administration at a time when several key policy decisions and developmental programmes are underway. (PTI)



ANNAMALAI TO LAUNCH COASTAL CLEANUP DRIVE IN SOUTH TN

Former BJP chief K Annamalai, who launched the “We The Leaders” movement, is scheduled to visit a few southern coastal districts to launch a massive coastal cleanup drive, a source said on Friday.

He would visit Kanyakumari on August 2 in his capacity as leader of the movement to officially launch the state-wide initiative from the Kanyakumari Beach Road, and initiate a similar drive in Uvari in Tirunelveli district, Manapad and Tiruchendur in Tuticorin district.

Interestingly, Kanyakumari district has registered the highest number of volunteers for the “We The Leaders” that Annamalai had announced on June 5, an insider said. (PTI)

Drugs worth ₹6.89 cr seized in 3 separate operations in Mizoram, 2 held



FAIR REPORT
■ Aizawl

Drugs worth more than ₹6.89 crore were seized in three separate anti-drug operations in Mizoram, police said on Friday.

Two persons, including one from Assam, were arrested in connection with the seizures, they said.

The biggest haul was made in the early hours of July 21 when two men riding a scooter were intercepted on the Zokhawthar-Melbuk road near Mualrawt in Champhai district, close to the India-Myanmar border, police said.

The suspects abandoned the scooter and fled after spotting the police patrol, they said.

A search of the vehicle led to the recovery of 6.73 kg of methamphetamine tablets, estimated to be worth ₹4.75 crore, they added.

A case was registered at the Zokhawthar police station under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

In another operation on July 23, a special police team intercepted a truck on the basis of intelligence inputs in Saitual district. A search of the vehicle led to the seizure of 2 kg of morphine, valued at around ₹2.09 crore in the illicit market, the statement said. The truck driver, identified as Kabir Hussain (30) of Tarapur village in Assam’s Cachar district, was arrested, police said.

On the evening of July 15, the Champhai Police Special Task Force intercepted a car at the Khankawn check gate and recovered 24 grams of heroin, valued at ₹4.8 lakh, from the possession of the driver, they said.

Beginning of accountability: Wangchuk extends fast by 2 days

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Sonam Wangchuk on Friday termed the end of his 26-day hunger strike the “beginning of accountability”, saying he decided to call off the fast only after receiving assurances from the Government and MPs across parties on his key demands for examination reforms and protection of the peaceful protesters.

The educator-activist also said that he extended his fast by two days because negotiations with the Centre were continuing.

“End of hunger... Beginning of accountability,” Wangchuk posted on X, where he shared a video explaining his decision to end the fast, which he began at the Jantar Mantar on June 28 in support of the Cokroach Janta Party’s (CJP) ongoing protest demanding accountability for paper leaks, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation, and reforms in the examination system, among others.

According to the post, Wangchuk ended his fast after 26 days upon getting assurance from the Government and MPs of all



Social activist Sonam Wangchuk with Union Health Minister JP Nadda, Union Minister of State Jitendra Singh and Apex Body of Ladakh at Medanta Hospital after Wangchuk ended his 26-day indefinite hunger strike at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram

political parties that the issue of accountability in the ‘failing’ examination system would be discussed in Parliament.

The Government also assured that the families of those students who took their lives after the NEET-UG paper leak in May would be adequately compensated, and no cases would be registered against the students and youth protesting peacefully.

In the video, Wangchuk also disclosed that he extended his hunger strike by two days because negotiations with the Centre were continuing.

“Negotiations were on for these assurances since the last two days, for which I had to extend my hunger strike. I could have extended it further if required,” he said.

Wangchuk also shared the text of the assurance letter that Health Minister J P Nadda read out at the hospital before he broke his fast.

“The Government is positive on not registering cases against those protesting peacefully at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and those who participated in the march to Parliament on July 20,” the letter said.

It also said that the Government had “already assured threadbare discussions to find solutions to paper leaks and educational reforms for exams in Parliament”, and was “positively considering suitable compensation for the suicide victims of recent NEET paper leaks”.

Wangchuk ended his hunger strike late on Thursday night in the presence of his wife Gitanjali Angmo, Nadda and Union minister Jitendra Singh at the Medanta Hospital in Gurugram.

WANGCHUK’S WIFE ASKS CRITICS NOT TO RUSH TO JUDGE HIM FOR ENDING HUNGER STRIKE

New Delhi: Activist Sonam Wangchuk’s wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, on Thursday appealed to people not to rush to judge him for ending his 26-day hunger strike, saying he had paid a heavy physical price for a cause larger than himself and deserved compassion rather than criticism.

Her appeal came after Wangchuk ended his fast late on Thursday following assurances from the government on his key demands and repeated appeals by several MPs across party lines that he end the hunger strike and continue serving the nation.

In an emotional post on X, Angmo said Wangchuk was lying in the intensive care unit after losing 11 kg, including muscle mass, during the fast, and urged people to recognise the sacrifice behind his decision.

“Before you rush to criticise @Wangchuk66, first pause to earn the ethos of fasting for 26 days for a cause larger than yourself,” she wrote.

“He lies in the ICU today, having lost 11 kg, including muscle mass, because he chose sacrifice over comfort. The least we can offer him is a day of compassion before burdening him with our own expectations and political calculations,” she said.

Angmo said not everyone was qualified to judge “a life of selfless service”.

“One must first earn the moral stature to do so. Please... have a heart,” she added.

Wangchuk ended his fast late on Thursday after Union ministers J P Nadda and Jitendra Singh conveyed the government’s assurances that it was positive about not initiating legal action against peaceful protesters, would hold discussions in Parliament on examination reforms and was positively considering compensation for families of students who died by suicide following the alleged NEET paper leak. The activist is recovering at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram. (PTI)

First week of Monsoon Session washed out as Opposition demands Pradhan’s resignation

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

The first week of the Monsoon session of Parliament was washed out as the Government and the Opposition continued to be at loggerheads over the demand for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation before a debate on NEET paper leak issue in both Houses.

Hitting out at the Opposition, the Government said making “excuses” and attaching “pre-conditions” before a debate will send a wrong message to the country.

In the first week of the session, both Houses could

not take up any legislative agenda except for introduction of a bill each in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

In Lok Sabha, a bill to replace an ordinance which increased the number of judges of the Supreme Court from 34 to 38 was introduced but could not taken up for consideration and passage despite being listed every day. The bill has to be passed into an Act of Parliament before the session concludes on August 13 else the ordinance will lapse.

In Lok Sabha, Question Hour could not be held for even 15 minutes in five days. In Rajya Sabha, a bill was



introduced on Friday to make insult to the national song Vande Mataram a criminal offence, despite being listed for introduction on multiple days.

When Lok Sabha met at 12 noon after an earlier adjournment, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju pointed to the Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and said the Government has

repeatedly reached out to Opposition parties to let debate on the paper leak take place. He said while several Opposition MPs are of the view that the debate should take place, Gandhi should make his party members understand the need for a discussion. Rijiju said making excuses and attaching pre-conditions before a debate will send a wrong message to the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also assured of a stringent law on paper leaks and holding trial of the accused in fast-track courts, he said, while also noting that activist Sonam Wangchuk

has ended his hunger strike.

He said the Union Cabinet will take a decision on the proposed law on Friday.

However, the Congress and other Opposition parties continued to insist on resignation of Pradhan and shouted slogans like “Istifa do”, following which the House was adjourned for the day.

Similarly, Rajya Sabha was adjourned within minutes of assembly after Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the issue of lathi-charge on students who are protesting against the paper leak and pressing for the resignation of Pradhan.

CBI brings Avinash Arjun Rathod back from UAE in joint operation

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), along with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), coordinated the successful deportation of Red Notice subject Avinash Arjun Rathod from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Rathod arrived in Mumbai on 23 July 2026 and was immediately taken into custody by the Maharashtra Police. Rathod is the main suspect in a major financial fraud worth hundreds of crores. He avoided arrest for years after running an investment scam that took people’s savings.

The CBI says this case shows India is getting better at finding and bringing back economic offenders who escape overseas.

According to official reports,

Rathod is wanted for large-scale financial fraud. He and his team convinced people to invest in several schemes by promising fake fixed monthly returns. After collecting the money, he moved it through different bank and demat accounts, cheating investors.

Investigators say the scheme primarily operated through APS Wealth Ventures, a Pune-based company that Rathod started in 2011. He and his team promoted it as a stock market investment and targeted middle-class families, Government workers, and professionals across Maharashtra, including Pune, Mumbai, and Vidarbha. They promised high fixed returns and claimed investments could double in 20 months. People invested anywhere from a few lakhs to over a crore, with some putting in all their life savings.

To gain trust, the accused gave



small early returns to the first investors, using a Ponzi-style method that encouraged people to refer others and grow the

scheme. By early 2023, things started to fall apart. When investors asked to withdraw their money in March 2023, Rathod said he was ill and asked for more time until 10 April.

During this time, his wife, Vishakha Rathod, ran the office and spoke with investors. But on the promised date, both disappeared. Investors then found out their money was gone and the couple had escaped to Dubai.

Numerous investors filed complaints with the Economic Offences Wing of Pune Police. An FIR was registered at Chaturshringi Police Station, and the investigation revealed the extent of the fraud.

Losses are estimated at ₹125 crore from over 600 investors, and the total could reach ₹700 crore over several years. No matter the final amount, many families lost their savings, retirement money, and financial security.

A non-bailable warrant was issued, and Indian authorities asked INTERPOL for help.

A Red Notice was put out for Rathod, making him wanted worldwide. Getting him back from the UAE took ongoing efforts by the MEA, coordination from the MHA, and steady follow-up by the CBI. He returned on 23 July 2026, ending years of work. After the suspect arrived in Mumbai, Maharashtra Police took him into custody and will present him in court.

The CBI may lead or closely monitor the investigation, focusing on tracing funds, identifying additional suspects, and recovering assets for victims.

This case highlights the persistent issue of investment fraud, which exploits public trust in financial markets and the allure of ‘assured returns.’ The APS Wealth Ventures case serves as a reminder of the risks associated with unregulated or inadequately vetted investments.

Road safety experts call for adoption of low-cost safety solutions to reduce accidents

FAIR REPORT
■ New Delhi

Road safety experts on Friday highlighted the alarming state of road safety in the country and underscored the urgent need for practical, scalable and cost-effective solutions to prevent road accidents. They noted that India can significantly reduce road fatalities through affordable and evidence-based interventions in cities.

Speaking at a conference organised by the India chapter of International Road Federation (IRF), IIT Delhi professor emeritus Geetam Tiwari said road markings to enhance night-time visibility can substantially improve road safety in cities. Implementation of international best practices can reduce crashes while improving mobility for all road users, Tiwari added.

IRF president emeritus K K Kapila said most urban crashes occur due to everyday design deficiencies on ordinary roads operating at normal traffic speeds.

“Low-cost engineering measures such as roundabouts, raised pedestrian



crossings, traffic-calming measures, improved street lighting and safer intersection designs have been proven to reduce crashes by 20 to 80 per cent, often at a fraction of the cost of major infrastructure projects.

“Such interventions can be implemented much faster and deliver immediate safety benefits,” Kapila added.

Jitendra Kaushik, CEO, Onnyx Electronisys, showcased innovative technological solutions supporting urban traffic safety.

Rajasthan CM’s Gram Vikas Chaupal focuses on participatory rural governance

FAIR REPORT
■ Jaipur

Rajasthan Chief Minister Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma’s Gram Vikas Chaupal initiative is focusing on participatory governance by taking the administration directly to villages and facilitating interaction between the Government and rural citizens.

With an emphasis on strengthening governance at the grassroots, the Chief Minister has been visiting rural areas, holding open interactions with villagers, inspecting development projects, and reviewing the implementation of welfare schemes on the ground. The initiative aims to create a direct communication channel between policymakers and citizens to address public concerns and improve service delivery.

The Gram Vikas Chaupal serves as a platform where women, farmers, youth, livestock rearers, frontline workers, and local residents discuss issues ranging from agriculture and employment to water conservation, sanitation, animal husbandry, education, and rural infrastructure. Beneficiaries of



Government schemes have also shared their experiences directly with the Chief Minister, providing feedback on implementation.

One of the instances highlighted during the initiative involved schoolgirls informing the Chief Minister that their Government Senior Secondary School did not offer a Science stream. Following the interaction, Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma directed officials to address the issue, and the Science stream was subsequently approved and introduced, according to the state Government.

The Chief Minister has also interacted with children, women, and senior citizens while reviewing the condition of village schools,

Anganwadi centres, and other public facilities. These visits have enabled the Government to identify local challenges requiring administrative attention.

Beyond grievance redressal, Gram Vikas Chaupal has also been used as a mechanism for monitoring development projects. During village visits, officials present progress reports on ongoing works, while the Chief Minister reviews implementation, directs timely completion of projects, and seeks accountability from the concerned departments. Several local issues have also been addressed through discussions with officials during these visits.

In another instance cited by the Government, a woman

appealed for the transfer of her husband to a location closer to home because of their child’s special medical requirements. Acting on the Chief Minister’s directions, the transfer order was issued within hours, officials said.

According to officials, the programme is not limited to grievance resolution. Villagers are also encouraged to share ideas and suggestions for future development planning, with the objective of making them active participants in Rajasthan’s development process.

Political observers say the Gram Vikas Chaupal combines public participation, administrative accountability, and direct interaction between citizens and the Government. They note that the initiative seeks to strengthen rural governance by enabling the administration to respond more effectively to local issues.

As Rajasthan continues to focus on rural development, Gram Vikas Chaupal has become an important part of the state’s outreach efforts, with the Government presenting it as a model for citizen-centric governance.

