

# No need to teach about riots, demolition in schools: NCERT chief after textbook revisions

■ By Gunjan Sharma

NEW DELHI, June 16 (PTI)

REJECTING accusations of saffronisation of school curriculum, NCERT's director has said that references to Gujarat riots and Babri masjid demolition were modified in school textbooks because teaching about riots "can create violent and depressed citizens."

In an interaction with PTI editors at the agency's headquarters here on Saturday, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) director Dinesh Prasad Saklani said the tweaks in textbooks are part of annual revision and should not be a subject of hue and cry.

Asked about references to Gujarat riots or Babri masjid demolition being tweaked in NCERT textbooks, Saklani said, "Why should we teach about

riots in school textbooks? We want to create positive citizens not violent and depressed individuals".

"Should we teach our students in a manner that they become offensive, create hatred in society or become victim of hate? Is that education's purpose? Should we teach about riots to such young children... When they grow up, they can learn about it but why school textbooks. Let them understand what happened and why it happened when they grow up. The hue and cry about the changes is irrelevant," he said.

The comments by Saklani come at a time when new textbooks have hit the market with several deletions and changes. The revised Class 12 political science textbook does not mention the Babri masjid but refers to it as a "three-domed structure". It has pruned the Ayodhya

section from four to two pages and deleted details from the earlier version.

It instead focuses on the Supreme Court judgement that paved the way for the construction of a Ram temple at the site where the disputed structure once stood before it was torn down by Hindu activists in December 1992. The Supreme Court verdict was widely accepted in the country. The consecration of the Ram idol in the temple was performed on January 22 this year by the Prime Minister.

"We want to create positive citizens and that's what is the purpose of our textbooks. We cannot have everything in them. The purpose of our education is not to create violent citizens... Depressed citizens. Hatred and violence are not subjects of teaching, they should not be focus of our textbooks," added Saklani.

He hinted that the same hue and cry is not made about 1984 anti-Sikh riots not being in textbooks.

The latest deletions in the textbooks include: BJP's 'rath yatra' from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya; the role of kar sevaks; communal violence in the wake of the demolition of the Babri masjid; President's rule in BJP-ruled states; and the BJP's expression of "regret over the happenings at Ayodhya".

"If Supreme Court has given a verdict in favour of Ram temple, Babri masjid or Ram janmabhoomi, should it not be included in our textbooks, what is the problem in that? We have included the new updates. If we have constructed new Parliament, should our students not know about it. It is our duty to include the ancient developments and recent developments," he said.

# India refrains from associating itself with Swiss summit communique on Ukraine

NEW DELHI, June 6 (PTI)

**INDIA** on Sunday refrained from associating itself with any communique emerging from a Ukraine summit for peace hosted by Switzerland and asserted that it will remain engaged with all stakeholders to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine conflict.

Pavan Kapoor, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, represented India at the Summit on Peace in Ukraine that was held at a resort near Lucerne in Switzerland on June 15 and 16.

The summit concluded with dozens of countries throwing



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Ukraine peace summit in Buergenstock, Switzerland. (AP/PTI)

their support to Ukraine's "territorial integrity" and calling for talks among all parties to find a lasting solution to the conflict. "The Indian delegation attended the Opening and Closing Plenary Sessions of the

Summit. India did not associate itself with any communique/document emerging from this Summit," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"India's participation in the Summit, as well as in the pre-

ceding NSA/Political Director-level meetings based on Ukraine's Peace Formula, was in line with our consistent approach to facilitate a lasting and peaceful resolution to the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy," it said in a statement. The MEA said India continues to believe that such a resolution requires a sincere and practical engagement between the two parties to the conflict.

"In this regard, India will continue to remain engaged with all stakeholders as well as both the parties to contribute to all earnest efforts to bring about an early and abiding peace," it said.

# IAF contingent participates in combat exercise 'Red Flag 2024' in Alaska

NEW DELHI, June 16 (IANS)

**AN INDIAN** Air Force (IAF) contingent participated in Exercise Red Flag 2024 conducted at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska of the United States Air Force, from June 4-14. This was the second edition of Exercise Red Flag 2024, which is an advanced aerial combat training exercise, held four times a year by the US Air Force.

The exercise witnessed the participation of the Indian Air Force along with the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), Royal Air Force (RAF) of the United Kingdom, Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAf), German Luftwaffe, and the US Air Force (USAF).

"IAF contingent participated with the Rafale aircraft and personnel comprising of aircrew, technicians, engineers, controllers and subject matter experts. The transatlantic ferry of Rafale fighter aircraft was enabled by the IL-78 Air to Air Refuellers (AAR), while the transportation of personnel and equipment was undertaken by the C-17 Globemaster aircraft," the Ministry of Defence said on Sunday.

The contingent landed at Eielson, USAF base in Alaska on May 29.

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The Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent participated in the Red Flag 2024 Exercise conducted at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska of the United States Air Force.

(PTI)

# CRUSH TERRORISM in J&K: Shah to forces

NEW DELHI, June 16 (Agencies)

**UNION** Home Minister Amit Shah, on Sunday, directed security forces to crush growing terrorism in Jammu division, wipe it out from Jammu & Kashmir and ensure complete security for the upcoming annual Amarnath Yatra.

Shah on Sunday directed security agencies to implement area domination and zero-terror plans in the Jammu division like they did in Kashmir to achieve success.

He also said the Narendra Modi Government is committed to set an example by cracking down on terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir through innovative means.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah chairs a high level meeting to review security situation in J&K in New Delhi on Sunday. NSA Ajit Doval and J&K Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha are also seen.

(PTI)

These were conveyed to officials by the Home Minister at a high-level meeting convened to review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks in the Union Territory, sources said.

Shah directed the agencies to replicate in the Jammu division the successes achieved in the Kashmir Valley through the area domination plan and the zero-terror plan, they said.

Shah directed security forces to crush the emerging terrorism in the Jammu division of the Union Territory and prevent its revival in J&K while ensuring complete security for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra

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**Nitin Gadkari to chair review meeting today**

SRINAGAR, June 16 (IANS)

**UNION** Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari is scheduled to chair a high-level meeting here on Monday to review the progress of various developmental projects in Jammu & Kashmir, officials said on Sunday.

Among the matters to be discussed will be Amarnath Yatra track and Jammu-Srinagar

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# Israel announces ~~'tactical pause'~~ in Gaza military offensive

JERUSALEM, June 16 (AP)

ISRAEL'S military announced on Sunday that it would pause fighting throughout daytime hours along a route in southern Gaza to free up a backlog of humanitarian aid deliveries destined for desperate Palestinians enduring a humanitarian crisis sparked by the war, now in its ninth month.

The "tactical pause" announced by the military, which applies to about 12 kilometres (7.4 miles) of road in the Rafah area, falls far short of a complete cease-fire in the beleaguered territory that has been sought by the international community, including Israel's top ally, the United States. If it holds, the limited halt in fighting could help address some of the overwhelming needs of

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**The pause is aimed at allowing aid trucks to reach the nearby Israel-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, the main entry point for incoming aid**

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Palestinians that have surged even more in recent weeks with Israel's incursion into Rafah.

The army said the pause would begin at 8 am (0500 GMT) and remain in effect until 7 pm (1600 GMT). It said the pauses would take place every day until further notice.

The pause is aimed at allowing aid trucks to reach the nearby Israel-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, the main entry point for incoming aid, and travel safely to

the Salah a-Din highway, a main north-south road, the military said. The crossing has suffered from a bottleneck since Israeli ground troops moved into Rafah in early May.

COGAT, the Israeli military body that oversees aid distribution in Gaza, said the route would increase the flow of aid to other parts of Gaza, including Khan Younis, Muwasi and central Gaza. Hard-hit northern Gaza, which was an early target in the war, is

being served by goods entering from a crossing in the north.

The military said the pause came after discussions with the United Nations and international aid agencies.

Aid agencies, including the UN, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The pause along the southern route comes as Israel and Hamas are weighing the latest proposal for a cease-fire, a plan that was detailed by President Joe Biden in the administration's most concentrated diplomatic push for a halt to the fighting and the release of hostages taken by the militant group. While Biden described the proposal as an Israeli one, Israel has not fully embraced it and Hamas has demanded changes that appear unacceptable to Israel.