

SC bars coercive action against protesters with NO CRIMINAL RECORD

Orders release of detained, arrested protesters below 18

NEW DELHI, July 28 (PTI)

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday restrained States from taking any coercive action against protesters in the recent student-led agitation and directed them to release those under 18 on the condition that none should have any criminal antecedents.

Hearing a batch of petitions alleging police brutality during demonstrations against irregularities in exams and the NEET paper leak, a bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said a fair and independent probe on the matter was required.

"All States are hereby instructed to release children under the age of 18, who have been reported to be arrested or detained in connection with the ongoing protests and who do not possess any criminal antecedents," the bench directed.

It said if necessary, these children shall be released upon the execution of a simple bond by themselves or their family members, especially if such a requirement is insisted upon for surety.

During the hearing, the bench also comprising justices Joymala Bagchi and V Mohana observed, "Whosoever committed excesses, took law into their hands should be taken to task."

The bench took note of alle-



gations such as the use of pellet guns, lathis embedded with nails, rubber bullets and electric batons on protesters resulting in severe life threatening injuries to several students and young women.

It directed that Delhi Government and other states may proceed with the investigation of the FIRs registered but no coercive measures shall be taken against the protesting students.

(Contd on page 5)

'RAF fired multiple munitions during protests, 2 rounds of non-lethal plastic pellets'

NEW DELHI, July 28 (PTI)

THE Rapid Action Force (RAF) fired multiple rounds of non-lethal munitions, including two rounds of plastic pellets, while controlling the mob at one location near Jantar Mantar during the July 20 'Sansad Chalo' march by protesters on the NEET paper leak issue, officials said on Tuesday citing official record of the police action.

The incident has been recorded on July 22 at 1:24 PM in the general diary entry of the Parliament Street police sta-

tion on the information of a Deputy Commandant of RAF stating the blue dungaree donning force was on duty in the Zone 1 of the Jantar Mantar area along with a Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) rank officer of the Delhi Police, the officials told PTI. On the directions of the DCP, according to the officials quoting the police station record, RAF fired 55 non-electrical shells, 15 electrical shells, five tear smoke grenades, two rounds from the anti-riot guns and two rounds of plastic pellets on July 20.

SC to hear pleas on pellet firing, food volunteer detention on Aug 3

NEW DELHI, July 28 (PTI)

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear pleas filed by a former IPS officer and two persons, who claimed to have been injured by pellet guns fired during the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP)-led students' protest on NEET paper leaks. The plea was mentioned before the bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, who said the court would take up the matter along with other petitions arising out of the protests on August 3.

The petition filed by Yashovardhan Azad, Prashant Kumar and Sheikh Irshad Mansoori through advocate Vrinda Grover sought direction for decommissioning or banning the use of wholly or partly metallic kinetic projectiles/ pellets fired from pump action rifles or projectile action guns (PAG) for crowd dispersal of civilian assemblies by law enforcement agencies and other connected reliefs. Kumar (25) is an artist who was present at the 'Sansad Chalo' march.

Sharif's PML-N wins 9 out of 13 seats in first phase of PoK polls

ISLAMABAD, July 28 (PTI)

THE Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) won nine out of 13 seats in the first phase of elections held in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the Election Commission said on Tuesday.

There were allegations of massive rigging in the first phase of the polls held on Monday, in which the Pakistan's People Party (PPP) won the remaining seats. The elections for 45 contesting seats in the so-called Legislative Assembly in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir are happening in three phases between July 27 and August 10. India maintains that the entire Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

Pakistan's People Party won the remaining seats

are integral and inalienable parts of it. New Delhi also asserts that Pakistan has been in "illegal and forcible occupation" of parts of these Union Territories.

According to preliminary results issued by the Election Commission on Tuesday, the PML-N led by the Sharif brothers - Nawaz and Shehbaz - emerged as the winner in nine constituencies while the PPP led by the Bhuttos secured four seats.

Both parties are coalition partners at the federal level. Meanwhile, Imran Khan's

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf has boycotted the polls

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf has boycotted the polls. There are 53 seats in the so-called Pakistan-occupied Kashmir legislative assembly - 45 are directly elected, while eight are reserved for women, technocrats and clerics.

Alleging rigging in seven seats, PPP senior leader Nayyar Bokhari said: "Our winning seats have been gifted to the PML-N." Other senior PPP leaders have demanded the Election Commission not to announce results till investigation of rigging in certain constituencies is not completed.

Rana Sanaullah, adviser to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has dismissed rigging allegations saying elections were largely held in a "peaceful and fair" manner, and violence was reported in one constituency. A PPP worker was killed and two were injured in a violent clash on the polling day, allegedly triggered by an incident of firing by the PML-N leader. The elections are taking place after nearly two months of violence in the region, in which several were killed. It was triggered by a demand for the abolition of 12 contentious refugee seats by the Joint Awami Action Committee, which spearheaded prolonged protests, leading to a crackdown by security forces.

Sharmila wins historic gold in para athletics

Compatriot Shilpa K Shyla bags bronze

GLASGOW, July 28 (PTI)

SHARMILA Dhankar scripted history by becoming India's first-ever Commonwealth Games para-athletics gold medallist, while high jumper Sarvesh Kushare and weightlifter Valluri Ajaya Babu clinched a silver each, as the country enjoyed a rewarding day in the multi-sport event here.

Sharmila delivered a landmark performance by winning the women's shot put F57 title with a season-best effort of 9.81m, becoming the first Indian to win a gold medal in para-athletics at the Games late on Monday night.

Her triumph ended India's 20-year wait for a para-athletics medal at the Games. The last para-athletics medal in CWG was won by Ranjith Kumar Jayaseelan in the men's seated Discus Throw event in the 2006 edition.

The F57 classification is for athletes with lower limb impairments, limb deficiencies or reduced muscle power. Soon after, national record holder Kushare created history by becoming the first Indian to win a silver medal in the men's high jump at the Games.

(Contd on page 5)



India's Sharmila Dhankar, left, and Shilpa K Shyla celebrate after winning gold and bronze medals respectively in the women's shot put F57 at 23rd Commonwealth Games, in Glasgow, on Monday.



**Silver for
Kushare
in men's
high jump**

Protesters storm energy complex in Libya over power outages



Mellitah Oil and Gas terminal.

CAIRO, July 28 (AP)

PROTESTERS demonstrating against ongoing power outages in Libya stormed a key energy complex overnight and closed gas lines that fuel power plants, which officials warned could trigger a nationwide power blackout.

Demonstrators in the capital Tripoli, Zawiya, Misrata and other locations across western Libya have protested for several days over hourslong power outages. They demand better electrical services and have called for the resignation of Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

As part of the ongoing protests,

a group stormed the General Electricity Company's Mellitah Oil and Gas complex about 90 kilometres (55 miles) west of Tripoli. The disruption could cause a complete blackout in multiple areas and ultimately collapse the electricity network, the

company warned in a statement Tuesday. The Mellitah complex is a strategic energy supplier. Gas from the complex is compressed and sent to Sicily through a sub-sea pipeline, according to Bonatti, an international contractor that provides services to global energy sectors.

The Mellitah complex sends 30 million Standard Cubic Meters of gas to Italy daily, according to Bonatti. The closure of the lines disrupted operations and caused a severe shortage in gas and fuel supplies needed to operate power plants, pushing a number of generators out of service, the National Oil Corporation said in a statement Tuesday.

Centre orders sugar dealers to limit stocks to 30 days; stock limit at 4,000 quintals

NEW DELHI, July 28 (PTI)

THE Government on Tuesday directed that no dealer of sugar should hold stock for more than 30 days and also imposed a stock limit of 4,000 quintals as part of its efforts to keep prices of sweetener under control.

The order would come into force with effect from August 1, 2026, and would remain in force up to November 30, 2026.

In a gazette notification, the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs imposed this restriction using powers under section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, and the Sugar (Control) Order, 2025. "Central Government hereby directs that no dealer of sugar shall hold any stock for a peri-



od exceeding thirty days from the date of receipt of such stock and shall not keep sugar in stock at any time and in any place throughout the country in excess of 4,000 quintals," the notification said.

To keep prices under check amid a forecast of a deficit monsoon, the Centre has already banned sugar exports.

The order would not apply to

sugar stocks held on the Government account, or by dealers nominated by the State Government or an officer authorised by it to hold stock for distribution through fair price shops under the Public Distribution System.

The Ministry said that the State Governments or Union Territory administrations should fix the

stock holding and turnover limits, subject to the condition that the stock holding limit and the turnover period shall not be higher than the limit or period as specified herein.

For counting the period of holding of the stock, the date on which any stock is received by the dealer should be included.

The Ministry asked all dealers to declare and regularly update the stock position of sugar on the portal. In May, India banned the export of sugar till September 30 this year with immediate effect, a move aimed to enhance domestic availability and contain prices.

The Government has allowed exports of nearly 16 lakh tonnes of sugar for the 2025-26 marketing year ending September.

Trump expresses frustrations with Netanyahu in their first meeting since Iran war

JERUSALEM, July 28 (AP)

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with President Donald Trump on Tuesday is the first since the two leaders launched a joint war against Iran and marks a chance for Netanyahu to smooth out strains in their relationship.

The meeting comes as both face growing pressures at home. Netanyahu is up for reelection and is embattled in part because of his deteriorating relationship with Trump. Trump is under pressure to end an unpopular war that has wreaked economic havoc and driven prices higher ahead of midterm elections this November.

Trump revealed some tension with Netanyahu ahead of their meeting, complaining on Tuesday about reports that the Israeli leader plans to discuss

intelligence on Iranian activities at Pickaxe Mountain, a potential nuclear site that the US president has threatened repeatedly to bomb.

"I know exactly what's going on at Pickaxe," Trump told "Fox & Friends." He insisted that whatever Iran is doing is "not a big problem" and that "Bibi's telling me that because he wants me to stay involved."

"Why do you have to announce to the world?" Trump added, flashing his frustrations with his ally.

The two leaders also plan to discuss the framework agreement the US and Israel signed with Lebanon over the Israel-Hezbollah war and the expansion of the Abraham Accords, according to a White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to preview the meeting.

"We have a little difference,"

Trump said Monday when asked by reporters if he and the Israeli prime minister were on the same page with Iran. "But pretty close, yeah."

Trump has had a hot-and-cold history with Netanyahu over the years, but upon his return to the White House last year, their alliance seemed stronger than ever. When they started the war together in February, it was with a united front, touting their respective militaries as acting in lockstep to take out Iran's leadership and pave the way for a government more friendly to the West. But as Iran fought back - sending drones and missiles slamming into U.S. Bases and high-rises in cities in the Gulf, and choking off the Strait of Hormuz - Trump came under immense pressure both at home and by allies in the region to end the conflict.