

Several hurt in crackdown on CJP Parliament march

Scores hospitalised with fractures, head and eye injuries as police resort to baton-charge during the protest; 70 protesters detained, say police; CJP leaders meet Nadda, demand Pradhan's ouster

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Several people were injured here on Monday when the police cracked down on a Parliament march called by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) seeking the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan even as the government reached out to the CJP.

At least 38 of the injured were taken to the Lady Hardinge Medical College and around 65 to the Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, with fractures, swellings, and head and eye injuries, sources said.

The protests brought to the fore the growing discontent over the NEET paper leak and irregularities in the CBSE school ex-



Security forces using tear gas to disperse CJP protesters during their march in New Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

amination process as slogans of "Dharmendra Pradhan, *isteefa do* (resign)" boomed. The police action on one of the largest protests in the national capital in recent years came amid an Internet shutdown in the New Delhi district.

Police resorted to baton-

charge and lobbed tear-gas shells on multiple occasions in Jantar Mantar, Patel Chowk, India Gate, Connaught Place, and other parts of the area where large groups protested. Police, however, denied using disproportionate force.

The Delhi police said in a statement that 70 protes-

ters were detained. "Appropriate legal action is being initiated, and an FIR is being registered... for rioting, assault on public servants, damage to public property, and other offences," a press release said.

Representatives of the CJP, Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka, later met Union Minister J.P. Nadda to formally seek resignation of the Union Education Minister. They said Mr. Nadda had agreed to discuss the demands with the government. However, the CJP was still waiting for a response, Mr. Das said in the evening, adding: "The protest is continuing at Jantar Mantar."

CONTINUED ON

» PAGE 12

ANGER BEYOND PAPER LEAKS

» PAGE 12

Several CJP protesters injured in crackdown

Seeing the “brutality with which peacefully protesting youth are being dealt with”, activist Sonam Wangchuk said he will continue fasting “until the youth leaders are allowed to meet the parliamentarians at the Sansad Bhawan, or I am allowed to meet them here at the hospital”.

Mr. Wangchuk had earlier indicated that he was on the verge of calling off his fast if MPs met and assured him that they would raise the issue of education in the Monsoon Session.

Earlier, CJP leaders did not begin the march to the Parliament in the morning, having established contact with the government through New Delhi’s deputy commissioner of police. Delhi Police said in a statement that over 118 police personnel sustained injuries, and that 60 protesters were injured in the melee. “During today’s protest by CJP in the New Delhi area, the protesters displayed unruly, aggressive and violent behaviour,” the police statement said, accusing the “violent mob [of causing] extensive damage to public property”.

By early afternoon, hundreds of protesters slipped through barricades onto Sansad Marg, heading southwest to the new Parliament building. When they were a few hundred metres away from the Parliament house, security forces lathi-charged a small gathering, around which time mobile internet too was cut at 150 spots across central Delhi.

(With inputs from Shrimansi Kaushik, Sreeparna Chakraborty, Ashna Butani, and Sobhana K.)

Monsoon Session off to a stormy start amid Opposition protests

Opposition MPs raise NEET paper leak, Ram Temple donation theft issues; Lok Sabha adjourned after repeated disruptions; MPs of Congress, SP and Trinamool troop into the Well of the House; DMK raises Mekedatu issue, skips Cong.-led meeting

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The proceedings in the Lok Sabha were disrupted on the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament on Monday as Opposition parties raised various issues, primarily the alleged National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) paper leak and Ram Temple donation theft.

The disruption over the NEET issue came amid attempts by protesters, led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), to break barricades to march to Parliament, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged paper leak and CBSE exam irregularities.

The House was adjourned six times since it met in the morning, and was later adjourned for the day at 3 p.m. The only business transacted was the introduction of a Bill by Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to replace an Ordinance which in-



Turbulent start: Lok Sabha proceedings under way on the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Monday. SANSAD TV

creased the number of Supreme Court judges from 34 to 38.

The changed political alignments following the recent Assembly election were also visible during the proceedings.

As soon as the Lok Sabha assembled, Opposition MPs raised slogans, with the Congress, the Samajwadi Party and the Trinamool Congress members protesting over alleged NEET paper leaks and the

donation embezzlement at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. However, the Trinamool MPs who trooped into the Well of the House did not include the 20 rebel MPs who now claim to be a part of the National Citizens Party of India (NCPI).

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which has parted ways with the Congress after the latter switched sides and allied with the newly elected

TVK government in Tamil Nadu, too entered the Well. But the party members raised slogans over the Karnataka government's proposal to build a dam at Mekedatu across the Cauvery river rather than the issues flagged by the Congress.

The split between the Congress and the DMK appeared clear inside the Lok Sabha, although DMK MP T. R. Baalu continued to occupy his earlier seat next to

Congress MP K.C. Venugopal, with Speaker Om Birla yet to approve the party's request for separate seating. The DMK skipped the customary strategy meeting of Opposition parties convened by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his Parliament office on Monday morning.

Sources told *The Hindu* that DMK chief M.K. Stalin made it clear that the party's Lok Sabha members should not associate themselves with issues raised by the Congress on the floor of the House.

Repeated adjournments

Mr. Birla, who began the proceedings with obituary references to six former MPs, first adjourned the House till noon as Opposition MPs raised slogans during the Question Hour.

Earlier, at 2 p.m., BJP MP Jagdambika Pal, who was officiating as the Speaker, said there was adequate quorum to conduct business, but some Opposition MPs alleged they were being prevented from entering the House.

Canada-India defence collaboration for a secure future

Canada is seeing an historic shift for our country – one that opens new opportunities for relations between Canada and India. Speaking at CANSEC 2026, Canada's leading defence, security and emerging technology event, on May 27, 2026, Prime Minister Mark Carney said: "The very nature of war is rapidly evolving, driven by the proliferation of drones, autonomous systems, and weapons in orbit. Conflicts could emerge closer to our borders than before, and new weapons are reducing the distance that separates us from them. The world has changed, and Canada must change with it. That is why, six weeks after forming the government, we announced our ambitious plan to rebuild, rearm, and reinvest in the Canadian Armed Forces."

This is at a time when the world is changing, and Canada-India defence collaboration can translate into a strategy for a secure future.

The good news is that we are already walking on this path. In 2025, Mr. Carney announced that Canada is on track to spend 5% of its GDP on defence by 2035. In March, we already surpassed 2% of the GDP, placing Canada among one of the 10 largest economies in the world.

As Mr. Carney said during his speech in January 2026 at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, there has been a rupture in the world order. Or as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said, we are living through a decade of crisis.

Bilateral defence engagement

In this changing world, defence cooperation between Canada and India has become crucial and we have already taken steps to bolster it.

Most recently, we accredited Defence Advisers in both Ottawa and Delhi. Mr. Carney and Mr. Modi agreed to establish a Defence Dialogue to



Chris Cooter

High Commissioner
for Canada to India

Shared interests drive Canada and India toward a stronger strategic defence partnership

prioritise cooperation on shared interests and align capacities. Canadian and Indian navies participated in the Rim of the Pacific exercises and Talisman Sabre exercises. In June this year, a delegation from India's National Defence College visited Canada. This will allow Indian officers to have direct exchanges with military colleges and bases in Canada.

We have established a national Defence Investment Agency to streamline military procurement. We have also launched a defence Industrial Strategy to diversify supply chains so Canada does not rely on just one country. That is why we are calling on natural partners such as India to participate in co-development, subsystem manufacturing, and sustainment. We are investing in innovation, including through a half billion-dollar investment in next generation aerospace technologies, including a drone innovation hub.

Strategic technology cooperation

Canada's strengths in advanced technologies can complement India's scale, manufacturing capacity, and expanding industrial base. Canada is one of only a few countries with a full-spectrum aerospace sector, while India's domestic aviation industry is the third largest domestic market in the world. Canada is a research and development powerhouse, while India is focused on advancing innovation capacity and high-end manufacturing.

Canada and India are part of a small group of countries with advanced space capabilities. The importance of civilian space cooperation was highlighted in the joint statement between our two Prime Ministers. Canada's strengths in advanced components for satellite technology and space robotics can complement India's strengths in low-cost platforms. Canada's RADARSAT constellation system can have

application in meeting India's aim of advancing its naval capacity in the region. Critical minerals are the building block of defence technologies – another area where Canada and India can expand their partnership. Amid the crisis in West Asia, national security and economic security are inextricably linked. Here, a critical partnership between Canada and India can take shape.

Canada has vast geological reserves of 31 critical minerals from cobalt to helium. Canada holds the tenth largest reserves of rare earth elements; the third largest recoverable resources of uranium; and 5% of the world's tungsten reserves. Additionally, Canada is the second largest producer and exporter of uranium globally, with 24% of global production in 2024. Canada has embarked on a strategy to diversify its trusted partners. For India, there is a need for reliable partners such as Canada to reach its own economic and national security goals. The Canada-India memorandum of understanding on Critical Minerals Value Chain, signed during Mr. Carney's visit to India in February-March 2026, laid the groundwork for the integration of stable, resilient supply chains between the two countries.

Building on shared legacy

As we look forward, it is worth recalling our shared history and common sacrifice. Recently, I visited the Kirkee War Cemetery in Pune where members of the Royal Canadian Air Force killed during the Second World War were laid to rest. As I walked through the memorial site, I was reminded that our countries have stood shoulder to shoulder in the past, not just on the battlefield but for common causes and for the shared security of our countries. Let us continue that long-standing tradition as we reshape the defence cooperation between our two countries.

No decision yet on increasing ethanol blending in petrol: Govt

ENS Economic Bureau

New Delhi, July 20

AMID THE backlash on ethanol-blended petrol, the government on Monday informed Parliament that no decision has been taken on raising blending levels beyond the current 20%, and any decision to raise the blending levels will be taken only after detailed studies and stakeholder consultations. There is also no plan to make lower ethanol-petrol blends and pure petrol available at fuel stations.

“So far, no decision has been taken by the Government for increasing ethanol blending with petrol beyond 20%. Any future decision regarding higher ethanol blends will be taken only after detailed scientific and technical studies and consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including automobile manufacturers, Oil Marketing Companies and research institutions,” Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Suresh Gopi informed Rajya Sabha.

India achieved 20% ethanol blending in petrol last year and at present, the E20 fuel — 80



India achieved 20% ethanol blend in petrol last year. REUTERS

parts petrol and 20 parts ethanol — is the standard petrol variant across the country.

There has been a public backlash over the E20 fuel, with claims ranging from notable reduction in mileage and engine component wear and tear in older vehicles whose engines were not designed for higher ethanol blends.

Gopi said that while the E20 fuel can reduce fuel economy by 3-5% in older vehicles whose engines are not designed for this blend, it is cleaner and superior in other performance parameters vis-a-

vis pure petrol and lower ethanol-petrol blends.

“With regard to efficiency, studies indicate that fuel economy depends on several factors, including driving conditions, driving habits and vehicle maintenance. Mileage depends on driving habits, tyre pressure, servicing and AC load far more than fuel type. Any reduction in fuel economy in certain older E10-designed vehicles is generally limited to about 3-5%, while E20 offers a higher octane rating, superior anti-knock characteristics, cleaner combustion and smoother engine operation,” the minister said.

On its part, the government has been attempting to allay fears, saying that the drop in mileage in older vehicles would be marginal, and would be outweighed by the benefits like higher octane rating, superior anti-knock characteristics, faster combustion, better pickup, smoother acceleration and cleaner engine operation.

The government has also consistently rejected claims that E20 fuel could damage engine components. **FULL REPORT ON**

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Houthis declare maritime blockade of Saudi Arabia at Red Sea gateway

Iran-aligned group based in Yemen says the naval ban at the Bab el-Mandeb Strait will be effective immediately, calling the move an 'equation of an eye for an eye'; blockade will strain Saudi Arabia's economy by cutting off access to its Red Sea ports

Agence France-Presse

SANAA

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis announced a maritime embargo of Saudi Arabia on Monday, stepping up the U.S.-Iran war as the rebels threatened the top oil exporter's ability to bypass the Strait of Hormuz.

Deputy head of the Houthi media office, Nasruddin Amer, said on X that the Bab el-Mandeb strait will be closed in response to what he called Saudi Arabia's "unjust blockade on Yemenis for over 10 years."

The group's announcement came as Iran said it was back to a "full-scale



Strategic waterway: Yemeni fishermen pass by a commercial ship at the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Yemen. AP

war" with the United States.

Houthi military spokesperson, Yahya Saree, said in a video statement that the ban will be effective immediately, describing it as

an "equation of 'an eye for an eye.'"

"Any foolish act committed by the reckless Saudi enemy will be met with a comprehensive escalation," Mr. Saree added.

Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is the gateway to the Red Sea through which around 12% of the world's trade passes. The Houthis earlier demonstrated their ability to disrupt shipping there when they targeted ships for months over the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, with over 100 vessels attacked.

First fire

Saudi Arabia and the Houthis traded fire last week for the first time in years, threatening a 2022 truce that has held despite expiring.

The exchange of fire was set off when an Iranian plane arriving from Tehran

attempted to land in Sanaa, challenging Saudi Arabia's hegemony over Yemeni skies.

The Houthis' naval blockade, if enforced, could further strain Saudi Arabia's economy by cutting off access to its Red Sea ports, which have been vital for oil exports as renewed fighting limits passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

The blockade is also expected to hurt global markets that rely on Saudi Arabia – the world's leading crude exporter, producing over 10 million barrels per day – for their energy imports.

(With inputs from The Associated Press)

China, Philippines trade barbs in South China Sea encounter

Associated Press

MANILA

The Philippine military on Monday accused China's coast guard of allegedly injuring a Filipino sailor during an incident in the disputed Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea.

The military said Chinese coast guard personnel aboard a motorboat repeatedly struck the sailor on the head with a wooden baton, injuring him and damaging his smaller vessel.

China's coast guard res-

ponded by claiming that two rubber boats belonging to a Filipino vessel had rammed the Chinese patrol boat. "During the incident, Philippine personnel attacked Chinese law enforcement personnel using oars and long sticks," the Chinese coast guard said in a statement on social media.

The row was just the latest altercation between Chinese and Philippines personnel in disputed waters in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims virtually in its entirety.

Thousands of Israelis march seeking return of settlements in Gaza Strip

Agence France-Presse

TEL AVIV

Thousands of Israelis, including settlers and right-wing activists, marched towards the border with Gaza on Sunday, calling on the government to re-establish Israeli settlements in the war-shattered Palestinian territory.

The demonstrators gathered near the border before walking in large numbers towards the fence overlooking northern Gaza, where Israeli security forces were deployed to prevent participants from advancing further.



Settler push: Israeli Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir seen during the march towards the Gaza Strip in southern Israel on Sunday. REUTERS

“We are walking today to tell the government of Israel and show all the world that this land belongs to us and that Gaza really be-

longs to us and that we want to go back there,” a participant said.

Another participant said the event marked what he

viewed as “just the beginning” of a campaign to restore Israeli communities in the coastal territory.

“We are having a big march back to the Gaza Strip, back to where Jews lived for hundreds, thousands of years,” he said, adding that the 2005 withdrawal had been temporary.

Previous marches have likewise sought to pressure the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to re-establish settlements in the territory—much of which has been rendered uninhabitable by more than two years of war.

Veteran Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya named group's leader

Reuters
July 20

KHALIL AL-Hayya, a senior Hamas official who survived an Israeli raid on Qatar in September last year and who is seen as having good ties with Iran, was named on Monday as the leader of the Palestinian militant group.

Hayya, who lost a son in the Gaza conflict and two sons in previous wars, has been based with other Hamas leaders in Doha. He has become increasingly influential in the group as

other top Hamas officials have been killed in Israeli strikes, among them Ismail Haniyeh on a visit to Iran and Yahya Sinwar in the Gaza Strip.

Hayya was at the heart of ceasefire talks throughout the Gaza war that erupted when Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, prompting a sweeping Israeli offensive that has flattened much of the enclave since then.

He took part in indirect talks with Israel that culminated in a US-brokered ceasefire in October 2025 that halted major



Khalil al-Hayya

fighting in Gaza, although Israel has continued attacks on Hamas and other militants who it says pose an imminent threat.

An earlier ceasefire initiative had been on the agenda for discussion between the 64-year-old and other Hamas leaders when they were targeted in Israel's September 9 attack on Doha, in which six people were killed but no top Hamas officials.

Hayya, widely seen as the group's most influential figure abroad since Haniyeh was killed by Israel in Iran in July 2024, is part of a five-man leadership council based in Qatar that has led Hamas since Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of the October 2023 attacks, was killed last year.

Hailing from the Gaza Strip, Hayya is a veteran member of the Islamist group. Regarded as having good ties with Iran, a vital source of arms and finance for Hamas, he has been closely involved in the group's efforts to broker several truces with Israel, playing a key role in ending a 2014 conflict and again in attempts to secure an end to the current Gaza war.

Hayya has been part of Hamas since it was set up in 1987.

In the early 1980s, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood, the Sunni Islamist movement from

which Hamas emerged, along with Haniyeh and Sinwar, Hamas sources say. In Gaza, he was detained several times by Israel. In 2007, an Israeli airstrike hit his family home in Gaza City killing several relatives. In 2008, his son Hamza was killed by an Israeli airstrike.

Hayya left Gaza several years ago, serving as a Hamas point person for ties with the Arab and Islamic worlds and basing himself in Qatar. He accompanied Haniyeh to Tehran for the visit in July during which Haniyeh was assassinated.

Hormuz crisis: Crude imports surge 60%; net oil, gas imports up 45%

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, July 20

INDIA'S CRUDE oil import bill surged by over 60% on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis in the first quarter of the current financial year even as import volumes dipped slightly amid supply tightness and elevated prices due to the West Asia crisis and stifled energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, as per provisional data from the petroleum ministry.

Similarly, liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports and petroleum product exports declined in volume terms, while rising in value. Overall, the country's net oil and gas imports jumped 45% in value from year-ago levels, underscoring the adverse economic impact of the West Asia crisis on energy import-dependent India.

The country depends on imports to meet over 88% of its crude oil requirement and about half of its consumption of natural gas, which is imported as LNG, or super-chilled gas. Despite depending on imported oil and gas, it is a net exporter of petroleum products due to its massive oil refining capacity, while it also imports some petroleum products like liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

Around 40% of India's crude oil imports, 60% of its LNG imports, and a whopping 90% of its LPG imports came from West Asia through the strait. Apart from grappling with physical supply tightness due to the Strait of Hormuz crisis, the resultant surge in international prices forced India to import oil and gas at extremely high rates, as the country has been prioritising supply security over price considerations.

The June MoU between the US and Iran brought a sigh of relief for India and the global energy market, but the renewed

• West Asia war impacts energy bill

	APR-JUN FY26	APR-JUN FY27	CHANGE (%)
Oil imports (mn tn)	62.6	59.8	-4.5
Oil imports (\$ bn)	30.9	49.8	61.2
Petroleum pdt imports (mn tn)	12.2	7.1	-41.8
Petroleum pdt imports (\$ bn)	5.8	4.2	-27.6
LNG imports (mscm)	8396	7674	-8.6
LNG imports (\$ bn)	3.4	3.6	5.9
Petroleum pdt exports (mn tn)	15	11.3	-24.7
Petroleum pdt exports (\$ bn)	9.1	12.7	39.6
Net oil & gas imports (\$ bn)	30.9	44.9	45.3

SOURCE: PETROLEUM PLANNING AND ANALYSIS CELL (PPAC)

conflict in the Gulf following the pact's effective collapse is emerging as a major concern as energy flows through the strait have crashed again after a short-lived three-week recovery.

Oil & gas trade math

According to latest provisional data released by the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), crude oil imports in the June quarter rose 61.2% y-o-y to \$49.8 billion, even as import volumes declined 4.5% to 59.8 million tonnes (mt), or about 438 million barrels. This trans-

lates to about \$113 per barrel as the average landed price of imported crude oil in the June quarter, up from around \$67 per barrel in the corresponding quarter of last year. The PPAC data shows that India's dependence on imported oil in April-June was 89.1%, flat on a y-o-y basis.

As for LNG imports, while supplies declined 8.6% to 7,674 million standard cubic metres (mscm) in April-June from 8,396 mscm in the corresponding quarter of last year, the LNG import bill rose by almost 6% to \$3.6 billion, reflecting the spurt in prices.

Petroleum product imports declined almost 42% in volume terms to 7.1 mt, as supply of major petroleum products that India imports — like LPG — were impacted by the West Asia war. In value terms, the decline in petroleum product imports was relatively lower — down 27.6% to \$4.2 billion — due to high international prices.

The country's petroleum product export volumes declined by a fourth to 11.3 mt in April-June from 15 mt in the corresponding period of last year as domestic fuel supplies took precedence amid the global supply crunch. Nonetheless, the exports surged nearly 40% in value due to the jump in international petroleum fuel prices.

Taking into account the overall oil, LNG, and petroleum product imports as well as fuel exports, the country's net oil and gas imports rose 45.3% y-o-y in April-June to \$44.9 billion, the PPAC data shows. Energy imports are a major component of India's overall imports, and any meaningful increase has ramifications for its trade balance, current account, inflation, and the rupee's exchange rate, among others.

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