

Patel slams BJP over MNREGA changes

By Special Correspondent

Rewa: Former minister and Congress Working Committee (CWC) member Kamleshwar Patel on Friday strongly criticised the BJP-led Union and Madhya Pradesh governments over changes to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) and alleged administrative negligence behind the contaminated water tragedy in Indore.

Addressing a press conference at the Circuit House here, Patel said the BJP government's policies and functioning must be exposed before the country. He alleged that MNREGA, which provided a legal guarantee of employment to millions of poor and working families in rural India, had been altered without wide debate, consultation with states or adherence to democratic processes.

Patel said MNREGA was not merely a welfare scheme but a legal right enacted by the Congress after a transparent and consultative process. He accused the BJP of systematically weakening the Act through budget cuts, withholding of funds and administrative hurdles, and now converting it into a centrally controlled scheme. According to him, the new framework removes the legal right to employment, undermines panchayats, shifts financial burdens to states and disproportionately harms



poor labourers, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women.

Expressing concern over Madhya Pradesh, Patel said that despite lakhs of registered workers, less than one per cent receive 100 days of employment, reflecting the government's intent.

Raising the Indore incident, where over 20 people reportedly died after consuming conta-

minated water, Patel termed it a result of administrative apathy and political arrogance. He alleged that complaints had been ignored for two years and questioned the absence of accountability despite BJP representatives holding all key posts.

Patel said the Congress would continue its democratic struggle to ensure accountability and protect the rights and lives of the poor.

BJP leader fined Rs 54 cr for flattening mountain

Shivpuri: In a massive

crackdown on illegal mining, the Shivpuri district administration has imposed a staggering fine of Rs 54.58 crore on a local BJP leader and his brothers for allegedly excavating and selling an entire mountain. Karera BJP Mandal President Venus Goyal, along with his brothers Rajesh Goyal, a former Mandi Vice-Chairman, and businessman Bhavesh Goyal, are accused of systematically stripping the "Changez Pahadi" near the four-lane highway. Following a detailed investigation by Karter Tehsildar Kalpana Sharma, Collector Ravindra Kumar Choudhary confirmed the illegal extraction of over 1.81 lakh cubic meters of murram and boulders.

Despite the monumental fine, the administration's action has



sparked intense political heat as no FIR has been registered against the influential family. Critics are questioning if the "ruling party connection" is shielding the trio from criminal proceedings, as the intervention remains confined to a financial penalty rather than police custody. The sheer scale of the environmental devastation—where a significant natural landmark has been virtually erased for profit—has shocked environmentalists. While the district authorities maintain that the penalty follows statutory guidelines, the absence of a criminal case has led to allegations of a "selective" crackdown, raising concerns over whether the hefty fine will ever be recovered or if it serves as a mere symbolic gesture against systemic "mining-mafia" activities.

Spurned fiancé arrested for brutal murder of teenage girl in Jabalpur

Jabalpur: A chilling act of vengeance has shaken Jabalpur's Adhartal area after a 19-year-old girl was allegedly murdered by her former fiancé and his accomplice. The victim, Richa Rajak, a resident of Imaliya and a worker at a factory in Richhai, was returning home from her shift when she was intercepted by the accused, Sahil Rajak, and his associate, Ajay Thakur. In a sudden and violent confrontation, Sahil reportedly launched a frenzied knife attack, leaving the teenager with fatal injuries before fleeing the scene.

Preliminary police investigations reveal that Richa and Sahil had previously been engaged. However, the victim



had recently called off the marriage, a decision that reportedly fueled Sahil's resentment. Driven by a desire for revenge over the broken engagement, he plotted the targeted attack to eliminate her.

Adhartal police acted swiftly following the sensational crime, tracking down and arresting both Sahil and Ajay. The duo now faces murder charges as authorities gather further evidence.

This tragic incident has sparked concerns over the safety of women commuters and the disturbing rise in violent crimes stemming from domestic and personal disputes in the region.

Straying tigress sparks terror in Shivpuri villages

Shivpuri: Panic has gripped the villages of Sardar Singh Pura and Khutela near the Madhav Tiger Reserve, as a translocated tigress from Bandhavgarh continues to prowl near human settlements. Unlike typical tigers that establish deep-forest territories, this "wanderer" female has shown a peculiar preference for village outskirts and agricultural fields. For the past four days, she has been stationed within a one-kilometer radius of the Surwya area, spending her daylight hours lounging on farm embankments before moving toward village borders at dusk.

The tigress's refusal to retreat into the core jungle has left local residents in a state of constant fear. Wildlife experts note that instead of settling into a specific range, she appears to be roaming extensively, possibly attempting to claim the entire reserve as her domain. While the behavior is unusual for a translocated animal, the Forest Department's tracking teams are monitoring her movements around the clock to prevent any man-animal conflict. Villagers have been



advised to remain cautious as authorities work to nudge the tigress back into the safety of the deep forest, away from the terrified rural community.

Youth gets 20 years' jail for minor's rape

Ujjain: A court in the Ujjain district has sentenced a 22-year-old man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 for the rape of a minor.

The verdict was delivered by Judge Prema Sahu of the Additional Court in Tarana tehsil. The convict, Arun Chauhan, a resident of Rudraheeda village under the Ghatia police station jurisdiction, was found guilty under multiple sections of the law. According to the prosecution, the case dates back to October 8, 2024, when the victim filed a police report.

She stated that while she was on her way to a field, Chauhan lured her away under the false pretext of marriage.

He subsequently engaged in sexual relations with her against her will. Following a thorough investigation, the police submitted a chargesheet to the court. After evaluating the oral and documentary evidence presented by the prosecution, the court found the accused guilty of the heinous crime and pronounced the sentence to ensure justice for the survivor.

Electricity team attacked over outstanding bills in Badnagar

► Farmer assaults officials after connection disconnected for non-payment

Ujjain: A routine recovery drive turned violent in Piplu village, Badnagar, when a team from the electricity department was physically assaulted by a local farmer. The incident occurred while officials were performing their duties to recover long-overdue arrears.

The team, led by Supervisor Janardan Dwivedi, arrived at the residence of farmer Lokendra, son of Jagdish, to collect outstanding payments. Reports indicate that Lokendra had failed to clear his electricity bills for a significant period. When the department proceeded to disconnect the power supply by cutting the wires, the farmer became enraged and launched a physical attack on Dwivedi and his colleagues. The assault was captured on a mobile phone, and the resulting video has since surfaced as evidence. Following the confrontation, the aggrieved employees filed a formal complaint at the Bad-



nagar police station. The police have registered a case for obstructing official duties and assault, and an investigation is currently underway to hold the accused farmer accountable for the violence.

Student dies in tractor-trolley collision, driver absconds

Morena: A routine commute turned into a nightmare in Porsa town on Thursday when an 18-year-old student was fatally struck by a tractor-trolley. The victim, identified as Ankit Baghel, a resident of Inni Khaira village, was cycling home after attending his daily coaching classes when a speed vehicle laden with soil collided with him.

The impact left Baghel with critical injuries, prompting an immediate rescue effort by onlookers. He was rushed to the Porsa hospital, but as his condition deteriorated rapidly, doctors referred him to the Morena District Hospital. Despite the medical team's best efforts, the young student succumbed to his injuries.

The driver of the tractor-trolley abandoned the vehicle and fled the scene. Local police have since seized the soil-laden trolley and registered a case against the unidentified driver. A team has been deployed to track down the absconding suspect, while the local community mourns the loss of a promising young life.

Police retreat after drunken youths pelt stones

► Escalating violence in Satna raises law and order concerns



Satna: A routine call to disperse a group of rowdy individuals turned into a dangerous confrontation late Thursday night when a police team was targeted by an intoxicated mob. The incident occurred around midnight near the water tank in Hanuman Nagar, Nai Basti,

forcing five to six officers to flee to safety.

The tension began when Kolgawan police responded to reports of youths creating a public disturbance. When two initial officers were met with verbal abuse, they called for reinforcements.

However, as the team—led by ASI Umesh Pandey and four constables—followed the suspects into a nearby settlement, they were surrounded by approximately 12 intoxicated men. The group launched a sudden and coordinated stone-pelting attack, catching the officers off guard. While no serious injuries were reported, the bold assault has created a climate of fear in the locality and raised urgent questions regarding the safety of personnel on duty. Kolgawan station in-charge, Sudeep Soni, confirmed that authorities are currently reviewing CCTV footage and viral videos to identify the culprits. Although no arrests have been made yet, officials have promised strict legal action against those involved in the attack.

Satna Municipal Corporation grants Rs 25 lakh to family of deceased sewer worker



Satna: In a swift move to provide relief to the bereaved family of a laborer, the Satna Municipal Corporation has handed over an ex-gratia payment of ₹25 lakh following a

tragic onsite accident. The victim, Santal Kushwaha, lost his life a few days ago while working on a sewer project in front of the Toyota agency. Acting on the directives of Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, Mayor Yogesh Kumar Tamrakar met with the victim's wife, Seema Kushwaha, to facilitate the direct bank transfer of the compensation and present a symbolic check. This government aid comes in addition to Rs 20 lakh previously provided by the contractor, M/s Envirad Projects Pvt. Ltd., bringing the total financial support to ₹45 lakh.

The distribution ceremony was attended by senior officials, including Finance Deputy Commissioner Satyam Mishra and Executive Engineer R.P. Singh. Mayor Tamrakar emphasized the administration's commitment to worker safety and ensuring that the families of frontline laborers are not left helpless in the face of such unfortunate tragedies.

Mother and three children rescued from water tank

► Tense standoff in Raisen

Raisen: A narrow escape from tragedy unfolded in the Udaipura area of Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh, when a woman, driven to despair by domestic turmoil and financial hardship, climbed an 80-feet-high water tank with her three young children and threatened to jump. The woman, identified as Pooja Dhakad, cited persistent harassment by her father-in-law as the reasons for her drastic actions. She further claimed she was being denied funds for basic household expenses, leaving her in a state of extreme distress. Upon receiving the alarm, Tehsildar Dinesh Bargale and Station House Officer (SHO) Jaywant Singh Kakodia rushed to the scene. As a crowd gathered in panic, the police quickly deployed

a safety net at the base of the tank. For over an hour, officials maintained constant communication with Pooja, attempting to talk her down while she repeatedly threatened to leap. The high-stakes standoff ended through a coordinated tactical maneuver. While SHO Kakodia distracted Pooja with continued persuasion, Sub-Inspector Keshav Sharma managed to approach from behind and secure her. All four individuals were subsequently brought down safely, averting what could have been a catastrophic loss of life. Disturbingly, reports revealed this was the second such incident; Pooja had climbed the same tank on December 24. Following the rescue, officials summoned her father-in-law, who admitted to his lapses. Authorities have now initiated mediation to resolve the family dispute through mutual agreement, prioritizing the long-term safety of the mother and her children.

Shivpuri: In a major push for financial inclusion, Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya Scindia, announced that rural women will soon lead the charge in expanding banking services across villages. Under a new initiative, women will be trained to open and manage bank accounts through India Post Payments Bank (IPPB). Financial independence via digital banking

Scindia entrusts India Post Banking to village leaders

► Empowering rural women



at the grassroots level, we are providing them an opportunity to earn an additional income of Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000 per month," the Minister stat-

ed. This move aligns with the government's vision of fostering economic independence among rural women. Modernizing post offices & farmer support: The Minister also shed light on a strategic partnership between the Department of Posts and the Ministry of Agriculture. This collaboration will streamline the monitoring and distribution of fertilizers to ensure farmers receive timely supplies. Scindia emphasized that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the Indian Postal Department is undergoing rapid modernization. "Our goal is to transform India Post into the world's leading postal service while bringing essential government services directly to the doorsteps of rural citizens," he added. The initiative marks a significant step toward strengthening Digital India through female-led local leadership.