

SC releases draft regulations on use of AI in courts, seeks comments from stakeholders, public

New Delhi, 4 June: In a move to modernise the legal landscape while safeguarding judicial integrity, the Supreme Court released draft 'Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in courts' which contain a list of permissible and forbidden usage, stating that "no judicial outcome shall be reached through Algorithmic Decision-Making alone."

Inviting comments and suggestions from stakeholders and the general public by June 20, the Artificial Intelligence Committee of the Supreme Court provides for allowing AI tools in "case management (including identification of defects in new filings), cause list preparation, hearing scheduling and docket prioritisation". The draft

regulations for use of AI in courts "shall apply to the use, deployment, or integration of AI in any judicial, adjudicatory or administrative function of the Supreme Court of India, High Courts, and all Courts including the Tribunals and statutory Commissions performing adjudicatory functions, within the territory of India".

The necessity for such a regulatory framework has become increasingly evident as the top court and several High Courts have raised concerns about the misuse of AI tools, which sometimes produce non-existent case laws that have even influenced actual judgments. At the same time, the Justices of the Supreme Court have emphasised the importance



of using AI tools to enhance benefits such as translating judgments into local languages and streamlining legal searches. "These regulations aim to govern the use of AI, grounded in the principles of human primacy, transparency, accountability, data protection, and

judicial independence, while establishing an institutional framework for responsible AI adoption across India's judicial system," the apex court said in its notice.

The 35-page draft proposes a clear "red line" for technology, indicating that while AI may as-

sist, it will never replace the human mind. According to one of the regulations, "the use of AI in court processes shall at all times remain strictly subservient to human judgment and judicial authority and every AI System shall function solely in an assistive capacity and shall not supplant or compromise the independent exercise of judicial authority by a duly appointed judicial officer and the ultimate authority to determine matters of law, fact and justice shall vest exclusively in the judicial officers of the competent jurisdiction." Regulation 20 states that the use of AI for reaching judicial outcomes, such as judgments, sentencing, or determining the credibility of witnesses, is strictly forbidden.

CJP attacks Centre over JEE data exposure, calls for Pradhan's sacking

New Delhi, 4 June: The Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) on Thursday said the reported exposure of JEE (Advanced) 2026 candidate data due to a cloud storage configuration issue in the results portal showed how "incompetent" people were running the country's education system and digital infrastructure.

The leaders of the campaign, which began on social media and went on to take a life of its own, also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to immediately sack Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, saying he had failed to ensure accountability in the education sector. Addressing a press conference here, CJP leaders said the incident had raised fresh concerns about the security of student data and the government's handling of examination systems. CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka, an alumnus of IIT Kanpur and the London School of Economics who was appointed the campaign's spokesperson on Wednesday, said the expo-

sure of candidate information reflected the poor state of cybersecurity safeguards.

"Names, phone numbers and images of nearly two lakh students got exposed. In a country that has produced techies leading top technology companies across the world, the education minister and the government are so incompetent that they are unable to run basic systems securely," Ranka said. "The Education Minister is totally incompetent. He has run the education system into the ground. We appeal to the Prime Minister to sack Dharmendra Pradhan immediately. This is about the future of our students and a lot is at stake," he added.

The CJP spokesperson also said public institutions required individuals with scientific temper and technical competence. Questioning the response of IIT Roorkee, which conducted the exam this year as its nodal body, Ranka said the institute's assertion that the exposed data was in a "read-only" format did not diminish the seriousness of the issue.

Seventeen projects, initiatives selected for National Awards for e-Governance

New Delhi, 4 June: A total of 17 projects or initiatives selected for the National Awards for e-Governance 2026 across seven categories to recognise exemplary contributions in digital governance, an official statement issued on Thursday said. The National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) are presented every year to recognise and promote excellence in implementation of e-governance initiatives. The 29th NAeG 2026 awardees in seven categories include the gram panchayats category, recognising deepening and widening of service delivery at grassroots level through digitisation. "Agri Stack", a project of Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, "Mahakumbh 2025" by Prayagraj Mela Authority, Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, and Blood Bag Traceability and Citizen Interaction portal for promoting

speedy, safe and voluntary blood donation by Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC) are among the awardees, according to the statement issued by the Personnel Ministry.

TRINETRA, an AI based Video Surveillance system for Mahakal Rudrasagar Integrated Development Area (MRIDA), including Mahakaleshwar Temple by Mahakaleshwar Temple Trust, Samrat Vikramaditya Prashasnik Sankul Bhawan, Ujjain; and Panchayat Advancement Index, a Data Driven Governance for Viksit Bharat by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj are also among the awardees, it said.

The awards ceremony will be held during the 29th National Conference on e-Governance in Jaipur, Rajasthan, the statement said, without mentioning the date

Maharashtra environmentalist's battle for tree conservation bears fruit

Latur, 4 June: Planting a tree may be a symbolic gesture for many people, but for green activist Sudhakar Deshmukh, who hails from Maharashtra's Beed district, it has been a lifelong mission spanning more than four decades. A resident of Mamdapur village under Ambejogji tehsil, the environmentalist is claimed to have distributed more than 18 lakhs saplings across Maharashtra.

These saplings have been gifted during weddings, religious gatherings, birthdays, retirement ceremonies, housewarming functions and public events. While grazing cattle and working in fields during early years of life, he often survived on wild fruits and edible plants found in forests and farmlands. Instead of discarding the seeds of the fruits he consumed, Deshmukh began planting them in open spaces, along riverbanks and near rocky terrain.

The initiative has since become a powerful platform for promoting tree plantation and conservation across Maharashtra. Through the campaign, Deshmukh established a free nursery and seed bank at his residence. The bank preserves seeds of numerous indigenous tree species, including banyan, peepal,

tamarind, mango, amla, bael, karanj and kadamba. These seeds are distributed free of cost to students, farmers, women's self-help groups and senior citizens. Beyond plantation drives, the 57-year-old activist has been a persistent advocate for a comprehensive tree census across Maharashtra.

"Since 2005, I have been actively advocating this cause through awareness campaigns and public outreach. In 2012-13, during the Winter Session of the legislature in Nagpur, me and my family launched a campaign.

"We have consistently demanded that all tree species with a trunk circumference of at least 6 feet and a height of 7 to 10 feet be officially counted and recorded. We urged authorities to display boards in every village indicating the total number of trees within its limits," he told PTI on the eve of World Environment Day. As a result of these sustained efforts, tree census activities have now been incorporated under the state government's 'Majhi Vasundhara Abhiyan' (My Earth Mission), which is a major outcome of the campaign, he maintained.

Another major achievement of our movement came in 2022-23, when municipal corporations, municipalities and gram panchay-

ats were directed under the Majhi Vasundhara Abhiyan to conduct tree censuses and maintain official records of the trees within their jurisdictions," Deshmukh stated. The activist's decades-long contribution to tree conservation has earned him several honours, including the prestigious 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vanashree Award' from the Maharashtra government in 2023.

The Supreme Court has refused to interfere with the Madras High Court order which dismissed a plea seeking action against officials who denied permission to Hindu devotees to light a lamp on Thiruparankundram hill but allowed religious celebrations during Ramzan.

A bench of justices PS Narasimha, Aravind Kumar and Shree Chandrashekar refused to interfere with the order of the Madurai bench of the high court but reduced the cost imposed on the petitioner Hindu Dharma Parishad. "While we are not inclined to interfere with the impugned order passed by the high court, we are of the opinion that imposition of costs quantified at Rs 50,000 is on the excessive side and can be reduced to Rs 5,000 in the facts and circumstances of the case. Ordered accordingly," it said in its order of June 2.

The seer has also attracted attention over his opposition to the January 2024 consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, saying the temple structure was incomplete and that the ceremony was not in accordance with sacred Shastra rules. Separately, a special POCOSCO court had directed Uttar Pradesh police to register an FIR against him and some of his disciples over allegations of sexual assault involving minors. Avimuktshwaranand has denied the allegations, describing them as fabricated, and has publicly offered to undergo a narco-analysis test to establish his innocence.

Three returnees from Ebola-hit African nations kept in home isolation in Chhattisgarh's Durg

Durg, 4 June: Three persons, who recently returned to Chhattisgarh's Durg district from Ebola virus-affected countries in Africa, have been placed under 21-day home isolation as a precautionary measure, officials said on Thursday. The three travellers, however, show no symptoms of the disease and have no history of contact with Ebola-infected persons, officials said. Durg Collector Abhijeet Singh said one woman arrived in Durg from the Democratic Republic of Congo on May 31, while two others reached Bilhailai on June 2 from Ethiopia and Uganda. Of the three travellers, two are Indian nationals and one is a Ugandan citizen, he said. "As none of them have symptoms and there is no history of contact, all three have been placed under home isolation for 21 days. They are currently asymptomatic and in good health," Singh said.

Health officials have been monitoring their condition through telephonic their health status every morning and evening, he said. The travellers have been advised to immediately inform the tracing team, health department, control room or the office of the Chief Medical and Health Officer if they experience any discomfort or symptoms during the monitoring period, he said. Durg Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Manoj Dani said international travellers arriving from Ebola-affected countries, particularly in Africa, are being placed under home isolation for 21 days and are being provided daily health monitoring and medical advice.

Avimuktshwaranand spends night at roadside camp after stay permission denied in UP's Kannauj

Kannauj (UP), 4 June: Swami Avimuktshwaranand Saraswati, who is involved in a row over his claim to the title of Shankaracharya and is also facing allegations in a POCOSCO case, was allegedly denied permission to stay at a school here during his yatra for protection of cows, his aides claimed on Thursday. Administrative officials refused to comment on the claim. Avimuktshwaranand had arrived in Kannauj on Wednesday as part of his ongoing 'Gau Vishti Yatra' and was scheduled to halt overnight at Asha Public School in Salempur, Chhibramau. After permission for the stay was allegedly denied, he spent the night at a roadside camp, his aides said.

Organisers alleged that the administration informed them in the evening that permission for the stay had not been granted,

leading to the cancellation of the programme. Following the development, the Shankaracharya decided to stay at the welcome site at Pal Chauraha, where a temporary tent had been erected. Police personnel remained deployed at the spot throughout the night. According to aides, there was no arrangement for lights or fans at the site despite the prevailing heat, and attendants used hand-held fans to provide relief to the seer. Speaking to reporters before leaving for Farrukhabad on Thursday morning, Avimuktshwaranand said his yatra would continue and had already covered around 150 Assembly constituencies. He said the objective of the yatra was to seek the status of 'Rashtra Mata' (National Mother) for cows and to spread awareness about cow protection, conservation and re-

ligious values. Reacting to the incident, Samajwadi Party President and Kannauj MP Akhilesh Yadav criticised the Yogi Adityanath



government in a post on X. "BJP that has no regard even for saints does not deserve to continue. This is the lesson our great epics teach us: those who create obstacles in the path of saints, sacred rituals, and right-

eous deeds ultimately meet their end through divine justice itself," Yadav said. He also shared a video of Avimuktshwaranand in which he is mak-

ing allegations against the state government. Avimuktshwaranand was in news during the Magh Mela at Prayagraj in January after a dispute with the police over a proposed chariot procession on a peak bathing

East coast railway registers impressive growth in non-fare revenue through innovative asset monetisation

Diversified revenue streams from rail coach restaurants, wagon cleaning, land licensing and passenger amenities strengthen East Coast Railway's non-fare earnings portfolio while promoting sustainability and community engagement

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Bhubaneswar, 4 June: In a significant stride towards financial sustainability and customer centric development, East Coast Railway has registered impressive growth in Non-Fare Revenue (NFR) through innovative utilisation of railway assets across its network. Moving beyond conventional passenger and freight earnings, the Railway has transformed underutilised assets and service spaces into revenue generating avenues that also enhance passenger convenience, local employment and environmental sustainability.

The achievement reflects East Coast Railway's vision of developing railway infrastructure not merely as transport assets, but as community oriented spaces that create economic opportunities while improving the travel experience.

CBI books man for posing as undersecretary in PMO

New Delhi, 4 June: The CBI has filed charges against a man for impersonating an undersecretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), officials said Thursday.

The accused, identified as P Elangovan, became the subject of an investigation initiated following a complaint from the PMO. The complaint originated from a wedding invitation card that was received at the PMO, which stated that Elangovan was employed as an undersecretary.

"The assistant director, PMO, has mentioned in his letter that prima facie this appears to be a case of impersonation as an official of the Prime Minister's Office because as per official records, no individual with the name 'Thiru P Elangovan' has worked in PMO till date," the complaint from the PMO said.

Based on the complaint, the CBI registered a preliminary enquiry on January 8, which showed that in 2023, Elangovan had called V Kumaresan,

Among the most visible initiatives are Rail Coach Restaurants at Khurda Road, Puri, Rayagada, Titilagarh, Muniguda and Hirakud stations. These creatively redesigned coaches have emerged as popular dining destinations, generating Rs.1,36,60,369 in revenue while enhancing station ambience, promoting tourism and creating local employment.

Passenger oriented logistics services also contributed significantly, with two wheeler packing contracts at Talcher, Berhampur, Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur stations earning Rs.35,48,606 by providing secure and convenient transportation solutions for passengers. Wagon cleaning contracts at Angul BOXN Shed and Sarla generated Rs.74,45,455, while also supporting improved freight operations, asset maintenance and cleaner railway infrastructure.

the Joint Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR-CE), over the phone and falsely introduced himself as a PMO officer. He requested access for 'VIP darshan' for his relatives at the Annamalai Temple in Thiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, a request that Kumaresan granted in good faith. Later, he kept making such requests, which Kumaresan approved, thinking he was an officer from the PMO.

"During the enquiry, it was found that P Elangovan induced V Kumaresan to send a marriage invitation card for the wedding of V Kumaresan's son, scheduled on April 09, 2025, by showing P Elangovan as a family member of V Kumaresan so that P Elangovan could obtain leave from his office, i.e. the PMO," the CBI FIR said. The invitation card was then sent to the PMO by Kumaresan, which led to the revelation of Elangovan's deception and prompted the CBI to file an FIR.

CJP backed by 'urban naxals', claims Telangana BJP chief



Hyderabad, 4 June: Telangana BJP president N Ramchander Rao on Thursday alleged that groups such as CJP were being backed by "urban naxals" and organisations like the AAP. Asserting that Gen Z identifies with the Indian ethos, he said the country's youth would not fall into the trap of people allegedly backed by international investor and philanthropist George Soros and others like him.

Rao was speaking at a 'Meet the Press' organised by the Press Club Hyderabad on the occasion of Telangana Formation Day.

"Youth have the right to fight on issues. There are many student organisations. I am not saying every student should follow the BJP or the ABVP. Cockroach Janata Party is not a new phenomenon," Rao said.

"It has been created by people associated with parties like the Aam Aadmi Party. They are trying to spread certain narratives through social media. Their presence is limited to social media, and they have no real grassroots base," he claimed. The satirical platform emerged following a controversy over remarks attributed to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant about "cockroaches" and "parasites" during a court hearing on the "senior" designation for lawyers.

The CJI later clarified that his observations, directed at individuals entering the legal profession through "fake and bogus degrees", were misquoted. What began as an online satire project has since evolved into a wider conversation

on digital dissent and youth frustration, with the platform using memes and sharp political commentary to address issues, such as unemployment, exam-paper leaks and education.

Asked whether the BJP would contest alone or enter into alliances for the upcoming elections to the three municipal corporations in Hyderabad, Rao said the party's national leadership would take a decision on alliances. "As far as our current stand is concerned, we will contest alone. However, we need the support of all people for our victory. Alliances and other matters will be decided by the party's national leadership," he said.

Elections to the Greater Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Malkajgiri municipal corporations are expected to be held later this year. Rao alleged that the ruling Congress and the opposition BRS were trying to stir Telangana regional sentiment as they lacked confidence in winning public support based on their performance.

Referring to the recent opposition by some Congress leaders and opinion-makers to a proposed meeting to be addressed by Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and the subsequent denial of permission by the police, Rao said the event should have been allowed. He also questioned why the BRS had allied with the AIMIM, which had opposed Telangana statehood, and why it had inducted leaders who opposed the state's formation into its cabinet when it was in power.