

SC on State's Duty to Preserve Life During Hunger Strikes

Delhi High Court asserted the state's duty to protect life during activist Sonam Wangchuk's indefinite fast, following the Union government's silence.

Supreme Court judgments clarify the state's responsibility to protect a person's life during a hunger strike while upholding the right to dissent.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- **Supreme Court** rulings affirm the **state's duty** to **preserve life** during hunger strikes.
- These rulings also respect the fundamental **right to dissent**.
- The **Union government** remained silent for **19 days** regarding activist **Sonam Wangchuk**'s ongoing fast.
- The **Delhi High Court** asserted on **July 16, 2026**, that '**life of any citizen is precious**'.
- **Sonam Wangchuk** is on an indefinite hunger strike at **Jantar Mantar, New Delhi**.
- He seeks the resignation of Union Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** over irregularities in the **NEET examination**.

STATICS & SYLLABUS FOCUS

The **Right to Life** is enshrined under **Article 21** of the **Indian Constitution**.

The **Right to Dissent** is implicitly protected under **Article 19(1)(a)** (**freedom of speech and expression**).

In **P. Rathinam v. Union of India (1994)**, the Supreme Court initially held that the **right to die** was part of **Article 21**.

The judgment in P. Rathinam was later **overruled** by the Supreme Court in **Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab (1996)**.

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (**NEET**) is conducted by the **National Testing Agency** (NTA) for admission to **medical courses**.

Jantar Mantar in **New Delhi** is a **historical site** and a popular venue for protests and demonstrations.

REVISION FLASHCARD

SC judgments affirm state's duty to preserve life during hunger strikes while respecting dissent.

Syllabus Relevance: High

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