

Vande Mataram gets statutory protection as Prez clears Bill

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday gave assent to a Bill that criminalises intentional disruption or prevention of the singing of the national song 'Vande Mataram', giving it the same legal protection currently accorded to the national anthem, a government statement said

With the president's assent, The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, has become a law.

The Lok Sabha had passed the Bill on July 30, while the Rajya Sabha had cleared it a day earlier.

The legislation grants Vande Mataram the same status as the national anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana'.

For the first time at the Independence Day function, Vande Mataram will be sung from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the Union Home Ministry said. Earlier, the Prevention of Insults to ► **P11**

PM Modi urges people to celebrate I-Day with pride

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged citizens to celebrate the Independence Day with honour, pride and glory, and take a pledge for a developed India.

Modi said this in a post on Instagram and also shared a video showing the NDA MPs and Union ministers greeting him by waving the tricolour and raising slogans of 'Vande Mataram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' when he entered the venue of the ruling coalition's weekly 'Mangal Milan' meeting here.

"Let us pay tribute to our freedom fighters. Let us take a pledge for a developed India. Har Ghar Tiranga, Ghar Ghar Tiranga, Har Mann Tiranga (Tricolour in every home, tricolour in every heart). Come, let us hoist the tricolour at every home. Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram, Vande Mataram," Modi said in the Instagram video.

LS passes 2 Bills as House stalemate continues Govt ready for debate on students' issues, accuses Rahul of 'running away': Minister



NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed without debate two more Bills, including one seeking to rename Kerala as Keralam, as Opposition members continued to protest, demanding the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the House over police excesses against student protesters in Delhi on July 20.

“Of the 11 Bills cleared by the Lok Sabha so far, only two were debated, while the remaining were passed without discussion amid Opposition protests.

The House was adjourned for the day soon after the passage of the two Bills, with the logjam showing no signs of abating despite the government on Monday offering a discussion on "student and youth agitations" across states and a reply by Shah, including on the police action. That the stalemate would continue ► **P11**

Govt likely to send FCRA Bill to Joint Parl Committee

NEW DELHI: The government is considering sending The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to a joint committee of both houses of Parliament, even as the Congress and some opposition parties have demanded that it be withdrawn, sources said on Tuesday.

The Congress and TMC were among the parties which raised the issue during the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee of the ► **P11**

Panel on demographic changes reviews Rohingyas “settlement” around Jammu

According to Govt data, over 13,700 foreigners, including Rohingyas and Bangladesh nationals, are settled in Jammu and Samba districts, where their population has increased by over 6,000 between 2008 and 2016.

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JAMMU: A government-appointed high-level panel examining demographic changes visited the Jagti township — the largest designated satellite settlement for displaced Kashmiri Pandits here — on Tuesday, to gather views and inputs from different sections of the population, officials said.

The team also inspected a slum housing Rohingya immigrants in Narwal area of Jammu and met several delegations, including representatives of the Gorkha community and refugees from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), they



said. Four members of the high-level committee reached Jammu on a three-day visit on Monday and held consultations with senior government and police officials including Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhakar.

In May, the Centre had constituted the high-level panel headed by Justice (Retd) Prabhakar Navlekar to study demographic changes in different parts of the country, arising from illegal immi-

gration and other reasons, and to suggest measures to deal with these changes.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the "High-powered Demography Mission" on August 15 last year. The Union Cabinet gave its approval to the proposal on September 11, 2025.

On the second day of their visit, the team comprising Census Commissioner Mritunjay Kumar along with Durga Shankar Mishra (retired IAS officer), Balaji Srivastava (retired) ► **P11**

Maharaja Gulab Singh Brigade flags demographic issues, submits memo Brigade demands comprehensive audit in Jammu; stricter laws to curb changes

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JAMMU: The Maharaja Gulab Singh Brigade (MGSB) on Tuesday submitted a comprehensive memorandum to the high-level four members Demographic Committee which is on a three-day tour to Jammu & Kashmir.

The committee was established recently by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to study the demographic changes across the country and submit its report.

The MGSB delegation was led by Chairman Shivang Satya Gupta along with other members of the Brigade.

The memorandum ur-



gently calls for a thorough demographic audit, and enhanced punishment in current laws to address rapid, unauthorized, and engineered demographic

changes in the Jammu region. Highlighting the uneven population growth and unauthorized settlements, MGSB detailed how demographic dynamics are

allegedly being weaponized to alter the socio-economic and political structure of the strategically sensitive region.

Others who were the

part of the delegation included—President Rajay Jambwal, Vice-President Anil Singh Rakwal, Research Analyst Ravish Handoo, District President (Jammu Periphery) Mehmood Choudhary, and Ex-Servicemen Cell In-charge Sanjay Kumar.

The memorandum emphasizes critical national security threats stemming from the influx of Rohingyas and illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. These groups have reportedly established settlements near sensitive military cantonments and border areas. MGSB highlighted documented intelligence pointing to the illicit procurement of Indian national ID cards, ► **P11**

4 minors among 7 saved from Ujh river

JAMMU: Seven persons, including four women, were rescued after they were left stranded in the Ujh river due to a sudden rise in the water level following incessant rains in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, police said.

The rescue operation was launched after police post Nagri was informed that seven civilians were left stranded in the swollen Ujh river near their Mahi Chak village, a police spokesman said.

After sustained and meticulous efforts by joint teams of police and SDRF, all the trapped persons were rescued and ► **P11**

I-Day 2026: Anti-terror mock drill, ‘long-range patrolling’ conducted



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JAMMU: Ahead of the Independence Day celebrations, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday conducted long-

contingency, an official said.

The long-range patrolling was conducted by the Special Operations Group (SOG) of Jammu and Kashmir Police, covering nearly 20 km from Jatwal to Lala Chak along the Jammu-Pathankot national highway, a spokesman said.

He said it was followed by a mock drill at the border police post in Lala Chak to assess preparedness of personnel in dealing with a simulated terror attack scenario.

During the exercise, two simulated terrorists were shown carrying out an attack on an establishment. In response, SOG personnel established a cordon around the area and ► **P11**

SC makes FIR mandatory for missing person

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has clarified that its order directing states and Union Territories to immediately register FIRs in cases of missing persons applies to every person, irrespective of age or gender.

A bench of justices Ah-sanuddin Amanullah and R Mahadevan said it was shocked to learn that some of the states are under the impression that the expression "person" refers only to children and does not include adults. "We find this to be a deliberate and mala ► **P11**

Govt approves Rs 5.78 Cr for restoration of Lah Wali Bowli

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SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has approved ₹5.78 crore for the comprehensive restoration and preservation of the historic Lah Wali Bowli in Rajouri, marking another significant step towards safeguarding J&K's rich architectural and cultural heritage.

The conservation project will focus on restoring the historic stepwell and its architectural features while preserving its cultural character and historical significance. The initiative is also aimed at enhancing the site's tourism potential and

creating a heritage attraction for visitors to the district.

The approval forms part of the Government's broader efforts, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, to conserve and revitalise historically and culturally significant sites across Jammu & Kashmir.

In recent months, the Government has approved a series of heritage conservation initiatives covering both Jammu and Kashmir divisions. These include the repair and renovation of the historic Rattan Garh Fort in Baderwah, Doda; restoration and renovation ► **P11**

4 terrorists spotted near Ramtund peak; search operation underway

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DODA/POONCH: A video purportedly showing four suspected terrorists scaling Ramtund Peak in Doda district has surfaced, triggering a major anti-terror operation, officials said on Tuesday.

The Ramtund area lies close to the Seoj Dhar belt of the Udhampur district, a remote and heavily forested mountainous region used by terrorists as a route for movement and, at times, as a hideout. The difficult terrain, dense forests and connectivity with adjoining mountain areas have made the belt strategically sensitive from a security perspective.

According to official sources, some locals captured the footage and alerted the security forces late Monday afternoon. They added that the latest sighting has triggered a major

search operation, with security forces combing the surrounding forests, ridgelines and mountain tracks to track down the suspected group.

Reinforcements from the Army, police and CRPF have also been mobilised from Udhampur on Tuesday morning, and a massive operation was underway when last reports were received, the sources said.

They said preliminary inputs suggest that the group may comprise three foreign terrorists and one local. However, there has been no contact with the suspected terrorists so far.

The security operation is underway, with forces conducting searches across the mountainous terrain and adjoining areas, they said.

Security agencies have maintained heightened vigilance in the region due to its use in the ► **P11**

State of border will dictate overall trajectory of ties with China: India

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday described its border issues with China as "most serious" and asserted that maintaining peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is of "utmost importance", as the state of the frontier will govern the overall trajectory of bilateral ties.

New Delhi also trashed Beijing's criticism of its decision to formally identify 27 places and geographical features in Arunachal Pradesh by their standard names, emphasising that the state is an "inalienable and integral" part of India and nothing can change this "indisputable re-



ality".

"In matters relating to the border areas between India and China, we have always emphasised in discussions with the Chinese side that we consider these issues as most serious and that the mainte-

nance of peace and tranquillity in these areas is of the utmost importance," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his bi-weekly media briefing.

The remarks came amid unconfirmed reports ► **P11**

RSS Chief to interact with Gen-Z on Aug 15 Crisis won't exist in world if sense of belonging is fortified: Bhagwat

NAGPUR: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat will interact with students and youngsters at a programme organised by the Lokmat Media Group in Nagpur on August 15, event organisers announced.

The event is being held days after the RSS chief's interaction with the 'Gen-Z' at an event in Mumbai. The programme to mark Independence Day will be held at Kasturchand Park, the media group said in a statement.

According to a release, Bhagwat will perform the flag-hoisting ceremony at 9.30 am at Kasturchand Park, where Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated a 200-foot-high national flag erected by the Lokmat Media Group in March.

This will be followed by a special



programme, during which he will interact with youngsters on the topic — "The contribution of youth to India's bright future".

Based on the concept of the chairman of the editorial board of Lokmat Media Group and former member of Rajya Sabha, Dr Vijay Darda, ► **P11**

BJP leader booked for extortion; suspended

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police has booked BJP's Pulwama president Showkat Gayoor for allegedly making an extortion demand from a contractor through intimidation, officials said on Tuesday.

The BJP, reacting to the development, suspended Gayoor with immediate effect from all party posts and responsibilities and initiated disciplinary proceedings against him.

The FIR was registered Monday night at Newa police post in Pulwama on a complaint by Mohammad Yaseen Ganie, who also al-

leged that the BJP leader threatened him with the Public Safety Act if his demand is not met.

Ganie, in his complaint, accused Gayoor of committing acts of extortion, criminal intimidation, wrongful restraint, obstruction, harassment and making illegal demands in connection with the work being undertaken for Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, Barthana.

"Showkat Gayoor has, for some time, been continuously interfering with and obstructing the complainant and his drivers/workers. The accused has been repeatedly contacting the complainant by telephone, ► **P11**