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Lok Sabha all set to discuss anti-paper leak Bill

vention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 at noon. When the House met again at 2 pm, Birla made a fresh appeal for consensus, describing the Bill as legislation linked to the future of crores of students and saying it sought to curb paper leaks and organised examination fraud. Pointing out that members had submitted 91 amendments, he said six hours had been earmarked for discussion and more time could be allotted if required. He then adjourned the House until 5 pm to enable consultations between the Treasury and Opposition benches.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju backed the Speaker's appeal, questioning why the Opposition was blocking debate despite filing numerous amendments to the Bill.

However, when the House reassembled at 5 pm, Opposition members continued their protests. Rijiju accused the Congress and its allies of preventing discussion on legislation that they had themselves demanded after the NEET controversy.

"All members have come well prepared. Several Opposition members have submitted amendments. Yet the Congress and its allies are deliberately preventing discussion on such an important Bill," he said, adding that the country's youth were watching Parliament and the Opposition should participate in the debate.

The Lok Sabha was subsequently adjourned for the day. The Rajya Sabha witnessed similar scenes. Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought a discussion under Rule 267 on the police action against protesters, but Chairman CP Radhakrishnan rejected the notice. Opposition members demanded statements from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, leading to repeated adjournments through the day.

When the House reassembled after lunch, Minister of State for Home Nityananda Rai moved the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 for consideration before fresh protests stalled proceedings again.

Later, Deputy Chairman Harivansh attempted to take up the Bill for discussion. Rijiju again appealed to the Opposition to let the House function, while Kharge maintained that the Opposition was ready for a debate but insisted that Shah first make a statement on the police action. Amid slogan-shouting by both sides, the Rajya Sabha, too, was adjourned for the day.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, amends the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024. The Bill provides for jail term up to 10 years, up from three to five years in the 2024 Act, and penalty up to Rs 50 lakh instead of the earlier Rs 10 lakh. If the crime is found to be organised, the Bill proposes a minimum sentence of seven years and a penalty of up to Rs 10 crore.

It also sets a two-month deadline to complete investigations into paper leak cases. According to the Bill, States and Union Territories will be empowered to set up fast-track courts that can complete the trial within three months of filing of the chargesheet. The Centre, it says, will be empowered to set up a special task force to probe some paper leak cases.

In 6 yrs, J&K tourism has set new records in arrivals: LG

sector. "Tourist arrivals have reached record levels, confidence among domestic and international travellers has been restored, investments have increased, and employment opportunities have expanded. However, the true success lies not in numbers alone but in ensuring that prosperity reaches local communities and contributes to social inclusion," he said.

"The Responsible Tourism must ensure that every visitor departs with cherished memories while natural resources should also thrive," he said and called for heightened sensitivity towards forests, lakes, and rivers, and reiterated that development must proceed in balance with conservation.

He emphasised the importance of inclusivity, stating that boatmen of Dal Lake, pony owners serving mountain trails, artisans engaged in crafts such as pashmina and papier-mache, and families running homestays in Gurez and Bangus must be equal stakeholders in the tourism journey.

"Profits should not remain confined to large enterprises. Tourism must provide dignified incomes, training, and opportunities to all stakeholders to ensure sustainability," he said.

Highlighting the dimension of "Beneficial to All," the LG said the success of tourism can be achieved when lives of artisans and small entrepreneurs are transformed and the sector provides fair value for local labour and creates dignified livelihood opportunities for youth and women.

"Sustainable tourism is an approach where nature and progress are partners," he said and urged that infrastructure such as roads, hotels, and facilities must be developed with zero ecological impact.

He called for eco-friendly tourism to become a mass movement, encouraging tourists and stakeholders to adopt practices such as avoiding single-use plastics, proper waste management, prudent use of water and energy, and respect for wildlife.

Sinha urged all stakeholders to translate discussions at the conclave into concrete action plans with clear goals, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms.

He proposed certification standards for eco-friendly homestays and hotels to encourage healthy competition, comprehensive training programmes for youth to become protectors of nature and guardians of culture, and use of digital platforms to connect tourists directly with local communities.

"If local communities and youth combine innovation with sensitivity, link technology with culture, and development with environmental conservation, then I am confident that Jammu & Kashmir can emerge as a model of sustainable tourism for the entire nation," the LG said.

Among those present on the occasion included Zahoor Ahmed Karnai, Chairman, Tourist Trade Interest Guild; Prof Nilofer Khan, VC of University of Kashmir; Prof Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, VC of IUST; Anshul Garg, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir; Rajiv Pandey, DIG CKR; G V Sundeeep Chakravarthi, SSP Srinagar; Akshay Labroo, DC, Srinagar; industry leaders, heads of various business organisations, members of Tourist Trade Interest Guild, and prominent citizens.

Searches continue for 7 missing persons

All seven people have been missing since July 19, when heavy rains triggered flash floods and landslides across the twin border districts, killing 22 people, most of them in Surankote area of Poonch.

Among the missing are four members of a family from Lower Murrah and two members of another family from Sangla, Surankote.

Officials said rescue teams comprising police, NDRF, SDRF, and civil administration are combing the affected areas to trace the missing employee -- Abdul Ghani, a daily-wage worker for the Jal Shakti Department -- despite challenging terrain and the impact of recent heavy

rain.

He was inside a water pumping station which was washed away in the July 19 flash floods and has remained missing since.

In the worst-hit Surankote area of Poonch, multi-agency teams have stepped-up search efforts for six people from two families who went missing after flash floods and landslides triggered by a cloudburst.

Officials said the rescue teams were searching river-banks, nallahs and other flood-hit locations.

The searches would continue until all the missing persons were found out, officials said.

Army showcases high-altitude combat capability

highlighting the integration of advanced technologies into battlefield operations in challenging mountainous terrain.

"As part of the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas commemorations, the Indian Army conducted an operational capability demonstration and static display for media representatives at Matayen, showcasing its combat readiness, technological innovation and high-altitude operational capabilities," Fire & Fury Corps said on X.

Army personnel also briefed those who thronged the venue and they were shown a range of modern weapon systems, surveillance equipment and indigenous military technologies designed to enhance operational effectiveness in high-altitude areas.

Army officials said the display reflected the force's emphasis on operational excellence, technological advancement and self-reliance while paying tribute to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during Operation Vijay in the 1999 Kargil conflict.

The event formed part of the commemorative activities marking the 27th anniversary of India's victory in the Kargil War.

Rs 16.36 cr approved for restoration of temple, mosque

ensuring the preservation of its architectural heritage.

In another significant decision, the government sanctioned Rs 6.05 cr for the revival and restoration of Jamia Masjid Sharief at Shopian on heritage lines.

The project aims to preserve the mosque's distinctive architectural character while safeguarding its rich cultural and historical legacy for future generations.

Saxena orders increase in prize money

According to officials, the prize money was enhanced to encourage greater youth participation in sports and motivate sportspersons across the region.

The LG announced that the prize money for this year's winners would be increased to Rs 1 lakh and the runner-up team would receive Rs 50,000, up from Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000, respectively.

He also announced that the winners of next year's edition would receive Rs 2 lakh, while the runner-up team would receive Rs 1 lakh.

Organised from July 21 to 27, the prestigious UT-level championship witnessed the participation of 18 men's teams and four women's teams from different parts of Ladakh, showcasing the region's rich sporting heritage and enduring tradition of horse polo.

The final match was played between Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre (LSRC) and Animal Husbandry Department, Leh, in which the LSRC polo team emerged victorious and lifted the cup.

Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Mohammad Jaffer Akhoon, and Member of Parliament from Ladakh, Mohmad Haneefa Jan, were also present during the event.

The tournament, now in its sixth edition, has emerged as a flagship sporting event that promotes indigenous sports, celebrates Ladakh's unique cultural heritage, and provides a platform for talented riders and horses to compete under the challenging high-altitude conditions of the region. The event also reinforced the growing stature of Drass as a centre for traditional equestrian sports and cultural tourism.

Addressing the gathering, the LG said it was a matter of immense pleasure to be part of the grand finale of the LG Horse Polo Cup. He described horse polo as much more than a sport in Ladakh, calling it a living heritage that embodies the region's warrior spirit, horsemanship and cultural identity. Deeply rooted in Ladakhi and Balti traditions, the sport has been played across villages for generations, with Drass continuing to preserve and carry forward this invaluable legacy, he said.

Congratulating all the participating men's and women's teams, the Lieutenant Governor commended their skill, endurance and sportsmanship. He also appreciated the increasing participation of women's teams, stating that it reflects the growing empowerment of women in sports and society across Ladakh.

The LG reaffirmed the commitment of the Union Territory Administration to promoting horse polo alongside the development of modern sports infrastructure. He underlined the potential of integrating horse polo with adventure tourism and cultural festivals to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities, particularly in Drass, while promoting Ladakh as a unique cultural and tourism destination.

The closing ceremony concluded with the presentation of trophies and awards to the winning teams and outstanding performers.

Only Modi, Shah can restore J&K statehood: Omar

tion of statehood can be taken by only two persons - the prime minister and the home minister. That is why we held the protest for statehood in Delhi," he told reporters at Anantnag.

Responding to a reported statement by Leader of Opposition, the chief minister said, "He issues 10 statements every day. I don't have so much free time. I don't think they (Modi and Shah) will consult him on these issues."

He also said that the Leader of Opposition would one day wake up from sleep and read in the newspapers that statehood had been restored.

Notices issued to social media accounts

"It is a continuous process to take down objectionable and illegal content," a senior police officer said.

Another senior officer said that during the course of monitoring the protest, Delhi Police identified more than 480 social media handles allegedly linked to Pakistan that were actively circulating fake narratives, rumours and deepfake videos related to the demonstrations.

"These Pakistan-related handles are the same accounts which were active during Operation Sindoor. Teams are also investigating IP addresses of Pakistan-related handles," he added.

According to police, dedicated teams have been identifying accounts that uploaded content containing abusive language, misinformation or material that could amount to violations under relevant legal provisions.

"Our teams are monitoring every single video properly, and we are issuing notices to such social media handles that were involved in posting fake, deepfake and illegal content,"

the officer said.

The officer said the police's Social Media Monitoring Team has been maintaining round-the-clock surveillance over on-line platforms to identify objectionable posts linked to the protest and take appropriate action wherever required.

The notices being issued ask social media users to remove posts that are found to be abusive or illegal, while platforms are also being approached for appropriate action in accordance with the law, the officer said.

He added that the monitoring exercise would continue as investigators analyse digital evidence related to the protest and identify additional accounts involved in circulating misleading or unlawful content.

The officer said that they are issuing notices under the Information Technology (IT Act).

Sharing recent deepfake videos of one of the officers, police said, "The viral video claiming Delhi Police DCP Sumit Jha resigned over student protests is completely fake and AI-generated."

Police also shared the authentic footage of the officer.

Pak drones sighted near IB, LoC

Another Pak drone was sighted near the LoC in Tarkundi-Saaj area of Nowshera, Rajouri, officials said, adding that it also retreated safely.

As the drones were sighted late last night, searches were started by security forces at first light today to find out if the drones had dropped any weapons, explosives, IEDs, cash, or narcotics before moving back across the borders, officials said.

Searches were continuing when reports last came in. However, no recovery or arrest had been reported so far.

PoJK votes amid protests; Oppn alleges military interference

urity following weeks of unrest that left several people dead and hundreds injured.

The contest is primarily between Pakistan's major political parties: the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP). Nearly 300 candidates are vying for 13 seats in the first phase of polling. Kotli district accounts for 135 candidates contesting six constituencies, while more than 750,000 voters in Mirpur and Bhimber districts will decide the remaining seven seats.

The elections are happening after protests led by the Jammu & Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), which demanded subsidised wheat flour and lower electricity tariffs and called for greater political rights and the abolition of 12 assembly seats reserved for refugees who settled in Pakistan after 1947.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) called for a boycott of the elections, describing the exercise as a "sham" and alleging that the outcome had already been decided. The group urged voters to stay away from polling stations in protest.

Islamabad banned JAAC last month, accusing it of planning violence and disrupting public order. The group has rejected the allegations, saying its movement was peaceful.

Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which emerged as the largest party in the 2021 elections, is boycotting the vote in support of the protest movement, raising questions over voter participation and the credibility of the electoral process.

Opposition groups and activists have also accused Pakistan's military establishment of influencing the electoral process through what they describe as "election engineering." Pakistani authorities have rejected such claims, saying the polls were being conducted in accordance with the law.

The assembly comprises 53 members, including 45 directly elected lawmakers and eight reserved seats for women, technocrats, and religious scholars. Of the elected seats, 12 are reserved for refugees from Jammu and Kashmir who settled in Pakistan after 1947, an arrangement that remains at the centre of the ongoing political dispute.

MeT predicts heavy rains, flash floods; traffic disrupted on NH

for three days due to multiple landslides and shooting stones triggered by heavy rainfall.

Meanwhile, MeT said that on July 27, a spell of rain/thundershower was likely at many places towards late afternoon till evening, with improvement thereafter.

In Jammu division, few spells of light to moderate rain/thundershower at most places were likely. Heavy rains, torrential rains and brief intense heavy showers were likely in a few districts, with heavy to very heavy rain expected over Udhampur and adjoining areas during late night/ morning and afternoon/evening hours. Peak activity was expected during July 30-31, officials said.

From August 1-2, one or two spells of rain/thundershower were expected at many places with brief intense showers.

From August 3-4, one or two spells of rain/thundershower at many places, with possibility of heavy rain, brief intense heavy showers and torrential rain were likely over a few districts of Jammu division, officials said.

The MeT has warned of heavy rains and brief intense heavy showers in a few districts of Jammu division during July 28-31.

"Torrential rains/brief intense heavy showers may generate flash floods, landslides and mudslides at many vulnerable places during July 28-31," a weather department advisory said.

Peak activity with heavy to very heavy rainfall was likely over Udhampur and adjoining areas on July 30, it added. The department advised the general public, tourists, travellers and transporters to follow advisories issued by the administration and avoid vulnerable areas.

From July 28-31, in Kashmir division, few spells of light to moderate rains/thundershower at most places, with possibility of brief intense heavy showers in a few districts, generally during early morning and late afternoon/evening hours, were likely.

Meanwhile, the authorities concerned closed the Pul-Doda bridge late Sunday night after reports of visible cracks raised safety concerns.

Officials said an inspection by engineers found that the markings were not structural cracks but were likely caused by concrete overlap at shuttering joints during construction.

Officials said an expert team from Design Inspection and Quality Control had also been called in to independently assess the bridge and conduct quality checks to ensure there were no structural defects.

"Once the bridge is certified as safe, it will be reopened for vehicular traffic. At present, traffic has been diverted through the alternate Ganpat bridge. If the expert team identifies any defect, it will be rectified immediately before the bridge is reopened," officials said.

3,823 pilgrims leave for holy cave shrine in Himalayas

steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district. The yatra will conclude on August 28.

Authorities have put in place multi-layered security arrangements along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and at all transit camps to ensure the safe and smooth movement of the yatra convoys. A multi-tier security setup has been activated in and around the Bhagwati Nagar base

camp.

The commencement of the yatra had marked the beginning of the country's one of the most revered spiritual pilgrimages and reflects the coordinated efforts of the administration and all stakeholder departments to facilitate a secure, seamless and memorable pilgrimage experience for every devotee.

Traffic restrictions will remain in force on various stretches of the highway till August 28, with daily advisories and sector-wise cut-off timings to regulate traffic, officials said.

Cong MPs protest in Par complex, seek Amit Shah's apology

ity for what he called "barbaric assault" on peacefully protesting students and asking the minister whether he approved the use of "lethal force", including pellet guns.

In his letter, he said peaceful protest was crucial to any democracy and that it was the government's responsibility to protect protesters and resolve their grievances through dialogue.

"Such brutal violence destroys every norm, and has outraged the country. Youth and students, the future of our country, are demanding answers and accountability. Their voice will be heard," the former Congress chief said.

Kavinder calls for connecting younger generation with Sanatan values

and promoting spiritual awakening were inspiring people to embrace a life guided by truth, virtue and devotion.

Swami Ram Swarupji Maharaj delivered an enlightening spiritual discourse, highlighting the eternal relevance of Vedas and emphasising that Vedic Yajnas serve as a medium for spiritual purification, environmental harmony and the welfare of mankind.

The event has been organised by Jasrota MLA Rajiv Jasrota, with the objective of promoting Vedic traditions, spiritual consciousness and the enduring values of Sanatan Dharma.

"The Vedic Yajna-Anushtthan is a humble endeavour to preserve and propagate the ideals of Sanatan Dharma and India's ancient Vedic traditions," the MLA said and expressed gratitude to the governor for gracing the occasion and to Yogacharya Swami Ram Swarupji Maharaj for his continued spiritual guidance and blessings.

A large number of devotees from Kathua and adjoining areas participated in the inaugural ceremony with great devotion.

Right to peaceful protest guaranteed: SC

family members of those police personnel who were attacked during the protest along with other listed petitions.

"The right to peaceful protest is absolutely guaranteed. That cannot be denied. Merely because there is agitation cannot justify police excesses," the CJI said.

The life of every individual irrespective of who they are is important, the bench asserted when a lawyer said police personnel were also beaten up.

"There should be a protocol in place. There should be proper space and no restriction. But if there are some anti-social elements etc that can be taken care of. This is not a question of Delhi only. Uniformity of protocol is needed," the bench said.

"Just because there is agitation does not mean there is 'lathi charge'... self-evolved discipline is needed which is essential to democratic process," the CJI said and urged parties to assist the bench.

Solicitor General Tushar

Jitendra introduces 'Paper Leak, Unfair Means' Bill in LS

years. They are aimed at ensuring greater accountability, strengthening deterrence against such offences and safeguarding the integrity of public examinations.

The Bill proposes to enhance the punishment for persons resorting to unfair means by increasing the term of imprisonment to not less than five years, extendable up to ten years, as against the existing provision of imprisonment for a term of not less than three years, extendable up to five years. The maximum fine is also proposed to be enhanced from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 50 lakh.

For service providers found involved in offences under the Act, the Bill proposes to increase the maximum fine from Rs 1 cr to Rs 5 cr and extend the period of debarment from conducting any public examination from four years to eight years.

The Bill also proposes enhanced punishment for managerial personnel of service providers by providing for imprisonment for a term of not less than five years, extendable up to ten years, along with enhancement of the maximum fine from Rs 1 cr to Rs 5 cr.

To deal more effectively with organised examination-related crimes, the Amendment Bill proposes to increase the minimum term of imprisonment from five years to seven years, extendable up to ten years, while enhancing the maximum fine from Rs 1 cr to Rs 10 cr.

The Bill further empowers the Central Government to refer the investigation of offences under the Act to a Special Task Force constituted for this purpose.

To ensure expeditious investigation and trial, the Bill proposes insertion of a new Section 12A providing for completion of investigation within two months, designation of Courts of Session as Special Fast Track Courts for day-to-day trial of offences under the Act, completion of trial within three months from the date of filing of the charge sheet, and appointment of Special Public Prosecutors for every Special Fast Track Court.

The Bill also proposes insertion of a new Section 12B providing that appeals against any judgment, order or sentence of a Special Fast Track Court may be preferred before the High Court within a period of thirty days and, as far as possible, shall be disposed of within a period of three months.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, enacted on 12 February 2024 and brought into force with effect from 21 June 2024, provides a comprehensive national legal framework to prevent unfair means in public examinations.

The Act applies to examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs), Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), National Testing Agency (NTA), Ministries and Departments of the Central Government and their attached and subordinate offices for recruitment, as well as such other authorities as may be notified by the Central Government.

All offences under the Act are cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable, with stringent provisions relating to imprisonment, fine and attachment of property.

The proposed amendments are expected to further strengthen the legal framework for preventing examination-related malpractices, including question paper leakages, impersonation and organised cheating, while ensuring swift investigation, speedy trial and timely disposal of appeals.

By strengthening deterrence against such offences and ensuring prompt delivery of justice, the Amendment Bill seeks to uphold the integrity, fairness and transparency of public examinations, protect the interests of deserving and meritorious candidates, and reinforce public confidence in the integrity, fairness and transparency of the country's public examination system.