GREAT OFFERS!
Scan to Subscribe

www.dailypioneer.com
facebook.com/dailypioneer @TheDailyPioneer
instagram.com/dailypioneer linkedin.com/in/dailypioneer

The Pioneer

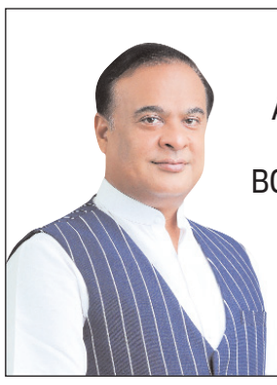
TRUSTED SINCE 1865

RNI No. 53466/91. Vol.36 Issue 190

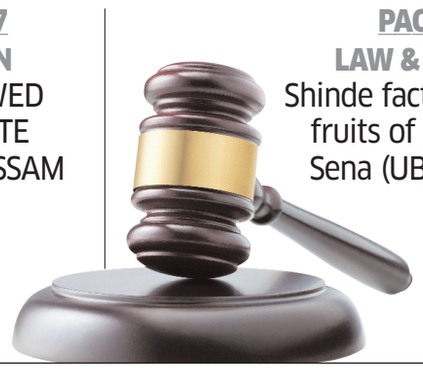
NEW DELHI | FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2026 | PAGES 16 | ₹5.00

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR BHUBANESWAR RANCHI CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYAWADA THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

PAGE 7
NATION
A RENEWED MANDATE BOOSTS ASSAM



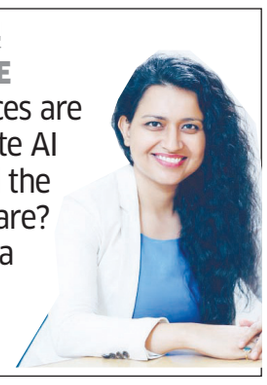
PAGE 10
LAW & JUSTICE
Shinde faction reaping fruits of defection: Sena (UBT) tells SC



PAGE 11:
BUSINESS
Kia begins Sorento production ahead of India launch

PAGE 12
GLOBAL
Bangladesh PM unlikely to visit India for BRICS

PAGE 14
MONTAGE
Public Resources are used to create AI Wealth. Should the Public Get a Share? Asks Nivedita Pandey.



Shah targets Congress on Vande Mataram

Home minister invokes partition as Congress defends the limited rendition agreed by freedom fighters

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
New Delhi

Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah on Thursday launched a sharp attack on the Congress, calling the party's decision to sing only the first two stanzas of the national song Vande Mataram at its events anti-national, an open defiance of a law enacted by Parliament, and an act of vote-bank appeasement. In a resolution passed on Wednesday the Congress Working Committee (CWC) chose to follow its 1937 decision and sing only the first two paragraphs of Vande Mataram, not the full song.

In a statement on X and in comments to the media, Shah said, "The Congress Working Committee's decision to sing only two stanzas of Vande Mataram instead of the full rendition is not only anti-national but also an open defiance of the law enacted by the Parliament."

Union home minister Amit Shah along with Tamil Nadu CM C Joseph Vijay and Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu during the 31st meeting of the Southern Zonal Council (SZC), in Mahabalipuram, in Chengalpattu district, Tamil Nadu PTI

In October 1937, the CWC chose the first two stanzas, which praise the India's beauty and richness without references to Hindu religion and mythology. Leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Rabindranath Tagore agreed to use only these verses after Muslim leaders objected to later stanzas mentioning Hindu goddesses Durga.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

HM LEADS SOUTHERN COUNCIL MEET

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday chaired the 31st Southern Zonal Council meeting near Mahabalipuram, with southern states pressing for quick resolution of inter-State water disputes, concerns over delimitation and funding, and delays in trials of crimes against women and children. Karnataka sought use of the 1971 Census for delimitation and retention of 543 Lok Sabha seats for 25 years, while Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala raised water issues involving Cauvery, Mekedatu and Mullaperiyar. Andhra Pradesh sought faster progress on the Godavari-Cauvery link. States also discussed education, infrastructure and pending issues under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.

DETAILED REPORT ON >> P6

SC forms five-member panel to probe July 20 protest violence

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC) of India on Thursday formed a five-member High-Powered Enquiry Committee (HPEC) to investigate claims of police excesses, violence, and other incidents during last month's student protests over the NEET exam paper leak. Justice R Subhash Reddy, a former SC judge, will lead the committee. The group will look into allegations of excessive force by security personnel and violence by protesters, with special attention to reports of targeted violence, harassment and molestation of women protesters.

The other committee members are Ravi Shankar Jha, former Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Justice Shalinder Kaur, former judge of the Delhi High Court, Rishi Kumar Shukla, former Director of the CBI, and Dr LR Bishnoi, retired Director General of Police in Meghalaya. The panel was formed in response to several petitions regarding the events surrounding the July 20 march by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) to the Parliament. Similar protests also took place in other States over alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG 2026 exam.

Police action on students at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on July 20 PTI

Following the court's order, the HPEC will look into claims of excessive force and violence by police and other agencies against protesters. Specific accusations include the use of pellet guns, electric batons, lathi charges and tear gas without enough warning and disproportionate use of violence by Delhi Police and other agencies. Some of these actions reportedly caused serious and lasting injuries. The panel will review the chain of command behind these actions, identify those responsible, and determine whether any laws, rules or norms were violated.

A major area of concern is the issue of targeted acts of violence, harassment and molestation of female protesters. Because these are serious and sensitive issues, the Supreme Court has told the committee to treat them as a top priority.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

The ByStander

Jharkhand HC steps in as JPSC row deepens

ROSHAN KUMAR
Ranchi

Amid the turmoil caused by the Jharkhand Government's August 18 late-night decision to cancel 22 recruitment examinations, relief has arrived from the Jharkhand High Court for several successful candidates. The court on Thursday stayed the State Government's order cancelling the appointment of candidates recruited through the 11th to 13th JPSC Civil Services Examinations and the Food Safety Officer (FSO) examination until further orders.

The court of Justice Deepak Roshan directed that the selected candidates be reinstated to work. During the hearing, the single-judge bench Justice Deepak Roshan orally remarked that the State Government itself is having the matter investigated by the CID. Therefore, no one can be permanently removed from service without observing the principles of natural justice. The court sought a response from the State Government by September 15.

The Government argued that the CID investigation revealed irregularities in 40 per cent of the cases so far, and further investigation is ongoing.

JSSC-CGL aspirants stage a protest in Ranchi against the cancellation of the recruitment process conducted by the Jharkhand Government PTI

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Representative image WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Landmark labour ruling gets a new legal limit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC), by a majority of 6:3, on Thursday held that the labour-friendly expansive definition of the term industry in its 1978 verdict shall not be considered for the interpretation of the Industrial Relations Code of 2020.

A nine-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant also by a majority verdict held that the reference seeking reconsideration of a 1978 judgement by a seven-judge bench on the definition of industry was validly made.

On February 21, 1978, the seven-judge bench had delivered a verdict on the definition of the term industry while deciding the plea of Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board and expanded its definition which brought millions of employees in hospitals, educational institutions, clubs and Government welfare departments under the protection of the Industrial Disputes (ID) Act, 1947.

The CJI, who authored the majority verdict for himself and Justices Satish Chandra Sharma, Alok Aradhe and Vipul M Pancholi, made clear that the triple-test, evolved in the 1978 judgement, to ascertain as to what constitutes an industry will remain valid.

However, the test will be applied in labour-related pending cases lodged under the now-repealed 1947 ID Act.

Almora retreat cancels naked yoga course

The Pioneer IMPACT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Dehradun

The proposed month-long 300-hour naked tantra yoga teacher training programme at Dwarahat Dunagiri Retreat in Almora has been cancelled following an inquiry by the district administration and police. The issue came to light after *The Pioneer* reported the event.

Almora SSP Chandrashekhar Ghodke

Almora senior superintendent of police Chandrashekhar Ghodke told *The Pioneer* that neither the retreat owner nor the organiser had obtained permission to conduct the programme.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

PIONEER IN SHORT

SAJJAN KUMAR DIES AT 84

Former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar, who was serving multiple life sentences for cases linked to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, died at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi on Thursday. He was 84. According to the hospital, Kumar was brought by police around 11 am with altered sensorium and was immediately admitted. Despite resuscitation and life-support measures, he died at 12.30 pm. The hospital said he had a history of high blood pressure, Parkinson's disease and multiple previous admissions. Kumar was lodged in Tihar Jail. A three-time Lok Sabha MP from Outer Delhi, he was a prominent Congress leader before resigning from the party following his conviction in 2018. The Delhi HC sentenced him to life imprisonment in December 2018 for the killing of five Sikhs and the burning of a gurdwara during the 1984 riots.

CURBS ON SUGAR STOCK SOON

The Government on Thursday imposed stockholding limits on bulk sugar consumers, seeking to curb hoarding and contain rising prices ahead of the festival season. Under the Sugar (Stockholding Limit of Bulk Consumers) Order, 2026, consumers using more than 10 tonnes a month will be allowed to hold only 15 days' stock. The order takes effect on September 1 and remains in force until November 30. The curbs cover confectioners, soft drink manufacturers, food processors, sweetmeat sellers and other institutional buyers. Government institutions and local bodies are exempt. Sugar mills' sales to bulk consumers will be verified using GST returns. The move follows an earlier order limiting sugar dealers to 4,000 quintals for 30 days. Retail prices have risen 13 per cent year-on-year to ₹52.30 a kg.

JMM vows to vehemently oppose MMDR Amendment Bill

MRITUANJAY KUMAR
Ranchi

JMM President Hemant Soren terms it a 'Black Law'

Chief Minister and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) Central President Hemant Soren roared against Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Bill (MMDR) Bill and termed it adverse and unfortunate for Jharkhand. He harshly criticized the Central Government for the amendment and said the party will vehemently oppose the amendment.

Soren said that the Bill was passed in Parliament without adequate consultation with the states and it is not in Jharkhand's interests.

The Chief Minister made these remarks on Thursday during a crucial meeting of the JMM's extended central committee at Sohrai Bhawan in Ranchi. The CM presided over the meeting, which was attended by the party's Ministers, MLAs, MPs and central committee members. Discussions were held regarding the future strategy to oppose the MMDR Amendment Bill.

Addressing the party office bearers during the meeting Soren targeted the Central Government, questioning how the economic losses Jharkhand would incur due to the MMDR amendment would be compensated. He said that such amendments would harm the State's Dalits, tribals, the underprivileged and large sections of society. He also said that while Jharkhand was preparing to advance into the category of developed States, this amendment has dealt a major blow to the state.

Accusing the Centre, the CM said the Government appears more sensitive towards prosperous States but shows no concern for the interests of tribals and Dalits. He made it clear that the JMM would vehemently oppose this bill through democratic and legal means. During the meeting, the party leaders also deliberated on a strategy to fight the battle ahead with a united front.

JPSC-JSSC Reform Manch accuses Govt of betraying students

SURENDRA SOREN
Ranchi

The JPSC-JSSC Reform Forum on Thursday accused the Jharkhand government of betraying students and announced plans to intensify its agitation over alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations.

Addressing a press conference in Ranchi, forum leader Ravindra Paswan said students had been holding a peaceful indefinite sit-in and hunger strike for the past 26 days, demanding action against alleged irregularities in examinations, cancellation of the JSSC CGL and other examinations, and an impartial probe into the matter.

Paswan said the state government had cancelled 22 examinations following the students' demands, leading them to believe that the government was taking their concerns seriously. However, he claimed the government was unwilling to agree to a CBI probe. The forum subsequently demanded a judicial inquiry and suspended its agitation after giving the government two months to act.

He alleged that students had suspended the movement in good faith, but the government's stand before the High Court had now raised questions over its intentions. "It appears that the government's sole objective was to somehow bring the student movement to an end," Paswan said.

He warned that the forum could mobilise lakhs of students in Ranchi and resume the agitation even before the two-month deadline if the situation warranted.

JPSC, JSSC Reform Manch students during a press conference at Ranchi Press Club in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

Paswan announced that the forum would burn effigies of Chief Minister Hemant Soren in all 24 districts of Jharkhand on Friday as part of its protest.

Forum leader Kunal Pratap alleged that despite the students' 26-day peaceful agitation, the government had failed to adequately represent their concerns in court. He claimed that the Advocate General did not appear on behalf of the government during the High Court proceedings and that the government counsel also failed to strongly present the state's position.

Pratap said the alleged absence of a strong government stand on such an important issue concerning students raised serious questions. He further alleged that the government had created a situation aimed at bringing the agitation to an end.

Referring to the examination conducted by TDPL, Pratap said the Chief Minister had earlier stated that examinations conducted by the agency would be cancelled and that irregularities had occurred in those examinations. He said students were therefore justified in questioning the government's present stand.

Taking a political swipe at the government, Pratap said students who had earlier used the slogan "Hemant hai toh himmat hai" were now disappointed with the government's approach. He added that, in the present circumstances, "Hemant hai toh dikkat hai" would also be an apt slogan.

Pratap said the students had even withdrawn their demand for a CBI probe after the government repeatedly described it as a political issue and had instead placed their faith in the state government. He also questioned the outcome of the CID investigation, saying students had nevertheless continued to trust the government.

He warned that if the government continued to maintain what he described as a questionable stand before the court and students failed to get justice,