

Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Bill Passed; Congress Protests

NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill 2018 amid walkout by the Congress. It amends the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act 1951.

Minister of State for Culture Mahesh Sharma, while replying to the discussions on the Bill, said the government honoured the martyrs who laid down their lives during India's freedom struggle.

"The NDA government is dedicated to the national memorials like the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum and the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Museum built in honour of the freedom fighters. The government also celebrated the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev," he said.

K.C. Venugopal of the Congress said the legislation has been brought by the government with only one purpose -- to remove

the Congress President from the Trust. The bill removes the Congress from its permanent position on the board - which has been its privilege for decades.

"The Jallianwala Bagh struggle was led by the Indian National Congress. Everybody knows about it. The BJP does not know about the freedom struggle. Their leaders did not participate in the freedom struggle. They supported the killers of Mahatma Gan-

dhi. Even now they are justifying the killers of Mahatma Gandhi. This is negative politics," he said.

Venugopal said they can remove the Congress President from the Trust but the country and its people will decide who will go to the Trust. After this, the Congress members staged a walkout.

Earlier, participating in the debate, Trinamool Congress' Sugata Bose said the blood of Hin-

dus, Muslims and Sikhs mingled in the earth of Jallianwala Bagh.

"Let us all join together and unitedly honour the memory of those who died a hundred years ago on April 13, 1919.

"Let us leave all parliamentary bickerings behind and together say we will strive for the unity of all religious communities in India. Let us bow our heads in memory of the martyrs of the Amritsar tragedy," he said.

NRI Marriage Registration Bill Introduced In Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Monday introduced the Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indians Bill in the Rajya Sabha.

The Bill seeks to provide safeguards to Indian women who are trapped in fraudulent marriages with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

"Therefore, it is necessary that the marriage solemnized or otherwise in India or outside India shall be registered within a period of 30 days from the date of marriage," the Bill's objectives state.

"It has been decided to bring in a legislation to provide for compulsory registration of marriage for better enforcement of rights of the deserted spouses under various family laws," it added.

The Bill also seeks to amend the Passport Act, 1967 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

The proposed amendment to

the Passport Act, 1967 would empower the passport authorities to impound or cause to be impounded or revoke a passport or travel document of a, NRI, if it is brought to his notice that the person has not registered his marriage within a period of 30 days from the date of marriage.

The proposed amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 would also empower the courts for issuance of summons and warrants through the specifically-designated website of the Ministry of External Affairs.

It further provides for attachment of the properties, both movable and immovable, belonging to a procl aimed offender.

The introduction of the Bill was necessitated by the Ministry of External Affairs due to numerous complaints received from Indian nationals mostly women deserted or harassed by their Non-Resident Indian Spouses.

Amarinder Welcomes Food Account Panel

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday welcomed the 15th Finance Commission's move to notify a committee to look into the Rs 31,000 crore food account issue between the Punjab government and the Centre.

The Chief Minister said "it could lead to early resolution of the issue related to the legacy debt of Rs 30,584 crore, which was threatening to cascade into a major fiscal crisis for the state."

The committee, to be led by Ramesh Chand, member of the Niti Aayog and the 15th Finance Commission, has been asked to submit its report within six weeks. The Finance Commission chairman N.K. Singh, at a meeting with the Punjab government on January 30, accepted the gravity of the issue, an official spokesperson said.

"The committee has been mandated to look into all aspects of the legacy debt of the Punjab government arising out of accumulated CCL (cash credit limit)



with reference to Food Corporation of India/Department of Food and Public Distribution.

"The committee would also recommend contours of suitable resolution that would be fair and appropriate to all stakeholders and Punjab, thus enabling the state to manage the fiscal challenge arising out of the debt stock and servicing cost due to the leg-

acy debt," the spokesperson said.

"The legacy debt was created by the erstwhile SAD-BJP government which, in the last leg of its tenure, had persuaded the Centre to convert the CCL gap into a clean long-term loan for the state. This inflated the state's fiscal deficit to 12.34 per cent of GSDP (gross state domestic product) in 2016-17.

Criminal Extradited From UAE

NEW DELHI: The Indian government has got Prabhjot Singh -- wanted in two cases by Punjab police -- extradited from the UAE, CBI officials said on Thursday.

A senior Central Bureau of Investigation official said that Singh, wanted in in Punjab for two cases of murder, destruction of evidence and under sections of Arms Act was extradited to India on Thursday morn-

ing. The CBI had informed the Punjab Police which had sent a team to the UAE.

Singh landed in Amritsar, the CBI official said. The official said that a red corner notice against Singh was earlier issued by the Interpol.

This is the fourth extradition of a high-profile accused in last two-and-a-half-months from the United Arab Emirates.

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