Jantar Mantar protest violence probe: SC-appointed HPEC headed by former SC judge Justice R. Subhash Reddy

Judiciary · 19 October 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/19



News

To probe allegations of excessive police force (pellet guns, tear gas, lathi charges) and of protester violence against police during the July 2026 student protests at Jantar Mantar, Delhi and elsewhere (over alleged exam paper leaks; led by the 'Cockroach Janata Party' (CJP); clashes during the 20 July march to Parliament), a Supreme Court bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana constituted a five-member High-Powered Enquiry Committee (HPEC) on 18 Aug 2026, headed by former SC judge Justice R. Subhash Reddy. Allegations of targeted violence and sexual harassment against women protesters get priority. On 15 Oct 2026 the panel invited complaints and evidence through the portal hpec.nic.in; vulnerable witnesses' identities will be kept confidential.

Key facts

Constituted by	Supreme Court – 18 Aug 2026; bench: CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi, V. Mohana
Case	Shailendra Mani Tripathi v. Union of India – WP(Crl) 280/2026
Chair	Justice R. Subhash Reddy (SC judge 2018–22; ex-Chief Justice, Gujarat HC)

Members	Ravi Shankar Jha (ex-CJ, Punjab & Haryana HC), Shalinder Kaur (ex-judge, Delhi HC), Rishi Kumar Shukla (ex-CBI Director), L.R. Bishnoi (ex-DGP, Meghalaya)
Mandate	Police force, chain of command, protester violence, property damage – interim report 'at the earliest'
Complaints	hpec.nic.in portal (15 Oct 2026) or in person – Shiksha Sadan, Rouse Avenue, New Delhi

Background

- Constitution: Article 19(1)(b) – right to assemble peaceably and without arms; Article 19(3) – the State may impose 'reasonable restrictions' in the interests of sovereignty and integrity of India and public order. Prohibitory orders are now issued under Section 163 BNSS (formerly Section 144 CrPC).
- Jantar Mantar as protest site: protests shifted there after curbs on the Boat Club lawns near India Gate in 1993. In Oct 2017 the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered protests there to end. In Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India (July 2018; Justices A.K. Sikri and Ashok Bhushan) the SC held there cannot be a complete ban on protests at places like Jantar Mantar and Boat Club, and ordered guidelines.
- Follow-up: on 11 Oct 2026 the Delhi Police Commissioner, on an MHA committee's recommendation, de-notified Jantar Mantar as a designated protest site; Ramlila Ground, Burari Ground and CBD Ground (East Delhi) were named instead.
- History: 'Jantar Mantar' = 'yantra' (instrument) + 'mantra' (calculation). Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II of Amber/Jaipur built observatories at Delhi (1724), Jaipur, Ujjain, Varanasi and Mathura. Jaipur's Jantar Mantar became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2010; the Delhi observatory is an ASI-protected Monument of National Importance.
- Justice R. Subhash Reddy: born 5 Jan 1957, Kamaram, Medak district (Telangana); judge, Andhra Pradesh HC (2002–16); Chief Justice, Gujarat HC (Feb 2016 – Nov 2018); Supreme Court judge (2 Nov 2018 – 4 Jan 2022).

Tamil Nadu link: there is no direct Tamil Nadu link in this news (the chair hails from Telangana). Astronomy link: the 'Madras Observatory', set up in Chennai by William Petrie in 1786, became the East India Company's official observatory in 1792; its work moved to the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (founded 1 April 1899), where John Evershed discovered the radial flow of gas in sunspots (the 'Evershed effect', 1909). It is now run by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru.

Shanmugam IAS Academy – your next step

- **Courses:** TNPSC Group 1, 2 / 2A (Prelims + Mains), Group 4, UPSC / IAS – Coimbatore · Madurai · Online – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/fees
- **Books (PDF):** TNPSC PYQ books, UPSC books – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/study-materials
- **Free quiz + daily PDFs:** https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/free-pdf-download · All news of this day: https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/19

Admissions – call / WhatsApp: 99941 46662 · 99944 27714 · www.shanmugamiasacademy.in