

Good Morning

Kashmir

16th
Year Of Publication

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Deeply pained by the demise of veteran actor Shri Satish Shah ji. Known for his exceptional comic timing and natural screen presence, he brought warmth, laughter and joy to millions through his remarkable performances in cinema and television.

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■ Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood

CM Abdullah Inaugurates Chrysanthemum Garden In Srinagar



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SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday inaugurated Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood (Chrysanthemum Theme Garden) at the picturesque Botanical Garden in Srinagar, marking a new milestone in the Valley's tourism and floriculture landscape.

Developed at a cost of 1.869 crore, the Chrysanthemum Theme Garden spans over 100 kanals and is envisioned as a major autumn attraction in Kashmir. With its vibrant blooms in shades of yellow, red, pink, and purple, the garden promises to infuse new color and charm into the Valley's tourism calendar during the autumn months.

The Chief Minister cut the ceremonial ribbon and

declared the garden open to the public, describing it as "a floral celebration that adds a new chapter to Kashmir's tourism story."

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister commended the efforts of the Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens for its role in establishing the theme garden.

He noted that the initiative would "address the off-season gap in tourism and enhance the autumn experience for visitors."

Omar Abdullah recalled that he had laid the foundation stone of Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood in November last year, drawing parallels with the success of the Tulip Garden. "Just as the Tulip Garden transformed the spring tourist season, the Chrysanthemum

● P-06

PM Modi Has Worked To Secure India, Crushed Terrorism: Amit Shah

Highlights Decisions Like Art-370 Abrogation, Surgical Strikes, Op Sindoor

SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that for 70 years, no one dared touch Article 370, but in 2019, Prime Minister Modi ended it and crushed terrorism from hideouts like no one had before.

Addressing rallies across Bihar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that for seven decades, no government attempted to amend Article 370, but in 2019, PM Modi revoked it and fully integrated Jammu and Kashmir into India.

Shah also discussed India's economic trajectory, saying that under Modi's leadership, the country rose from the 11th to the fourth-largest economy in the world, with a goal of reaching third by 2027. "PM Modi has brought our country's economy from 11th place to fourth. We will move from fourth to third before 2027. He has made our country safe," he said.

On security issues, the Home Minister listed major



attacks after Modi took office, including Uri, Pulwama, and Pahalgam. He said the government responded through surgical strikes, air strikes, and launched Operation Sindoor following the Pahalgam attack.

"Modi has worked to secure India. He has worked to make India prosperous," Shah said. He criticised previous governments for failing to act on

security matters, citing political considerations, and said Modi's government took decisive steps to neutralise terrorists at their hideouts.

Turning to electoral matters, the HM addressed the special intensive revision of voter rolls in Bihar. He accused opposition parties of obstructing the process and said that all infiltrators would

be traced and removed from the electoral lists.

Shah urged voters to support the NDA government, promising action against infiltrators. "Tell me, should the names of infiltrators be removed from the voter list or not? Form the NDA government again... I promise you that we will remove every single infiltrator

● P-06

“MODI HAS WORKED TO SECURE INDIA. HE HAS WORKED TO MAKE INDIA prosperous,” Shah said. He criticised previous governments for failing to act on security matters, citing political considerations, and said Modi's government took decisive steps to neutralise terrorists at their hideouts.

...Rajya Sabha Polls

Those Who Betrayed Us Known To All: CM Omar



OWAIS GUL

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said the National Conference (NC) was "betrayed" in the Rajya Sabha elections and those involved are "known to all".

Speaking to reporters, the CM, termed the outcome as "unfortunate" but chose not to name those responsible, saying their identities are "now widely recognised".

He thanked the members,

especially Congress, and others for voting in favour of the NC candidates. "I am satisfied that at least not even a single vote from our party was wasted," he said.

Omar said those who participated in meetings and enjoyed hospitality with the BJP should have openly declared their support for that party. "Like MLA Handwara (Sajad Gani Lone), who opted to abstain as he didn't want to harm the BJP, these members

● P-06

Rajya Sabha Polls In J&K Trigger Political Row, Cross-Voter Hunt

AGENCIES

JAMMU: The political controversy surrounding the Rajya Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir continues a day after the polls, as party leaders traded accusations over alleged cross-voting and "fixed deals."

BJP's Jammu and Kashmir president Sat Sharma claimed a historic victory for his party, winning the fourth Rajya Sabha seat despite attempts by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to "create a division on the basis of Jammu versus Kashmir," Sharma said, "This is a historic victory for the BJP. We have won the seat from the soil of Kashmir, despite attempts by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his party to create a division on the basis of Jammu versus Kashmir. He asked the legislators to unite against the BJP, which won 29 seats from Jammu in the



2024 Assembly polls."

Sharma also dedicated the win to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party workers, adding, "We will continue to serve the people under 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas Sabka Prayas.'"

The BJP rejected People's Conference leader Sajad Gani Lone's claim that the Rajya Sabha elections were a "fixed match" between the National Conference (NC) and BJP.

Sharma dismissed the allegation, saying, "What he is saying now has no meaning. Why did he not vote? He should have voted, whether for A or B. Staying away from voting is undemocratic."

However, Sajad Gani Lone, who represents Handwara, asserted that the NC facilitated BJP's victory. "These two or three extra votes had no room for that candidate number four. Even if there had been no cross-voting, that candidate would still have lost."

All the cross-voting was done by the National Conference. They did it themselves," Lone said. He alleged, "Seven NC members directly gifted their votes to the BJP. It was a fixed match." He added, "The BJP ensures the victory of its own candidates through these same people. They abuse BJP during elections to fool voters, but they are working together

● P-06

CS Reviews Arrangements For 2Nd Edition Of Kashmir Marathon

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SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Saturday chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements for the upcoming 2nd Edition of the Kashmir Marathon, being organized by the Tourism Department on November 2, 2025, in Srinagar.

The meeting besides Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism was attended by Secretary, Health; Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir; DIG, Traffic; MD, JKTD; Director, Tourism, Kashmir; SSP, Traffic, Srinagar; Commissioner, SMC, and other senior officers of concerned departments.

The Chief Secretary described the marquee event as a valuable opportunity

to promote tourism and sports culture in Jammu and Kashmir, noting that the inaugural edition had received overwhelming

response and set new benchmarks for sporting events in the region.

He observed that participation from runners across the nation and abroad would further reinforce Kashmir's image as a premier destination for leisure, adventure and sports tourism.

Emphasizing seamless coordination among all departments, Dulloo directed the concerned to ensure foolproof arrangements for visiting athletes and participants, covering aspects such as transportation, accommodation, medical care, security, sanitation, and event management.

● P-06



Rising Discontent In NC MLAs Signals Shift: Sharma

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma on Saturday highlighted growing unrest among National Conference (NC) legislators following the Rajya Sabha victory of Sat Sharma, suggesting that many are seeking alternative political directions.

“I SINCERELY thank all the MLAs who have extended their support for this cause.

Sharma said, "We expected this support, as there has been increasing dissatisfaction among MLAs, especially within the National Conference. Many are unhappy with the State Government and are looking for an alternative."

He further added that this marks the first move by legislators aiming to align with Prime Minister Narendra

● P-06

Legislators Voted Freely Despite CM's Efforts To Divide J&K: BJP

AGENCIES

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir BJP President Sat Pal Sharma, who secured the fourth Rajya Sabha seat in the Union Territory, Saturday said that the win came despite efforts by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to create a divide between the two regions.

Sharma returned from Kashmir to a reception by party workers and supporters at Jammu airport, followed by a procession to the Trikuta Nagar party office.

The BJP dismissed claims by People's Conference leader Sajad Gani Lone that the election was predetermined between the National Conference and the BJP.

Sharma defeated NC candidate Imran Nabi Dar by

receiving 32 votes against Dar's 22 in the third notification. NC's Gurwinder Singh Oberoi also won a seat with 31 votes.

Sharma told reporters that the party did not offer anything to legislators but asked them to vote according to their conscience. He said that the BJP received four votes in this instance and expected more support in future elections from legislators acting similarly.

He said the seat was won from Kashmir despite opposition attempts to unite legislators against the BJP.

Sharma dedicated the win to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party workers and said the party would continue its work under the policy framework of inclusive development

● P-06



■ Cross Voting During RS Polls

Aga Ruhullah Mehdi Takes Dig At CM Omar For Not Revealing Names Of MLAs

Refuses To Campaign In Budgam By-Polls, Cites NC's Political Failure

NAVEED UL HAQ

SRINAGAR: Member Parliament from Srinagar and senior National Conference leader Aga Ruhullah Mehdi said on Saturday that he will not campaign for his party in the upcoming Budgam by-polls, accusing the NC of failing both politically and administratively in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking to reporters, Mehdi, said that the recent controversy over alleged cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha elections has raised serious questions about transparency. He urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to reveal the names of those involved.



"I have absolutely no knowledge of who voted for whom or who engaged in cross-voting," Mehdi said. "From the Chief Minister's statement, it became clear that he seems to know who

did the cross-voting but does not want to reveal the names. This proves that he knows it happened. This is not a zaati dukaan (private shop) where names can be hidden. This is public property. Credibility

is built on people's trust and their votes."

He added that if someone knows about cross-voting and chooses not to disclose it, it is "unacceptable." "If there has been wrongdoing with people's trust, it must be revealed so that citizens know who is innocent and who betrayed them. This is public information and people have the right to know," he said.

Mehdi questioned when political leaders in Jammu and Kashmir would take what he called the "struggle for survival" seriously. "Fighting at the party level is fine, but for our collective survival, all like-minded people must come together," he said.

● P-06

KCCI Meets LG to Address Trade, Tourism, Export Challenges



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SRINAGAR: A delegation of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), led by its President, Javid Ahmad Tenga, Saturday called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. The delegation comprised of newly elected office bearers and executive committee members of KCCI put forth various issues related to the promotion of tourism, industries and trade-related activities in the region. They also apprised the Lieutenant Governor of the various upcoming initiatives aimed at enhancing Kashmir's visibility as a preferred tourist destination.

DC B'la Flags off Rally under Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 3.0



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Saturday flagged off a rally from the Old Hospital complex Baramulla (CMO Office) under the Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 3.0, an initiative aimed at creating awareness against tobacco use among youth. The campaign, being organized by the Chief Medical Officer Baramulla under the aegis of the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir and National Health Mission, seeks to prevent initiation of tobacco use among youth, promote cessation among users, and strengthen enforcement of tobacco control laws. Chief Medical Officer Baramulla, Dr. A.G. Raina, District Health Officer, Dr. Bhajan Kour and other officials were present on the occasion. Students of ANMT School and officials participated enthusiastically in the rally, raising slogans and holding placards to spread the message of a tobacco-free society. Speaking on the occasion, the DC emphasized the need for collective efforts to discourage tobacco consumption and protect youth from its harmful effects. He appreciated the Health Department for organizing such awareness activities and urged continued community participation in the campaign.

OSC conducts Awareness Programme at Shopian



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SHOPIAN: The One Stop Centre (OSC) Shopian, under the Department of Social Welfare, Saturday organized an awareness programme at the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Girls' Library, Old DC Office, Shopian. The initiative was aimed at sensitizing the girls regarding the range of services and assistance provided by the OSC and to enhance awareness about the Women Helpline 181. During the session, the girls were apprised of various problems concerning blackmailing, women trafficking, domestic violence and other forms of harassment. They were further briefed on the functioning of the Women Helpline 181 Control Room, including its role in providing immediate assistance and facilitating timely intervention in distress situations. During the programme, the girls were encouraged to approach the One Stop Centre or contact the helpline in case of any such incidents requiring support, protection, or counselling. Awareness pamphlets containing detailed information about OSC services and helpline facilities were distributed among all the girls to promote accessibility and strengthen awareness at the community level.

Court Convicts Accused in NDPS Case at Anantnag

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ANANTNAG: The Hon'ble Court of Special Judge designated under the NDPS Act at Anantnag, Manzoor Ahmad Khan Saturday convicted the accused Bashir Ahmad Bhat, son of Gull Mohammad Bhat, resident of Waghama, Bijbehara, in connection with FIR No. 230/2021 under Section 8/15 of the NDPS Act, registered at Police Station Bijbehara. During the course of investigation, 70 kilograms of poppy straw were recovered from an Alto 800 vehicle bearing registration number JK18A-1097, driven by the accused while he was proceeding from Anantnag towards Sangam. After the trial and examination of evidence, the Hon'ble Court found the accused guilty of the offense. The case has been listed for October 27, 2025, for the decision on the quantum of punishment. The prosecution was represented by Senior Prosecuting Officer, Shri Arif Majeed Romshoo, who effectively presented the case on behalf of the State.

DLSA Sgr organizes Special Lok Adalat to resolve Cheque Bounce Cases



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SRINAGAR: In accordance with the 2025 calendar of the J&K Legal Services Authority, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, organized a Special Lok Adalat at the District Court Complex, Mominabad, Srinagar Saturday. The Lok Adalat, aimed at amicably resolving Cheque Bounce and Bank cases which was held under the direction of Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, Shazia Tabassum and under the chairmanship of Principal District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar, Tasleem Arief. To facilitate the amicable settlement of cases, 03 benches were constituted for the said Lok Adalat, wherein first bench was presided over by the Additional District Judge (Bank Cases), Kusoom Pandita and 1st Additional District & Sessions Judge Srinagar, Anjum Ara. The second bench was presided over by Forest Magistrate Srinagar, Mohammad Ishtiyak Alam Baba and PT & E Magistrate Srinagar, Massarat Jabeen and the 3rd Bench was presided over by City Munsiff, Srinagar, Shayesta Nazir and 1st Addl. Munsiff Srinagar, Zirgham Hamid. Overall 101 number of cases were taken up for settlement out of which 33 number of cases were amicably settled and Rs. 2,64,10,457 was awarded as settlement amount. The Special Lok Adalat reflects the commitment of the DLSA Srinagar and J&K Legal Services Authority to promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and ensure timely justice delivery.

DLIC approves 202 cases under Mission YUVA in Shopian

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: The meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under Mission YUVA was held Saturday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta. The meeting aimed to review and approve applications received under the Mission YUVA initiative, designed to foster youth entrepreneurship and self-employment. A total of 202 applications verified by the SBDU, were presented for consideration. Following a comprehensive evaluation based on eligibility, business viability and the applicant's socio-economic background, all applications were approved for financial assistance and handholding support under the Mission YUVA framework. Addressing the committee, the DC emphasized the vital role of self-employment in empowering youth, instructing all departments to ensure timely fund disbursement, robust monitoring and dedicated mentoring to guarantee the sustainability of the supported ventures. During the meeting, the DC also underscored the importance of expanding outreach activities, organizing awareness camps and conducting mobile registration drives to ensure the benefits of Mission YUVA reach every eligible youth in the district. "Mission YUVA is not just a scheme, it is a movement to promote innovation, self-reliance and employment generation," he stated. The meeting was attended by ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; General Manager DIC, Shurjeel Naikoo; AD Employment, Lead District Manager, DDM NABARD, Advance Manager Cluster officer JKB, District Officer JKEDI, EO and other concerned.

J&K BOSE grants final opportunity to apply for 11th, 12th Annual Exams

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SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (J&K BOSE), has issued extension-notification for online submission of Annual examination Forms for class 11th and 12th, Regular, 2025 for a period of 3 days beginning on October 27. As per the notification(s) issued by the Joint Secretary, Examinations JD/KD, the on-roll eligible students of Kashmir Division including winter zone areas of Jammu Division besides district Kargil can submit their examination forms in online mode from October 27 to 29 on payment of applicable fee of Rs 4230 excluding practical fee. The Board has directed all concerned institutions to ensure timely submission of forms, advising students to carefully verify their particulars during punching of information on the designated portal in observance of timeline. The notification(s) indicating fee structure are available on the official J&K BOSE website. www.jkbose.nic.in. The Board has urged parents and students to complete the process of submission of forms within the stipulated time frame to avail the final chance following which no form will be entertained, whatsoever. Relevantly, the extension in notification has been granted following declaration of the results of classes 10 and 11.



DC Kupwara inspects functioning of Fruit Mandi Handwara



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HANDWARA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse, visited the Fruit Mandi Handwara to review its functioning and to take stock of issues faced by the traders operating in the Mandi. During the visit, the DC held an interaction with members of the Fruit Mandi Association, led by its President Mohammad Amin, who apprised him of several concerns including the construction of a Kisan shed, a separate passage from the Bypass to the Mandi, and issues related to the hotline electricity supply. He assured the traders that the administration is committed to addressing their grievances and will take necessary steps to upgrade infrastructure and facilities at the Fruit Mandi. Suse emphasized that the Horticulture sector forms the backbone of Kupwara's economy, and district administration is focused on strengthening the horticulture sector and ensuring better support to fruit growers and traders. The DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javid Naseem Masoodi and Tehsildar Handwara, Zeeshan Khan.

Devyani Rana expresses resolve to sustain momentum of development in Nagrota

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Bharatiya Janata Party candidate for the upcoming by-elections to the Nagrota Assembly seat, Devyani Rana, while addressing a series of meetings at Kathar Upper, Kathar Lower, Krishanpur and Bhatyari Saturday reiterated her firm resolve to carry forward the vision of a progressive and prosperous Nagrota, saying that the agenda of development and economic growth will not be allowed to get derailed under any circumstances. Emphasizing the BJP's core philosophy, Rana reiterated that the party stands for equitable opportunity for all and believes in inclusive governance that uplifts all sections of the society and provides every citizen a fair chance to succeed. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has witnessed a people-centric model of development where every individual, regardless of background, is economically and socially empowered. Recalling her late father Shri Devender Singh Rana's commitment to the constituency, Devyani Rana said "My father had a dream to see Nagrota prosper and thrive and I am determined to realize that dream with people's support," she added. In a strong message to those trying to mislead the people, Rana cautioned disruptive forces not to test the unity and resolve of the people of Nagrota, who, she said, remain steadfast in their approach towards the betterment of the constituency. The people of Nagrota are wise, resilient, and deeply committed to their development and no divisive agenda can weaken their resolve or derail their progress," she said. Calling upon voters to extend their full support to the BJP for the larger good of the constituency, Ms. Devyani Rana said, "Together, we will build a Viksit Nagrota that will contribute proudly to the vision of a Viksit Jammu and Kashmir and Viksit Bharat". Sr. BJP Leader and Chairman DDC, Jammu Bharat Bhushan while speaking at these places appealed to the people of Nagrota to extend their wholehearted support and give a decisive mandate to Ms. Devyani Rana, so that she can carry forward the unfinished mission of inclusive and holistic development envisioned by her late father, Devender Singh Rana. He emphasized that Ms. Devyani embodies the same spirit of dedication, compassion, and commitment to public service that her father was known for. Reaffirming the BJP's collective resolve, he stated that the entire organization stands firmly united behind Ms. Devyani Rana in her endeavour to usher Nagrota into a new era of progress, prosperity, and people-centric governance.

CBDM Capacity Building, IRS Training Programmes Held at Anantnag

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: A Capacity Building Programme on Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM) was organised by the District Disaster Management Authority in collaboration with Rural Development Department and State Disaster Response Force, Anantnag at Dak Bungalow, Khanabal. The event witnessed active participation from officers including Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), and DySP SDRF and officials of various departments including Health, Youth Services & Sports, Fire & Emergency Services, Jal Shakti, Rural Development, Power Development, Revenue, and Flood Control and volunteers. The session focussed on enhancing community awareness and preparedness for effective disaster risk reduction and fostering response mechanisms at grassroots level. ANANTNAG: A Capacity Building Programme on Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM) was organised by the District Disaster Management Authority in collaboration with Rural Development Department and State Disaster Response Force, Anantnag at Dak Bungalow, Khanabal. The event witnessed active participation from officers including Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), and DySP SDRF and officials of various departments including Health, Youth Services & Sports, Fire & Emergency Services, Jal Shakti, Rural Development, Power Development, Revenue, and Flood Control and volunteers. The session focussed on enhancing community awareness and preparedness for effective disaster risk reduction and fostering response mechanisms at grassroots level.



Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Commissioner Development highlighted the importance of CBDM in empowering local communities to play a proactive role in disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response. During the program, the significance of CBDM for micro planning based on community knowledge and available resources besides involving community members directly for faster response, better coordination with government agencies, self reliance and minimization of losses during disasters was elaborated. The programme concluded with an interactive session and demonstrations about basic disaster response techniques, aimed at equipping participants with practical knowledge for efficient action during emergencies. Later, an Incident Response System (IRS) Training Programme was also organised for strengthening the district's disaster response and coordination mechanisms. It focused on familiarizing officers with the operational structure, planning process, and response protocols of IRS, preparing them to manage real-time disaster situations more efficiently. Deputy Secretary, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction, J&K, Snober Jamil joined the session virtually and briefed the participants about the Incident Response System framework. She highlighted the importance of IRS mechanism as a structured approach for effective disaster response and coordination among different departments. Deputy Secretary emphasized that IRS enables clear roles, responsibilities, and communication channels during emergencies, ensuring swift and efficient action across all levels of administration.

Military-Civil Fusion Capsule Team of stakeholders visit Samba, Domana, Mira Sahib Brigades

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JAMMU: As part of the ongoing Military-Civil Fusion Capsule, the stakeholder participants today undertook cross-establishment visits to the Samba, Domana, and Mira Sahib Brigades in the Jammu sector. The visit aimed to deepen understanding of the operational, administrative and developmental challenges in border areas, while fostering closer cooperation between the civil administration and the armed forces. During the interactions, participants gained valuable insights into the functioning of field formations, coordination mechanisms, and efforts undertaken by the Army to maintain security and support developmental initiatives in border regions. The exchange provided a platform for meaningful dialogue, reinforcing the spirit of jointness, synergy and mutual respect that underpins effective civil-military cooperation. The Civil-Military Fusion Capsule continues to serve as a model of inter-agency cooperation, promoting shared learning, coordination and a unified approach to national objectives. The initiative reflects the Government's vision of integrated national security and border development, with the civil administration and senior Army officers emphasizing the importance of collaborative planning and execution for regional stability.

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Sigh Of Relief For Kashmir's Tourism

With Diwali holidays upon us, Kashmir's valleys are hearing a long-missing sound, tourists are walking through their doors. After months of debilitating silence following the disastrous Pahalgam attack, tourism destinations are starting to hum again. This new group of visitors is much more than a bulleted point on the seasonal statistics; it is a lifesaver for a regional economy that was nearing collapse and it speaks powerfully to the resilience of the people of Kashmir and the travelers fond of visiting it.

The months of gloom were not only an abstract period of inactivity. They were a period of real struggle for people, hoteliers, shikara wallahs, transporters, tour guides, and artisans, that depend on the tourism economy. The report on tourism is harsh in its description of people living in poverty. Cab drivers were forced to sell his vehicle at a discount in order to pay back an unpayable loan, and the connection they have to the tourism industry represents just one of innumerable stories of challenge and adversity. The stories of individuals represent a common experience of distress that gripped an entire sector, upsetting the lives of others and breeding uncertainty about the future. The attack stole innocent lives are also forced the economy's collapse.

Precisely this context is what makes the present moment so important. The revival of tourists is a manifestation of collective confidence. It reflects that the attraction of Kashmir and its people must prevail over the disruption. The expressions of visitors both from Mumbai and beyond about being amazed with "paradise on earth", and praising the warmth, is the strongest antidote to the fear factor. Their refusal to cancel a trip is a brave vote for normalcy.

But, we must not get carried away with unbridled optimism. Historically, tourism in Kashmir has been a delicate bloom, too frequently wilted by violence-cycles and political distortions. In addition to ensuring visitor security, the administration is tasked with visioning a robust long-term plan for the industry. The plan will have to include expansion beyond traditional seasons, improvements in investment for infrastructure, and promotion of the Valleys potential on national and global platforms.

Now, the hope comes from the approaching winter season, when visitors generally return to Kashmir's snow-covered scenery. Stakeholders in the sector have every reason to be hopeful. But hope must be accompanied by sustained and concrete action from the government to make sure that their hope will not remain a short-lived seasonal event but be the basis of ongoing stability. The people of Kashmir have exercised great resilience. They deserve a future in which their economic stability is not beholden to the next crisis. The tourists returning are the first green shoots of that hope; it is now a joint obligation to cultivate them into a forest of sustained prosperity.

Beyond Darkness: A Light They Carry Within

ASIF AHMAD BHAT



Life is full of experiences that open our eyes to realities we often ignore. Recently, I had one such experience that changed how I look at strength, resilience, and the meaning of ability. We were celebrating the Diwali festival at an NGO that works for specially abled persons and other underprivileged sections of society. The organisation's main goal is to help them access better economic opportunities, especially in the government sector, through training and awareness. The environment that day was filled with laughter, music, and celebration. As the festival concluded, all the students began dancing with joy.

But among them, one student caught my attention — a visually impaired boy. He didn't know the dance moves; he couldn't see the beats or the lights. Yet he kept on dancing like the happiest person on Earth. His steps were imperfect but his spirit was flawless. In that moment, I realized — sometimes the brightest light comes from those who live in the deepest darkness.

A Glimpse Through Cinema and Reality

The very next day, I was watching the movie "Sitaare Zameen Par," which beautifully portrays the neglected sections of our society. The film reflects how our perspectives often limit the potential of people with disabilities. Watching it reminded me of a close friend of mine, Rohit, a visually impaired student preparing for the SSC exams. He recently completed his Master's in Economics with an impressive

percentage. One evening, we went for a walk to buy some essentials. At the shop, Rohit used his mobile banking app to make a payment. I noticed how people around us began staring — not out of admiration, but disbelief, as if he was doing something impossible for someone "like him." It was disheartening. That moment showed how society still views disability as incapacity rather than a different kind of ability.

According to the 2011 Census, India has over 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, which is about 2.21% of the population. However, as per the Ministry of Statistics (2022), only 36% of them are employed, compared to the national average of over 60%. Even though government initiatives like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) and Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign) exist, societal attitudes continue to be the biggest barriers.

The Story of Prateek: Strength in Silence

These experiences reminded me of another friend, Prateek, who is also visually impaired and works in the defense sector. He is an all-rounder — from repairing electric equipment to solving technical issues, he can do it all. Many times, I felt ashamed that even though I am "normal," I couldn't perform tasks that came so easily to him. Despite his government job and remarkable skills, he still faced harsh realities. Several landlords refused to rent him a room simply because of his disability. It made me realize how physical blindness is not the real challenge — society's mental blindness is.

According to a National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) report, over 70% of educated disabled individuals still face discrimination in renting, employment, or even basic public access. This is not

just a social issue but a moral one — a reflection of how far we still have to go as a nation that claims "inclusion for all."

When Mockery Meets Ignorance

A few days later, during dinner with friends, one of them started talking about the Diwali celebration and the dance performance of Ashutosh, the visually impaired student who had danced so freely. My friend began to laugh and mock him, saying his moves looked funny. I went silent for a while.

Then it hit me — for people like Ashutosh, dancing wasn't just about movement. It was about freedom. Maybe it was the first time he got a chance to express himself without judgment. Society often mocks what it does not understand. These individuals get so few opportunities to express their emotions, dreams, and talents that when they finally do, we measure them by standards they were never meant to fit into.

I felt deeply disturbed by this attitude. According to WHO estimates (2023), about 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability, yet most continue to face social stigma. In India, the National Sample Survey (2018) found that over 45% of disabled individuals rarely participate in social events due to fear of mockery or exclusion. These numbers are not just statistics — they are stories of human neglect.

A Girl Left Behind

Even more painful was the story of a visually impaired girl student from our NGO. Her parents refused to

let her come home for Diwali simply because of her disability. They felt she might "cause trouble" or "not fit in" with guests. It was heartbreaking — a reminder that discrimination often begins at home.

The UNICEF Disability Report (2021) mentions that around one-third of disabled children in India are kept out of family gatherings or festivals, which severely affects their confidence and emotional well-being. If family acceptance is denied, how can we expect social acceptance to follow?

A Lesson From Light

Though "Sitaare Zameen Par" was made to teach a lesson, the real lesson lies in how we behave outside the cinema hall. Even the character played by Aamir Khan initially showed ignorance — using insensitive words in a courtroom scene before realizing his mistake. It mirrors how our society often learns empathy only after confrontation. The truth is, the problem isn't disability — it's our perception of it. Disability does not define limitation; indifference does. Every person I mentioned — whether Rohit, Prateek, Ashutosh, or the girl student — carries a light within them, waiting to be seen.

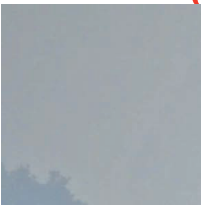
Conclusion: Seeing Beyond What Eyes Can See

These experiences taught me that the real darkness isn't in blindness, but in how we fail to see others with compassion. A visually impaired person might not see the world, but they feel it — more deeply than most of us ever will. As citizens, we must not only rely on government schemes but also take individual responsibility to create inclusive spaces — in our neighbourhoods, workplaces, and schools. Let's begin by changing our vocabulary, normalising accessibility, and celebrating ability, not disability. Diwali is called the festival of lights — but maybe true light is not what shines in lamps. It is what glows in the courage of those who keep dancing, even when the world refuses to play the music.

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'The Air Is Killing Us': When The Air Turns To Poison

LALIT GARG



Once celebrated as the symbol of culture, energy, and progress, Delhi today stands shrouded in a suffocating haze of smoke and dust. The poisonous air has reached such alarming levels that even breathing has become a risk. Recently, Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) touched a dangerous level of 345, categorized as "severe." This is not merely a health emergency for the residents of the national capital but also a matter of grave concern for both the BJP-led Central government and the Delhi government. Each year, as October and November arrive, the city's skyline turns murky, and life begins to choke. The reasons are many — and the responsibility is collective — shared by the government, society, and individuals alike. Delhi's place among the world's most polluted cities is a damning commentary on our model of "development." The suffering of patients with respiratory diseases under such conditions is unimaginable, and the toxic air is a silent cause of many chronic ailments.

Among the key causes of this crisis is stubble burning. Farmers in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh set fire to crop residues, releasing microscopic particulate matter into the air. The seasonal wind direction blows this polluted air toward Delhi, pushing its pollution levels sharply upward. Adding to this are the millions of vehicles spewing exhaust fumes, dust from construction sites, open garbage burning, and the crushing population pressure — all of which deepen the disaster. It would not be wrong to say that Delhi, in the name of development, has begun devouring its own existence. Once again, this year, Diwali fireworks sent pollution levels soaring. Despite strong appeals from environmentalists and religious organizations — and the Supreme Court's decision to allow only "green crackers" — the reality on the ground shows that this measure has failed. People burst polluting fireworks under the guise of green crackers, a clear reflection of our self-destructive mindset. Environmental experts have long maintained that calling green crackers "non-polluting" is a myth — and Delhi's current situation reinforces this truth.

However, it would also be unfair to say that governments have done nothing. Both the Centre and the Delhi government have, over recent years, initiated several measures. After Rekha Gupta became Chief Minister and the BJP came to power, this problem was addressed as a top priority. The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) was implemented, providing phased measures based on pollution severity. Subsidies were introduced to promote electric vehicles, thousands of e-buses were deployed, smog towers were installed, and a "Green Delhi App" was launched to resolve complaints. Farmers were given alternative machines and subsidies to discourage stubble burning. Yet, despite these efforts, the root of the problem remains intact — because pollution is not merely an administrative issue; it is a social and psychological one. We may blame stubble burning or fireworks, but the deeper cause lies in systemic failure. It is shocking that despite all measures, the AQI in most areas

has crossed the 350 marks. Even after Diwali, the toxic air refuses to clear. The Central Pollution Control Board's interventions have had little visible effect, and the enforcement of GRAP-2 only reflects the gravity of the situation.

Every winter, as the temperature drops, Delhi's air turns deadlier. Despite court interventions and repeated government announcements, little changes on the ground — proof of our collective negligence. Strict laws exist, yet open garbage burning continues, dust covers the streets, and old vehicles keep running. Green cover is vanishing; trees are being felled while the culture of planting new ones fades away. This crisis cannot be solved by blaming governments alone; it demands citizen awareness and responsibility. The government can make rules, but unless people change their habits, controlling pollution will remain impossible. Compared to other metros, Delhi's condition is the worst — its pollution levels are often double those of Mumbai, Bengaluru, or Kolkata. This is partly because Delhi suffers not only from local pollution but also from emissions drifting in from neighboring states. Hence, only

a regional approach can bring lasting results. The Central government must coordinate with state administrations to develop a uniform and permanent policy on stubble management, industrial emissions, construction control, and vehicular norms.

At this point, pollution should no longer be viewed as a seasonal nuisance but as a national disaster. Environmental awareness must be spread through schools, institutions, and religious organizations. Each residential colony should develop "green zones," promote urban forests, and encourage every citizen to pledge to plant at least one tree a year. Public transport should be prioritized, and old diesel vehicles phased out rigorously. Undoubtedly, fireworks are not the sole cause of Delhi's choking air. Unchecked population growth, pollution from the construction of over one lakh new buildings each year, and emissions from millions of vehicles all play a part. As citizens, our irresponsibility continues to deepen the crisis.

Delhi's pollution is, in essence, a mirror of our failed development model — one where we multiplied comforts but lost the most basic element of life: clean air. This is not only a governmental failure but also the outcome of our collective insensitivity. If we do not awaken now, future generations will know clean air only through history books. It is time to rise above politics, blame games, and apathy — and unite for our right to breathe. The true mark of civilization lies not in exploiting nature but in preserving it. If we turn the air we breathe into poison, all symbols of progress will become meaningless.

Above all, until people realize that bursting toxic fireworks in the name of festivity is an act of collective suicide, no court order or government directive can save us. This is a moment that calls for a joint moral initiative by political, social, and religious leaders alike. The crisis is not confined to Delhi or the NCR — cities like Mumbai and Kolkata are already following the same dangerous path. Unless we act decisively now, the capital of India will remain a capital of smog — a living reminder of how human progress, without conscience, becomes self-destructive.

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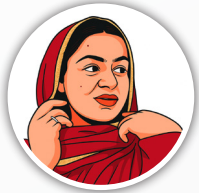
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Flame That Burns Brighter: The Enduring Bond Of Marriage



MUSKAN SHAFI MALIK

As I hold my parents' wedding card from 27 years ago and watch them on screen from October 26, 1998, I wonder how time has flown so fast between the autumn of 1998 and the autumn of October 2025. To many, these might be just numbers, but for me, they represent so much more: patience, love, care, respect, endurance, support, and so much else. Their marriage is not about materialistic luxuries but about simplicity and mutualism. My mother, the cornerstone of our house, whom we call "braand kean" in Kashmiri, turned the foundation of our home so strong she made a non-living space into a living and loving one. My father, whom I call the backbone of our house, is a laborer who works in a formal dress as a medical representative. He has mingled his blood and sweat, day and night, to make our lives beautiful.

Every civilization is built on families. I believe families are the basic unit of society. A family starts with two people, and when children, the flowers, are added, its essence is enhanced. As I hear the stories from my mother, from books to baking, her sudden shift in her early 20s placed more responsibilities on her compared to our generation. At that time, the fear of social life, the deeply rooted stigma, and the prejudice of being a stranger's daughter, a "lukk garich koor," must have put immense pressure on her.

Despite what I believe were the constraints of that society and era, she became a mother of three and the most responsible wife. On the other hand, my father is a man of infinite efforts and few words. For 28 years, his morning has begun while the whole of Kashmir was still asleep, and at dusk, his fatigue turns into prayer.

He may not have official titles, but

the work he has done silently for society has sustained his dignity through honesty and hard work. The love of both my parents is less poetic and more practical. Through his life, I have learned that masculinity is not about dominance, but about endurance, humility, and silent strength. He respects my mother not out of obligation but from admiration. Together, they prove that equality in marriage is not a Western idea but a human truth that existed long before we named it.

When I asked my father what this bond means to him, he replied, "Marriage is a union of two unknown souls written by fate at the wheel of life, settled in heaven and celebrated on Earth. But beyond that, a great marriage is not when 'I' and 'She' become 'We,' but when 'I' and 'She,' even after 27 years, still become 'We.' Our love is a flame that burns brighter with each passing year."

Asking the same question to my mother, she replied, "When we got married, we were nothing, but by being together, we are everything now." Although my parents are not the only example of such a partnership, there are indefinite examples; the quality of the parents' bond profoundly affects a child and their future, and that is the main reflection here.

Within Islam, marriage is considered to be divine and sacred. It is about creating love, righteousness, and tranquility between partners. The Quran tells us that Allah has made pairs so they may find comfort with one another. Marriage serves many roles, such as morally educating people, continuing one's family line, and socially stabilizing society to foster respect for one another and for orderly and lawful relationships.

Psychology and science support the viewpoint that a positive connection between parents is also vital in maintaining a child's physical, psychological, and social well-being. In particular, Bowlby and Ainsworth's Attachment Theory illustrates how responsive and reliable caregiving promotes secure attachment, which produces empathy, trust, and confidence. Alternatively, a poor relationship between parents has harm in its own right. Social learning theory explains that children imitate hostility or aggression



observed at home, increasing defiant or antisocial behavior. Additionally, the strength of the marital relationship is the underpinning of the family unit. Nevertheless, in many social contexts, the extended family will impact the couple's lived experience in significant ways.

As I have witnessed, when joint families harbor prejudice, rigid expectations, or unhealed grievances, these tensions often spill into the marital space. From my own research, I have met more than twenty women who shared experiences of being asked to remain silent to preserve "family honor," suppressing their grievances and carrying the emotional weight alone. On the other hand, the husband remains stuck among his parents, siblings, and spouse, unsure whom to support. He is truly forsaken and teased as to where he needs to place his loyalty.

The dynamic develops a circular tension. The woman is asked to be quiet, and in being asked to be silent, she feels pressure to hide her frustra-

tion. At the same time, anxiety is created in the man's divided loyalty, disconnecting him from himself and his girlfriend. Stigmas and biases compound small infractions, turning molehills into mountains, and harboring small disagreements into larger confrontations, and sometimes precipitating into verbal or physical violence.

Breaking this cycle requires conscious boundary-setting and a shared understanding between partners. To act as buffers against external pressures, there must be open communication and mutual respect. While changing entrenched family attitudes is not easy, a couple can create a protected space to address grievances, validate emotions, and make collective decisions. The first step toward preventing its destructive consequences is to recognize the interplay between family prejudice and marital well-being. In societies where honor and stigma dominate, the emotional resilience of the couple becomes both a shield and a silent act of resistance.

As I look toward the future, a pressing question arises: will new generations be able to maintain strong marital bonds? Will they be able to address the pressures that have complicated relationships for years? Pressures that come from anywhere except love.

The connection between partners is often judged by outsiders via their judgments, unwanted roles, and weighty burdens, not by the bond itself. The strength of a marriage is not only through the love between two people; it is additionally expressed when they can agree on strategies to address these pressures together. If the legacy of hierarchy continues to dominate, then the fragile fabric of these connections may continue to fray.

The challenge for the next generations is to protect the sanctity of partnership by remaining open, pushing back against the dead weight of social prejudices and redefining respect and honor as a means to enhance the bond rather than suppress it. Only then can a marriage exist not as a silent acquiescence to tradition, but as engaged parties in a shared intention that burst with life even in the midst of societal chaos.

Mental health distress is often caused by relationship matters. In India, almost 50% of suicides among youth are connected to familial conflict, romantic issues, and marriage-related stress. Globally, the rates of intimate partner violence are 27% for females over the age of 15, and intimate partner violence leads to a higher risk of depression, PTSD, and anxiety. In India, family problems can account for up to 34% of suicides, and marriage-related matters are estimated at 5%.

The family is indeed the basic unit of society and the centre of care and trust where hearts become one. A home becomes a world to share. Here, love and patience, the untouched things, build the frame of both family and society. I believe that if there are strong bonds at home, it is definitely a nation's pride, for in its strength, a strong India lies.

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Understanding Gen Alpha: Cultural Shift Or What?



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

When I saw the scene in "Kaun Banega Crorepati," where ten-year-old Ishit told Amitabh Bachchan, "I know the rules, please don't start explaining them," I wasn't surprised at all. I've seen many children whose words are mature beyond their years, but whose emotions are far behind their childhood.

Some on social media called him arrogant, others said his parents hadn't instilled good values. But the truth lay deeper than these immediate reactions. That boy was, in fact, a mirror of an entire generation—the generation we call the Alpha generation, the fastest, most impatient, and most unstable.

These children are growing up in an era where the answer to every question is just a touch away. Their childhood is filled with mobile phones, replacing games with peers, and the glare of the screen. They want everything "instantly"—answers, attention, and praise. But this immediacy comes at a cost. The part of their brain responsible for patience, judgment, and emotional control is swept away by a deluge of information before it can mature. The result is a rapid pace of thought, while the ability to control it weakens. These children know a lot, but they don't know how to pause and listen.

Ishit's behavior reflected that unease. His words were confident, but behind that confidence was a hidden fear. At an age when children should be asking questions, he was eager to answer. This isn't just a child's tendency, but a sign of a broader social situation. This behavior isn't a sign of a mental illness, but rather the result of unbalanced development. When a child is constantly trying to speak up, prove himself right, and attract attention, he's living under some invisible pressure.

Often, these children are caught in



an invisible competition. They believe they must appear intelligent and successful at all costs. This superficial confidence is a veil behind which lies insecurity, fear, and performance anxiety. When Ishit said, "If I don't win twelve lakh rupees, I won't be allowed to take a picture with you," it was clear that his self-worth is tied to achievement. This pressure stems from the expectations of family, school, and society.

Today's parents praise their children's intelligence and achievements, but pay little attention to their emotions. The priority is to make them smart, not disciplined. They forget that children's greatest learning power is imitation. They learn from our actions, not from our words. If there is irritation, impatience, and bitterness at home, they will replicate the same patterns in society. The nature sown like a seed in the family grows into a tree in society.

The same scenario plays out in schools. A seventh-grade student declares, "I already know everything." An eighth-grade student breaks down,

entangled in the web of love and popularity found on social media. This is not just the fault of parents, but also of the education system, which expects the same pace and results from every child. A child who doesn't fit that mold is labeled a rebel. Sometimes, their rebellion is merely a voice of inconsistency, not a crime.

The greatest paradox of our time is that we have equated knowledge with speed. We have mistaken technical proficiency for maturity. But the real crisis is that our new generation is becoming emotionally unstable. They communicate with the outside world, but not with their inner selves. Schools, gadgets, and societal competition have robbed children of the stillness of childhood. Now, a quiet child is labeled "slow," while a loud one is labeled "successful." This is the paradox of our civilization.

The problem lies not in the child, but in our perspective. We taught children to speak, but not to listen; we gave them knowledge, but not empathy. We taught them achievement, but not bal-

ance. That's why today, any child who expresses their feelings is immediately labeled "uncultured," "arrogant," "rebellious." But that child is merely a reflection of our own impatience. Our homes, our schools, and our society are collectively transforming that innocent mind into a machine that speaks a lot but understands little. Now, there's competition in education, performance in parenting, and comparison in society. All three have robbed a child of their spontaneity.

Now, we need to change both our thinking and our systems. Children need empathy, not just knowledge. They need to be taught to endure, not conquer. If we don't change course, qualities like humility and patience will be labeled as abnormal. Society is moving toward a path where the quiet will be considered weak, and the shouting successful. This is a dangerous time when the roots of civilization are beginning to wither.

Ironically, the adults who criticized the child themselves use anger, disrespect, and abusive language on social

media. How can a generation that has lost its self-control teach children decorum? This is the deepest concern.

That child is not a flaw, but a sign. He shows us the direction we are headed. We are creating citizens who are technically adept, but mentally exhausted. That child is a mirror of our inner haste, our expectations, and our imbalance. He needs to be understood, not scolded. Within every supremely clever child lies a bright but frightened mind, one that needs to be guided, not suppressed.

Unless we teach our children to value compassion over achievement and humility over intellect, they will continue to grow up under the burden of our unfulfilled aspirations. That child was, in fact, a reflection of ourselves—and perhaps we should now fear the reflection we are increasingly turning away from.

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Dr. Prakash Jha’s Play “Yashomati” Staged at Tagore Hall

JAMEEL ANSARI

SRINAGAR: A captivating theatrical play titled “Yashomati”, written by noted playwright Dr. Prakash Jha, was staged Saturday at Tagore Hall, Srinagar.

The event was organised by Shanti Manas Foundation in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages (JKAACL) and drew an appreciative audience for its emotional depth and artistic finesse.

The play, directed by acclaimed theatre artist Anjali Ada, featured stellar performances by Mangat Ram, Ravi Singh, Swar Kaul, Dr. Mukti Sharma Tikru, Anjali Ada, and Keshav Kakreja, who brought the characters to life with powerful portrayals.

“Yashomati” Play explored the complex emotions of human relationships, separation, and the enduring spirit of humanity. The profound dialogues, realistic performances, and compelling stage design kept the audience deeply engrossed throughout

the show.

In her opening remarks, director Anjali Ada welcomed the audience and expressed her gratitude to Ms. Harvinder Kour, Secretary of the Cultural Academy, for her support in making the production possible.

The event was graced by Principal Secretary, Culture, Shri Brij Mohan Sharma as the chief guest, along with Secretary JKAACL Harvinder Kour, Additional Secretary Adeel Saleem, Deputy Secretary Syed Shakeel-ur-Rehman, former Minority Commission Member Neelam Ramila Singh, National Chairperson of the National Human Rights Council Shahida Parveen, President of the International Human Rights Organization (JK Chapter) Mohammad Altaf Bhat, Media Incharge Mohammad Yaqoob Donoo, Chairperson of Smile Foundation Musarrat Bano, and Tariq Sheera of the Sheher-e-Khaas Literary and Cultural Foundation.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal Secretary Brij

Mohan Sharma described the play as a profound reflection on human emotions and cultural continuity: “Yashomati is not merely a stage performance but a living tale of humanity, closeness, and the pain of separation. It reminds us that art and culture play a vital role in maintaining the emotional and intellectual balance of society.”

He further added that the Jammu & Kashmir Cultural Academy has consistently supported artistic works that promote peace, harmony, and human values. Commending the creative team, he said the play represents our shared cultural heritage and expressed hope that such meaningful and high-quality theatrical productions will continue to inspire the younger generation toward art and humanistic values.

The event saw an enthusiastic presence of theatre lovers, cultural activists, and members of various social organizations. The proceedings were conducted by Salim Salik, Editor, Sheeraza Urdu.

CM Omar Calls For Quality And Innovation In Higher Education

Addresses Valedictory Session of NEP Conclave at AS College

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday said that Jammu and Kashmir’s education system must continue to evolve with the changing times, emphasising that quality and innovation should remain the central pillars of higher education in the region.

He was addressing the valedictory session of the two-day National Education Policy (NEP) Conclave-2025 organised by the Higher Education Department (HED) at Amar Singh College, Srinagar.

The event was attended by Minister for Higher Education Sakina Itoo, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary HED Shatmanu, Vice Chairman J&K Higher Education Council Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chancellors of various universities, Director Colleges Prof. Aijaz Bashir, Principal Amar Singh College Ajaz Ahmed Hakak, principals, educationists and students from across Jammu and Kashmir.

In his address, the Chief Minister reflected on the transformation of India’s education landscape, observing that the traditional system of rote learning has given way to a more dynamic,

learner-centric approach.

“There has been a change in the ways of providing education. Earlier, books were given to students, they memorised lessons, wrote exams, received marks and degrees, and were sent into the world — but with little practical readiness. Companies would often say that we get educated children but must first make them ‘unlearn’ before retraining them for the workplace,” he said.

He noted that the National Education Policy has enabled students to design their own degrees, combining subjects and practical exposure in ways that make them employable and confident.

“In our time, we had to choose between fixed streams—medical, non-medical, commerce or arts. Today’s students can design their degrees to suit their future aspirations. Alongside theoretical learning, the emphasis on practical exposure has given students the confidence to innovate and find real-world solutions,” the Chief Minister remarked.

Referring to the exhibition organised by students from various colleges, Omar Abdullah appreciated the ingenuity and problem-solving mindset demonstrated through several innovative projects.

He cited examples such as a finger-print-based car ignition system linked with Aadhaar to prevent underage driving, carbon monoxide detection sensors for safety during winters, and automated water flow systems for frozen pipelines in cold regions.

“These are not just classroom ideas but real solutions to real problems. Our children are learning to think critically and apply knowledge to everyday challenges. This is the spirit that the National Education Policy seeks to nurture,” he said.

The Chief Minister also lauded the creativity of students involved in traditional crafts, art, papier-mâché, needlework, beekeeping, and organic farming, describing them as vital forms of vocational excellence that reflect the diversity of J&K’s educational strengths.

Referring to the innovative initiative Colleges on Wheels, the Chief Minister said such programmes have broadened the horizons of students, especially young women.

“It must have been difficult for parents to allow their daughters to travel across the country on a train, but I am sure those journeys transformed

their lives. I hope the Higher Education Department continues such experiments so that our students exchange ideas and experiences,” he said.

Omar Abdullah congratulated the colleges that secured NAAC accreditation, describing it as a recognition of quality assurance and academic excellence. He encouraged other institutions to strive for similar standards.

“Getting NAAC accreditation is a big achievement. Those colleges which are yet to achieve it must make it their priority. Accreditation ensures that our institutions meet national benchmarks of quality,” he added.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister honoured college principals whose institutions received NAAC accreditation and distributed appreciation certificates among students who excelled in sports and extracurricular activities across J&K colleges.

Earlier, Omar Abdullah visited the student innovation and craft exhibition organised on the sidelines of the conclave, where he interacted with students and appreciated their creativity and innovative ideas.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

CM Abdullah Inaugurates

Garden will redefine autumn tourism in Kashmir,” he remarked.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also inaugurated an exhibition featuring a wide range of ornamental, lavender, and other floral varieties cultivated by local growers with departmental support. He interacted with the floriculturists and appreciated the dedication and craftsmanship of the gardeners and field staff whose efforts brought the blooms to life.

The event was attended by MLA Zadibal Tanveer Sadiq, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary Floriculture Zubair Ahmed, Secretary Culture, Director Floriculture Kashmir and other senior officials.

PM Modi Has Worked

from Bihar,” he said. He also called out Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and Manmohan Singh, as well as Lalu Prasad Yadav, for remaining silent on security matters and criticised Rahul Gandhi for shielding infiltrators through his “Ghuspetiya Bachao Yatra”.

The Home Minister said the Bihar Assembly elections would decide whether the state continues on the path of development or returns to misgovernance. “Under Modi, India strengthened national security through surgical strikes in 2016, air strikes in 2019, and Operation Sindoor in 2025,” he said—(KNO)

CIK Files Charge

banned organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Investigators found that Khan not only propagated digital propaganda but also facilitated recruitment on the ground. His actions were aligned with Pakistan-based handlers working to destabilize Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, three others were charge sheeted in the same case: Waseem Ahmad Sheikh, resident of Kandoora Budgam, Junaid Ahmad Mir, resident of Tikkipora Lolab, Shabir Ahmad Gogri, resident of Darbagh Harwan, Srinagar

CIK officials said the investigation remains active. Efforts are ongoing to identify and neutralize the wider digital ecosystem aiding terrorist activities, including social media handlers and sympathizers operating from abroad.

Officials added that more arrests are expected as the probe continues.

This development reflects the continued efforts of CIK and Jammu and Kashmir Police to dismantle both physical and online terror networks and protect the region’s youth from radicalization. (KNS)

Those Who Betrayed

too should have openly supported that party,” he said.

The CM said that leaders who won the Rajya Sabha elections will raise their concerns in Parliament about issues such as statehood and special status.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the media persons on the sidelines of the inauguration of Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood (Chrysanthemum Theme Garden) at the picturesque Botanical Garden in Srinagar, which marked a new milestone in the Valley’s tourism and floriculture landscape.

Developed at Rs 1.869 crore, the Chrysanthemum Theme Garden spans over 100 kanals and is envisioned as a major autumn attraction in Kashmir. With its vibrant blooms in shades of yellow, red, pink, and purple, the garden promises to bring new colour and charm to the Valley’s tourism calendar during the

autumn months.

The Chief Minister cut the ceremonial ribbon and declared the garden open to the public, describing it as “a floral celebration that adds a new chapter to Kashmir’s tourism story”.

Abdullah commended the efforts of the Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens for its role in establishing the theme garden.

He said the initiative would “address the off-season gap in tourism and enhance the autumn experience for visitors”.

Omar recalled that he had laid the foundation stone of Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood in November last year, drawing parallels with the success of the Tulip Garden. “Just as the Tulip Garden transformed the spring tourist season, the Chrysanthemum Garden will redefine autumn tourism in Kashmir,” he said.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also inaugurated an exhibition featuring a wide range of ornamental, lavender, and other floral varieties cultivated by local growers with departmental support. He interacted with the floriculturists and appreciated the dedication and craftsmanship of the gardeners and field staff whose efforts brought the blooms to life—(KNO)

Rajya Sabha Polls

behind the scenes.”

NC president Farooq Abdullah rejected Lone’s claim, saying, “There was no question of gifting seven votes to the BJP. If that is the case then how was our candidate able to get 21 votes?” Abdullah added that the NC had been approached by the BJP to leave the fourth seat, which the party refused.

“We decided to contest on the fourth seat as well,” he said, thanking Congress, PDP, AIP, and independents for supporting NC candidates.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described the outcome as a betrayal by unnamed legislators, stating, “It is unfortunate, but those involved are known to all.” He added, “I am satisfied that at least not even a single vote from NC didn’t go in vain.” Omar also commented on other local matters, saying, “If we can begin the tourist season early by opening the Tulip Garden, we can extend the season with the Gul-e-Dawood garden. I congratulate all gardeners and officials of the department.”

As political tensions linger, the aftermath of the Rajya Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir continues to dominate discussions, with cross-party accusations and counterclaims keeping the spotlight on alleged deals, betrayals, and electoral strategies. (KNS)

CS Reviews Arrangements

The Chief Secretary urged the Traffic Department to take all necessary measures to secure the marathon routes on the day of the event. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive traffic management plan, including appropriate diversions and issuance of advance travel advisories to ensure the safety and convenience of commuters.

He underscored the need to provide a memorable experience to all participants that reflects Kashmir’s hospitality and growing capability in hosting large-scale international events.

During the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Ashish Chander Verma informed that several renowned national and international athletes are expected to participate in this year’s edition.

He further noted that the event would also act as a platform to showcase local art, craft, and culture, with dedicated stalls promoting Handicrafts and Handloom products from Jammu and Kashmir.

Director, Tourism Kashmir, Raja Yaqoob, presented a detailed overview of the operational plan, covering aspects of participant registration, route management, volunteer deployment, and publicity campaigns.

He elaborated that the marathon will feature two main race categories the Full Marathon (42 km) and Half Marathon (21 km) are open to both men and women like the first edition of this came here.

The routes will traverse Srinagar’s most iconic and picturesque locations, including Dal Lake, Mughal Gardens, and Chinarn-lined boulevards, offering runners an inspiring blend of athletic challenge and scenic beauty.

The meeting was apprised that the Full Marathon (42 km) will take participants through a captivating circuit showcasing the natural and cultural splendor of Srinagar, while the Half Marathon (21 km) will provide runners an equally enriching experience that combines endurance with the Valley’s breathtaking vistas.

Adding to the event’s grandeur, the Kashmir Marathon 2025 features an impressive prize pool, with substantial rewards for winners in both Full and Half Marathon categories.

For the Full Marathon, the overall category prizes include Rs25,00,000 for 1st place, Rs20,00,000 for 2nd, Rs18,00,000 for 3rd, Rs15,00,000 for 4th, and Rs12,00,000 for 5th place. In the respective age-group categories (18–35 years, 36–50 years, and 50+ veterans), cash prizes of Rs1,00,000, Rs75,000, and Rs50,000 will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions respectively.

For the Half Marathon, the overall category winners will receive Rs15,00,000, Rs12,00,000, eRs 9,00,000, Rs6,00,000, and Rs3,00,000 respectively for the top five positions, while age-group winners will receive Rs75,000, Rs50,000, and Rs25,000 for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions respectively for both men and women participants.

With its generous rewards, stunning routes, and vibrant community participation, the Kashmir Marathon 2025 is poised to emerge as a flagship sporting event showcasing the region’s spirit, hospitality, and tourism potential.

Expressing optimism about the event, the Chief Secretary remarked that the Kashmir Marathon would not only promote fitness and sportsmanship among youth but also serve as a major tourism promotion event, attracting visitors from across the world to experience the Valley’s natural beauty and cultural richness.

Aga Ruhullah Mehdi

He argued that the people of Jammu and Kashmir had given a “strong and clear mandate” to the National Conference in hopes that the party would represent them independently and end confusion and division. “Unfortunately, it has been a year since that mandate was given, and the party has failed to act according to that sentiment,” he said.

“If the party was not ready to fight this existential battle, then why did it make promises during the election campaign?” Mehdi asked. “Even with such a strong mandate, the party appears weak. The people of Jammu and Kashmir did not make you dependent on others. After the Assembly elections, there was no need to form new alliances. Yet, the same mistakes made before the elections are being repeated.”

He warned that people would start looking for alternatives. “This qaum is not dependent on the National Conference, Congress, or BJP. For their wujood ki ladaai (fight for existence), they will always find new options,” he said.

Mehdi added that if the National Conference had respected the people’s mandate, no one would be asking why it was seeking support from others. “People trusted them, but that trust has not been honored,” he

said. “No real fight has started.”

Asked about internal decisions attributed to him on social media, Mehdi said he often hears about decisions supposedly made in his name that he never took. “Sometimes I feel there must be another Ruhullah out there making decisions for me,” he said. “I have neither made such statements nor taken such decisions. My position remains what it was before the elections.”

He said he had asked his party for clarity on what message to take to voters. “Tell me what we have achieved politically in the past year based on the promises we made,” he said. “The party has no clear answer.”

Mehdi said he had earlier asked the party to resolve the reservation issue before filing nominations. “This issue affects our children and their future,” he said. “We should not be fighting our own children, the same children whose parents voted for us in difficult times.” He criticized the government for threatening students who raised their voices. “We say we will not bow to pressure, but we were elected precisely to be under people’s pressure, to listen to them,” he said. “In a democracy, a leader who listens to people’s pressure grows stronger, while the one who shows arrogance perishes. That is dictatorship.”

“If a ruler refuses to come under public pressure, then what is the difference between him and an LG? A true democratic leader is one who listens to people’s genuine demands,” he said.

Mehdi said he had urged the government to show at least one “confidence-building measure,” such as resolving the reservation issue within three days, before the by-polls. “But that did not happen,” he said. “Instead, students received threats. If this is the response, what message should I take to the people?”

He also referred to the government’s changing stance on electricity meters. “A year ago, we said meters were zulm (oppression). Now, after becoming Chief Minister, we are telling people to use them,” he said. “There is no consistency in politics or governance. How can I go before the people and justify this?”

He said he would therefore stay away from the Budgam by-polls. “People are the real judges of their votes,” he added.

When asked whether he planned to float his own party amid widening differences with the National Conference, Mehdi dismissed speculation. “Recently, I posted a simple tweet asking who in your community inspires you, gives you confidence, and motivates you,” he said. “I hope the people of Jammu and Kashmir will recognize and celebrate such honest and sincere individuals who still hold the public’s trust.”

“We must bring these forgotten but trustworthy people into public view,” he said. “We must celebrate those who are imaan-daar, Khuda-dost, and have integrity. That is the least we can do.”—(KNO)

Rising Discontent

Modi’s vision for development and peace in Jammu Kashmir.Kashmir History Books

“I sincerely thank all the MLAs who have extended their support for this cause. This is just the beginning — let’s see what unfolds next,” Sharma remarked, hinting at possible political realignments in the near future. (KDC)

Legislators Voted Freely

and effort. Regarding Sajad Gani Lone’s statement that seven NC votes were given to the BJP, Sharma said the accusation was irrelevant, questioning why Lone had not voted himself and pointing out that abstaining from voting was undemocratic—(KNO)

Secy RDD calls for accelerated progress on Panchayat Ghars, PLCs in J&K

414 Panchayat Ghars completed; 40 Panchayat Learning Centres being established

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, Saturday chaired a high-level meeting with Deputy Commissioners to review the status of land identification for construction of Panchayat Ghars, establishment of Common Service Centres (CSCs), and operationalization of Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Secretary sought the intervention of the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) to resolve pending land-related issues hampering construction of Panchayat Ghars, informing that 414 Panchayat Ghars have been completed so far.

The meeting was attended by District Development Commissioners of various districts, Director General Rural Sanitation, J&K, Anoo Malhotra; Director RDD Kashmir, Shabir Husain Bhat; Director RDD Jammu, Shahnaz Akhter; Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal; Deputy Secretary RD&PR, Tahir Ahmad Magray; Superintending Engineers REW Jammu/Kashmir, besides Assistant Commissioners Panchayat,



Executive Engineers, and SPRC/DPRC teams.

During the meeting, the Secretary took a detailed review of the physical and financial progress of Panchayat Ghar construction for FY 2023-24 and 2024-25. He directed the DCs to expedite land identification for the remaining Panchayats and ensure early resolution of bottlenecks. He further advised exploring relocation options in cases where suitable land was unavailable within the Panchayat jurisdiction.

Emphasizing timely execution, the Secretary directed officers to complete formalities such as land mutation, revenue record updating, and geo-tagging before submission of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs).

Expressing concern over slow progress in

some districts, the Secretary instructed DCs to treat Panchayat Ghar construction as a top priority, conduct regular district-level reviews, and closely monitor both physical and financial achievements.

He further directed that Assistant Commissioners Panchayat (ACPs) and Executive Engineers ensure timely completion of works while proactively addressing land disputes, tendering delays, and administrative approvals. The Secretary emphasized that district-wise performance would be closely monitored.

On the co-location of Common Service Centres (CSCs), it was informed that 83% progress has been achieved for FY 2025-26. The Secretary urged field officers to bridge the remaining gap to ensure

universal coverage across all Panchayats.

He also announced that 40 Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) are being established during the current year, directing DCs to make these centres fully functional at the earliest. He encouraged showcasing model Panchayat Ghars as Learning Centres to promote innovation and best practices.

Stressing efficient implementation, Aijaz Asad called for regular monitoring, inter-departmental coordination, and proactive problem-solving to ensure timely achievement of RGSA objectives.

During the meeting, Director Panchayati Raj, Sham Lal, made a detailed presentation on the progress of Panchayat Ghars, Common Service Centres, and Panchayat Learning Centres.

Satish Sharma interacts with BCCI President

Discusses promotion, development of cricket infrastructure across J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma and BCCI President, Mithun Manhas held an extensive discussion on promotion and development of cricket infrastructure and associated activities across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the interaction, the Minister highlighted the Government's commitment to nurturing sporting talent and strengthening grassroots cricket across Union Territory. He emphasized the need for modern training facilities, youth engage-



ment programs, and structured tournaments to identify and support emerging players. He also called for giving special emphasis

on Border areas as well as remote and far flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister also discussed the possibilities

of hosting inter-district and national-level tournaments, enhancing coaching support, and upgrading existing cricket infrastructure to meet national standards.

Satish Sharma reaffirmed the government's resolve to make Jammu and Kashmir a hub of sporting excellence, particularly in cricket, through collaborative efforts between Jammu and Kashmir administration and National sporting bodies.

Mithun Manhas appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Jammu and Kashmir Government and assured full cooperation from BCCI in developing cricket at all levels in Jammu and Kashmir.

3rd ODI: Kohli, Rohit reflect on 168-run partnership in vintage batsmanship after consolation win

SIANS

SYDNEY: Following India's dominant nine-wicket win over Australia in the third ODI at the Sydney Cricket Ground, senior batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma shared heartfelt reflections on their long-standing partnership, adding that the enjoyment of playing cricket together has meant they have been able to stitch memorable stands.

On Saturday, Rohit's strokeplay was crisp in hitting 13 fours and three sixes in his 121 not out off 125 balls – his 33rd century in the format. Kohli's composure was unwavering in hitting an unbeaten 74 off 81 deliveries, laced with seven boundaries, and he became the second-highest run-getter in ODIs.

Together, the duo stitched an unbeaten 168-run partnership in an absolute chasing masterclass and ensured India ended the series with a statement win by completing a chase of 237 with 11.3 overs to spare and avoiding a clean sweep defeat to Australia.

“Good to be out of the pond, honestly (after consecutive ducks). You've scored so many runs in international cricket, but then the game shows you everything, even at this stage. Almost 37 in not many days, and I still cannot feel like I don't know how to get a run. I mean, this game is amazing. That's why we love batting; we love batsmanship. It's so challenging when it's not going your way.”



“Just to find your rhythm again, of course, going out there, having a situation to play in always is something that always brings out the best in me. When Rohit's already batting there, it's pretty easy to kind of keep rotating strike. We understand each other's game pretty well. So again, really good to have a big partnership and another match finishing partnership for us,” said Kohli to broadcasters at the conclusion of the game.

Rohit also echoed a similar sentiment. “I have always loved coming here and playing here. I enjoy playing cricket here in Australia. Fond memories of 2008 and a nice way to finish. I don't know if we'll be coming back to Australia, but it was fun all these years that we played here. A lot of good memories, bad memories, but all in all, I'll take the cricket that I played here.”

Kohli also reflected on the evolution of their understanding over the years. “From very early on,

of course, we understand we're probably the most experienced players now. But even back in the day, we used to think that if we had a big partnership, the kind of strokes we could play, we could really take the game away from the opposition. It was just about communication, staying in the game.”

“It all started in 2013 vs Australia, in the ODIs at home, when we really started getting those big partnerships together and really taking the game on. From then on, it was pretty clear. The opposition also knew that if these guys are in for 20 overs together, any total is chaseable. The game's never done in the opposition's favour. So I've really enjoyed batting with Rohit. Good to know we've scored a few together.”

J&K Handball Association to Hold Trials for Federation Cup

ASHIQ HUSSAIN

JAMMU: The Jammu & Kashmir Handball Association has announced it will conduct selection trials to form a team for the upcoming 37th Federation Cup Handball Championship.

The national-level championship for men is scheduled to be held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh,

from November 25 to 29, 2025.

Aspiring players from across the union territory will get their chance to showcase their skills during the trials, which are set to take place at the Playing Field in Shastri Nagar, Jammu. The trials will be held over two days, on October 29 and 30, 2025, commencing at 4:00 PM



each day.

The Association has formally requested all Presidents and Secretaries of its affiliated units to ensure their players are present at the venue for the selection process. The selected squad will represent Jammu and Kashmir at the prestigious national tournament in Lucknow.

‘Deeply painful’: MPCA condemns molestation of Australian women cricketers

SIANS

INDORE: Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association (MPCA) on Saturday expressed profound dismay over the alleged molestation involving two Australian women cricketers in Indore.

“No woman should have to endure such inappropriate behaviour. We extend our deepest condolences to the affected players. This incident is deeply painful not only for the players but for the entire sports community, as well as for our state and city,” Mahanarayan Scindia, President of the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association (MPCA), posted on his X.

A shocking incident of alleged molestation involving two Australian women cricketers has sent ripples through the cricketing world and local community, prompting swift arrests and strong condemnations from officials.

Scindia said that Madhya Pradesh, especially Indore, has always been renowned for the respect and safety of its guests.

The players, staying at the premium Hotel for the Women's World Cup Cricket, were reportedly harassed while walking to a nearby cafe, casting a shadow over Madhya Pradesh's reputation for hospitality.

Scindia further lamented the damage to the city's image: “The inappropriate behaviour of one individual has tarnished this prestigious image, leaving us all deeply saddened. We commend the swift and firm action of the local administration



and police, who promptly identified and arrested the accused. The MPCA stands in complete solidarity with the affected players and the Australian team during this difficult time and is committed to providing all possible cooperation to the investigating agencies.”

According to police officials, the incident occurred on Thursday when the two cricketers were approached by two young men on a motorcycle. The suspects allegedly began harassing them verbally and physically before fleeing the scene.

Distressed, the players immediately sent an SOS call to the hotel and team security, Danny Simmons, who alerted local authorities.

Police responded promptly, identifying and arresting one of the accused, 28-year-old Aqueel Khan, on Friday. Investigations are going on to apprehend the second suspect.

Madhya Pradesh Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya echoed the sentiment, stating, “If this has happened, it is shameful... Strict action

will be taken against those involved, as this concerns the honour of our country.”

He assured that the government would ensure justice and prevent such occurrences in the future. The Australian team management has acknowledged the incident but declined further comment, focusing on player welfare.

Cricket Australia is reportedly in touch with local organisers to bolster security measures for the remainder of the tournament. This episode has sparked broader discussions on women's safety in public spaces, particularly during high-profile international events.

Local residents and cricket enthusiasts in Indore have voiced support for the victims, with many praising the rapid police response.

The MPCA has pledged enhanced protocols to safeguard all participants. The arrested suspect faces charges under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, with a court appearance scheduled soon.

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