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## Modi-Macron Talks

# India, France Aim To Double Trade In 5 Yrs

Leaders launch joint AI working group, expand UPI footprint in France



Observer News Service

New Delhi: India and France on Sunday unveiled an ambitious agenda to deepen their strategic partnership, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron agreeing to work towards doubling bilateral trade within the next five years and expanding cooperation in emerging technologies, innovation and digital infrastructure.

The wide-ranging talks between the two leaders in the French city of Nice produced 13 key outcomes, including the launch of an Innovation

Roadmap 2030, the creation of a joint Artificial Intelligence (AI) Working Group, a new mechanism to boost trade and economic security, and the expansion of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in France.

The two sides also finalised a declaration on cooperation in the high-speed railway sector and signed a security agreement for the protection of classified information.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said the discussions covered the full spectrum of bilateral relations, including defence, security, space, civil nuclear energy, trade | [More on P6](#)



Children carry bundles of paddy saplings while assisting in transplantation work during the paddy sowing season in Budgam district. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

## 'Let's Not Blow It'

# Trump Pushes Peace Deal After Beirut Strikes

Agencies

Jerusalem: US President Donald Trump on Sunday urged no further attacks by anyone after Israel's military said it launched strikes on Hezbollah targets in Beirut, potentially complicating efforts to finalise a deal to end the US-Iran war.

Smoke rose over the Lebanese capital, and the Civil Defence said it retrieved three bodies and six wounded people from the rubble.

Iran threatened a military response. Trump reacted on social media: "We are very close to a Deal that will bring peace to the region," and "Let's not blow it!"

The deal in its current form is a deep disappointment to Israel's government, which has been sidelined in negotiations led by Pakistan and others. The last time Israel struck the Beirut suburbs a week ago, it set off the most serious escalation of fighting between Iran and Israel since the tenuous ceasefire took hold April 7.

Trump, who had said the deal could be signed Sunday, has pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stop hitting | [More on P6](#)

## Kashmir Colonies Under Truck Siege

After a recent crash involving a child, residents are demanding tighter checks on heavy vehicles in residential areas.

Syed Sammar Mehdi

Srinagar: Residents of Mustafa Abad know the sound well.

"A heavy tipper enters the lane, living rooms grow silent, parents glance toward children playing outside, and homeowners look up at electric wires hanging above the road.

The reaction comes from experience. Residents of this HMT locality of Srinagar say commercial vehicles regularly pass through Lane 2, formerly Shaheed Gowhar Lane during daytime, brushing against electricity poles, pulling at overhead wires and scraping structures along roads designed for neighbourhood traffic.

What residents describe in Mustafa Abad mirrors a growing complaint heard in residential colonies across Srinagar, where heavy vehicles increasingly appear on interior roads meant for local movement.

"People live on these roads, children play here, and elderly people walk here," said a resident. "These lanes were never built for trucks."

The concern has gained fresh attention after a recent incident in which a young boy was struck by a speeding vehicle inside a residential neighbourhood while running from a pack of dogs.

The episode reignited | [More on P6](#)

## Security Tightened Ahead of Yatra, Muharram: DGP



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Director General of Police, J&K, Nalin Prabhat on Saturday chaired a high-level security review meeting in Srinagar to assess preparedness for the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026 and directed officers to maintain a high state of readiness across the Union Territory.

Chairing the meeting at

PCR Kashmir, the DGP called for heightened vigilance at all sensitive and vulnerable locations and ordered intensified surveillance, area domination exercises, cordon and search operations (CASOs), and continuous patrolling along the Yatra routes, railway tracks, tourist destinations and other vulnerable pockets.

He directed security agencies to conduct daily | [More on P6](#)

## 3 Haryana Residents Killed In Nagrota Road Accident

LG, CM Express Grief

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Three residents of Haryana were killed and two others injured after the car they were travelling in collided head-on with a passenger bus near Nagrota on the outskirts of Jammu city during the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday.

According to police, the accident occurred near Jagti in the Nagrota area when a car bearing registration number HR29BB-2127, travelling towards Jammu, collided with a bus (JK02AJ-9933) that was on its way to

Udhampur.

Five persons were travelling in the car at the time of the accident. All sustained critical injuries and were immediately shifted to Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu, for treatment.

Officials said two of the occupants were declared brought dead on arrival at the hospital, while another succumbed to injuries during treatment.

The deceased have been identified as Sikander Saifi, Shakti and Mohit Verma, all residents of Ballabgarh, Haryana. The two injured passengers are undergoing treatment at GMC Jammu. | [More on P6](#)

Delay In Srinagar Grain Storage Facility

## HC Backs FCI's Penalty On Private Contractor

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has dismissed a petition filed by M/s Alpine Agro Services challenging penalties imposed by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) for the delayed completion of black-topping work at a grain storage facility constructed under the Private Entrepreneur Guarantee (PEG) Scheme.

Justice MA Chowdhary upheld the recovery orders issued by FCI,

observing that the petitioner-firm had failed to fulfil essential contractual obligations despite being granted repeated extensions and could not avoid liabilities arising from the agreement after having enjoyed its benefits.

The petition challenged communications dated September 3, 2021, and November 15, 2021, through which FCI ordered recoveries from the monthly rentals payable to the firm for delays in completing black-topping of | [More on P6](#)

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### Socioeconomic Disparities Could Be Major Predictors Of Antimicrobial Resistance: Study

Press Trust Of India

A new study has found that the major predictors of antimicrobial resistance could be socioeconomic inequality and living conditions, such as overcrowding and access to sanitation, and not just antibiotic consumption.

Researchers, including those from King's College London, said that reducing antibiotic consumption alone will be insufficient and that governments should prioritise structural public health interventions, including improving nutritional status, reducing overcrowding and strengthening health equity in high-risk areas. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which occurs when a microbe develops an immunity against the very drugs designed to kill it, is projected to claim more than 39 million lives over the next 25 years, according to estimates published in The Lancet journal in September 2025.

Senior author Tania Dottorini, professor of artificial intelligence in science at King's College London, said, "Our research uses a multi-scale, multi-modal approach that has never been applied in this way before. By identifying which resistance traits are increasing, where they are spreading, and what is driving them, we can better target surveillance, policy and interventions towards the threats that are most likely to impact global health in the future." "Reducing antibiotic use alone won't be enough. Tackling AMR requires structural interventions on inequality, sanitation, nutrition and health equity alongside stewardship. We believe that our findings provide a roadmap for targeted AMR interventions," Dottorini said.

The researchers analysed more than 45,000 genomes collected from across 127 countries of 16 bacterial species, which the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified as critical priority pathogens.

The species, including Klebsiella, Acinetobacter and Escherichia coli, are associated with high mortality and limited treatment options. Resistance genes in the bacterial species linked to antibiotic resistance were identified.

The study, published in the journal Cell Genomics, then looked at more than 1,000 environmental, health and socioeconomic indicators, such as poverty, climate and healthcare trends, to understand how the global factors may change in the future.

The global trends were then linked with resistance genes to identify which characteristics of antimicrobial resistance are most strongly associated with future environmental and socioeconomic changes.

The researchers were thus able to forecast the resistance threats most likely to grow by 2050, specifically 210 pathogen-specific traits and key socioeconomic indicators that could drive the threats.

### 'Frozen Shoulder, Musculoskeletal Disorders Emerge As Hidden Complications Of Diabetes'

Press Trust Of India

As India grapples with one of the world's largest diabetes burdens, doctors are reporting a less-recognised consequence of the disease -- a rise in orthopaedic conditions ranging from frozen shoulder and trigger finger to nerve compression disorders and accelerated wear-and-tear of joints.

Experts said persistently high blood sugar can damage collagen, tendons, ligaments and nerves, increasing the risk of pain, stiffness and mobility problems that can significantly affect quality of life.

"We are increasingly seeing people in their 40s presenting with frozen shoulder, tendon problems and joint stiffness, conditions that were traditionally more common in older age groups. A major reason is the rising prevalence of diabetes and pre-diabetes at younger ages in India," Dr Skand Sinha, professor, Sports Injury Centre, VMMC and Safdarjung Hospital said.

The formation of advanced glycation end products accumulate in tendons and capsules, making tendons less elastic, prone to degeneration and tearing. The smallest blood vessels are narrowed, reducing the blood flow needed to maintain healthy rotator cuff, he explained.

According to doctors, greater awareness among physicians and routine screening for metabolic disorders have also led to earlier detection of diabetes-related musculoskeletal complications.

Dr Abhimanyu Kumar, senior consultant, orthopaedics, at the Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, said doctors are increasingly finding musculoskeletal complaints to be an early indicator of diabetes in some patients.

"We often see patients coming with frozen shoulder, trigger finger, chronic tendon pain or unexplained joint stiffness, and subsequent investigations reveal previously undiagnosed or poorly controlled diabetes. In many cases, the orthopaedic complaint becomes the first warning sign of an underlying metabolic disorder," Kumar said.

He noted that diabetes-related musculoskeletal disorders are now being diagnosed at younger ages because Type 2 diabetes itself is occurring earlier in life.

"Chronic hyperglycaemia accelerates ageing of connective tissues. Excess glucose leads to the formation of advanced glycation end products that make collagen fibres thick, stiff and brittle, reducing flexibility of tendons and ligaments.

"Diabetes also impairs blood supply to



these tissues and promotes low-grade inflammation, increasing the risk of frozen shoulder, trigger finger and tendon disorders," he said.

According to Kumar, poor glycaemic control significantly worsens the severity and progression of orthopaedic conditions.

"Uncontrolled blood sugar accelerates cartilage degeneration, impairs tissue healing and increases the risk of complications after fractures or orthopaedic surgery. Patients with diabetes are more likely to experience delayed bone healing, infections and prolonged recovery," he said.

Dr Sinha said injured tendons in people with diabetes generally heal more slowly and less effectively after injury.

Dr Sarvesh Pandey, joint replacement and arthroscopic surgeon, Indraprastha Apollo hospital, Delhi, said frozen shoulder affects an estimated 10-30 per cent of people with diabetes, compared with only 2-3 per cent of the general population, while trigger finger is also several times more common among diabetics.

Stressing the importance of early detection, he said timely screening can help identify musculoskeletal complications before they lead to significant disability.

"Many patients ignore mild shoulder stiffness, finger locking or joint pain, assuming these are age-related problems. However, early evaluation can help detect underlying diabetes or poor glycaemic control and allow treatment before permanent tissue damage occurs," he said.

Dr Pandey said diabetes is associated with a range of orthopaedic complications beyond frozen shoulder and trigger finger. These include diabetic hand

syndrome, which causes thickening of the skin and restricted finger movement; Dupuytren's contracture, where scar tissue in the palm gradually pulls the fingers into a bent position; and Charcot arthropathy, a serious condition in which nerve damage leads to progressive destruction of joints, particularly in the feet and ankles.

He added that diabetes is also linked to osteoporosis, especially in people with Type 1 diabetes, and can accelerate osteoarthritis in those with Type 2 diabetes through metabolic and inflammatory changes.

"Good blood sugar control, regular foot examinations, maintaining a healthy weight and early physiotherapy or range-of-motion exercises are key to preventing disability and preserving mobility in people with diabetes," he said.

"People with diabetes should not ignore persistent shoulder pain, stiffness or weakness. Medical attention should be sought if shoulder pain lasts for more than six weeks, causes night-time discomfort, results in loss of strength, or is accompanied by swelling or redness," Dr Sinha said.

Most of these conditions can be managed effectively if diagnosed early.

Treatment options range from physiotherapy and targeted exercise programmes to ultrasound-guided hydro-dissection, growth factor concentrate (GFC) injections and, in selected cases, arthroscopic surgery, he said.

"Advances in orthopaedic care have significantly improved outcomes for patients with diabetes-related shoulder disorders," Dr Sinha added.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

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## Rana Emphasises Timely Project Completion & Quality Execution of Works

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Emphasising the need for timely completion of projects and efficient service delivery, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana On Sunday chaired a review meeting at Srinagar to assess the progress of ongoing works and the overall functioning of the Jal Shakti department across Kashmir Division.

The meeting was attended by senior officers including the Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti and Irrigation & Flood Control, Kashmir, along with Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers of various divisions, who briefed the Minister on the status of ongoing projects, water supply schemes, irrigation infrastructure and departmental performance.

The Minister directed officers to ensure timely completion of all projects,

improve service delivery at the ground level and maintain rigorous monitoring of field activities. He stressed the need for efficient scheme implementation, prompt redressal of public grievances and optimum utilisation of available resources.

"Timely delivery of services to the people is non-negotiable. Officers must remain actively engaged in the field and work in close coordination to ensure effective execution of departmental programmes," the Minister said, reiterating the Government's commitment to strengthening water supply and irrigation infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir.

He further said that the government led by Omar Abdullah is committed to the welfare of every citizen, and that commitment must reflect in the timely execution of schemes and the quality of services reaching the grassroots.

## MMU Reaffirms Commitment to Muslim Unity

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Under the directions of the Patron of Muttahida Majlis-e-Uluma (MMU), Mirwaiz Muhammad Umar Farooq, an important meeting of the MMU Shia-Sunni Coordination Committee was held at the headquarters of Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar. The meeting was chaired by Agha Syed Mujtaba and attended by leading scholars, religious leaders, and representatives of various religious organisations.

The participants emphasized that, in view of the challenges confronting the Muslim Ummah at the local, national, and international levels, it is imperative to strengthen unity, mutual respect, and inter-sectarian understanding and harmony. They underscored the sanctity of the month of Muharram and resolved that any attempt to create sectarian discord or disturb the atmosphere of brotherhood would not be tolerated.

The meeting expressed concern over certain social media content circulated during Muharram last year that led to misunderstandings and urged religious organisations and individuals to exercise responsibility and restraint in public discourse and online engagement.

he participants also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the utmost

respect for the noble Companions of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) and the revered Ahl al-Bayt (A.S), stressing that inflammatory or divisive remarks are contrary to the spirit of Islamic ethos and unity.

The meeting proposed the constitution of a committee under the banner of MMU to remain vigilant during Muharram and counter any attempts by disruptive elements to undermine sectarian harmony.

Concluding the meeting, Agha Syed Mujtaba appreciated the efforts of Muttahida Majlis-e-Uluma and its leadership, particularly Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir, in fostering inter-sectarian understanding, sectarian harmony, and collective guidance for the people.

Among the distinguished personalities who attended the meeting were Molana Shawkat Hussain Keng; Agha Syed Mohammad Yousuf; Syed Adil Murtaza; Syed Mohsin Rizvi; Molana Bilal Ahmad Haji; Mufti Ghulam Rasool Samoon; Sibti Mohammad Shabbir Qummi; Syed Parvez Safavi; Mohammad Altaf Muntazir; Ghulam Mohammad Nago; Mohammad Jamal Bachoo; Imdad Saqi; Qari Mohammad Aslam Rahimi; Mufti Taufiq Umar Nadwi; Mushtaq Ahmad Sofi; Pir Ghulam Nabi; Majid Abbas Jawad; Advocate Yasir Raof; Imtiyaz Malik; and the Secretary of the Majlis, Molana M.S. Rehman Shams, among others.

## IDA Srinagar Hosts Workshop on Implantology

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Srinagar branch of the Indian Dental Association (IDA) on Saturday organised a Continuing Dental Education (CDE) programme featuring lectures and hands-on workshops on implantology, aimed at enhancing clinical skills among dental practitioners.

The programme, held at a hotel here, focused on "Implant Placement and Precision" and brought together dental professionals and specialists from across Kashmir. As per KNS, the workshops covered various aspects of implantology, including patient selection, diagnostic planning, implant placement techniques and management of clinical complications.

Addressing the inaugural session, IDA Srinagar President Dr Nusrat

stressed the importance of continuous professional development and keeping pace with advancements in dental science to improve patient care.

The academic sessions were led by experts, including Dr Tushar Chawla, a specialist in implantology from New Delhi, oral and maxillofacial surgeons Dr Altaf Hussain Malik and Dr Ashiq Ali, and prosthodontist Dr Mohammad Arif Lone.

The programme was coordinated by Professor and Head of Department at Government Dental College Srinagar, Dr Irshad Ahmad Misger.

Among those involved in organising the event were Dr Altaf Hussain Malik, immediate past president of IDA Srinagar, President-elect Dr Khalid Nazir, CDE Convenor Dr Hysum Mushtaq and Branch Secretary Dr Ab Latif Matoo.

## SKUAST-K Entrance Test sees record response amid National Enrollment Slowdown

Over 17,000 Candidates compete for 900 undergraduate seats

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) on Sunday witnessed an overwhelming response to its Undergraduate Entrance Test (UET), reflecting a growing preference among students for institutions offering innovation-driven and future-ready academic programmes.

The entrance examination for undergraduate courses was conducted smoothly across 20 designated examination centres, including 18 in Srinagar and 2 in Jammu. Over 17,000 candidates appeared for the test, competing for 900 seats available in 14 undergraduate disciplines. The examination recorded an impressive attendance rate of 94 percent.

The unprecedented response is being attributed to SKUAST-K's strategic focus on market-oriented, cutting-edge curricula and its innovative pedagogical framework aimed at preparing students for emerging opportunities in agriculture, allied sectors, industry, entrepreneurship and technology-driven careers.

To ensure the highest standards of transparency, confidentiality and efficiency, the University put in place a comprehensive multi-layered examination management system. From paper setting and printing to transpor-



Over 17,000 candidates appeared for the test, competing for 900 seats available in 14 undergraduate disciplines. The examination recorded an impressive attendance rate of 94 percent

tation and distribution at examination centres, strict security protocols were maintained throughout the process.

A coordinated effort involving SKUAST-K officers, faculty members, centre coordinators, invigilation staff, police and civil administration ensured the smooth and hassle-free conduct of the examination across all centres.

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, accompanied by the Registrar, Controller of Examinations,

Director Education and other senior university officers, visited several examination centres to oversee the arrangements and monitor the conduct of the examination.

The University reiterated its commitment to academic excellence and quality education, stating that the strong participation reflects increasing confidence among students and parents in SKUAST-K's academic programmes and career-oriented approach.

## Dr. Farooq Abdullah Calls for Seamless Arrangements for Muharram

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah Sunday asked the administration to put in place comprehensive and seamless arrangements for the forthcoming holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram, with special focus on the observance of Youm-e-Ashura.

Dr. Farooq emphasized the immense religious and emotional significance of Muharram and urged the concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted essential services.

He stressed that devotees and mourners should be facilitated in every possible manner so that they can observe the sacred month and participate in religious gatherings with dig-

nity, peace and devotion.

The National Conference President expressed hope that the administration would rise to the occasion and make adequate arrangements well in advance, reflecting sensitivity towards the religious sentiments of the people and ensuring that all observances, particularly Youm-e-Ashura, pass peacefully and without inconvenience.

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**PRAYERS**

FAJR	3: 33
ZUHR	12:30
ASR	5: 30
Magrib	7:46
ISHA	9: 28

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
 29 Zil-Hajj  
 1447

### This Day In History

- 763 BC- Assyrians record a solar eclipse that will be used to fix the chronology of Mesopotamian history
- 778- Willibald, Abbot of Heidenheim, dictates his pilgrimage to the Holy Land fifty years before, to nun Hugburc, who records this and biographies of Willibald and his brother - the first known English woman writer
- 923- Battle of Soissons: King Robert I of France is killed and King Charles the Simple is arrested by the supporters of Duke Rudolph of Burgundy
- 1184- Magnus V Erlingsson, King of Norway (1156–1184), dies in the Battle of Fimreite
- 1246 - With the death of Duke Frederick II, the Babenberg dynasty ends in Austria
- 1389 - Battle of Kosovo: Turks defeat Serbs
- 1567 - Battle at Carberry, Scotland: Protestant troops beat Earl Bothwell's army
- 1667 - 1st fully documented human blood transfusion is performed by French physician, Dr. Jean-Baptiste Denys, when a small amount of sheep blood is transfused into a 15-year old boy, who survives the procedure
- 1808 - Joseph Bonaparte becomes King of Spain
- 1826 - Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II abolishes the elite Janissary corps executing thousands for treason to make way for a more modern army
- 1864 - Battle of Petersburg begins as General Ulysses S. Grant assaults the Confederate line at the important Southern rail center of Petersburg
- 1869 - World's 1st plastic Celluloid is patented by John Wesley Hyatt, Albany, NY
- 1876 - Tsunamis after earthquake floods NE coast of Japan, kills 28,000
- 1878 - World's first moving pictures caught on camera (used 12 cameras, each taking 1 picture) done to see if all 4 of a horse's hooves leave the ground
- 1888 - Wilhelm II becomes Emperor of Germany
- 1896 - Tsunami strikes Shinto festival on beach at Sanriku, Japan; 27,000 are killed, 9,000 injured and 13,000 houses destroyed
- 1911 - Tabulating Computing Recording Corporation (IBM) is incorporated.
- 1913 - The Battle of Bud Bagsak in the Philippine concludes
- 1916 - Boeing Model 1 [B & W Seaplane], the 1st Boeing product, flies for the 1st time
- 1917 - In order to calm troubled relations with Ireland, the British grant amnesty to the Prisoners taken during the Easter Rising of 1916
- 1924 - Ford Motor Company manufactures its 10 millionth automobile
- 1940 - World War II: France surrenders to NAZI Germany, German troops occupy Paris
- 1940 - Soviet Army occupies Lithuania
- 1943 - Congress of racial Equality (CORE) forms
- 1954 - Great Britain's 2 biggest steel factories nationalized
- 1960 - Argentina complains to UN about Israeli illicit transfer of Eichmann
- 1965 - South Africa begins economic boycott of Dutch products
- 1977 - Spain's 1st free elections since 1936 (41 years)
- 1978 - Soyuz 29 carries 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 6; they stay 139 days
- 198 - 5 En route to Halley's Comet, USSR's Vega 2 drops lander on Venus
- 1988 - NASA launches space vehicle S-213
- 1991 - Birth of the first federal political party in Canada that supports Quebec nationalism, le Bloc Québécois
- 1996 - IRA bomb in Manchester wrecks city centre at 11.17am, injuring 200
- 2001 - Indian epic "Laagan" directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, starring Aamir Khan and Gracy Singh premieres
- 2002 - Near earth asteroid 2002 MN missed the Earth by 75,000 miles (120,000 km), about one-third of the distance between the Earth and the Moon
- 2012 - Apple I computer sells for a record \$374,500
- 2015 - Real estate mogul Donald Trump launches his campaign for US President

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# The Right to Walk Without Fear

Educational gains and economic aspirations lose much of their meaning when public spaces remain a source of anxiety for half the population.



Zobiya Bhat

“  
Public transport, neighbourhoods and public spaces consistently emerge as places where women face harassment. Many incidents never reach formal reporting channels, which means official figures capture only a small part of everyday experience.

A few days ago, I was walking from my university to my hostel when a group of girls came into view ahead of me.

They were talking among themselves as they moved along the roadside, absorbed in the ordinary concerns of student life.

A few moments later, several young men on motorcycles approached, shouted loudly in an attempt to attract attention and sped away laughing.

Nothing followed. The girls did not react, and kept walking. People nearby continued with their day.

The scene lasted only a few seconds, but I could not easily put it out of my mind.

What unsettled me was not the behaviour of the bikers. Kashmiri women know these encounters well. Most have experienced some version of them on roads, in markets, on buses or outside colleges.

What troubled me most was the response of everyone else.

Nobody appeared surprised. The girls treated it as another interruption in a long series of interruptions. The people around them treated it as part of the landscape.

That normalisation felt more troubling than the incident itself.

Public discussion in Kashmir usually revolves around politics, unemployment and economic uncertainty. Those concerns influence the lives of millions and need serious attention.

But during these discussions, another reality often receives far less scrutiny despite driving the daily experiences of women and girls throughout the valley.

Many leave home carrying ambitions that would have seemed out of reach a generation ago. They attend universities, prepare for competitive examinations and enter professions that continue to expand their presence in public life.

Alongside those ambitions comes another burden that rarely appears in development statistics or policy debates: the constant effort of assessing risk in ordinary spaces.

A bus journey, a walk home, a crowded market or a shared taxi can demand a level of vigilance that many men rarely have to consider.

A few weeks after the incident near my university, my brother told me about something he witnessed while travelling towards Srinagar during Eid.



A young woman was being publicly humiliated by a man in broad daylight. A crowd gathered around them. People watched, but nobody stepped forward.

The man attempted to justify his conduct by claiming the woman was his wife or fiancée. Listening to my brother describe the scene, I found myself thinking more about the crowd.

Dozens of people had seen a woman being degraded in public and accepted it as something that did not concern them.

Those moments reveal more about a society than dramatic incidents ever can. They simply expose the boundaries of what people are willing to tolerate.

Research conducted among female university students in Kashmir points towards a trend that extends far beyond isolated experiences. Studies examining harassment in public transport have found that many women travel with a persistent sense of discomfort and caution.

The consequences extend beyond immediate distress.

Mobility, educational experiences and confidence in public spaces all suffer when harassment becomes a routine possibility rather than a rare occurrence.

Women safety surveys tell a similar story. Public transport, neighbourhoods and public spaces consistently emerge as places

where women face harassment. Many incidents never reach formal reporting channels, which means official figures capture only a small part of everyday experience.

Numbers help establish scale, though statistics alone cannot explain why these experiences remain so common.

Part of the answer lies in the different expectations placed on girls and boys from an early age.

Most Kashmiri girls grow up hearing variations of the same advice: travel carefully, be cautious, avoid certain places, and stay alert.

Families pass these instructions down through genuine concern. Parents want their daughters to move through the world safely.

The result, however, is that girls often receive extensive training in managing risk while far less attention goes towards examining the attitudes that create that risk in the first place.

Many women recognise this imbalance.

Public debates about safety frequently revolve around what girls should do differently rather than why some boys and men feel entitled to intrude upon, intimidate or humiliate women in public spaces.

Responsibility silently shifts towards those experiencing the problem instead of those causing it.

Economic hardship sometimes enters

these discussions as an explanation for deteriorating social behaviour.

Kashmir's unemployment crisis has created frustration and uncertainty for a generation of young people. Those pressures are real, and they help explain many aspects of contemporary life.

But they cannot explain away harassment.

The experience of women in public spaces has its roots in social attitudes, cultural expectations and everyday conduct. Economic difficulties may intensify frustrations, though they do not determine how people choose to treat one another.

As a young woman, I often hear talks about independence. Education, employment and financial security are presented as markers of progress, and rightly so.

But their significance becomes harder to appreciate when women continue adjusting their movements around the possibility of harassment.

Freedom acquires a different meaning when reaching a classroom, workplace or examination centre involves constant calculation.

Kashmir has undoubtedly made important strides in expanding opportunities for women. More girls are entering higher education, pursuing careers and participating in public life.

That progress is real, but its full promise remains out of reach when public spaces continue to feel uncertain for many of the women expected to occupy them.

I love Kashmir and I want to see it flourish. That aspiration involves more than economic growth, infrastructure projects or employment figures. It also involves the experience of walking through the world without apprehension, humiliation or unwanted scrutiny.

The memory that remains with me is still that roadside encounter near my university.

The bikers disappeared within seconds, the girls continued walking, and life moved on. Their reaction revealed a difficult truth.

Many women in Kashmir have become accustomed to behaviour that should never have become ordinary.

Until that changes, discussions about progress will remain incomplete.

*The author is a student and independent writer from Kashmir who writes on gender, governance, education and social issues. She can be reached at bhatzobiya02@gmail.com.*

# The Politics of Public Prayer

When public celebrations and political rallies routinely occupy roads, scrutiny of Muslim prayers raises difficult questions about fairness and equal citizenship.



Nowsheen Mushtaq

India's public spaces tell the story of its democracy. Streets become stages for wedding processions, political campaigns, religious festivals and cultural celebrations.

Traffic slows as wedding guests dance through city roads. Election rallies bring long convoys and roadshows that can occupy entire neighbourhoods for hours. Festival processions draw thousands into public spaces, often requiring extensive traffic diversions and police deployment.

Most Indians accept these disruptions as part of a diverse and vibrant society. They see them as expressions of faith, culture, community and democratic participation.

A different standard often emerges, however, when Muslims gather for Friday prayers or Eid congregations in open spaces.

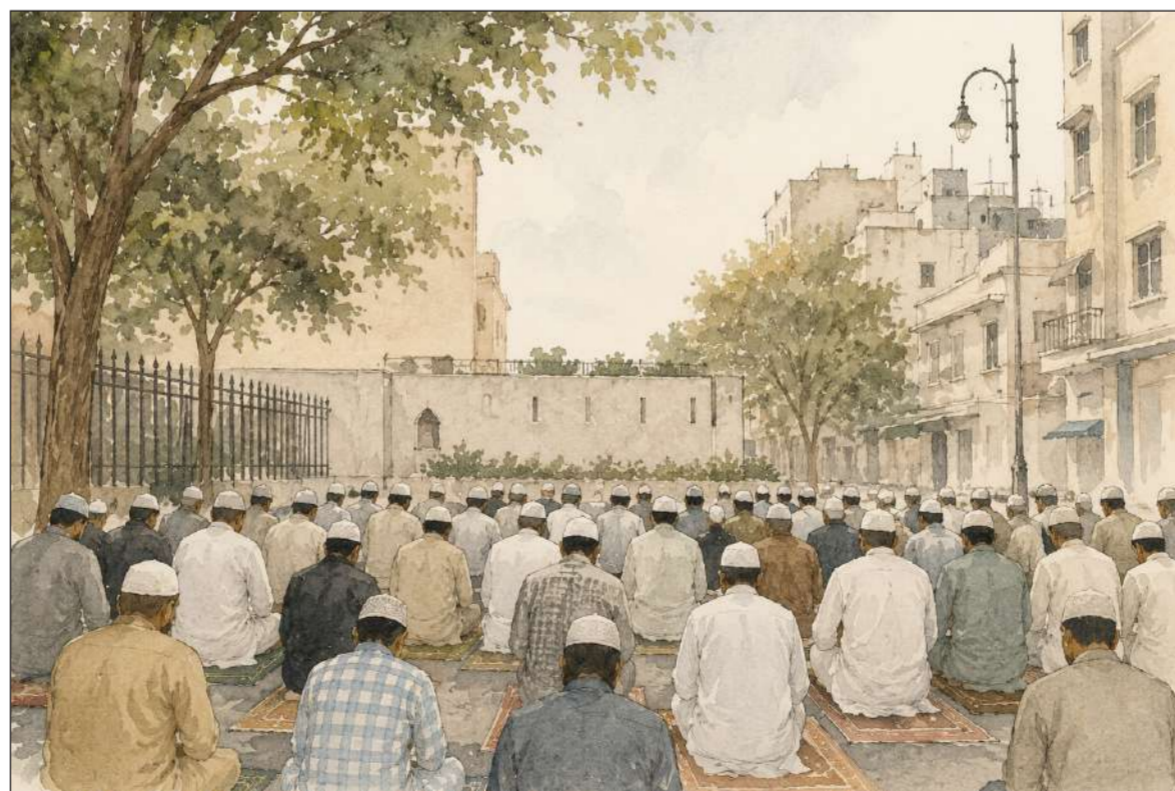
The debate usually begins with concerns about traffic, public inconvenience or the use of common areas. Such concerns deserve consideration.

Every large gathering in a densely populated country creates logistical challenges. Public authorities have a responsibility to manage crowds, maintain order and minimize disruption to daily life.

Fair regulation, however, depends on consistency. Questions arise when one type of gathering faces intense scrutiny while others pass with broad social acceptance.

India's calendar is filled with major religious events that occupy public spaces. Ganesh Chaturthi processions, Durga Puja immersions, Navratri celebrations, Holi festivities, Janmashtami's Dahi Handi events, Ram Navami rallies, Rath Yatras, Bonalu processions, Thaiyusam observances and the Kumbh Mela all involve substantial public participation.

Roads close, traffic routes change and administrative machinery mobilizes on a large scale. Citizens adjust because



“A confident democracy welcomes peaceful expressions of faith. It regulates gatherings through neutral rules and practical planning rather than selective scrutiny. Such an approach protects public convenience while strengthening trust among citizens.

these events form part of the country's social fabric.

Political rallies receive similar accommodation. Wedding processions regularly bring vehicles to a halt while participants celebrate in the middle of public roads.

Public discussion rarely portrays such gatherings as challenges to national unity or public order. Most people view them as legitimate uses of shared space.

Friday prayers occupy a central place in Islamic religious

life. They bring worshippers together once a week for congregational prayer, spiritual reflection and community interaction.

Many Indian cities face a practical challenge: mosque capacity often falls short of the number of worshippers attending Friday prayers. During Eid, attendance grows even larger. Open spaces sometimes become the only workable solution for a brief period.

These gatherings are typically organized, peaceful and limited in duration.

But despite that reality, they frequently attract political controversy disproportionate to their scale and impact.

The issue extends beyond traffic management, and touches a deeper question about equal citizenship.

Public prayer serves a religious purpose, but it also communicates belonging. Citizens who worship openly in a shared civic space affirm their place within the national community.

Public visibility signals confidence that one's faith can be practiced without suspicion or hostility.

Attempts to push religious expression entirely out of public view create a different message. They suggest that some identities fit comfortably within the public sphere while others remain acceptable only when kept private.

Such distinctions weaken the principle of equal citizenship that lies at the heart of a democratic society.

India's Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and equal protection under the law. Those commitments gain meaning through consistent application. Rights acquire strength when governments and citizens apply the same standards to everyone, regardless of faith or numbers.

Accommodation has long been one of India's greatest strengths. A country of immense religious, linguistic and cultural diversity functions because people make room for one another in shared spaces. Public life becomes richer when communities see their traditions treated with equal respect.

A confident democracy welcomes peaceful expressions of faith. It regulates gatherings through neutral rules and practical planning rather than selective scrutiny. Such an approach protects public convenience while strengthening trust among citizens.

The debate over Muslim prayers in public spaces therefore reaches beyond a question of logistics.

It asks whether India will apply the same principles to every community.

A plural society proves its strength when it extends equal freedom, respect and consideration to all.

That standard remains essential to the democratic promise India has made to its citizens.

*The author is an educator and writer. She can be reached at nowsheen9051@gmail.com.*

# Muharram Through My Grandfather's Eyes

Long before I understood Karbala, I encountered it in the tears, prayers and traditions that filled our Kashmiri home each Muharram.



Syed Majid Gilani

A few days ago, a dear friend, Azhar Abbas, walked into my office and asked a question that followed me home.

"Majid," he said, "you write about pain, loss, separation and the struggles of ordinary people. Why have you never written about Karbala? It is one of the greatest tragedies in human history."

His question caught me off guard. I stopped, searched for an answer and finally smiled.

"It is not that I do not want to write about Karbala," I told him. "Every time I try, my pen stops."

The answer sounded simple, but the truth behind it was much deeper.

Whenever I think about Karbala, my thoughts return to childhood. They return to my grandfather, whom we called Abaji, and to the Muharram gatherings that filled our home with emotion, remembrance and reverence.

Abaji was a gentle and deeply religious man. He rarely spoke about his feelings. His eyes, however, revealed everything.

Each Muharram, he would take out his old copy of the marsiyas of Mir Babbar Ali Anees. The book looked as though it had travelled through generations. Its pages had turned yellow. Its cover showed

the marks of years of use. He would gather family members around him, recite the verses and explain their meaning with patience and affection.

Those sessions felt ordinary to me at the time. Children rarely understand the significance of what they witness every day.

Looking back, I realize that those evenings taught me more about Karbala than any history lesson ever could.

After the recitation ended, Abaji would move to a window and continue reading on his own. Soon, tears would gather in his eyes. They would slowly run down his face as he turned the pages.

As a child, I watched without fully understanding.

I also remember my grandmother, Amma, and my mother preparing babri treysh during Muharram. My father would distribute it among passers-by as an expression of love and respect for the Ahlul Bayt (RA).

Amma observed voluntary fasts during those days. Every member of the family participated in remembrance in a different way.

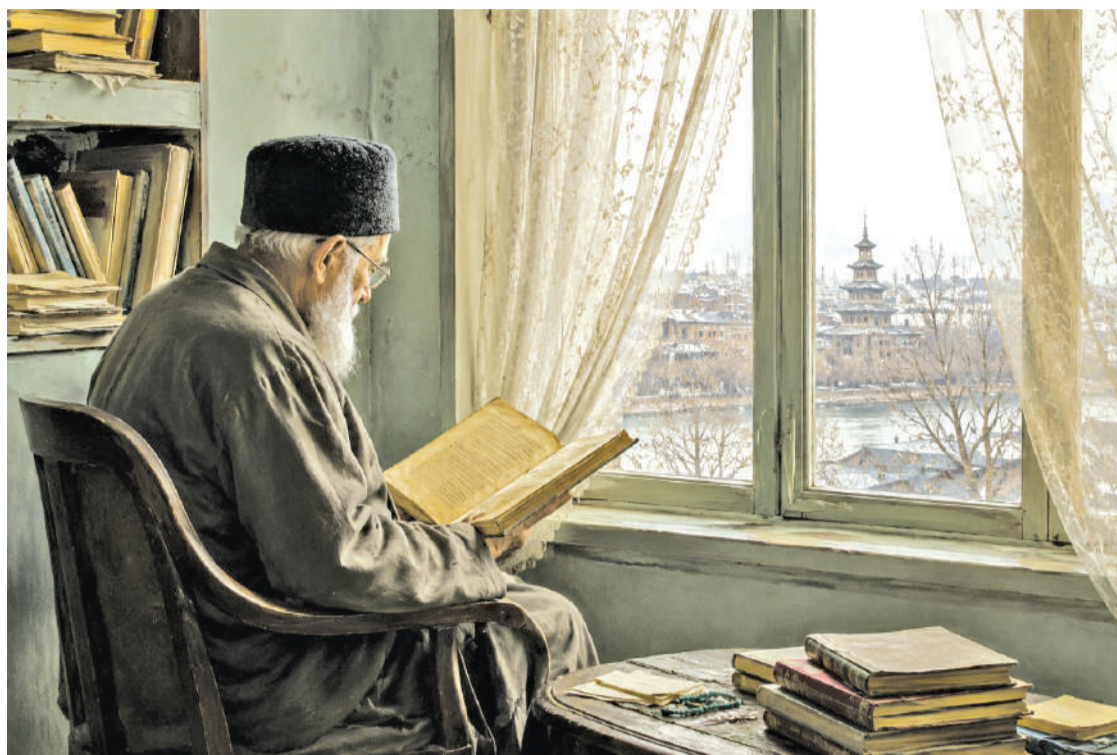
Those practices seemed natural within our home, but their deeper meaning unfolded gradually with age.

What struck me most was the emotional force behind them. Karbala touched the people around me in a way few other stories did. Decades had passed since their own childhoods, but the memory remained vivid enough to bring tears to their eyes every year.

Without realizing it, I was learning lessons that would stay with me throughout life.

I learned that faith can ache. I learned that love can express itself through grief. I learned that certain memories pass from one generation to the next with extraordinary power.

Abaji's attachment to the Ahlul Bayt (RA), the noble family of



**Abaji's attachment to the Ahlul Bayt (RA), the noble family of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), ran deep. Anees's marsiyas brought that devotion to life. Through those verses, he seemed to experience once again the sorrow, courage and sacrifice associated with Karbala.**

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), ran deep. Anees's marsiyas brought that devotion to life. Through those verses, he seemed to experience once again the sorrow, courage and sacrifice associated with Karbala.

Even today, whenever Muharram and Safar arrive, I think of him sitting near that window with the old book in his hands.

That image has never left me.

Perhaps that is why Karbala has always felt different. It never entered my life as a distant historical episode. It arrived through human emotion. It came through family memories, shared rituals and tears that appeared each year with remarkable consistency.

Everything I know about Karbala began there.

It came from what I saw as a

child, what I heard from elders and what I felt in gatherings where the story was remembered.

That personal connection explains my hesitation when I sit down to write about it.

Like millions of people around the world, I know the names of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), Hazrat Abbas (RA), Hazrat Zainab (RA) and Hazrat Ali Asghar (RA). I know of

their sacrifices and the stand they took for truth and faith. Their story continues to inspire people centuries after the events themselves.

Karbala survives in public memory for a reason. People remember it because its message reaches far beyond a battlefield in seventh-century Iraq. It speaks to questions of conviction, sacrifice and moral courage that remain relevant in every age.

Still, facts alone do not explain its enduring hold on human hearts.

Its deepest influence often emerges through personal experience. It appears in a grandfather's tears, a mother's prayers, a family's traditions and the emotions that return each Muharram.

Whenever I hear a marsiya today or attend a gathering where Karbala is remembered, I feel the same emotion that surrounded me as a child.

Time has given me greater understanding, though it has also deepened my appreciation of why so many people continue to mourn and remember.

A few minutes after our conversation ended, Azhar left my office. But his question remained: "Why do you never write about Karbala?"

That evening, my thoughts returned once more to Abaji by the window, Anees's marsiyas resting in his hands, tears moving gently down his face.

At last, I found my answer.

I first came to know Karbala through those who loved it enough to grieve for it, remember it and pass its story on.

Some stories pass through books, others arrive through the hearts of those who keep them alive.

Karbala belongs to the second kind.

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## The Conversation Prof. Aslam Started

Former IGNOU Vice-Chancellor Prof. M. Aslam's call to keep children off social media until 16 has sparked a wider debate, drawing responses from four top educators and scholars on its impact on learning, behaviour and childhood.



Syed Sammar Mehdi

Prof. M. Aslam's recent article, "No Social Media Before 16," struck a chord with readers far beyond academic circles.

Drawing on developments in countries such as Australia, Malaysia and Canada, the professor argued in his Kashmir Observer OpEd that unrestricted social media access is altering how children learn, think and grow.

His intervention prompted responses from educators and scholars who approached the issue from different professional experiences while sharing a common concern: childhood is changing rapidly under the influence of digital platforms.

Presented below are their responses in their own words.

### "We've Created the Perfect Conditions for Social Media to Take Hold"

As a teacher, I found Prof. Aslam's article deeply relevant. Many educators recognised the risks associated with unrestricted internet access long before the pandemic. Covid accelerated digital adoption and transformed online platforms into educational necessities. Internet companies expanded access through attractive packages and devices, while conversations around parental controls remained limited.

Children suddenly gained access to a vast digital universe where educational content sat alongside material designed purely to attract attention. Platforms such as TikTok created a culture of influencers, endless reels and constant self-display. Stories

## No Social Media Before 16

PROF. M. ASLAM'S CALL Sparks a Wider Debate

Four educators and scholars respond



On learning and thinking

On behaviour and attitudes

On families and society

On policy and safeguards

of young girls becoming victims of stalkers after posting routine content illustrate how quickly online visibility can turn dangerous.

Changes are visible inside classrooms as well. Many students approach teachers with a certainty that leaves little room for dialogue. Home environments have changed too. Nuclear families and working parents often leave children alone with screens for long periods.

Childhood thrives through guidance, supervision and meaningful human interaction. Current conditions allow social media to occupy that space with remarkable ease.

— Ozma Siddiqui, English Language Specialist; former English Language Instructor, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah; Editorial Board Member, International Journal of English Language and Education.

### "Social Media Is Influencing How Children Think"

Prof. Aslam has raised an important issue that governments and policymakers can no longer ignore. Social media has become one of the most powerful influences in the lives of young people. Information now reaches children instantly, often through sensational content designed to provoke reactions rather than encourage understanding.

My concern centres on independent thinking. Children increasingly consume information through platforms that reward emotion, speed and repetition. Family influence and parental guidance face growing competition from digital content. Many young people spend more time engaging with screens than engaging with meaningful conversations at home. Social media can certainly play a

positive role when it highlights social issues and expands awareness. Problems emerge when misinformation, propaganda and distorted narratives gain traction. Such content influences perceptions long before children develop the tools needed to evaluate it critically.

Prof. Aslam's article comes at an important moment. Countries around the world are exploring safeguards for younger users. India should approach this issue with seriousness and adopt practical policies that protect children while preserving the benefits of technology.

— Dr. D. Sundar Ram, Director, Academy of Grassroots Studies and Research of India (AGRASRI), Tirupati.

### "This Debate Has Reached a Critical Moment"

Reading Prof. Aslam's article was both engaging and enlightening.

What impressed me most was its relevance to one of the defining policy questions of our time. Discussions about social media often focus on innovation and connectivity. Much less attention goes toward its impact on children and adolescents.

The article succeeds because it places that concern at the centre of public discussion. International developments demonstrate that governments are increasingly willing to intervene when evidence points to harm among younger users. India faces similar questions and will eventually need clear answers.

Public debate plays an important role in this process. Newspapers provide a bridge between academic thinking and everyday concerns. Scholars can contribute valuable insights, though those ideas gain real significance when they reach parents,

teachers and citizens.

Prof. Aslam's article performs precisely that function. It encourages readers to think carefully about childhood, technology and public policy at a time when those conversations have become increasingly important.

— Prof. (Dr.) Sukamal Deb, Professor of Practice and Lead, Anant Centre for Documentation, Development of Crafts, Anant National University, Ahmedabad; Member, Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University.

### "A Balanced Contribution to an Important Debate"

What impressed me most about Prof. Aslam's article was its measured and evidence-based approach. Public discussions on social media often move toward extremes. This article maintained a balanced perspective while presenting legitimate concerns regarding early exposure to digital platforms.

Technology plays an important role in modern life. Children benefit from digital tools when they are used thoughtfully and responsibly. Questions arise when social media becomes a dominant influence during formative years. Parents, educators and policymakers therefore need informed discussion grounded in evidence rather than emotion.

The article also demonstrates how academic scholarship can enrich public discourse. Complex social questions become far more accessible when they are presented in clear language and connected to everyday experiences. Such writing strengthens public understanding and encourages meaningful engagement with policy issues.

Conversations about childhood, technology and social media will continue to grow in importance. Prof. Aslam's intervention makes a valuable contribution by bringing these concerns before a wider audience.

— Prof. Manohar Lal, Former Director, School of Computer and Information Sciences (SOCIS), IGNOU, New Delhi.

— The author is a trainee journalist at Kashmir Observer.

## FSSAI Flags Misleading 'Healthy' Claims By Food Brands

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued notices to several food companies for allegedly using misleading brand names, trade names and product claims that could deceive consumers, as part of a wider crackdown on violations of food labelling norms.

The food regulator said the companies were found to be in violation of provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and directed them to strictly comply with labelling and display regulations.

In a post on X, FSSAI said the food business operators (FBOs) had been instructed to follow established labelling norms to prevent consumer deception.

Among the brands served notices are Healthy Master, Neuherbs True Vitamin, Plant B, The Health Factory,

Troovy, Healthy Choice, Emami's Healthy and Tasty, Health Aid, Organic Wisdom, Shine Organic, Two Brothers Organic Farms, Storia, World of Organic and Iota Water.

According to the regulator, brand names such as Healthy Master, The Health Factory, Healthy Choice, Emami's Healthy and Tasty and Health Aid may create an impression about health benefits that are not supported under existing regulations.

FSSAI also objected to the use of the term "True Vitamin" by Neuherbs, stating that it is neither defined nor recognised under current regulations and could mislead consumers.

Plant B was issued a notice over branding of its plant-based vegan products. The regulator said the branding could give consumers the impression that the products are certified vegan despite the company not having obtained the required approval

for vegan food endorsements under its FSSAI licence.

Troovy's "Healthy Mix" chips also came under scrutiny, with FSSAI stating that the use of the term "healthy" may be misleading considering the product's composition.

Separate notices were issued to Organic Wisdom, Shine Organic and Two Brothers Organic Farms for using the term "organic" in their branding without possessing the required certification, Jaivik Bharat logo or necessary organic endorsements.

The regulator said such branding could mislead consumers regarding the organic status of the products.

The action forms part of FSSAI's broader efforts to strengthen compliance with food labelling standards and ensure that consumers are not influenced by unverified health, nutritional or organic claims on packaged food products.

## CIC Orders CBSE to Disclose Exam Expenditure, Procurement Details

Agencies

New Delhi: The Central Information Commission (CIC) has directed the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to disclose "point-wise categorical" information permissible under the RTI Act related to expenditure on exams and details of answer books, including the tendering and procurement process, for Class 10 and Class 12 board examinations.

After setting aside the CBSE's earlier denial of information under the RTI, the transparency panel asked it to furnish revised replies and said that the information exempt from disclosure may be redacted or masked under Section 10 of the RTI Act, while any denial under Section 8(1)(d) should be properly justified.

The case arose from an RTI application seeking details of answer books used in Class 10 and Class 12 board examinations during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 sessions, including paper quality, number of pages, size, purchase cost, total expenditure, GST payments and details of the tender process for procurement of answer sheets.

In its response, the CBSE disclosed certain specifications of the answer books, stating that the paper used ranged from 60

GSM to 120 GSM, answer books contained 8, 20, 32, 40 or 48 pages and were available in sizes of 22 x 28 cm and 37.5 x 54.5 cm.

The board also said records regarding the weight of individual answer books were not maintained.

However, information relating to the purchase cost of answer books, the number purchased and total expenditure incurred on procurement was denied under Section 8(1)(e) of the RTI Act.

On queries regarding the tender process, names of participating firms, rates quoted and vendor selection, the CBSE said the matter was related to "confidential" and "sensitive" activities of board examinations and claimed exemption under sections 8(1)(d), 8(1)(e) and 8(1)(g) of the Act.

The board also stated that expenditure data for examination fees was maintained on a financial year basis instead of academic sessions and declined to provide specific expenditure details. It also informed the applicant that expenditure on practical examinations was booked under a broader expenditure head and could not be segregated separately.

The appellant challenged the response before the CIC, arguing that larger public interest and transparency warranted

disclosure of information relating to procurement and expenditure. Information Commissioner Sudha Rani Relangi observed that the core issue in the appeal was the denial of information related to the "tender process for purchase of answer sheet and other related stationary materials" despite the appellant's contention that larger public interest justified disclosure.

The Commission found that the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) had denied information under multiple exemption clauses "without giving any proper justification in this regard".

It also noted that the CPIO neither appeared during the hearing nor filed any written statement to justify the denial of information.

"Accordingly, the impugned reply of the CPIO dated 18.03.2025 in the absence of any justification for denial of the information sought, is hereby set aside," the CIC said.

Referring to transparency in public procurement, the Commission observed that "time and again" the Supreme Court and the CIC had emphasised that such exemptions must be construed strictly to ensure accountability in public procurement and contracts by

public authorities.

"Now, considering the averments of the Appellant during hearing regarding irregularity on such tenders, the Commission, deems it fit, to direct, CPIO to re-visit the contents of the RTI application in question and provide a revised point-wise categorical replies along with relevant permissible information that can be provided as per the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005," the CIC said.

The CIC further said the CPIO ought to have disclosed permissible information while redacting only those portions exempt from disclosure under the RTI Act. "Information which is exempted from disclosure be redacted/masked under Section 10 of the RTI Act, 2005. In case the information sought is covered under Section 8(1)(d) of the RTI Act, 2005, the CPIO may justify such denial by giving justification under Section 19(5) of the RTI Act, 2005," the order said.

Section 8(1)(d) deals information such as commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party, unless the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

## Frozen Shoulder Emerge As Hidden Complications Of Diabetes: Experts

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: As India grapples with one of the world's largest diabetes burdens, doctors are reporting a less-recognised consequence of the disease -- a rise in orthopaedic conditions ranging from frozen shoulder and trigger finger to nerve compression disorders and accelerated wear-and-tear of joints.

Experts said persistently high blood sugar can damage collagen, tendons, ligaments and nerves, increasing the risk of pain, stiffness and mobility

problems that can significantly affect quality of life.

"We are increasingly seeing people in their 40s presenting with frozen shoulder, tendon problems and joint stiffness, conditions that were traditionally more common in older age groups. A major reason is the rising prevalence of diabetes and pre-diabetes at younger ages in India," Dr Skand Sinha, professor, Sports Injury Centre, VMIC and Safdarjung Hospital said.

The formation of advanced glycation end products accumulate in tendons and capsules,

making tendons less elastic, prone to degeneration and tearing. The smallest blood vessels are narrowed, reducing the blood flow needed to maintain healthy rotator cuff, he explained.

According to doctors, greater awareness among physicians and routine screening for metabolic disorders have also led to earlier detection of diabetes-related musculoskeletal complications. Dr Abhimanyu Kumar, senior consultant, orthopaedics, at the Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, said

doctors are increasingly finding musculoskeletal complaints to be an early indicator of diabetes in some patients.

"We often see patients coming with frozen shoulder, trigger finger, chronic tendon pain or unexplained joint stiffness, and subsequent investigations reveal previously undiagnosed or poorly controlled diabetes. In many cases, the orthopaedic complaint becomes the first warning sign of an underlying metabolic disorder," Kumar said.

He noted that diabetes-related musculoskeletal disorders

are now being diagnosed at younger ages because Type 2 diabetes itself is occurring earlier in life.

"Chronic hyperglycaemia accelerates ageing of connective tissues. Excess glucose leads to the formation of advanced glycation end products that make collagen fibres thick, stiff and brittle, reducing flexibility of tendons and ligaments."

"Diabetes also impairs blood supply to these tissues and promotes low-grade inflammation, increasing the risk of frozen shoulder, trigger finger and

tendon disorders," he said.

According to Kumar, poor glycaemic control significantly worsens the severity and progression of orthopaedic conditions.

"Uncontrolled blood sugar accelerates cartilage degeneration, impairs tissue healing and increases the risk of complications after fractures or orthopaedic surgery. Patients with diabetes are more likely to experience delayed bone healing, infections and prolonged recovery," he said.

Dr Sinha said injured tendons in people with diabetes generally heal more slowly and less

effectively after injury.

Dr Sarvesh Pandey, joint replacement and arthroscopic surgeon, Indraprastha Apollo hospital, Delhi, said frozen shoulder affects an estimated 10-30 per cent of people with diabetes, compared with only 2-3 per cent of the general population, while trigger finger is also several times more common among diabetics.

Stressing the importance of early detection, he said timely screening can help identify musculoskeletal complications before they lead to significant disability.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### India, France

and investment, technology, innovation, education, mobility and people-to-people ties. "A key focus of the discussions was strengthening and diversifying bilateral cooperation in economic growth, technology and innovation," Misri said.

One of the major outcomes was the announcement of a high-level mechanism aimed at doubling bilateral trade within five years. Current trade between the two countries stands at around USD 16 billion.

The two nations also agreed to establish a separate dialogue mechanism on economic security, reflecting a growing emphasis on resilient supply chains and strategic economic cooperation.

Under the India-France Innovation Roadmap 2030, both countries will deepen collaboration in critical and emerging technologies, support startup and incubator ecosystems, strengthen industry-academia linkages and promote academic mobility.

To boost cooperation in the rapidly evolving field of artificial intelligence, New Delhi and Paris announced the creation of a Joint AI Working Group focused on AI governance, research and development, capacity building and industry exchanges.

In a move expected to benefit Indian tourists, students, business travellers and the Indian diaspora, the two countries also agreed to expand the use of UPI at Paris Airport and in the city of Nice, further extending India's digital public infrastructure footprint in Europe.

The leaders also announced the establishment of a National Centre of Excellence for Skilling in Aeronautics and Allied Sectors at Kanpur. The centre is expected to support training, institutional partnerships and research in aviation and aerospace while strengthening the workforce for manufacturing and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) activities.

According to officials, the outcomes reflect a shared commitment to building a future-oriented partnership centred on innovation, technology and sustainable economic growth.

The two leaders also discussed measures to enhance mobility of students and skilled professionals and expand mutual recognition of educational qualifications. Prime Minister Modi invited French universities to establish campuses in India under the National Education Policy, a proposal welcomed by President Macron.

Modi arrived in France on Saturday night as part of his week-long visit to France and Slovakia.

### Trump Pushes

Lebanon hard while a deal is near, but the prime minister has defied him.

Netanyahu's office said the strikes were in response to Hezbollah attacks on northern Israel. Israel's military said Hezbollah launched three projectiles, releasing footage where an audible boom was followed by rising smoke. There was no immediate comment from the Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

"Israel will not tolerate firing into its territory," Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement. The military later said it was preparing for potential incoming fire in the coming hours.

An Associated Press photographer at the scene in Beirut said a five-story apartment building with shops on the ground floor was struck. The two lowest floors were the most heavily damaged. Residents of the southern suburbs, many of whom had returned home after weeks of relative calm, could be seen fleeing.

Hezbollah fired missiles into Israel on March 2, two days after the US and Israel attacked Iran, sparking war in the Middle East. Israeli troops have since pushed their invasion of Lebanon deeper than at any point in over a quarter century.

Iran wants a ceasefire deal to include the fighting in Lebanon.

Mediators push Iran and the US closer to a deal

Iran's parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, a lead negotiator for Tehran, warned the US on X after Israel's strikes that "if you lack the will and ability to fulfill your commitments, speaking of continuing the path is not possible."

"Without a doubt, these crimes will not go unanswered," said Gen. Mohammad Jafar Asadi, deputy commander of Iran's Joint Command Headquarters, the official Mizan news agency reported.

Qatari mediators travelled to Tehran on Sunday to finalise the agreement, according to two regional officials.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media, expressed cautious optimism that the US and Iran were finally approaching a deal that could halt hostilities that have killed thousands of people and reopened the Strait of Hormuz, whose closure has thrown world markets into disarray.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Saturday the deal would be signed Sunday, while Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said it could happen in the coming days. Trump said the Strait of Hormuz would open immediately after the signing.

The deal is expected to be signed electronically, without an in-person ceremony, though it's unclear when or how the signing will take place.

Iran's government warned that any division at home over the deal weakens its negotiating position, and those criticizing negotiators are taking aim at a national decision. Iranians must recognize that no war lasts forever, spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani told the state-run IRNA news agency.

Nuclear and other issues still to be finalised. The deal does not solve the thorniest issues between the US and Iran, including Iran's nuclear program or its billions of dollars in frozen funds, but offers a 60-day framework for technical discussions on those issues, according to Pakistani and regional officials familiar with the ongoing negotiations. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not

authorised to speak publicly.

The officials described Pakistan's effort leading the negotiations, struggling for months to keep both sides from walking out on multiple occasions.

Under the deal being discussed, US and Israel appear to have fallen short of their original goals of destroying Iran's missile and nuclear programs and ending its support for armed proxies in the region. It is not clear how the deal will address these issues, or if they will be part of the final agreement.

Iran's nuclear program and highly enriched uranium have long been at the centre of tensions with the US and Israel and an international source of concern. Trump on social media asserted Saturday that "when all is calm," the US would go in and "downblend and destroy" the enriched uranium in Iran or in the US.

Iran has 440.9 kilograms (972 pounds) of uranium that is enriched up to 60 per cent purity, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Iran has long maintained its nuclear program is peaceful and has not publicly committed to giving up the enriched uranium, which is believed to be buried under three nuclear sites that were badly damaged by US strikes last year.

Critics in Trump's Republican Party, struggling with an unpopular war ahead of the mid-term elections, have criticized the emerging deal. Some said it did not improve on the terms of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal that Trump withdrew the US from during his first term and which he still describes as "bad."

Meanwhile, Trump was expected to discuss demining the Strait of Hormuz during the Group of Seven summit that starts Monday. (AP)

### Kashmir Colonies

fears about vehicle movement within densely populated localities and sharpened scrutiny of commercial traffic passing through residential areas.

Residents say the issue extends beyond a single incident.

Many allege that tippers and other commercial vehicles use neighbourhood roads as convenient shortcuts, avoiding congestion on major routes and passing through colonies where homes stand only a few feet from the roadway. The impact is visible.

Electricity poles in Mustafa Abad bear marks of repeated collisions. Wires sag above sections of the lane. Residents point toward damaged rooftops and structures that they say have suffered during the passage of oversized vehicles. "Look at the poles and wires," said another resident. "They tell the whole story."

Residents also describe a growing sense of unease. Parents keep a closer watch on children, and pedestrians move aside when trucks enter narrow lanes.

People speak of living with the constant possibility that the next vehicle could damage property or place someone in harm's way.

"This has become a quality-of-life issue,"

said a local shopkeeper. "A residential colony should not feel like a transit corridor."

The complaints emerge at a time when construction activity continues to expand in and around Srinagar, increasing the movement of earth, gravel and building material through the city.

Residents acknowledge the need for development projects, but their frustration centers on enforcement and route management.

After complaints from Mustafa Abad reached officials, representatives of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation said they would examine the issue and coordinate with the concerned agencies. Traffic police officials gave a similar assurance, saying such complaints surface regularly and efforts are underway to address them as quickly as possible.

Residents say they hope those assurances translate into visible action.

One recent afternoon, another truck entered Mustafa Abad. Residents watched as it moved beneath a cluster of electric wires stretched across the lane before disappearing toward the main road.

The vehicle moved on, but the anxiety stayed behind.

### Security Tightened

anti-sabotage checks along the pilgrimage routes and ensure round-the-clock security domination of major roads and arteries connected with the Yatra.

To strengthen emergency response, the DGP ordered deployment of Quick Response Teams (QRTs) at strategic locations and stressed the need for public awareness regarding cut-off timings for pilgrims. He also directed regular inspections of security arrangements and facilities established for yatris.

Emphasising the use of technology, Prabhat asked officers to make optimum use of CCTV surveillance networks and RFID-based tracking systems at transit camps, base camps and along the pilgrimage routes to improve monitoring and emergency response capabilities.

The DGP also instructed officers to closely monitor terrorist associates and other anti-national elements while ensuring adequate deployment in hinterland and vulnerable areas. He stressed the protection of all sensitive installations connected with the Yatra.

District police chiefs were directed to coordinate closely with the civil administration to ensure effective implementation of security and logistical arrangements. Prabhat also called for regular coordination meetings and comprehensive contingency planning to deal with disasters, fire incidents, adverse weather and other emergencies.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the DGP reviewed security preparations for upcoming Muharram observances and the annual Mela Kheer Bhawani, directing officers to ensure adequate security, effective crowd management and coordination among all agencies for their smooth conduct.

The meeting was attended by senior police officers, including Special DGP Coordination S.J.M. Gillani, ADGPs, IGs, DIGs and district SSPs

from across Jammu and Kashmir.

### HC Backs FCI's

internal roads at a 17,500-metric-tonne godown established at Shilvat in Srinagar.

According to court records, Alpine Agro Services was awarded the project in May 2013 under the PEG Scheme on a "Build, Own and Operate" basis for a guaranteed period of ten years. A Lease and Service Agreement executed between the parties provided for operation of the facility on a guaranteed hiring basis from February 27, 2015, to May 20, 2024, with monthly rentals linked to the approved storage rate and annual escalation.

The petitioner argued that the godown had been constructed according to prescribed specifications and was accepted by FCI as operationally fit for storage purposes. It contended that only the black-topping of internal roads remained incomplete and that the delay was caused by circumstances beyond its control, including the death of a partner and the law-and-order situation in Kashmir during 2016.

FCI, however, maintained that black-topping of internal roads was an essential component of the approved project and that the petitioner had failed to complete the work despite several opportunities and extensions. The corporation argued that the recovery of penalties was in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

After examining the contractual provisions and the facts of the case, the court found no merit in the petition and upheld the recovery orders issued by FCI.

The court held that a party cannot accept the benefits flowing from a contract while simultaneously seeking to avoid obligations imposed under the same agreement. Consequently, the petition was dismissed, affirming FCI's decision to recover the penalties from the rentals payable to the firm.

### 3 Haryana Residents

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and initiated an investigation to ascertain the cause of the accident.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident.

"Deeply grieved to learn about the loss of precious lives in a tragic road accident near Jagti, Nagrota. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Praying for the early recovery of the injured. I have directed the District Administration to provide all necessary assistance to the affected families," the Lieutenant Governor said in a condolence message.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed deep sorrow over the incident and conveyed his sympathies to the bereaved families.

The Chief Minister prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls and wished a speedy recovery to the injured. He directed the concerned authorities to ensure the best possible medical treatment and care for those injured in the accident.

The accident took place near the Jagti-Karli area of Nagrota on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway during the intervening night of June 13 and 14.

## Satish Sharma visits Pahalgam, Interacts with Tourists, Transporters

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Minister for Youth Services & Sports, Transport, Information Technology, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Science & Technology, ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma visited the renowned tourist destination of Pahalgam and interacted with the tourists, local stakeholders and transporters to assess the tourism and public service ecosystem in the area.

During the visit, the Minister reviewed the facilities available for the visitors and took stock of the overall arrangements being made to cater to the growing influx of tourists. He inspected various public amenities and emphasized the need to maintain high standards of cleanliness, safety, transportation and visitor services to ensure a seamless and memorable experience for tourists.

Interacting with the tourists from different parts of the



country, Satish Sharma extended a warm welcome to them and highlighted Jammu and Kashmir's unparalleled natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and renowned hospitality. He expressed satisfaction over the increasing tourist footfall in the Valley. He said that the growing number of visitors reflects the confidence of tourists in Jammu and Kashmir as a safe and attractive destination. The Minister said that the gov-

ernment, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, is committed towards strengthening the tourism infrastructure and enhancing facilities at all major tourist destinations. He added that sustained efforts are being made to improve the connectivity, public amenities and service delivery mechanisms so that visitors enjoy a comfortable and enriching stay in the Union Territory. During his interaction with the

local tourism stakeholders, including hoteliers, service providers and traders, the Minister appreciated their contribution towards promoting Pahalgam as one of the country's premier tourist destinations. He stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all stakeholders to further improve tourism services and maintain the destination's appeal. Satish Sharma also met representatives of the transport sec-

tor and held discussions with local transporters regarding issues concerning transportation facilities, traffic management and passenger convenience. The transporters apprised the Minister of various concerns and suggestions related to the sector. The Minister assured them that their genuine issues would be examined sympathetically and appropriate measures would be taken to further strengthen transport services in the region.

Reiterating the government's commitment to sustainable tourism development, the Minister said that tourism remains a key driver of economic growth and employment generation in Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that the government is focused on creating new opportunities for local communities while ensuring that tourism development remains environmentally responsible and beneficial to all stakeholders.

## CM Omar Expresses Grief over Road Accident near Nagrota, Jammu

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed deep grief over the tragic road accident near Nagrota in Jammu district, in which three persons from Haryana lost their lives and two others sustained injuries.

In a message of condolence, the Chief Minister conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls. He also wished a speedy recovery to those injured in the accident. The Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to ensure the best possible medical treatment and care for the injured persons.

The accident occurred during the intervening night of June 13 and 14 near the Jagti-Karli area of Nagrota on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, when a car collided with a passenger bus. Three residents of Haryana were killed in the mishap, while two others sustained injuries.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah prayed for strength and courage to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss. (Observer News Service)

## Sopore Police Bust Gambling Racket

**SRINAGAR:** Four persons were apprehended on Sunday after police busted a gambling den operating at a public place near a park in the Chinkpora area of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said.

Acting on reliable information, a team from Police Station Sopore raided the spot and caught the accused red-handed, they said. Those arrested were identified as Dawood Iqbal Ganie, Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh, Owais Ahmad Dar and Parvaiz Ahmad Ganie — all residents of Chinkpora, Sopore.

Officials said cash amounting to Rs 8,590 and playing cards were seized from the site.

A case under FIR No. 144/2026 has been registered at Police Station Sopore under Section 13 of the Gambling Act, and further investigation has been taken up, they added.

Police have reiterated their commitment to maintaining public order and warned that strict legal action would continue against those involved in gambling and other anti-social activities. (Observer News Service)

## MVD Ramban Conducts Major Enforcement Drive

**RAMBAN:** The Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Ramban conducted a major enforcement drive at Maroog, Seri and Chanderkote along National Highway-44. The drive was carried out on the directions of the Transport Commissioner, J&K and under the supervision of Assistant Regional Transport Officer Ramban, with the objective of ensuring strict compliance with traffic regulations and enhancing road safety.

During the drive, more than 75 vehicles were checked for adherence to the Motor Vehicles Act and other road safety norms. A total of 15 vehicles were e-challenged for various offences, attracting an expected penalty of 53,700.

Violations detected included permit-related offences, operation of defective vehicles and other traffic rule violations. Two vehicles were seized for being operated in defective condition, while two driving licences were recommended for suspension for serious violations, including operating vehicles without valid permits and driving defective motor vehicles.

Assistant Regional Transport Officer Ramban Varun Bhasin urged vehicle owners, drivers and commuters to strictly follow traffic regulations, maintain vehicles in roadworthy condition and carry all valid documents while driving to avoid legal action.

The ARTO added that the MVD and District Police will continue to conduct regular enforcement drives across the district to curb traffic violations and ensure the safety of all road users. (Observer News Service)

## 84 Bn CRPF Celebrates World Blood Donor Day

**RAMBAN:** On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, 84 Battalion CRPF Ramban, in collaboration with District Hospital Ramban, organised a blood donation camp at the Blood Bank of District Hospital Ramban on Saturday.

More than ten personnel of 84 Bn CRPF and one Inspector from BSF voluntarily donated blood.

The programme was attended by Commandant N Ranbir Singh, Second-in-Command Vikram Singh, Senior Medical Officer Deputy Commandant Dr J Anantha Krishnan, Assistant Commandant Shree Ram Meena, and nearly 50 personnel of 84 Bn CRPF.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commandant stated that the camp was organised under the theme "One Drop of Humanity: Give Blood, Save Lives." He appealed to the public, particularly young and healthy individuals, to donate blood voluntarily and regularly — not only to save lives but also to help maintain a safe and adequate blood supply for patients in need.

He also highlighted the health and emotional benefits of voluntary blood donation and encouraged citizens to make it a regular practice. The Commandant assured that 84 Bn CRPF would readily extend support by donating blood for patients in need whenever called upon.

The camp was conducted under the supervision of Medical Superintendent Dr Mohd Rafi and Consultant Pathologist Dr Parvez Katoch. Other officials of District Hospital Ramban also participated. (Observer News Service)

## DC Ramban Reviews Preparations for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026

**RAMBAN:** Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan conducted a spot inspection of Yatra Camp Lamber to review the progress of arrangements being put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026.

During the visit, the DC inspected ongoing works and assessed preparedness for providing essential facilities to pilgrims. He reviewed arrangements related to accommodation, sanitation, drinking water supply, power supply, healthcare facilities, road connectivity and other civic amenities being developed at the campsite.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Executive Engineer, PWD, to expedite ongoing infrastructure works and ensure their completion within prescribed timelines.

The DC also instructed officers of Jal Shakti, Health, Rural Development Department (RDD), JPDC and other departments concerned to work in close coordination and complete all assigned works well in advance of the commencement of the Yatra. He stressed the need to maintain high standards of cleanliness, uninterrupted utility services and adequate healthcare facilities for the pilgrims.

The DC also interacted with officers on the spot and reviewed department-wise progress, and directed all to remain proactive and ensure that every facility is put in place in a time-bound manner. (Observer News Service)



Dr. Karan Singh, Former Union Minister met Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, at Lok Bhavan and discussed various matters related to development of Jammu Kashmir.

## Congress Launches Padyatra in Jammu

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** The Congress launched a five-day padyatra in Jammu under its "Hamari Riyyasat Hamara Haq" campaign, demanding restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and raising issues such as inflation, unemployment and examination paper leaks.

The march was flagged off by Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra in the presence of working president Raman Bhalla, former minister Yogesh Sawhney and other party leaders.

Addressing party workers and supporters, Karra said restoration of statehood was the democratic and constitutional right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and accused the BJP-led Centre of delaying its return despite repeated assurances.

He said the campaign was aimed at mobilising public support for restoration of statehood and highlighting issues affecting people, including rising prices, unemploy-



ment and fuel costs.

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir continue to be deprived of their democratic rights. Congress will continue its struggle on the roads and in democratic forums until statehood is restored," Karra said.

Referring to the NEET paper leak controversy, he alleged that repeated irregularities in examinations had affected the future of students and job aspirants and demanded accountability from the Centre.

Karra also expressed concern over the deaths of three Indian sailors in the Gulf of Oman following a US military strike on a tanker accused of violating a blockade on Iranian ports. He urged the Gov-

ernment of India to take up the matter diplomatically and ensure the safety of Indian citizens working abroad.

Bhalla said the padyatra was intended to take the concerns of common people to the government and accused the BJP of failing to address inflation, unemployment and other public issues.

As per KNS, he reiterated the party's demand for restoration of full statehood with constitutional guarantees and urged Congress workers to strengthen the campaign across Jammu and Kashmir.

The padyatra will cover various areas of Jammu district over the next five days as part of the party's outreach programme.

## NC Demands Immediate Lifting of Tourism Restrictions

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Provincial President Kashmir Advocate Showkat Ahmad Mir Sunday expressed serious concern over the prolonged restrictions on several tourist and adventure destinations across the Valley, saying the continued curbs have severely disrupted the tourism ecosystem and adversely impacted thousands of families dependent on hospitality, transport, guiding, trekking, and other allied sectors.

According to a press release issued here, Mir said that thousands of people associated with the tourism sector, including pony owners, tourist guides, hawkers, transport operators, hotel owners, and other service providers, have been facing severe financial difficulties for over a year.

He further stated that tourists arriving from other states and countries are now able to access only a limited number of destinations, which is affecting their overall travel experi-

ence and harming the image of Kashmir as a premier tourist destination. Even at locations that remain open, various restrictions and administrative hurdles continue to create difficulties for both tourists and those dependent on the tourism industry.

Mir remarked that it is surprising that even during the turbulent period of the 1990s, tourism and adventure activities were not subjected to such prolonged restrictions. Yet, for the past one-and-a-half years, many of these activities have remained curtailed for reasons that remain unclear, resulting in far-reaching negative consequences.

He emphasized that the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood is essential because a fully empowered government led by elected representatives is better equipped to understand the ground realities, public needs, and challenges faced by local communities, and can therefore take balanced and people-centric decisions.

## Ghulam Ali Khatana Holds Public Darbar at Gool



Observer News Service

**RAMBAN:** Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Er Ghulam Ali Khatana conducted a public darbar at Gool to hear and address the grievances, demands and developmental concerns of residents from various areas of Sub-Division Gool.

A large number of residents, public representatives and stakeholders participated in the programme, raising several important issues related to infrastructure, education, healthcare, employment, banking and tourism development.

The public raised demands spanning education, transport connectivity, sports infrastructure, legal facilities, minority welfare and land rights, including the establishment of a polytechnic college, improved rail access and effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

Participants also highlighted

the need for tourism infrastructure, banking facilities at Gool and strengthening of essential public services in the area.

Addressing the gathering, the MP assured the public that all genuine demands and grievances would be taken up with the appropriate authorities. He emphasised the need for inclusive, people-centric development and directed officers concerned to ensure timely redressal of public issues. He stressed that local youth should be actively engaged in ongoing construction and developmental works to generate employment and improve livelihoods.

The MP reviewed various developmental projects and sought on-the-spot responses from departments concerned on the issues raised. Several grievances were resolved during the darbar itself, while directions were issued for prompt action on the remaining matters.

## DC Rajouri Directs Measures to Reduce Road Accidents

Observer News Service

**RAJOURI:** Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee to review road safety measures being undertaken across the district and assess action taken on decisions made during previous committee meetings.

A comprehensive review stressed the need for coordinated efforts among all stakeholder departments to reduce road accidents and ensure safer roads for commuters. The DC directed the departments



concerned to conduct joint inspections of identified accident-prone locations (hotspots) and undertake post-accident analysis and recommend corrective measures.

Reviewing emergency response preparedness, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need to assess

and strengthen the functioning of hospitals located along the National Highway to ensure timely medical assistance to accident victims.

To streamline traffic management within Rajouri town, the DC directed the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) to issue a public notice

inviting contract carriage vehicle operators to submit the requisite documents. The Deputy Commissioner also directed the agencies concerned to ensure proper regulation of e-rickshaws operating in urban areas.

The meeting reviewed road safety action plans submitted by various departments. Directions were issued for the installation of reflective mirrors at vulnerable locations, including Salani, besides the installation of crash barriers at critical stretches. The DC also emphasised the installation of appropriate cautionary and informative signages

near government and private educational institutions situated along the National Highway. The functioning of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system at Chingus was also reviewed.

Among those present were Senior Superintendent of Police Rajouri Gaurav Sikarwar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Ravi Kumar Sihag, Superintending Engineer PWD, Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Executive Engineers, representatives of the Border Roads Task Force, Executive Officer Municipality and other district and sectoral officers.

# Deepti, Smriti Shine As India Crush Pakistan By 64 Runs



Press Trust of India

**BIRMINGHAM:** The peerless Deepti Sharma strangled an out of sync Pakistan with a five-wicket haul after Smriti Mandhana's delectable half-century as India thrashed Pakistan by 64 runs to make a winning start to their Women's T20 World Cup campaign here on Sunday.

Courtesy Mandhana's classy 44-ball-68 and Richa Ghosh's muscular 34 off 17 balls, India managed a winning score of 170 for 6.

Save Muneeba Ali's 35-ball-41, there was no sting in Pakistan batting as they folded for a meagre 106 in 17 overs.

Having played her part in a priceless 45-run stand with Ghosh, Deepti was in her element with the ball, picking up a career-best 5 for 10 in 4 overs while left-arm spinner Shree Chaurani grabbed 3 for 21. Shafali Verma's happy knack of picking wickets also helped India.

En route her five-wicket haul, Deepti also became

the highest wicket-taker in the history of Women's T20 Internationals.

With the third game being played on the same Edgbaston track, India got the advantage of bowling second as there was some turn on offer and the odd ball gripped, not allowing the batters to hit through the line. Deepti was literally unplayable on this pitch.

The most telling contribution during Indian fielding also came from Deepti, whose direct throw ended left-handed keeper-batter Muneeba's flashy innings.

Earlier, Mandhana's batting was grace personified as her regal knock along with Ghosh's cameo took India to a winning total.

Ghosh provided the final flourish as left-arm seamer Tasmia Rubab went for 23 runs in the penultimate over which eventually broke Pakistan's backbone.

Mandhana's elegance was on full display at Edgbaston as she caressed the ball to boundary with sheer timing.

The six off left-arm

seamer Rubab had class written all over it. Dancing down the track, the inside out boundaries off off-spinner Rameen Shamim were a work of art as she completed her half-century off just 34 balls. Her innings had nine boundaries and two sixes in it.

Shamim though finally had Mandhana when her mistimed hit was well taken by skipper Fatima Sana, who timed her slide to perfection.

Mandhana had company in her seasoned skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (36 off 35 balls) as the duo added 91 runs for the third wicket after Shafali Verma (6) and Jemimah Rodrigues (1) cheap dismissals had India under pressure at 18 for 2.

The skipper and her deputy were cautious with the Powerplay ending at 30 for 2 but they didn't let go of the opportunity to hit the boundaries.

In the next seven overs, India scored 70 runs and Mandhana got a couple of reprieves where Pakistan's butter-fingered fielders let

regulation chances slip by.

The left-hander was dropped off Rubab's bowling when her mistimed lofted shot was dropped by the fielder stationed at mid-off, who failed to latch on to the ball while running backwards.

The other was a big hit with the fielder at wide long-on boundary who saw it go for a six as it slipped between her palms. The unlucky bowler was left-arm spinner Sadia Iqbal (2/41), easily one of their best performers along with skipper Fatima Sana (2/33).

While Mandhana's footwork was a treat for the eyes, Kaur muscled a lot of deliveries using the depth of the crease. The Indian skipper used the conventional and slog sweep to good effect.

Once Mandhana was dismissed, India had a slump as Bharti Fulmali (0) was immediately stumped while trying an ugly hoick and Kaur's flick off Sana was taken by Natalia Pervez stationed at square leg boundary.

# World Cup: Does 'False 9' Concept Has Its Place In Football'S Biggest Theatre?

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Just like cricket fans love their six hitters, football fanatics have always had extra time for their beloved goal poachers.

From Gerd Müller to Miroslav Klose and Ronaldo to Harry Kane, the World Cup has traditionally belonged to the strikers who have been the 'Kings of 18 yards'.

Their KRA was simple: Hunt and Finish. That's about it.

But over the past two decades, another genre of centre forwards have emerged. They don't always occupy the attacking space but their USP lies in vacating it.

The role that is now known as the 'False 9'.

For the uninitiated, a 'False 9' begins as a traditional striker but that isn't always his main role.

Instead of jostling in the goal-mouth melee with opposition centre-backs, he slips into midfield and tries to win balls and don the role of a playmaker.

The idea of a 'False 9' is to create dilemma in the minds of the stopper backs. Would he or won't he? If he chases the so-called poacher, there is a vast expanse of land which can be utilised by those playing wide.

If they hang back, then there is a danger of making the 'False 9' both director and protagonist.

The modern club football, which basically shapes how international teams operate during mega events, has been deeply influenced by this tactical concept, which existed even in 1960s but no one made it more popular than Pep Guardiola and Lionel Messi during Barcelona's golden years.

Guardiola had moved Messi from the right wing into the centre but did not instruct him to play as a traditional striker.

He was given freedom to operate from the deep and draw opposition defenders out of position.

Barcelona became force of nature. So will the concept survive at the ongoing 2026 World Cup even if the role itself has evolved?

Argentina still depend on attributes that made Messi such an effective 'False 9'.

At 39 (he would be on June 24), he can no longer consistently produce the explosive acceleration of his younger days but the greatest of this era still can move away from the crowd and surprise the opposition.

One of the most effective 'False 9' could be Arsenal and Germany

forward Kai Havertz, who has been frequently used by Gunners gaffer Mikel Arteta in that role.

While Messi and Havertz will be in attendance, the strikers will always have their place under the sun till eternity.

Norway's Erling Haaland is the best exponent of what explosive bursts mean. His power and precision with regards to position inside the strike zone is second to none.

Bayern Munich's heart and England's skipper Harry Kane's predatory instincts are unparalleled even though Croatia and Ghana are set to give him a very tough time.

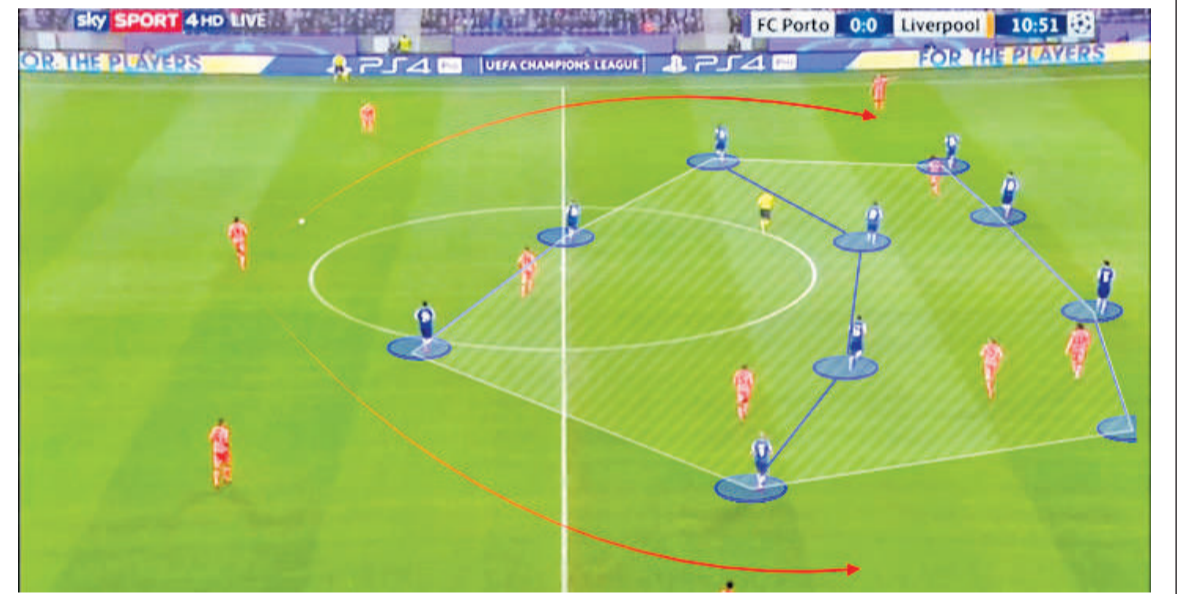
Lautaro Martinez's qualities make him an ideal ally of Messi when Albicelestes start its campaign.

Strikers, because of what they bring to the table will survive every tactical trend that football has to produce.

The methods differ, but the objective remains the same.

As the 2026 World Cup goes on, the contrast will offer one of the tournament's most intriguing tactical stories. Some teams will seek to pull defences apart through movement and deception.

Others will place their faith in a striker's instinct inside the box.



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