

AIKS naad

A Monthly Publication of **All India Kashmiri Samaj**

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Editorial

**Dear Readers,
Namaskar!**

As we enter yet another year of exile from our homeland, with winter tightening its grip, nature tests not only our physical endurance but our collective conscience. The falling temperature compels us to ask a simple yet uncomfortable question: *how much warmth do we extend to those among us who are most vulnerable and alone?*

For the elderly, winter is unforgiving. Arthritic pain worsens, breathing becomes laboured, immunity weakens, and loneliness deepens. Yet elder care often remains reactive rather than intentional. Our civilizational ethos teaches us that caring for elders is *seva*, not sympathy an obligation rooted in *Sanatan Dharma*.

As a mature and civilised community, we must rise to this responsibility. Those living in solitude must be actively reached out to and supported. Genocide and displacement have fractured the organic community bonds we once knew in Kashmir. Rebuilding these bonds is both our duty and our strength. Our elders are survivors of exile and injustice; safeguarding their dignity and well-being is the least we owe them.

Hindus in Bangladesh : When Silence Becomes Complicity

Beyond our borders, the winter is harsher for those living under fear. Repeated reports of violence and intimidation against Hindus in Bangladesh cannot be dismissed as isolated incidents. They reveal a persistent

vulnerability of minorities seeking nothing more than the right to live, worship, and exist with dignity.

Silence in such moments is not diplomacy it is abdication. Concern for persecuted Hindus is neither communal nor political; it is a humanitarian and civilizational imperative. To look away is to normalise injustice.

History does not forgive societies that choose comfort over conscience. The silence during the Kashmiri Hindu genocide remains a painful reminder, and similar passivity is now visible regarding Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh. India cannot abandon Hindus in increasingly Hinduphobic environments. Our civilizational responsibility demands clarity, courage, and firm action.

India's response so far, particularly at the diplomatic level, has lacked the resolve these circumstances demand. Genocidal tendencies must be confronted, not managed through silence. The world must be made aware, and human rights organisations must act impartially to safeguard the right to life, property, and religious freedom of minorities.

As Ghalib reminds us:

*“Jo kuch hua, wo kaise hua, jaanta hoon main;
Jo kuch nahi hua, woh bata—kyon nahi hua?”*

*(What happened, and how it happened, I know.
What did not happen—justice, protection,
compassion—tell me why it did not.)*

भूनील मैन गणक



From the *President's* *Desk*

Respected All Namaskar to All AIKS family,

As we enter fag end of this Gregorian calendar year, the community need to come together on the issue of identity front so far as Census 2026 is concerned. As we met Registrar General Census with a plea to count us as a 'Distinct identity' many pertinent points came up. Our delegation was made to convince that we will have to identify ourselves as 'Migrants 'or " displaced' under the caste sub head in 2026 census that will be taken up in April next year. Our primary objective is to get our population census correct so that even if Central & State govt wants too go for our return & rehabilitation process, our count should reflect a correct figure..Our community is facing crisis on preservation and promotion of culture, heritage and language. All prominent KP organizations will have to deliberate on this burning issue.

The first AGM of current AIKS team highlights the report card of its activities done successfully but lot needs to be done as we enter 2nd year of term. AIKS made its vibrant presence felt at International Saraswat Brahmin sammelan held at Jodhpur on 20-21 December.

AIKS team also met Dy.CEO of Noida authority as CMs secretariat has pushed a letter to Noida Authority for allotment of land for AIKS. Hopes are high but the rules are stringent regarding payment on basic price and quantum of land. Things will also shape up for setting up of museum as per communiqué from Ministry of Culture Govt. of India.

So far as demand of setting up of Kashmiri academy by Delhi Government on the lines of Punjabi, Sindhi, Urdu academy in Delhi is concerned we have done a couple of follow up meetings with concerned officers and minister as well. The academy will be kept in next budget of Delhi as assured by the minister himself.. We need to create a museum and Martyr memorial.

But the ongoing AIKS case in J&K High court can be decisive where in last hearing last & final opportunity has been given to Divisional Commissioner Kashmir to file the compliance report. I have vouched for a core group of AIKS with introduction of experienced activists.

The membership drive and subscription towards Naad magazine has to be speeded up, in the meantime. Also the team members need to approach our community brethren for getting advt for Naad and Vaakh for better results. We may succeed in getting a Delhi Tourism advt for NAAD in near future. Working in tandem with affiliates & other KP organizations, financial sustenance, having a permanent office in Delhi, reneging on our commitments, use of social media for transparent functioning. AIKS trust that has the foundation rudiments of assisting AIKS while in financial crunch needs to be stressed.

At the end, We look forward to a new year 2026 and I wish all community members a 'A happy new year 2026'.

May Sharda Mata bless us all !!



 Sunil Kaul



General Secretary's Column

The month of December has been significant for AIKS, marked by important organizational activities, institutional outreach, and renewed commitment toward our long-term goals.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the current AIKS Executive Committee is scheduled to be held on 28th December at the AIKS Office Premises, GK-1, New Delhi.

All affiliated units, patron members, life members, and special invitees have been formally invited. Invitations were disseminated through official emails, posted invite letters, and follow-up telephonic communication, coordinated efficiently by the AIKS office backend team.

This AGM will serve as a platform to present the report card of activities successfully undertaken during the year, review organizational progress, and deliberate on the roadmap ahead. While several objectives have been achieved during the first year of the current Executive's tenure, the leadership acknowledges that much remains to be accomplished as we enter the second year of the term.

45 Years of AIKS – A Legacy of Service

The year marks a historic milestone as AIKS completes 45 years of dedicated service to the Kashmiri Pandit community. AIKS remains the only organization of Kashmiri Pandits with such a long-standing history, consistently adhering to its Constitution, principles, and democratic values, irrespective of changing circumstances.

The organization's inherent values of transparency, integrity, and unwavering commitment to community affairs stand as testimony to the strength and vision of AIKS leadership. These values have not only guided the organization over the decades but have also been consciously nurtured within successive leadership teams to ensure continuity and institutional strength for the future.

Engagement with Noida Authority – Land Allotment Issue

During the month, the AIKS leadership also met the Deputy CEO of the Noida Authority regarding the long-pending issue of allotment of land for AIKS. This meeting followed a formal communication initiated by the Chief Minister's Secretariat, which has forwarded the matter to the Noida Authority.

While expectations remain positive, it was conveyed that stringent norms apply, particularly concerning payment at the basic rate and the quantum of land allotment. AIKS will continue to engage constructively with the authorities to pursue this matter in a transparent and compliant manner.

Museum Project – Ministry of Culture

Encouraging developments have also emerged regarding the proposed museum project, as indicated in recent communication from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The initiative aligns with AIKS's broader vision of preserving history, culture, and collective memory, and further clarity is expected in the coming period.



ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ (REGD.)

(APEX BODY OF INDIAN & OVERSEAS KASHMIRI PANDIT ORGANISATIONS)

AIKS Camp Office:-B-36 Samavar Premises GK-1 NEW DELHI -110048

Web: www.aiks.org; E-mail: hqaiks@gmail.com

(Annual General Body Meeting Circular)

Ref: AIKS/AGM-1/2024-2025

Date: 1st December 2025

TO

All Affiliate Units of AIKS

Patrons and Life Members

Special Invitees

Dear Members,

The Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) of the All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) is scheduled as per the details below:

Day, Date & Time:

Sunday, 28th December 2025 | 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Venue: Samavar Banquet Hall B-36, Samavar Premises, Pamposh Enclave, GK-1 New Delhi - 110048.

(Brief Agenda of the Meeting)

- 1. Remembrance**
Observance of two minutes of silence in memory of departed souls.
- 2. Welcome Address**
Opening remarks and welcome note by President Shri Ravinder Pandita.
- 3. Confirmation of Previous Minutes**
Approval of the minutes of the AGM held on 17th December 2023.
- 4. General Secretary's Report**
Presentation of the annual report by the General Secretary.
- 5. President's Report Card**
President's Annual Report for the year.
- 6. Financial Review**
Approval of the audited Balance Sheet for the financial year 2024-25.
- 7. Appointment of Auditors**
Approval of the appointment of Ms. Parminder Kaur Associates as Auditors for FY 2025-26 and 2026-27.
- 8. Membership Update**
Approval of new Life Members and Patrons of AIKS.
- 9. Affiliation of New Organizations**
Approval of the affiliation of Kashmiri Welfare Association, Karnal and Kashmiri Hindu Sabha, Bangalore.
- 10. Legal Affairs**
Update on the ongoing AIKS Jammu High Court case.
- 11. Future Programs**
Discussion and planning of upcoming AIKS initiatives and programs.
- 12. Any Other Business**
Matters to be taken up with the permission of the Chair.
- 13. Vote of Thanks**
Expression of gratitude by Shri Sanjay Sapru. (Lunch Break: 1:30 PM)

You are requested to kindly attend the AGM at the scheduled date, time, and venue. Affiliate organizations are requested to nominate their representatives for the meeting and inform us of their participation in advance. Activity reports of affiliate units and any suggestions may also be sent beforehand for inclusion.

We look forward to your valuable presence and participation.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Sunil Kaul (General Secretary)

AIKS affiliated Units at:

Inland : Agra, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Ambala, Amritsar, Bangalore, Bahadurgarh, Baroda, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Delhi, Dharamshala, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Gwalior, Hyderabad, Indirapuram, Indore, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Jammu, Jodhpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Moradabad, Nagpur, Noida, Panchkula, Pune, Ranchi, Sahibabad, Shimla, Srinagar, Udaipur, Varanasi

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 Col. Tej K Tikoo, Ph.D (RETD)



TERRORISM

IN JAMMU & KASHMIR : EBB AND FLOW

Ever since the hurried and unscientific partition of the country in 1947, state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has witnessed terrorism in one form or the other. Maharaja Hari Singh's reluctance/inability/compulsions behind not signing the instrument of accession in good time, British lack of trust in Nehru, despite being their preferred Congress leader, to protect its interests in this part of the world-post 2nd World War, Sheikh Abdullah's obsession to be the unchallenged chieftain of post-partition J&K, and Pakistan's unwillingness to accept the fact of accession of the State to India, created a situation that was bound to reach a boiling point one day. As if it was not enough, India's propensity for magnanimity, desire to project itself as a newly independent model state that respects some perceived norms of

international conduct, rather than following pragmatic policies strictly based on its national interest, further complicated the issue. India's Kashmir policy was, therefore, marked with duplicity, vacillation, confusion and appeasement, which further reinforced Pakistan's belligerence towards India. To add to our woes, others, particularly U.S. and Britain, fished in the troubled waters to serve their own ends, at our cost. All these historical factors, combined together, created a situation at the end of the decade of eighties, primed and waiting to be ignited by Pakistan.

Since 1988, till date, the contours of insurgency in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (now a union territory, minus Ladakh division) has seen much transformation, both in the conduct of the insurgency by Pakistan, as also in the attitude of Kashmiris towards the

violence perpetrated by these terrorists.

The decade between 1979, and 1989, saw events of far-reaching significance taking place in the world. Soviets were defeated in Afghanistan in 1989, hastening the former's break-up in 1991, and signaling the end of cold war. This resulted in a large number of countries (many of these Islamic) on the west and south of erstwhile Soviet Union becoming independent. While Germany got re-united, Romania, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and many other countries, broke free from the influence/ control of the communist behemoth. Militant revival of Islam in Iran in 1978, saw the shah of Iran getting toppled by Ayatollah Khomeini and establishment of a theocratic state based on Islamic principles of governance.

For Pakistan, the Islamist victories in Afghanistan and Iran had far reaching effect on its dealings with the west generally, and with India particularly. Having been chosen as the frontline state by U.S. and its allies for fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, it was bestowed with all kinds of aid, including huge quantities of sophisticated weaponry and billions of dollars. Pakistan utilized these resources to serve its own its own geopolitical interests. It first diverted this largesse to creating an insurgency in Punjab as a test case, and thereafter, in Kashmir, as part of a well-planned proxy war against India. While Pakistan, at this stage, had firmly established itself as the preferred ally of the west, India, on the other hand, faced serious challenges. With its all-weather friend, the Soviet Union, on the verge of break-up, political instability in India post-Indira Gandhi era, gave rise to fissiparous tendencies. It did not help matters that two of the strongest leaders dealing with J&K, i.e., Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah were no longer available to stem the rot. Therefore, Zia-Ul-Haque, the Pakistani military dictator, and his Islamist supporters were emboldened to make an attempt to fulfill their dream of completing the unfinished agenda of the partition; grabbing Kashmir. The deteriorating political situation in the valley made their dream look even more realistic.

The State Assembly elections of 1987

served as a catalyst in fanning classical insurgency in late eighties. The Congress and National Conference entered into an electoral agreement to fight the elections jointly. It was purely a marriage of convenience. Their indulgence in open and shameless rigging created wide spread resentment which served as a spark that ignited the fire, preparations for which had been going on during Zia-ul Haque's tenure for almost a decade. Thousands of Kashmiri youth crossed over to Pakistan to be trained in the camps that already existed in Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Punjab and even in Afghanistan. In the meantime, the ground situation in the valley had further deteriorated due to the political instability, corrupt and inefficient administration and mishandling by the Central Govt. India, as usual, was caught off guard, but worse, allowed the matters to drift.

Pakistan's strategy of using Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and slogan of *Azadi* to gain public support for insurgency in the initial phase paid huge dividends. Common Kashmiri identified himself with the *Tehreek* (Movement). This Phase, which lasted for the first few years, saw insurgency



spreading all over the valley, both rural and urban areas. Young men of all hues, even those belonging to some mainstream political parties, filled the demand for recruiting new cadres for the Jihad in Kashmir. These fresh cadres were brain washed and trained to kill in the name of Jihad. In the first phase of insurgency, they killed the members of the minority Pandit/Hindu community and those among their own community who did not share their world-view. Threatened with physical elimination or conversion or leaving the place, most chose the last option. Being the aborigines of the place, they left behind thousands of years of history, culture, their iconic places of worship, and last but not the least, huge properties, both movable and immovable. Within a short span of three to four months, every instrument of the paralyzed administration was subverted. During this phase, JKLF continued to be in the good books of its masters across the Line of Control (LoC). However, neither achieving *Azadi* for Kashmir was Pakistan's aim nor was JKLF its preferred *Tanzeem* (organization). Therefore, it decided to change tack and brought in the Hizbul-Mujahidin (HM), the militant wing of the Jamat e Islami. With their cadres

ideologically driven by the Islamic concept of Jihad, they were found to be more suited for a prolonged struggle. More importantly, JeI always supported Kashmir's accession with Pakistan. However, by 1993-94 it became clear to Pakistan that HM, on its own would not be able to deliver what Pakistan desired. Therefore, it now started pumping in its own Lashkar –e- Tayeiba cadres, trained by Markaz-Dawa-wal-Irshad, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with the Taliban against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. They were a toughened lot, who brought with them the extreme form of Wahabi Islam, religious intolerance and abominable cruelty. The worst manifestation of this religious intolerance was the burning down of Noor ud Din Wali's shrine at Tsrara-e-Sharief on

However, thrusting of Wahabi Islam on Kashmiris and treating their local customs with scant respect resulted in resentment and alienation of huge sections of local population from these terrorists. Between 1995 and 1998, security forces scored great successes in the field, restoring some semblance of order, thus enabling the Central Govt to hold Parliamentary elections in 1996. From 1996-2000, insurgents were fighting with their backs to the wall. Situation continued to improve



thereafter, as India held many elections in the state whose fairness was never questioned by anyone. However, the first decade of the present century saw Pakistan spreading the net of terror in mainland India, with many Indian cities witnessing terror acts resulting in huge loss of life and property.

Post 9/11, Kashmir got sucked into the vortex of international Islamic terror. The world now started taking note of the terror spread in the name of Islam. Before 9/11, the world community totally ignored India's oft-repeated pleas that terrorism needed to be curbed by concerted and combined efforts of the world community. But after this watershed event, India's stand stood vindicated. Its cooperation was sought and many multilateral groupings were created to deal with this menace. India's voice was now heard with more seriousness.

Pakistan deep state's success in roping in radical Islamic parties centered around convincing their leaders that their cadres were being sent to Kashmir to fight Jihad against the infidel to save Islam. But even the most rabid fundamentalist would agree that Islam in Kashmir, in fact, was never in any danger. Right from the time Bulbul Shah and Shah Hamadan arrived in the Valley about 700 years ago, and later, when Shah Mir's ascended to the throne, Islam in Kashmir has been flourishing and going from strength to strength. This was made possible because of the secular dispensation of democratic India, where Justice, equality, freedom of speech, tolerance, and right to one's beliefs are written in stone.

Since 2014, when the new dispensation came to power at the centre in new Delhi, there has been a significant change in Indian state's response to Pakistan, the fountainhead Islamic Jihad in Kashmir for decades. Looking back to the decades before 2014, the nation expected the central government to act against Pakistan, particularly after the terrorists hit Indian cities with impunity, leaving thousands of dead. India did not act even after the Mumbai attacks of November 2008, that shook the country. After 2014, India has acted against Pakistan whenever its Jihadis carried out big attacks on



Indian territory. Starting with the surgical strike after the Uri attack in 2016 followed by Balakote air strike deep inside Pakistan after the Pulwama carnage of 14 Feb 2019, and lately through the launch of 'Operation Sindoor'. All these actions against Pakistan, has sent a clear message to Pakistan; you will pay a heavy cost for conducting terror acts in India. Our intelligence system too has been revamped and strengthened to make it more robust and responsive to the changing tactics of the terrorists. It is not a mere coincidence that the latest 'White Collar' attack in Delhi, near Red Fort, took place after a gap of 14 years. Similarly, the terrorists have not been able to carry out attacks in any place outside JKUT for many years now.

A word of caution is in order; Pakistan is not going to give up on its tested philosophy of 'Inflicting thousand cuts on India'. Such operations, by their very nature, are dynamic, forcing change in their tactics and timing. I visualize that Pakistan will increasingly use indigenous modules to carry out its nefarious activities in India. This will permit it to claim that Pakistan has nothing to do with it, thus enabling it to deflect blame for the same and hope to escape Indian reprisal. Therefore, as proved by the latest terror attack on 10 November in Delhi, wherein high-profile doctors were brainwashed to act as its proxies, it is necessary for India to pre-empt such attacks by neutralizing these modules before they are able to execute their plans.



 Maj Gen Harsha Kakkar



Pak is an Enigma to India

India has for long attempted to project Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism, a dangerous nuclear power as also a nation on the verge of economic collapse. However, a lot has changed in recent months, despite Pakistan surviving on a collection of IMF bailouts and facing internal insecurities. Its relations with its two major neighbours, India and Afghanistan, may be at an ebb but its ties with nations which matter, US and China, are far better than before.

Trump speaks of his admiration of the Indian PM and Pakistan's failed marshal in the same sentence. He terms PM Modi as 'a very good friend,' and Asim Munir as his 'favourite field marshal.' India faces higher

tariffs than Pakistan, indicating that the US favours Pak to India.

The US-Pak bonhomie has been growing since Islamabad nominated him for the Nobel peace award for stopping Operation Sindoor, an act India denies. Simultaneously a group of 44 lawmakers in the US demand sanctions on senior Pak officials for 'escalating campaign of transnational repression and worsening human rights.' Pakistan's growing offensive actions against Afghanistan is to win favour of the US.

The Middle East, where India cultivated its economic and diplomatic ties to offset the influence of Islamabad, has seen Saudi Arabia inking a defence pact with Rawalpindi. It makes Pakistan a major player. It provides Pak



with financial security, though Saudi-Turkey tensions would be difficult for Islamabad to navigate.

Pakistan is all set to participate in the ISF (International Stabilization Force) in Gaza, based on Trump's peace plan. It no longer criticizes Israel as it used to. These actions indicate that Pakistan is working to align with US plans for the region.

China, with whom India has been attempting to restore its ties provided Pak with all inputs during Operation Sindoor. Pakistan is Beijing's natural ally, as both are India's adversaries. This despite the CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) not moving forward, targeting of Chinese workers by groups within Pak and Islamabad moving closer to the US.

Turkey, where India sent a field hospital and aircrafts filled with aid when it faced a devastating earthquake in early 2023, today ignores India moving closer to Pakistan. Afghanistan, which was expected to be Pakistan's client state is now an avowed enemy and an Indian ally. This implies Pakistan faces threats on both its major borders, India and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile multiple European nations, including Sweden and Finland are closing their embassies in Pakistan claiming them to be 'strategically pointless.' The same countries are expanding their consulates in India. This displays diminishing value of Pak for Europe, while rising for India.

The IMF's Governance and Corruption diagnostic for Pakistan mentions, 'corruption is a persistent feature of Pakistan's governance landscape, with significant adverse effects on economic growth, investment, and public trust.' For years Pakistan has promised to mend its rules to reduce corruption, but failed. Yet the IMF continues providing loans to Pak.

Internally, the 27th amendment has removed the independence of the judiciary.



Pakistan may be heading towards a military state with Asim Munir, the failed marshal, controlling the armed forces and nuclear assets, while being granted immunity from all legal challenges.

Yet there has been silence from across the world, less the UN Human Rights chief, Volker Turk, who mentioned that the amendment has been issued, 'without broad consultation and debate with the legal community and wider civil society.' This is because the world has either always accepted Pakistan to be a military ruled state or it is inconsequential.

The TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan), closely aligned with the Afghan Taliban, as also Baloch freedom fighters, have increased their attacks on Pakistan's security forces. Each year is worse than the previous. Pakistan's western provinces are almost beyond the control of its security forces. Pakistan's attempts to force Afghanistan to reign them in have failed, despite it launching air and drone strikes on their supposed bases in Afghanistan. In desperation, Pak has begun accusing India of supporting them, over which it has no proof.

The Pak army has banned the Islamist Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), whose

recent riots left 13 dead and scores injured. The TLP was the baby of the Pak army, which has been dumped once it fulfilled its purpose, something very common in Pak.

Imran Khan, Pakistan's most popular leader, remains behind bars, while his PTI is under pressure and being sidelined, its symbol banned and its only provincial government in KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) under threat of being displaced by President's rule. Imran remains the only individual capable of challenging the powerful military, while others, including the current leadership bow before it. Fear of protests, which could turn violent, forced the government to permit Imran's sister to visit him in jail.

Internally, Pakistan faces multiple challenges, security, political and economic. Instead of dealing with its own problems, it continues to foster terrorist groups against both, India and Afghanistan. Major terrorist attacks on India have been responded to by military power, which have had limited deterrence. The latest being Operation Sindoor.

Pak paid heavily in its short conflict with India in Operation Sindoor. Its main airbases and strategic assets suffered unprecedented damages, while it lost a collection of aircraft. Its border posts and HQs located close to the

LoC were also destroyed. Pakistan's own media released a list of over 150 dead in Indian strikes.

To preserve the standing and reputation of its armed forces, Pakistan, alongside China, launched an information warfare campaign claiming fictional damages to Indian assets. All through the campaign there was no mention of what were their own damages. The narrative played was solely destruction of some of India's Rafale aircraft.

This won support across the globe, including in the US. The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a US Congress mandated body, mentioned in its latest report, 'Pakistan's military success over India in its four-day clash showcased Chinese weaponry.' It boosted Pakistan and China's claims, ignoring the failure of Chinese military equipment.

India has attempted to sideline Pakistan diplomatically but not been very successful. Since withdrawing from Afghanistan, the US ignored Pak. Today the nation has a growing relationship with the Trump administration, while India's deteriorates. Its increasing role in West Asia provides it with some leverage. These are nations and regions which matter. For India, Pakistan remains an enigma. Every time it believes it has contained Pak, it bounces back.

Cartoon by- Anil Nakhasi





 Vijay Kashkari

Why AIKS?



The Kashmiri Pandits have challenged multiple mass departures from their homeland for over 700 years. The last exit from the valley was in 1990.

Facing religious, cultural, and political persecution, the community is surviving away from their homeland. For centuries, they have fought to preserve their dignity and identity. Kashmiri Pandits have preserved their customs. However, they are gradually losing their language. The community has a long history of living in challenging conditions, yet it has managed to remain a cohesive and united community. To consolidate the community as a separate entity, its members have formed associations, generally referred to as Sabhas.

As early as 1775, Kashmiri Pandits had settled in Lucknow. There were Kashmiri Mohallas in Lucknow, Allahabad (now Prayagraj), and Delhi. Allahabad, Lucknow,

and Agra were significant centres of the Kashmiri Pandits (KPs). Lucknow was a town in U.P., where large numbers of Kashmiri Pandits settled after migrating from the valley. KPs travelled to several cities of today's Punjab to seek employment and escape the oppression of Mughal rulers in the valley. Amritsar was one of the major settlements, especially from the 18th century onward. Kashmiri Pandit Sabha Amritsar is an over a century-old organisation. It is now known as the Shivala Kashmir Pandit Sabha. In 1883, Maharaja Ranbir Singh relocated his government to Jammu for six months. He initiated a practice of having two capitals in Jammu and Kashmir, shifting to Srinagar for the summer months and to Jammu for the winter months. It was called the Durbar Move. In 1913, this Durbar Move led to the formation of the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha

Jammu. This Sabha was formed by the employees of Maharaja who would move to Jammu for the six months of the Durbar Move. The association was called the Kashmiri Pandit Sahayak Sabha (KPSS). The KPSS was registered in 1914 under the orders of Maharaja Pratap Singh.

In 1931, KPSS formed the K P Women's League. The Kashmiri Pandit Association in New Delhi was well-established and functioning as early as 1935. Kashmiri Pandits and non-Kashmiri speakers lived in areas such as Bazar Sita Ram, Sadar Bazar, Chandni Chowk, Hanuman Road, Raisina Road, Doctors' Lane, Hastings Square, and Karol Bagh. These families were mostly descendants of those who had fled Kashmir during periods of religious persecution, with migrations dating back to the 16th century. Before 1940, Kashmiri Pandits organised themselves in Lahore, now in Pakistan, where they had migrated to seek work. After the partition in 1947, Kashmiri Pandit families moved out of Lahore and resettled in Delhi, Lucknow, Allahabad, and other cities. The Lahore association later merged with the Kashmiri Pandits' Association in Delhi, creating a unified body to serve the community.

There was hardly any city in India before 1947 where Kashmiri Pandits didn't migrate from Kashmir to settle in those cities. The cause of the migration was the tyranny, as well as the lack of opportunities to live with

dignity in their homeland. The breaks gave KPs a chance to rise to the heights. KPs were prime Ministers, Diwans, administrators to the rulers of Patiala, Jodhpur, Gwalior, Bikaner, Udaipur, Indore, Ratlam, and many more. Several Kashmiri Pandits were placed at prominent positions, particularly in North India, but had no place in their homeland, except for a few exceptions.

In 1947, the service prospects for the KP community in India were bleak. During the rule of PM Bakshi Gulam Mohmad, there were two categories of Assistant Engineers. KPs were appointed as probationary Assistant Engineers, while the other category of Assistant Engineers without probation was for the particular majority community members of Jammu and Kashmir.

After 1947, the migration of the KP community continued, with members seeking employment opportunities that matched their qualifications. The unemployed youth wandered through different cities in India, and due to their diligence, were settled in new places hundreds of kilometres away from their birthplaces, such as Shimla, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, and others. Wherever they established themselves, new associations emerged.

The Kashmir Pandit Association in Mumbai was established in 1968, before its formal registration, whereas the Kolkata Sabha was inaugurated in 1956. Bangalore had a KP association until 1990, followed by the



Kashmiri Hindu Sabha, and in 2001, the Kashmiri Hindu Cultural Welfare Trust was established.

KPs formed associations to provide a unified platform for addressing community problems, preserving culture and traditions, and fostering social responsibility that benefits both members and the wider community. These associations primarily serve to represent and uphold the community's interests.

To associate and coordinate the various Sabhas of India and overseas, the All India Kashmir Samaj (AIKS) was established in 1983.

The concept of AIKS was conceived in Mumbai by Sri Sham Sunder Nath Sopori. The idea of AIKS was taken forward in Allahabad by 22 members of the KP Sabha in 1979, who aimed to establish an organisation to coordinate all Sabhas/Samitis for a minimum common programme. The aim was to provide leadership to the community through the apex body.

The need-based notion was to help unemployed boys and girls in securing employment. To start a marriage bureau to secure suitable matches for boys and girls. Arrange annual meetings (AGM) at the India level to understand each other, discuss problems, and find remedial measures. Helping secure admissions for community children.

AIKS was registered as a society by the UP Government, with its registered office at Allahabad.

The first founder President was Justice P. N. Bakshi of the Kashmiri Sabha, Allahabad.

In 1980, AIKS drafted its constitution during a meeting in Kolkata, followed by another meeting in Jodhpur in 1982.

After Justice Bakshi, AIKS presidents until 1990 included Col. PN Kak (Kolkata), Dr N L Zutshi (Mumbai), and Brig. R. N. Madan (Jaipur), each serving from their home city.

The 1987 events are widely considered the primary catalyst for the widespread insurgency that transformed the political landscape of Kashmir and resulted in the mass displacement of the Pandit minority. Temples

were targeted; the Hindu minority was harassed. President AIKS Brig. R. N. Madan called a meeting in Srinagar to discuss the preservation of Temples and shrines in Kashmir. Enacting a law to preserve the identity symbols of Hindus was perceived in the meeting.

During 1989-90, because of the Community's displacement from the valley, the insight of AIKS changed to social as well as political ends of the community. The change was to be a party to the Indian State for any dialogue process. Issues about survival and political objectives became a top priority for the Organisation.

Because of the displacement of 3.5 Lakhs of Kashmiri Pandits to Jammu and other places in India, the community had to withstand the deterioration of their health, security, social life, housing conditions, livelihoods, environment, and education. There is still a relentless struggle for identity. Scattered throughout the globe, the community's perceptions have changed. This has resulted in the formation of over a hundred Kashmiri Pandit Organisations. This has resulted in conflicts and communication gaps. Conflicts, differing work cultures, personalities, and workflows have led to internal disputes and disruptions within the organisation. Even with a shared goal, organisations disagree on the best methods to achieve it. This has negatively impacted the public's perception and trust in all organisations involved in addressing the community's sensitivities.

The common purpose heavily relies on strong communication, trust, clear objectives, and effective management of the relationship; hence, AIKS, in an alliance with all other organisations, might gain benefits.

This paper does not have sufficient space to discuss the 45-year journey of AIKS; therefore, it does not mention it. Presently, AIKS is led by its 13th President.

References: AIKS archives, Shehjar, Kashmir Records, Search Kashmir, Kashmiri Pandit Anand Kaul, History of Kashmiri Pandit Jia Lal Kilam, Vitasta Kolkata



 B L Saraf



SMVDIME ADMISSIONS "Minority" Issue Resurfaces



Admission to the inaugural batch of MBBS course of the Shri Mata Vaishnav Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME) has caused concern among some sections of Jammu and Kashmir society. It is alleged that the list ignores that section of population on whose donations the institute functions. They demand that justice should be done. We leave it to the better judgment of the L G, Shri Manoj Sinha - Chairman of the Shri Mata Vaishnav Devi Shrine Board which sponsors the Medical College- and Omar Abdulla - the elected Chief Minister of the UT to solve the matter to the satisfaction of all, having due regard for the composite demography and culture of the region.

It is incumbent on the government and other stakeholders to show seriousness in the matter and exercise restraint in the rhetoric,

lest it spirals out in a controversy as to affect inter - community relations. Jammu and Kashmir can't afford a sequel to the Amar Nath land row of 2008.

In the debate that has ensued in view of the admission to SMVDIME an argument has been raised that this institute should be classified as a Minority Institute so as to satisfy feelings of the aggrieved. That naturally resurfaces the issue of grant of Minority status to some disempowered sections of the population living in Jammu and Kashmir, so that the rights which flow out of the National Minority Commission Act accrue to them as a statutory consequence.

Soon after they were hounded out of their home in Kashmir, in 1990, the internally displaced Kashmiri Hindus raised a demand for grant of Minority status so that they are enabled to have benefit of the rights which flow

under National Minorities Commission Act. They approached the National Minority Commission (NCM whereupon the then Chairman wrote letter No; No CH /4/ 98 / NCM Dt 12 01. 99, to CM Farooq Abdullah “..... Our Hindu brethren are a minority in J&K State We owe them the sacred responsibility of all that is necessary to protect their lives, properties, human rights and civil liberties.” Dr Tahir Mehmood - former Chairman of National Minorities Commission - made a public declaration on 3rd March 1998, that Hindus in Kashmir are a “Minority “. State government must constitute Minority Commission for them; or, in the alternative get the NCMA extended to the State. Similar kind of communication was addressed to Omar Abdullah, when he was CM in his earlier stint.

The KP organization reiterated the demand before National Minorities Commission in 2011 for the grant of benefits admissible to the minorities under NCMA, Wajahat Habibullah, then Chairman, referred to the decisions of the Supreme Court rendered in Bal Patel and TMA Pai cases; and then, vide

other communities, who happen to be in majority and likely to gain power in a democratic form of the government based on election.” Earlier, the Court in TMA Pai foundation case – (2002) 8 SCC 481 – gave meaning and content to the expression 'minority used in Article 30 and said that minority mentioned herein covers both religious and linguistic minorities, because India was reorganized on the linguistic basis. In this Article both linguistic and religious minorities have been put on par. Legal position is well settled: both religious and linguistic minorities are to be considered state –wise.

Bal Patel's case was for granting minority status to the Jain community. Bowing to their demand the UPA government did accord minority status to the Jain community in 2014 and Jains were included as a minority under Section 2 (c) NCMA Act.

The Supreme Court said in a case reported in AIR 1958 SC,956 that in case a law is applicable to the whole State minority must be determined by reference to the entire

Then Chairman wrote letter No; No CH /4/ 98 / NCM Dt 12 01. 99, to CM Farooq Abdullah “..... Our Hindu brethren are a minority in J&K State We owe them the sacred responsibility of all that is necessary to protect their lives, properties, human rights and civil liberties.” Dr Tahir Mehmood - former Chairman of National Minorities Commission - made a public declaration on 3rd March 1998, that Hindus in Kashmir are a “Minority “.

his DO No – CH / NCM / 9-5 / 2011, Dated May 6, 2011, advised the organization to approach the Central government “ so as to draw upon the guarantees extended to all Indians by our Constitution.”

In 1993 National Minorities were notified by the GOI, invoking Sec 2 (c) of NCMA, which are Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parses'. In Bal Patel's case AIR 2005 SC 3172, the Apex Court observed, “Minority as understood from the constitutional scheme signifies an identifiable group of people or community who were seen deserving protection from likely deprivation of their religious, cultural and educational rights by

population of the State. Kerala High Court held in AIR 1965 Kerala, 75 (FB) that any community, religious or linguistic, which is numerically less than 50% population of the State is entitled to the fundamental right guaranteed under Art 30 of the Constitution.

Working group on good governance, constituted by PM Manmohan Singh and headed by Naresh Chander Saxena did recommend for setting up of State Minority Commission. Two NC MLAs moved private members Bill No 12 of 2006 in the State Assembly for constitution of a State Commission of Minorities, with a view to safe guard, protect and ensure development

of minorities in the State. The Bill, however, was not carried through.

Kashmiri Hindus are not alone in raising such a demand. Sikhs and Christians are clamoring for it. They have made several representations to the State government. In fact, Ghulam Nabi Azad, as CM, acknowledged the merit of the demand. While addressing a gathering of Christian Community in Jammu, in April 2006, he announced that Minority Commission would be set up in the State to look after the interests of the minorities and provide them their right share.

Many in Jammu province, also, seek minority status. A petition has been filed in the Supreme court in 2017 which is under consideration. In one of its interim orders, passed in March 2017 the Apex Court termed this petition encompassing a “very important issue “and asked” the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir Governments to sit together and take a considered decision on setting up of a minority commission for the state” The petition has been filed for seeking a

direction to the state to set up a minority commission to safeguard the interest of religious and linguistic minorities. The J &K Reorganization Act of 2019 has materially altered the legal position: now N C M A C T is applicable to J &K.

United Nations declaration on Rights of Minorities, which General Assembly adopted recalling Resolutions 46/115 of 17. 7. 1991, 1992/ 16 of 21 February 1992 and 1992/ 4 of 20. 7. 1992 of the Commission on Human rights, vide Articles 1.1, 1.2 and 2.3, cast a duty on the State to protect the existence and social ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity of the minorities within their respective territories - and calls upon the State to adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve these ends.

This is the time that Government takes call and does justice to the 'real minorities 'in Jammu and Kashmir. It is more important lest the SMVDIME admission controversy repeats itself in future or finds a place elsewhere to erupt.

Author is Principal District & Sessions Judge

KASHMIRI PANDIT MARTYRS

List for December Month

Team Naad pays homage to the martyrs who were brutally killed by Jihadists in Kashmir, leading to the ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits from their homeland. NAAD shall continue to honor these innocent victims of Islamic fundamentalism on a monthly basis.

The list below is not comprehensive. We request community members, along with friends and relatives of the victims, to share additional details of the martyrs so that we can compile a complete record and pay tribute to them.

S No.	Martyr's Name	Location Killing	Date
1.	Sh. Swami K Nath	Vicharnag, Srinagar	9.12.1988
2.	Sh. Prem Nath Bhat	Anantnag	27.12.1989
3.	Sh. Janki Nath Koul	...	14.12.1991
4.	Sh. H.N. Wanchoo	...	05.12.1992
5.	Smt. Asha Pandit	...	29.12.1992
6.	Sh. Tej Krishen Bhat	...	03.12.1994
7.	Smt. Lakshmi Devi	...	21.12.2001
8.	Smt. Soni	...	21.12.2001
9.	Sh. Tej Krishan	...	03.12.2014



 Rahul Kilam

Children of a Lesser God

The Forsaken Kashmiri Pandits

In 2015, in a 53-page judgment of 18 May 2015, on the petition of nearly 232 Kashmiri Pandit migrant teachers (mostly women) of Delhi State Education Department, delivered by Hon'ble Justice Rajiv Shakdher of Delhi High Court, begins with the remarkable altruism that opened with a striking lament: “The petitioners before me are children of a lesser God.” They were Kashmiri Pandits—seeking relief not just from legal systems, but from national amnesia. More than a decade later, those words remain disturbingly accurate. One of India's oldest, most intellectually rich communities continues to live as internal refugees—displaced, ignored, and still waiting for justice.

In a recent move that underscores this neglect, the Supreme Court dismissed a petition asking for an investigation into the mass killings and rapes inflicted on Kashmiri Pandits during the insurgency of the 1980s and '90s. The Court's reasoning? That the plea had come “too late.” But since when does the passage of time erase the obligation to investigate gross human rights violations? In international law and Indian jurisprudence alike, mass crimes—ethnic cleansing, targeted killings, sexual violence—demand accountability. That demand doesn't expire.

This dismissal is more than a legal decision. It is a statement. A statement that the justice system still treats some tragedies as too inconvenient to confront. A statement that some victims must simply forget, forgive, and move on—while others are allowed the dignity of memory, inquiry, and redress.



Even more ironically, this same Supreme Court, while upholding the abrogation of Article 370 in 2023, saw Hon'ble Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul recognize the trauma of the Pandit community. In his concurring opinion, he recommended steps for structured rehabilitation. But what are words without will? What is sympathy without justice?

Let us be clear: the exodus of over 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits was not an accident of history. It was the outcome of a targeted campaign—marked by chilling slogans, assassinations, and fear. It meets every standard definition of ethnic cleansing. And yet, not one commission of inquiry. Not one conviction for the crimes of that dark decade. No truth. No justice. No closure.

What is perhaps more damning than the lack of action is the bipartisan consensus on doing nothing. From Left to Right, governments have either exploited or ignored the pain of Pandits, depending on what the moment demanded. The community has been a footnote to everyone's politics and a priority for no one's policy.

But the silence goes beyond the courtroom and the Parliament. It extends to civil society, academia, and the media—circles that rally around every injustice, yet too often fall quiet on this one. Why? Because the narrative doesn't fit the scripts we're comfortable with? Because some victims are easier to empathize with than others?

As a law student, I was taught that justice delayed is justice denied. But in the case of Kashmiri Pandits, justice hasn't just been

delayed—it has been deliberately evaded. And that evasion carries a cost—not only for them, but for the moral credibility of our institutions.

India cannot claim to be a functioning democracy while a part of its citizenry remains exiled from its own land. It cannot talk of pluralism, or G-20 leadership, while it continues to ignore one of the gravest internal displacements since Partition.

What must be done? At the very least:

A judicially monitored investigation into the targeted violence of the 1990s.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission that centers the experiences of Pandits and formally acknowledges the scale of injustice.

A clear, time-bound, and dignified return-and-rehabilitation policy developed with community participation.

Institutional and cultural safeguards to protect their religious and linguistic heritage in Kashmir.

The Pandits' legacy is not just their burden—it is ours. It is part of the unfinished story of Indian democracy. We must write the next chapter not with platitudes, but with principles. Because justice, if it means anything at all, must mean that no citizen of India is a child of a lesser God.

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FOND MEMORIES OF **Life in Kashmir** SOME FESTIVALS AS CELEBRATED IN KASHMIR

Kashmir, the cradle of Indian culture, philosophy, and religious thought for over 5000 years faced a very tough time between 14th and early 19th century when political Islam gained power. A serious attempt was made to erase all traces of Kashmir's glorious past, its Sanatan and Buddhist roots between 1339 and 1819. Kashmir's demography underwent a drastic reversal during this period; Kashmir saw six major exoduses when its Hindu populace was forced to migrate southwards. The tyrannical despots who ruled Kashmir during those tumultuous five centuries impacted the lifestyle of Kashmiri Hindus, known as Kashmiri Pandits. The maximum impact was felt on the way KPs celebrated their festivals – history bears testimony to KPs being ordered to celebrate Shivratri in summer (Aashad month instead of the traditional Phalgun month) by the despotic Afghan Governor Jabbar Khan. It was only when the tyrannical Afghans were driven out by the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1819 that Hindus in Kashmir could breathe freely. The next 128 years saw a modicum of normalcy being restored for KPs, particularly under the rule of the Dogra dynasty (1846-1947). Dogra Kings used to follow the Katyayan school as against the Laugakshi school followed by KPs – so there would be some minor variation in the celebration of religious events but no coercion from the State.



1990 saw the Seventh forced exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from Kashmir as KPs got scattered all over India, in search of safety, security and employment opportunities. Invariably, the Exodus has impacted the way KPs would celebrate their socio-religious functions. My attempt today is to document how two important festivals were celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir so that our younger generations, born outside Kashmir can know!

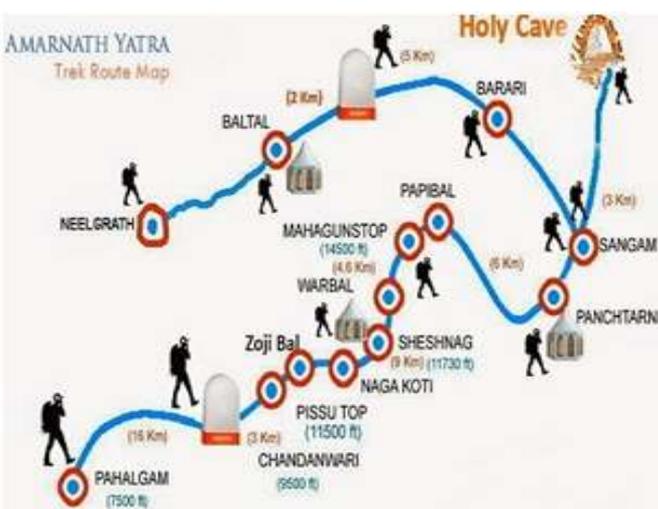
Shravan Punim : Also known as Shravan Poornima, it is also celebrated as Raksha Bandhan on the Full Moon Day (Poornima) of the Fifth month of Hindu calendar, Shravan! On this day, the traditional Yatra to Amarnath Shakti Peeth would reach the Cave (12756 ft altitude), led by the Mahant of Dashnami Akhara, carrying the Holy Mace of Lord Shiva (colloquially called Chari Mubarak). Amarnath Yatra would primarily

follow the traditional 47 km route via Pahalgam, Chandanwari, Pissu Top, Mahagunus, Panchtarni – reaching the Amarnath Cave on Shraavan Poornima day! It is a very picturesque route with breathtaking vistas of lakes and glaciers. Till 1980s, not many facilities used to be available because this is a 'once in a year' event and pilgrims would perform the yatra mostly on foot though porters and ponies would be available for those who could afford it. The yatra has another route – a 14 km shortcut, so to say, starting from Baltal (9000 ft) on the base of Zojila pass (Zanskar Range), near Sonmarg. The gradient is steeper on this route, hence tougher to climb and facilities are minimal! The route entails crossing several glaciers – I had the good fortune of performing Amarnath yatra via Baltal route in late 1970s.

I have several fond childhood memories of celebrating Sharvne' Punim, as the festival is called in Kashmiri, in 1960s. On the night preceding Shraavan Poornima, a big mela(fair) would be organized on the Shankaracharya Hill which has an ancient Shiva temple atop. Kashmiri Pandits from across the valley would throng to the place, performing pooja at the temple! As a child, I would accompany my grandmother to the Shankaracharya Temple which used to be decorated with floral garlands and buntings! The temple, built on a high octagonal base, looks majestic and has a long flight of stairs to climb. Another of my

memories (1966) concerns my visit to Shankaracharya Mela with my two uncles (RKM & TKM). We started from home after an early dinner but instead of getting down from the local bus at Durga Nag Temple (the base for climb to the Shankaracharya Hill), we continued till the bus reached a station called Sonwar where the newly opened (1965) Broadway Theatre was located. We were met there by several of their 'friends', including 'boys' from our neighbourhood whom I could recognize! I remember watching the last show of movie Mamata (starring Ashok Kumar-Suchitra Sen-Dharmendra) that night. Only my grandmother was aware of this detour since she had financed it! After the movie, we walked to Durga Nag Temple and started our climb to the Shankaracharya Hill. For our youthful legs, the climb was easy though we had to climb over a goat track. Dharmarth Trust, the managing body of all temples in Kashmir would make some basic arrangements to facilitate the pilgrims' climb – electrification of path, for example but left much to be desired!

The entire night was spent in 'watching' the mela and, later, in standing in the line to reach the temple's sanctum sanctorum! At the first light, we started our trek down the hill, towards our home – minimum 6-7 kms away. Before leaving, however, we collected some soil (mitti) from a specific spot on the hill in a small cloth bag. Collecting the soil had a specific purpose – it was used for crafting a Shivling by our Kul Guru for the Shraavan Punim Pooja. Our Kul Guru (Pandit ji) would arrive by 8 am and prepare the 'Shivling', (called 'Parthishwar' in Kashmiri) out of the soil we had brought. Then, a proper pooja would take place. In certain families, Kheer would be prepared as Prasad while in some other families, sweet pooris were offered as prasad! All adults in the family would keep a fast on Shraavan Punim, eating 'ann'(cereal) only once during day time. In certain families, however, the tradition was to avoid 'ann' totally – being a Poornima. This fast entailed eating only fruits and avoiding the traditional forms of 'ann'(food) like wheat or rice! The highlight of the day's menu would be fried pakoras



(fritters), made by dipping in a batter of singara ka atta (waterchestnut flour), slices of vegetables like egg plant(brinjals), pumpkin (kashiphal, Cucurbita maxima), potatoes, apples (sour variety) and green chillies (Capsicum annum). Since my grandmother had a thriving kitchen garden, we would, at times, have the luxury of enjoying fritters made of flowers growing on the vines of the Cucurbita maxima (Kashiphal – al-posh in Kashmiri) plant! These fritters would be consumed with curd and later washed down with Kashmiri Kehwa, partaken in special bronze cups (khos in Kashmiri)! Households would also prepare potatoes fried with a special technique and sprinkled with red chili powder for taste. Fruits like melons and watermelons besides pears (particularly Babugosha and 'naakh tang' variety) and apples would be consumed in the evening. Final pooja would be performed after moon rise! By then, most of the kids' gang would be in deep sleep!

Sri Krishna Janamashtami : The Birthday of Lord Krishna is celebrated on the 8th day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapada, as per Hindu calendar, across India. Hindu Almanacs carry even the minute details of the birth of Lord Krishna -time of birth (00.00 midnight), day (Wednesday), Tithi (Ashtami), Nakshatra (astral constellation) – Rohini. Abundance of such details often leads to dissent amongst scholars about the day/ date/ time at which birth of the Lord is to be celebrated! In Saurashtra (Gujarat) Janamashtami is celebrated over 5 days. In several other regions of India, it is observed both on the seventh and eighth day of the Bhadrapada Krishna Paksh(Satam-Aatham). Various sampradayas (sects and sub sects) amongst the Vaishnav traditions observe Sri Krishna's birthday on Bhadrapada Krishna Paksh Ashtami only. In Kashmir, we have been celebrating Sri Krishna Janamashtami as Zarme Satam, one day prior to the Bhadrapada Krishna Paksha Ashtami (on Saptami only).

Zarme Satam used to be a big celebration in KP homes as well as a community event. Within individual homes, young kids would be

dressed up as Baby Krishna, a ceremonial Jhoola (cradle called manzul in Kashmiri) would be hung from the roof rafters, decorated with garlands and fancy draping; a picture or small idol of Baby Krishna would be placed in the swing. Folklore has it that Lord Krishna was born at the stroke of midnight – so it is a tradition to swing the Baby Krishna's cradle, as one would do to a baby. Adults would observe a fast, avoiding cereals. Focus would be on fresh seasonal fruits like melons and water melons besides the typical Babugosha (Indian Pear, Botanical name Pyrus communis) and apples. Water Chestnut flour (gaaryi-aut in Kashmiri, Singade ka aata in Hindi) would be the main staple for people observing fast; people would have halwa(pudding) or poori made from Gaaryi Aut along with Kashmiri Kehwa (green tea). Fritters made from fresh vegetables like brinjal (wangun in Kashmiri), potatoes (oolu in Kashmiri), Kaddu (gol al in Kashmiri), green chilli (Marchvangun in Kashmiri) dipped in batter made from Water Chestnut flour (gaaryi-aut in Kashmiri) and fried potatoes (talyith oolu in Kashmiri) used to be the main staple for adults and kids would delightfully contribute towards consuming these goodies. In the evening, entire family would sit together to perform aarti and sing hymns from the compositions of Kashmiri saints like Pt Parmanand. Midnight would see a final round of pooja as the sound of conch(shankh) would emanate from temples as well as individual homes! At midnight, crackers would be burst in temples, marking the culmination of celebrations.

At the community level, the celebration would be more comprehensive. All Krishna Temples would be decorated with floral garlands and buntings. Temples would also organize a community Jhoola (a cradle shaped as swing, Manzul in Kashmiri) which would have a baby Krishna idol and devotees would take turns in swinging Baby Krishna on the Jhoola! An Aarti (community pooja) would be performed, morning, evening and, at midnight. People used to throng temples across the city.

Another manifestation of community celebration would be in the form of a 'Shobha Yatra' or procession that would include trucks/ open vehicles depicting various scenes related to the birth, childhood, and upbringing of Baby Krishna – these were called 'jhanki'. Every major KP locality/ Temple would organize a 'jhanki', depicting some aspect of Baby Krishna's life; these individual 'jhankis' would later assemble at Sheetalnath Temple from where these would become a part of the overall Shobha Yatra and later go around various parts of the city. Kids dressed as Baby Krishna would adorn these vehicles! Leading the procession would be a gentleman named Brijnath but better known by his acronym Brij Setarey (probably because of his proficiency at playing the Sitar), wearing a Saffron Turban and riding a well decorated horse. Another gentleman, named Mr Gopinath but better known as Gup Bachhe (he used to dance and perform in wedding events) would be performing astride an open vehicle. He would often sing the 'Krishna leelas' composed by masters like Pt Parmanand. Kashmiri literature is a rich treasure house of devotional hymns pertaining to Sri Krishna's birth, childhood, and landmark events of HIS life – these Leelas would be sung in individual homes (family gathering) and in Temples.

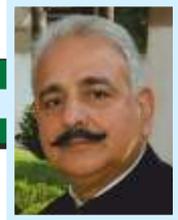
The main Shoba Yatra in Srinagar would commence from the historical Sheetalnath temple, Sathu Barbarshah, and would pass through all KP dominant areas like Braikujan, Nai Sadak, Badyar, Ganpatyar, Habba Kadal, Chinkral Mohalla, crossing the old Fateh Kadal bridge and then proceed through Karfalli mohalla, Kanyakadal, Zaindar mohalla and Dadikadal finally culminating at Lal chowk. Important to note that the procession route would avoid the downtown area which was predominantly Muslim dominated! Incidentally, my family lived in downtown area called Budhgir-Alikadal so we had to go to our relatives in Fateh Kadal or Habba Kadal to 'see' the jhanki! All along the route, floral petals would be showered on the Shobha Yatra from Hindu homes. For a few

years, a unit of the band of J&K Police and a couple of school bands (Hindu High School and Khalsa High school bands) would accompany the Shobha Yatra. The Shobha Yatra initially used to be organized by Yuvak Sabha led by Pt Shiv Narayan Fotedar. A few years down the line, Dr SN Peshin formed a dissenting organization named Sudhar Samiti and they would take out their own procession. Much later, Sanatan Dharm Sabha led by Sh Dharamvir Batra also would organize a similar Shobha Yatra. In fact, the Punjabi – Khatri families living in Amira Kadal area would very actively organize/ participate in Shobha Yatra. Similar Shobha Yatras were taken out in different towns of Kashmir – Anantnag, Baramulla, Kulgam, Pulwama etc. Even at the village level, Shobha Yatras were taken out. A friend living in Luk Bhavan, a KP dominated village near Anantnag town, told me that the Jhanki from their village would culminate in Nagbal Temple in Anantnag Town where jhankis from other surrounding villages would also culminate!

A very peculiar tradition in KP families used to be sending of baskets full of seasonal fruits to their married daughters' home (waryiv in Kashmiri), particularly in the first year of their marriage on Zarme' Satam. Freshly harvested walnuts, apples, melons, water melons in more than decent quantity would be sent besides a new sari and cash as "shagoon"! The fruits would be shared by the girl's MIL amongst her relatives and neighbours – a snobbish show off. I have faint memories of accompanying one such shagoon party to my Bua ji's waryiv (in-laws) in Rainawari soon after her marriage in 1963. Over years, the Law of Diminishing Utility would operate, reducing fruit quantities!

The lines I have written are of my memories, confirmed by my discussions with several of my relatives and friends. These memories got a fillip when after 35 years, Janamashtami Shobha Yatras were taken out in Srinagar and some other cities of Kashmir on August 16, 2025. Am hoping and praying for a revival of Kashmir's glorious Hindu past!

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Election Commission of India

EVOLUTION, INTEGRITY & THE POLITICS OF DISTRUST

A Perspective in National Interest

In any democracy, the legitimacy of governance rests on the credibility of elections. India, the world's largest democracy, entrusted this sacred responsibility to the Election Commission of India (ECI) — an institution designed to stand above politics, above governments, and above partisan pressures. Yet in recent years, political rhetoric around “vote chori”, EVM manipulation, and accusations of bias have generated an atmosphere of doubt. The question arises: Is this narrative a genuine concern or a political strategy?

A calm, historical understanding — rooted in facts — reveals a very different story.

Is the “Vote Chori” Narrative in National Interest?

Allegations of rigging or collusion, mostly from opposition parties including the Congress, have become routine. Each setback in elections triggers claims of stolen mandates. Yet, these claims rarely come with substantive evidence.

Such Narratives Harm National Interest for three Reasons:

1. They undermine public trust in an institution that has historically safeguarded free elections.
 2. They attack India's global democratic reputation, which is a strategic asset.
 3. They weaken voter confidence, potentially reducing participation.
- Healthy criticism is necessary for

democracy. But manufactured suspicion, especially without proof, weakens the very system that millions of Indians trust.

The Evolution of the Election Commission: From Advisory Body to Constitutional Watchdog

The ECI was established in 1950, but its evolution into a fiercely independent institution has been gradual and hard-earned.

1950–1980: Building Capacity

In the early decades, India faced enormous challenges — illiteracy, logistical nightmares across vast terrains, and the need to create a common electoral culture. The Commission focused on:

- ❖ Creating voter lists
- ❖ Standardizing electoral processes
- ❖ Expanding polling infrastructure
- ❖ Ensuring peaceful transitions of power

Despite limitations, India conducted credible elections even in times of political volatility.

The T.N. Seshan Era (1990–1996):

The Turning Point

No history of the ECI is complete without T.N. Seshan, the man who redefined the institution forever.

He :

- ❖ Pulled political parties, big or small, under strict scrutiny
- ❖ Enforced the Model Code of Conduct with unprecedented rigidity
- ❖ Cracked down on muscle power and booth capturing

Introduced voter ID cards

- ❖ Asserted the Commission's autonomy against political interference
- ❖ Seshan's tenure transformed the ECI from a procedural office into a fearless constitutional authority.
- ❖ His message was clear: Elections belong to citizens, not to political parties.
- ❖ Post-Seshan Reforms: Strengthening the System Further

1. Multi-Phase Polling

Used to prevent violence, maintain security forces' mobility, and reduce malpractices.

2. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)

Introduced experimentally in the 1990s and fully adopted by 2004.

EVMs eliminated:

- ❖ Invalid votes
- ❖ Booth capturing through ballot stuffing
- ❖ Large-scale paper manipulation
- ❖ Every major party — including those now opposing EVMs — has won elections through this system.

3. VVPAT Addition

To counter doubts, the VVPAT (Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail) was added, providing a physical verification mechanism.

4. Increased Transparency

- ❖ Live webcasting from polling booths
- ❖ Randomization of polling personnel
- ❖ Strict expenditure monitoring
- ❖ Real-time political funding checks

Today, Indian elections are logistically the largest and technically most transparent in the world.

Challenges Faced by the Commission Over the Years

1. Political Pressure: Governments of every era have attempted to exert influence. Some succeeded partially, others failed. Yet the ECI has historically found strength in constitutional backing.

2. Violence and Booth Capturing: Major improvements since the 1990s have drastically reduced these practices, though isolated incidents remain.



3. Hyper-Partisan Narrative Battles: The modern era challenge is no longer muscle power but perception warfare. Even the most transparent systems are questioned when politics demands a villain.

4. Social Media Misinformation: False allegations spread rapidly, overshadowing official clarifications.

The Current Debate: Integrity Under Question

Some opposition parties have accused the ECI of bias or complicity in manipulation. However:

Courts (including the Supreme Court) have repeatedly upheld the EVM system. Independent international observers consistently praise the scale and fairness of Indian elections. Every party, including the critics, wins states regularly under the same system. Thus, the “bias” narrative appears politically situational, not institutionally factual.

Conclusion:

Protecting an

Institution that Protects Our Democracy

India's Election Commission is not flawless — no institution is. But its evolution shows a clear direction: strengthening independence, expanding transparency, and modernizing systems.

Questioning institutions is democratic. Discrediting them for political gain is not. The “vote chori” narrative lacks evidence and undermines national interest. India must defend the credibility of the ECI — not because it is perfect, but because it is essential.

The ECI has survived political storms for 75 years.

It deserves public trust, not politically motivated suspicion.

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Kashmiri Pandits' LIVE WITH SURNAMES ALONE



The focus should not be on counting the years of exile for Kashmiri Pandits, but on what they have lost over the past thirty-five years of dispersion across the mainland of India. This has caused a significant decline in their ethnic identity. They have become increasingly detached from their original roots. They are struggling to adapt to new environments, surroundings, and climatic conditions, which has resulted in a hollow and unfulfilling sense of belonging to Kashmir. Thirty-five years is a long time to be away from their healthy, moderate climate region, and the loss of their native language.

Their disconnection from their homeland, memories of the areas they carried from their forced exile from the valley—under threat from imported guns—are fading each day in the subtropical and temperate zones of secure metropolitan cities. During these years of exile, a generation of senior individuals who had spent most of their lives is no longer present. With their departure, the vivid anecdotes and stories of their Kashmiri days, which served as living memories of Kashmir for the new generation, have ended. As a result, the inherited cultural ethos and religious rituals passed down through

generations are no longer readily accessible to the younger community. The second generation of displaced persons has less Kashmiri background and knowledge. As a result of that, it failed to fully convey the significance Kashmir held in shaping their personalities to the younger members of the family. Seeking sustenance or employment—whether in the private or government sectors—led youth across the country to explore opportunities for their survival. A considerable number of Kashmiri Pandit youth migrated abroad, secured positions in prominent companies, and eventually brought their parents to join them. Such family separations have impacted cohesion, community unity, and shared values. Their segregated lifestyles have distanced them from one another across India and internationally, reducing their interest in social, political, and traditional community affairs. Their living conditions in urban areas have limited the use of spoken Kashmiri, whether in schools, colleges, or social circles. Its use has become confined mainly to dinner table conversations within nuclear families, often involving parents and one or two children. The practice of speaking Kashmiri daily within families has further declined,

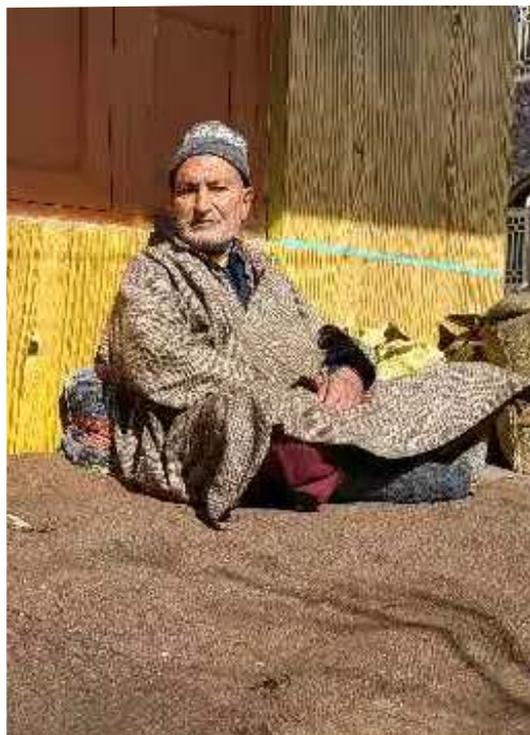
especially with the emergence of intercommunity marriages, involving non-Kashmiri boys and girls. Spoken language is a key component of cultural identity, ethnicity, unique traditions, and heritage. Late Sham Sundar Narayan Mushran, State Finance Minister of Madhya Pradesh Government, had ancestry from Kashmir, expressed sadness over loss of their Kashmiri language after they migrated nearly two centuries back from the valley to the writer during their occasional meeting at the Minister's residence in Bhopal in the year 1972.

Gone are the days when, in a joint family under a hierarchical patriarchal system, people recited Sanskrit verses from the Mahimnastotra, Panchastavi, or Bhavanisahasnam, or paid obeisance at Kheer Bhavani, Maa Zalla Bhagwati, Maa Chakreshwari, Maa Badrikalle on religious days. It was a significant social spectacle within the Kashmiri community. Their morning routine of visiting the local temple to worship is no longer observed. These were the days of old Kashmir, when they led contented lives with whatever little they earned after their hard day's work. For the Kashmiri Pandit minority, the dawn of independence in 1947 marked an economic decline, following the enactment of the big land abolition Act



1952, which restricted land ownership to a limit of 180 acres and abolished moneylenders by the late Sheikh Mohd Abdullah, the first Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. In his second term as Chief Minister, the late Sheikh introduced the J&K Agrarian Reform Act 1976, under which tillers gained proprietary rights of the land they cultivated, provided they paid a certain amount. The original landowners, mostly community members, were deprived of their land without compensation. These two acts included provisions that rendered them unchallengeable in court. In other states of India, the Land to the Tenants scheme was not successful. The implementation of the act in Jammu and Kashmir was manipulated by regional Muslim leadership for political ends. In the subsequent years, from the late Sheikh to Dr Farooq Abdullah, employment opportunities, departmental promotions, and admission to professional colleges for Kashmiri Pandits in state services were severely limited. This was an effort to economically strangle the community, forcing many to leave the state in search of jobs. It was a silent, calculated step of ethnic cleansing by regional leaders, carried out without notice. During a one-to-one meeting with the late Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister, late R.K. Kak, a correspondent of the Statesman, reportedly warned Nehru that every Kashmiri Pandit was an Indian sentinel in Kashmir, and their interests must be safeguarded. It was a prophetic assessment by late R.K. Kak regarding the community's future in the valley. This conversation was later revealed to the writer of the column in an informal setting.

The dynamics of mass displacement in human history have been driven by environmental, economic, and geographical factors that compelled people to migrate to new areas. In many cases, it was invading marauders who caused people to flee from their homes to safer zones. Unlike typical migration patterns, the primary reason for the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley was the presence of gun-toting neighbour boys radicalised to wage a political war against the



state. In this conflict between the majority population and the Indian government, the Kashmiri Pandits, being pro-India and easy targets, were hunted by Pakistan-trained JKLF cadres. Having lost trust in the Muslim majority of the valley and with the failure of the state administration, the small Pandit minority was compelled to leave their homes in search of a region where they could find safety.

During the period from 1989-90 to 2025, the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits has not been recognised as victims of human rights violations by the Indian government. The highest court of India has yet to deliver justice to them after thirty-five years of their statelessness. They lost their ethnic identity, and their hopes were shattered when the Indian state failed to provide legitimate political justice despite its extensive democratic, liberal, secular, and socialist constitution. The ruling dispensation of India or the state shows no concern for them. Now, after thirty-five years in exile, community members have integrated with other citizens across various states.



 Hira Lal Kak



PANDIT LAL KOUL

THE UNSUNG COMMANDER WHO ARMED AN EMPIRE

In an age when the map of North India was being redrawn by steel and strategy, one Kashmiri Pandit stood in the heart of the Sikh Khalsa Army—quiet, disciplined, relentless.

His name was Pandit Lal Koul, a son of a displaced community that had already survived centuries of persecution, yet carried its knowledge and pride wherever it went.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's empire was not built by chance. It required men who could think like statesmen, plan like engineers, and act like warriors. Pandit Lal Koul was all three.

He did not seek glory on the battlefield. Instead, he became the mind that powered the Khalsa's greatest strength—its artillery and its supplies.

Every cannonball, every musket, every pound of gunpowder that thundered across the plains of Punjab and the passes of the Northwest Frontier bore the imprint of his precision.

The Keeper of Fire and Steel

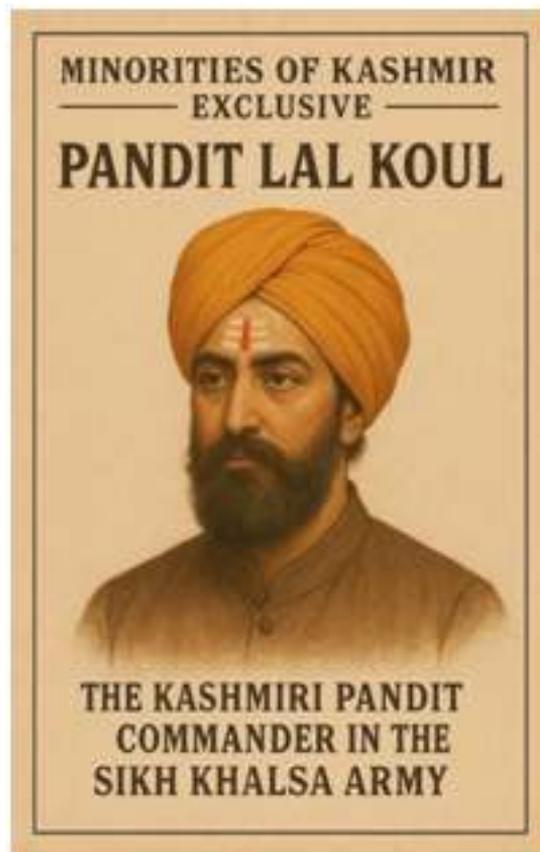
In the vast, fortified workshops of Lahore, Lal Koul was entrusted with a responsibility few could shoulder:

supervising gunpowder production, weapon inspection, and the flow of military stores for an empire at war.

This was not clerical work.

This was the heartbeat of the Khalsa war machine. A single mistake could cost hundreds of lives. A single delay could collapse an entire campaign.

Yet record after record—British, Sikh,



and court chronicles—describe him with the same words:

methodical, incorruptible, brilliant.

A Commander Without a Trumpet

While generals rode decorated elephants and led armies into battle, Pandit Lal Koul commanded something far greater—the power that allowed those armies to exist.

He was the man behind the curtain of victories.

The quiet strategist who ensured that: cannons roared when they needed to, supply lines never slept, and the Khalsa army remained one of the most feared forces in Asia.

It is said that Maharaja Ranjit Singh valued him not only for his competence but for his loyalty and clarity of mind—qualities for which Kashmiri Pandits had long been sought after in courts and administrations.

A Refugee Who Became the Backbone of an Empire

To understand Lal Koul's bravery, one must remember where he came from.

His ancestors fled a homeland where Kashmiri Pandits were targeted again and again for their intellect, their faith, and their refusal to bend.

They arrived in Punjab with nothing but memory and resilience—and turned that resilience into power.

Pandit Lal Koul's rise in the Khalsa Army was not an accident.

It was the continuation of a centuries-long struggle for dignity, now transformed into service for one of the greatest empires of the subcontinent.

Legacy of a Silent Warrior

There are warriors whose names echo through history because they wielded swords.

And then there are warriors like Pandit Lal Koul, whose courage lived in discipline, precision, and the responsibility of keeping an empire's arsenal alive.

He may not have worn medals.

He may not have stood at the frontlines.

But without him, the frontlines would not have stood at all.

Today, as Kashmir's forgotten warriors are reclaimed from the shadows of erased history, Pandit Lal Koul rises once again—a testament to Kashmiri Pandit bravery, intellect, and unbroken spirit.

*Author is Ex-C.G.M.ONGC;
Ex-Advisor Gail (India) Ltd. and
Engineers (India) Ltd.*

Calendar of Month

Kumar Shashti	25 th December 2025
Ashtami (Shukla Paksha)	28 th December 2025
Ekadashi (Shukla Paksha)	30 th December 2025
Poornima	03 rd January 2026
Sahiba Saptami	09 th January 2026
Ashtami (Krishna Paksha)	11 th January 2026
Ekadashi (Krishna Paksha)	14 th January 2026
Amavasya	18 th January 2026

Note

Panchak starts on 24th December 2025 ends on 29th December 2025

Poush (Shukla Paksha) from 21st December 2025 to 03rd January 2026

Maagh (Krishna Paksha) from 04th January 2026 to 18th January 2026



 P K Mam



Purpose of Life

(I make no claim to perfection — this is but a humble attempt to share what has been read, heard, reflected upon. The intention is not to compare religions or philosophies, but to explore how different civilizations — Eastern and Western — have sought to understand the purpose of human life. While Western existentialism finds meaning through courage amid life's uncertainty, Indian thought — as expressed in the Bhagavad Gita, Jain Darshan, and Kashmir Shaivism — views life as a continuum of consciousness shaped by karma, duty, and self-effort. The aim is not to conclude, but to invite reflection on what truly gives meaning to our existence.)

“O Destroyer of Pura, some say the universe is eternal, others that it is transitory;

some hold it to be both. Bewildered by these views, I still praise Thee, for even this confusion reflects my audacity.” — Shiv Mahimnah Stotram)

BHAGAVAD GITA

The Gita teaches that life has a divine purpose. Each person must perform duty selflessly, without attachment to results. It emphasizes karma yoga — action guided by righteousness — and faith in the divine order that sustains the universe. True fulfillment lies in aligning one's actions with this higher purpose and surrendering the fruits of effort to the Supreme.

ALBERT CAMUS

Albert Camus, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, argues that life has no inherent meaning. The “absurd,” he says, arises from man's search for



purpose in a silent universe. He offers three responses:

- (a) Reject life through suicide — which he calls cowardly.
- (b) Escape through faith — a “philosophical suicide.”
- (c) Embrace the absurd — living passionately despite meaninglessness, as Sisyphus does, finding joy in the struggle itself.

Personally, I do not believe in either divine determinism or nihilism. The purpose of life, to me, is to live with passion — to find meaning not in grand pursuits, but in how we perform the simplest of daily actions.

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

Nirad C. Chaudhuri, in *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and *The Continent of Circe*, reflected on the fleeting nature of life and criticized both Indian and Western civilizations for failing to face its deepest questions.

Though not as overtly absurdist as Camus, he shared scepticism toward religious assurances of an afterlife. He saw life as brief, shaped by history and culture, and urged humanity to confront existence without comforting illusions. Camus viewed this philosophically; Chaudhuri, historically — yet both celebrate human courage in uncertainty.

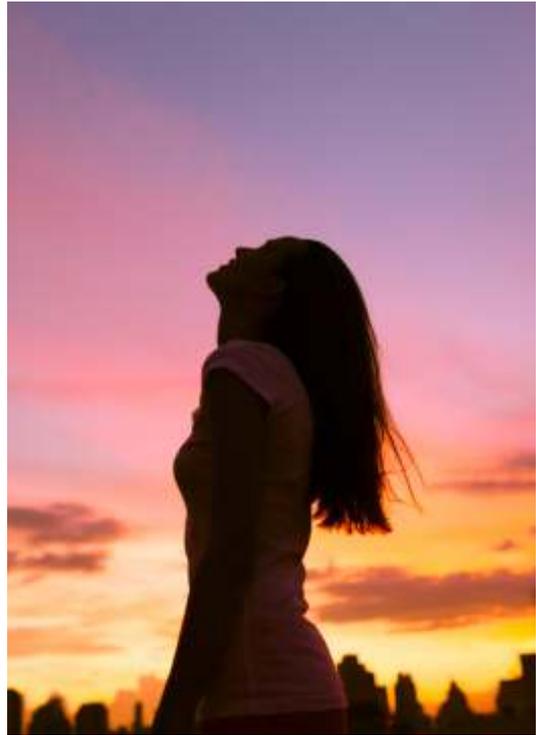
JAINISM

Jainism rejects a creator God but reveres Siddhas — liberated souls worthy of respect, not worship.

Mahavir's philosophy was inclusive and free from dogma. Neither nihilist nor anarchist, he emphasized individual effort and self-realization as the path to moksha (liberation), rejecting rituals and divine authority. True power, he taught, lies in personal action, ethical conduct, and inner transformation. Instead of worshipping imaginary gods, one should follow one's enlightened conscience — the real God within.

JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM

In the Abrahamic faiths, the soul rests after death awaiting divine judgment and eternal



placement in heaven or hell. With no concept of rebirth, this worldview encourages a linear, one-life perspective where fulfilment must be achieved within a single lifetime. The modern Western idea — captured in “You Only Live Once” (YOLO) or “Fear of Missing Out” (FOMO) — flows from this belief.

THE SANATAN VISION

Sanatan Dharma presents a different view. Rooted in karma and punarjanma (rebirth), it sees life as part of an unbroken continuum of consciousness. Every action becomes a seed carrying consequences into future births and shaping the soul's onward journey.

This vision upholds dharma (duty), restraint, gratitude, and ultimately moksha (liberation) — above consumption and transient pleasure. It harmonizes the material and the spiritual and reminds us that true freedom lies not in indulgence, but in transcendence.

KASHMIR SHAIVISM

Kashmir Shaivism teaches that the entire universe is a manifestation of one Supreme



Consciousness — Chit or Param Shiva. Nothing exists outside this awareness; every being and thought is a vibration (spanda) of that same Consciousness.

Death, therefore, is not extinction but transformation — a change of form within the same continuous reality. Advaita Vedanta echoes this truth: the individual self is never apart from the cosmic Self. Just as a wave is not separate from the ocean, so the living and the departed remain one in undivided Consciousness.

DEATH IS CERTAIN, ITS FEAR AVOIDABLE

No one truly knows what happens after death — it remains life's greatest mystery. Yet many who have faced near-death experiences feel certain it is not the end.

In the West, denial of death fuels dreams of a machine-augmented “transhuman” future. Traditional cultures face death with serenity. When a volcano erupted in Hawaii in 2018, indigenous people saw it as the goddess

Pele's presence and welcomed her, accepting danger as divine will.

Facing death clarifies how we live. Each of us has a purpose and unique gifts to express through seva (service) and sadhana (spiritual practice). We live fully when we follow what inspires us — without fear or regret. To live well is, indeed, to die well.

FOR BELIEVERS IN KARMA

Indian faith reconciles life's joys and sorrows as means to exhaust past karmas. Faith, though illogical to reason, remains deeply human. If one ends life prematurely, the unfinished karmic account continues elsewhere. The scriptures affirm that only one's deeds — good and bad — accompany the soul. The law of Karma is unfathomable; it cannot be erased or escaped by human will.

REFLECTION

The sky may be limitless, yet everyone needs a ground to stand on — that ground is spirituality. Each person's spiritual journey shapes their purpose and performance in life's race.

In this age of restlessness, man must rediscover meaning — not in mechanical pursuits but in awakening the Self and realizing I-consciousness.

Elevated souls have always stressed two pillars of existence:

1. Sadhana (Seeking) — personal discipline leading to self-realization.
2. Seva (Service) — selfless action for the welfare of others.

True humanity lies in serving others. As the Bhagavad Gita declares, “There is no fall for him, either here or hereafter, who works for the good of others.”

Tulsidas too reminds us: “The welfare of others is the highest Dharma; injury to others, the greatest sin.”

Service to mankind is virtue; selfless service invites divine grace.

CONCLUDING THOUGHT

The purpose of life, ultimately, is to realize the divinity within and express it through compassion, courage, and service to all living beings.



Chander M Bhat



Pandit Sarwanand Charagi

The Mystic Lamp of Kashmir

In the vast spiritual landscape of Kashmir, where centuries breathe through sanctuaries, stone temples, shrines, and snow-fed streams, certain luminous souls appear not with fanfare, but with the silent glow of a lamp placed at the altar of divinity. Pandit Sarwanand Charagi was one such radiant presence, steady, gentle, enduring, and transformative. His life was a testament to scholarship, humility, devotion, and selfless service. He lived as a teacher of young minds, a guide to seekers, a poet of the mystical heart, and a humble servant of God.

Born to Pandit Amar Chand Charagi and Smt. Kujamal, in an orthodox Kashmiri Pandit family of historic Ali Kadal in old Srinagar city, he inherited a lineage where tradition, piety, simplicity, and ritual sanctity were woven into daily life. Ali Kadal, with its old wooden bridges, winding lanes, and deep-rooted spiritual culture, shaped his earliest impressions. In his childhood, the family later shifted to Nai Sarak, another notable locality of Srinagar, and from there began his exposure to the wider intellectual currents of the Valley.

He began his early schooling at the then CMS (Church Missionary Society) School, Fateh Kadal, an institution which would later become the esteemed Tyndale Biscoe School. In an era when education itself was a rare privilege, young Sarwanand excelled rapidly. Those around him sensed his sharp intellect, absorbing memory, and hunger for knowledge. His teachers recognized in him a reflective mind, unusually contemplative for a child of his age.



As he grew older, his longing for learning intensified, and eventually, the young boy from the lanes of Srinagar proceeded to Banaras for higher education. There, he was admitted into the renowned Banaras Hindu University, at a time when BHU was a newly emerging seat of Indian cultural renaissance. Surrounded by scholars, saints, and seekers, Sarwanand flourished. He completed his graduation with distinction and soon thereafter pursued his L.T. (Licentiate in Teaching), today considered equivalent to the B.Ed. degree. His decision

to choose teaching was not accidental, it was the quiet calling of his soul.

In 1928, he joined the Education Department of the Jammu and Kashmir State. Thus began a long and dedicated journey as an educator, a vocation that would define most of his earthly life.

He served in various schools across the length and breadth of the State, inspiring countless students. His approach to education was deeply personal: he believed a teacher was not merely an instructor of subjects, but a moulder of character and conscience. He combined discipline with affection, strictness with compassion, and structure with vision. His classrooms were known to be places of awakening, not mere places of instruction.

After years of distinguished work, he was appointed as the Headmaster of the Government Higher Secondary School, Mattan. Here, his leadership matured into a form of silent excellence. Under his stewardship, the school became a centre of high academic standards, cultural refinement, and disciplined upbringing. Students and teachers alike revered him, not out of fear, but love and respect.

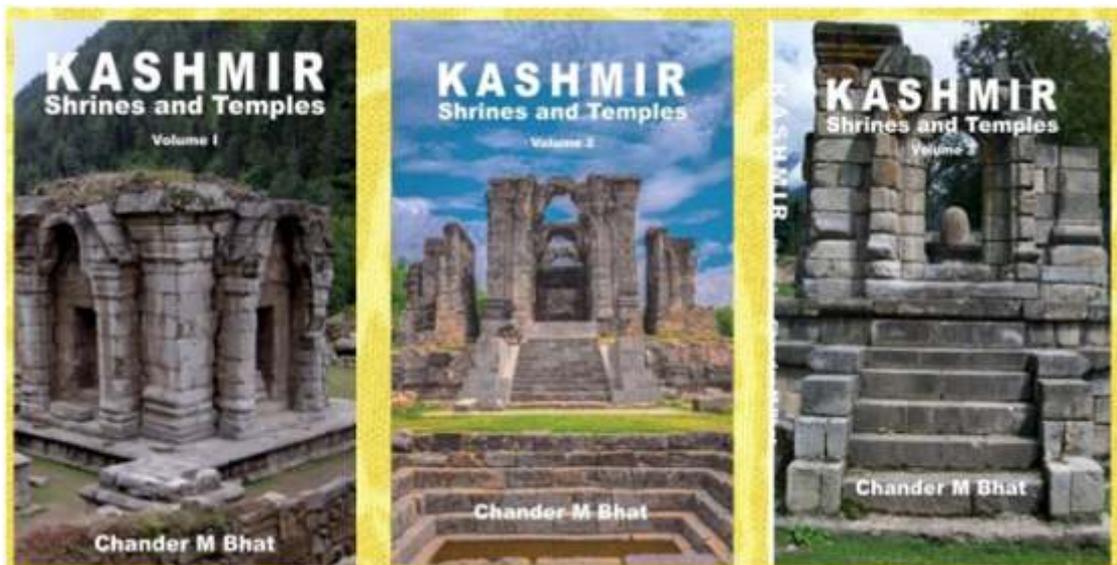
It was during his tenure at Mattan that an extraordinary episode unfolded, preserved not in official files, but in the sacred 'Bahi', the pilgrim register maintained by the hereditary

Pandits of Mattan. Recorded there is the historic visit of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, who came to Mattan accompanied by his wife, Smt. Rajvanshi (Raj Bans) Devi, in 1955. They performed puja at the sacred Martand temple, the majestic abode of Surya, standing in silent splendour over centuries. After the puja, they signed the pilgrim register, leaving an eternal entry in its sacred pages.

Aware of the remarkable standard of education at Mattan, the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, urged the Hon'ble President to visit the Government Higher Secondary School as well. It was a rare honour, one seldom accorded to any educational institution in the State. What impressed the Prime Minister was not merely the infrastructure, but the transforming presence of Pandit Sarwanand Charagi.

When the President visited and interacted with the students and faculty, he was visibly moved. Before departing, he wrote a sentence in the Visitors' Book, simple yet monumental in its emotional weight: I regret that I have not studied in this type of school.

These words remain one of the greatest tributes ever paid to any school in Kashmir, and indeed, to any educator. They bear witness to the power of sincerity, commitment, and moral



excellence, embodied by the quiet man from Ali Kadal.

Pandit Sarwanand Charagi was married to Smt. Dhanwati, a lady of gentle temperament and deep devotion. Together, they were blessed with three children, two daughters and one son. Like all enlightened parents, he believed that the best inheritance he could leave his children was education. He made sure each received the finest available schooling, a rare commitment in those times, especially for daughters.

His elder daughter, Smt. Kamla, was married to Pandit Soom Nath Kak, a distinguished and widely respected optician of Kashmir, who maintained a renowned establishment at Residency Road in Srinagar.

His younger daughter, Smt. Makhni, entered into a blessed union with Pandit Triloki Nath Mirza, a gentleman distinguished not merely by lineage, but by his noble temperament and cultured refinement. A man of soft speech and deep sensitivity, Pandit Mirza carried within him the quiet dignity that is born of good upbringing and noble character.

His son, Pandit Triloki Nath Charagi, married Smt. Mohan Rani, and carried forward the family tradition. Through learning, values, and rightful alliances, Pandit Charagi ensured that his lineage continued with grace, culture, and dignity.

In those bygone days, when the cultural soul of Srinagar still echoed through its bridges and courtyards, the learned men of Habba Kadal would often gather at the shop of Pandit Jai Lal Tikoo, a distinguished merchant dealing in saffron and the finest Kashmiri 'pattu' (tweed). His establishment, M/s Ishwar Dass Tikoo & Son, stood like a familiar landmark in the heart of Habba Kadal, and soon became an informal salon of thought, philosophy, and scripture.

It was here that Pandit Sarwanand Charagi, the closest friend of Pandit Jai Lal Tikoo, would join the circle of thoughtful minds. Evenings were spent in spirited discussions on sacred texts, spiritual commentaries, and the timeless wisdom of saints. The shop transformed into a quiet academy, where commerce paused, and the

Beyond being a teacher, Pandit Sarwanand Charagi was a seeker of the Infinite. His soul was tuned to a deeper rhythm, quiet contemplation, longing for God, introspective silence, and inner illumination.

In the later years of his life, after completing a devoted career as an Engineer, his inner compass gradually turned more and more toward the spiritual realm. Drawn by an inner calling, he became an ardent follower of Swami Kral Bab Ji Maharaj, the revered mystic of Kashmir, whose presence awakened in countless souls a longing for the higher life. Under the saint's influence, Pandit Mirza's spiritual inclinations deepened; his days became imbued with contemplation, devotion, and a gentle detachment from worldly preoccupations.

Retirement, for him, was not a withdrawal, but a blossoming, an inward journey towards self-realisation, guided by the teachings and grace of his beloved Guru.

fragrance of saffron mixed with the delicate perfume of learning.

It was during these gatherings that Pandit Charagi first came across the young and eager Pandit Soom Nath Kak, who lived near the shop. At Pandit Tikoo's earnest recommendation, he began tutoring the young man. Soon, recognising Soom Nath Kak's sharp intellect, discipline, and admirable character, Pandit Charagi developed a deep affection for him. Destiny, it seemed, had already written its course.

In due time, seeing his remarkable qualities, Pandit Charagi chose him as a worthy son-in-law and married his daughter to him, thus binding together not merely two families, but two noble lineages of intellect,

His surname, Chiragi, was fitting. He was indeed a lamp, "a Charag", lit from within. His glow was gentle, not blazing. He brightened hearts, not halls.

devotion, and cultural refinement.

Beyond being a teacher, Pandit Sarwanand Charagi was a seeker of the Infinite. His soul was tuned to a deeper rhythm, quiet contemplation, longing for God, introspective silence, and inner illumination. He belonged to a noble lineage of spiritual thinkers of Kashmir where devotion was not expressed loudly, but lived inwardly like steady fire under ash.

He did not wear saffron robes, yet carried the heart of a saint. He did not preach, yet lived the ideal. His sadhana was simple, meditation, 'japa', scriptural reading, self-reflection, and surrender. He spent his evenings immersed in contemplative stillness, absorbing and refining insights drawn from Kashmir Shaivism, Bhakti traditions, and classical Sanskrit devotional thought. Rarely did he speak of his inner experiences, yet his eyes carried the calm of someone who had seen something greater than ordinary life.

His writings, including his poetry, were not constructed for fame or scholarly approval; they were spontaneous expressions of inner awakening. He translated the Vaks of Lal Ded with deep feeling, and wrote works such as commentaries on 'Bhavani Nama Sahasra Stutih'. Those who read his verses spoke of them not as poems, but as experiences of the soul, direct, intimate, simple, yet profound.

His surname, Chiragi, was fitting. He was indeed a lamp, "a Charag", lit from within. His glow was gentle, not blazing. He brightened hearts, not halls.

Kashmir has historically stood at the sacred confluence of Shaivism, Sufism, and the devotional streams of Bhakti. Pandit Charagi embodied this synthesis in a rare and beautiful form. His worldview was expansive: Shaiva depth, Bhakti tenderness, and Sufi universality.

For him, the Divine was not distant, it was intimate, personal, living, breathing, present. In every tear of longing, he saw God. In every heartbeat of yearning, he felt the Presence.

After decades of dedicated service, he retired from Government service in 1962 as Headmaster of the Government Higher Secondary School, Mattan. Even in retirement, the flame of service continued to burn in him. He briefly accepted the headship of Vishwa Bharti School, Rainawari, where he worked for six months.

But destiny had its quiet plan. Later the same year, he passed away at the young age of just 56.

The news stunned all who knew him, students, colleagues, neighbours, seekers, and friends. It felt as if a lamp had been removed from a room, and only its fragrance remained.

Pandit Charagi is not remembered through monuments, institutions or marble plaques. His legacy is subtler, yet deeper: He lives in the transformed hearts of students he shaped. He lives in the pages he wrote with reverence. He lives in the silence of his contemplation. He lives in the sacred memory of Kashmiri devotion.

Every sincere teacher carries his spirit. Every humble seeker walks his path. He reminds us that even a quiet, ordinary life, lived honestly, purely, and spiritually, can become extraordinary. He reminds us that greatness is not noise, but depth.

He reminds us that the true measure of a human being lies not in applause, but in the fragrance they leave behind. Among the countless lamps of Kashmir's mystic tradition, the gentle flame of Pandit Sarwanand Charagi still glows, soft, humble, eternal.

Through remembrance, he lives. Through reverence, he shines. Through silence, he speaks. For even a small lamp, offered with sincerity, can guide many through darkness.



 Robin Koul



RUPA BHAWANI & THE STORY OF WASKURA

Who in Kashmir is not aware about the divine presence of Rupa Bhawani, the incarnation of Mother Sharika, revered by many names such as Alkeshwari and Ruph Ded?

A Brief Introduction : (though she needs none)

The name *Roopa Bhavani* literally means “the form of Mother *Bhavani*.” “*Roopa*” means the form, and “*Bhavani*” comes from the Sanskrit words “*bhava*” (existence, becoming) and “*ani*” (one who possesses). Together, the word signifies “she who gives existence,” “the source of becoming,” or simply, “the Mother.”

Birth and Early Life:

Mata *Rupa Bhawani* was born on *Zaishta Poornamashi*, in the month of *Zyeth* (Jyeshtha), in 1621 AD. She was the daughter of *Pandit Madho Joo Dhar* of *Khankah-i-Shokta (Safa Kadal)*, Srinagar.

Pandit Madho Joo Dhar was a devoted worshipper of Mata *Sharika*. He circumambulated *Hari Parbat* for years, praying sincerely for the Mother to be born as his daughter. His prayers were fulfilled, and he named the divine child “**Alakshyeshvari**”, meaning “the Goddess of the World.”

From a young age, *Alakshyeshvari* followed her father's spiritual path. He introduced her to yogic practices and nurtured her inclination toward meditation and divine knowledge.

It is also believed that *Rupa Bhawani* was mystically initiated into Yoga by the divine visions of *Shri Lalleshvari (Lall Ded)*, long after *Lall Ded* had left her physical form. This moment is considered a deep Yogic mystery.

Marriage and Turning Inward:

Rupa Bhawani was married early to *Pandit Hiranand Sapru*. Even after marriage, she continued to visit *Hari Parvat*, spending quiet midnight hours immersed in meditation. But her husband's family failed to understand her spiritual nature and the deep meditative states she had cultivated under her father's guidance.

Eventually, she left her husband's home in her pursuit of Truth and returned to her father. *Pandit Madhoo Joo* then became her Guru, guiding her on the next steps of her spiritual journey.

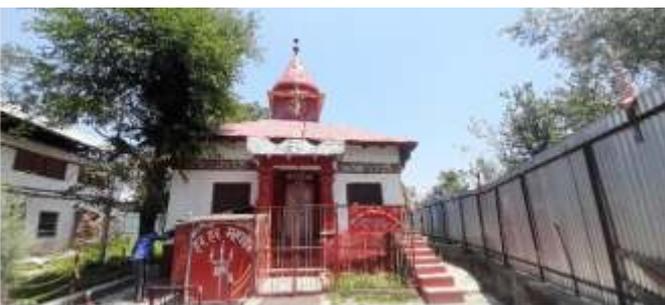
A Life of Renunciation and Tapasya:

Even at her father's home, the duties of the household made uninterrupted meditation difficult. Finally, *Alakshyeshvari* renounced family life altogether and began wandering from one sacred place to another, performing intense penance. It is believed that she spent **twelve and a half years** at each place of her *Tapasya*.

Born in *Safa Kadal*, she blessed many regions with her presence, *Khanqahi-e-Sokhta*, *Chashma-i-Sahibi*, *Wutshan*, *Manigam*, *Laar*, and **Waskura**, where her spiritual journey reached profound depths.

In this article we will go through her spiritual journey in *Waskura*.

First we will know more about *Waskura*, *Vaskura* or *Waskund*:



Waskura Lake:

Waskura Lake also called *Waskura Sar* is known for its calm freshwater, which has even drawn scientific interest and studied for its limnological features. (*The scientific study of bodies of fresh water for their biological and physical and geological properties*). Studies show that the lake's water level has remained largely stable over time, with no major changes in its depth.

It lies in *Waskura* village, about 13 km west of *Ganderbal* town in Jammu and Kashmir. Located at an elevation of **1590 meters**, the lake sits at **34°16' N latitude** and **74°39' E longitude**. It is connected to the right bank of the *Vitasta* through a small natural channel.

Geographical Features:



Spreading over roughly **52.7 hectares**, *Waskura* Lake is considered a **semi-drainage lake**. This means it has an outlet channel through which water flows out, but no major inflow channel bringing water in. Instead, the lake is fed by natural springs, both from within the lake and around its edges. The lake has a **sub-circular shape**, with a maximum depth of about **6 meters** and an average depth of around **3.75 meters**.

Legends of Waskura:



The ancient name of *Waskura* was “*Waskund*.” According to local lore, the sacred land of *Waskura* was once the place where **Naga Vasuki**, the divine serpent, performed deep *tapasya* to win the blessings of Lord *Shiva*. Moved by *Vasuki*'s deep devotion, Lord *Shiva* granted him a boon, allowing the *Naga* to remain eternally as the sacred serpent adorning His neck.

Over time, the spiritual aura of *Waskura* grew even stronger. It is believed that **Mata Rupa Bhawani** was drawn to the purity of this place and chose it as one of her **spiritual abodes**. Since then, it has come to be revered as **Mata Shri Roop Bhawani Tapasya Sthal**.

Waskura & Mata Rupa Bhawani:

The history of *Waskura* is deeply rooted with the life and legacy of *Mata Rupa Bhawani*. Her presence transformed the village into a significant spiritual centre for the local community and for the whole world.

Among her devoted followers was **Shri Hari Baghat**, a resident of *Waskura* who often travelled to *Laar* for the Mother's *darshan* and *seva* (service). He repeatedly prayed that she should grace *Waskura* with her permanent presence, and the Mother finally consented.

Here, *Mata Rupa Bhawani* undertook **twelve and a half years of intense meditation**, during which many miracles took place.

The Miracle of the Blind Boy:

In *Waskura* lived a young boy who had been blind since birth. He and his mother served *Mata* with deep devotion. One day, the mother pleaded with the Divine Mother to restore her son's sight. Moved by compassion, *Mata Rupa Bhawani* handed a stick to the boy and asked him to dig the earth with it.

As he obeyed, a **spring of water slowly emerged**, and at that very moment, the boy began to regain his vision with the emerging water. Washing his eyes with the water brought back his full sight.

This sacred well, believed to have been dug at her command, still exists today and is known as **Amrit Kund**.

Divine Teachings at Waskura:

It was at *Waskura* that *Mata Rupa Bhawani* began giving spiritual teachings to Bal Joo Dar Ji and Sadanand Mattoo Ji in the form of poetic verses known as Vakhs. Out of these, 145 Vakhs have survived and continue to guide seekers even today.

After completing twelve and a half years of *tapasya* at *Waskura*, which is a significant period that appears repeatedly in her life, *Mata* returned to Srinagar at the earnest requests of her many devotees and took residence at **Safa Kadal**.

Tradition and Continuity:

Devotees of Mata Alakhishwari / Mata Roop Bhawani traditionally observe Sahib Saptami at Waskura. The “Shri Alakh Sahiba Trust” oversees the maintenance and spiritual activities of all Taposthals connected with the saint, including the revered site at Waskura.

In this Part we will dive through the local ground experiences:

Accounts of the Locals:

The temple is opened every day by a local *Muslim* resident, **Shri Gulam Nabi Teli**, who, like the rest of the village, holds deep faith in *Mata*. His father, **Shri Gulam Mohammad**, also cared for the temple during his lifetime, maintaining it along with the *Pandits* of the village.

According to *Shri Gulam Nabi Teli*, ever since **Mata Roop Bhawani** chose to settle in their village, the village has been free from hardships. He shared a personal experience: he was blessed with four daughters one after

another, and finally prayed to *Mata* for a son. His prayer, he says with devotion, was answered; *Mata* blessed him with a son.

He believes that *Mata's* grace protects the entire village. Every morning he opens the temple, cleans the premises, lights the *diya*, and in the evening he locks the temple gates.

The Ancient Nag of Mata:

About 100 metres down to the right of the temple lies an **ancient Nag (spring)**. It is believed that *Mata* would step out through her wooden window (*Dharshan Dher*), onto a stone slab (still preserved there) and bathe in the spring daily.

The water source is now covered with a wire mesh to prevent dust and fallen leaves, yet algae and debris still collect inside. The spring needs proper restoration, a clean environment, and a protective boundary.

Dharamshala and Temple Complex:

To the left of the temple stands a two-storey **Dharamshalla**. Once full of charm and visitors in earlier times, it now requires urgent repair and maintenance.

Nearby, the **ancient well** dug by the blind boy still provides fresh, clear water. The iron pulley is functional, and drinking its cool water brings a deep sense of peace to the body and soul.

At the entrance of the temple are a few **ancient stone sculptures**, a remaining **pranalli**, and a **Shivlingam**. The stone tiles of the steps carry engravings in Urdu and Hindi, marking old dates and details. The tin roof rests on beautifully carved wooden beams and pillars.

Inside the sanctum stands the **murti of Mata**, depicted in the posture of receiving blessings from her Guru.

Ahansar Lake:

In conversations with the locals, we also learned about another lake in the area, besides the *Waskura* Lake, located in *Ahan* Village. It is called **Ahan Sar**. Locals claim that terracotta pieces and pottery have been found along its shores during soil digging, suggesting that the site may be **Neolithic**. This discovery certainly deserves further research and archaeological study.

Jai Mata Rupa Bhawani! Jai Mouj Kashmir!



 Kashyap Dhar



CYBERSECURITY AND FORENSICS



Cybersecurity and forensics are closely related fields focused on protecting digital information and investigating cybercrimes. Cybersecurity involves implementing measures to prevent unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of information. Forensics, in this context, focuses on the investigation of cyber incidents, collecting and analyzing digital evidence to understand what happened and potentially prosecute those responsible. With businesses and individuals relying heavily on technology, cybercrimes are growing fast. Proving these crimes, however, is not easy. Critical evidence for cybercrimes often resides within electronics such as computers and mobile devices. It is important to collect digital

evidence to help fight cybercrimes and bring justice. This is where cyber forensics comes in. Cyber forensics is a critical cybersecurity field that involves the identification, preservation, analysis, and presentation of digital evidence.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity encompasses a broad range of practices and technologies to secure computer systems, networks, and data. Key areas include: Risk Management of Identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential threats; Access Control of Implementing measures to restrict access to sensitive information and systems; Intrusion Detection and Prevention of Monitoring systems for malicious activity and taking action to block or mitigate attacks; Data Security of Protecting the confidentiality,

integrity, and availability of data; Incident Response of having plans and procedures in place to handle security breaches effectively.

Forensics

Forensics in the cybersecurity realm, often referred to as digital or cyber forensics, is the process which includes: Evidence Collection; Gathering digital evidence from various sources like computers, networks, and mobile devices; Preservation and Ensuring the integrity of evidence to maintain its admissibility in legal proceedings; Analysis and Examining the collected data to reconstruct events, identify perpetrators, and understand the nature of the attack; Reporting and Documenting findings and presenting them in a clear and concise manner. Pertinent to add, Cyber forensics requires measures that go far beyond a standard data collection process. That's because required information in a legal setting may not be immediately available. How is it different? Well, it needs recovering and reproduction, authentication and verification, and analysis to connect the available data insights with the appropriate user and their actions. While the underlying data records may be present, Forensic experts may require additional access authorization such as instructions from senior executives, external auditors, and court subpoenas to extract insights into a structured investigative report.

Relationship between Cybersecurity and Forensics

Cybersecurity and forensics are complementary fields. Cybersecurity aims to prevent and mitigate cyberattacks, while forensics investigates and analyzes those attacks to learn from them and improve security measures. Forensic investigations can reveal vulnerabilities in a system that cybersecurity teams can then address. Furthermore, forensic analysis can provide valuable insights into attacker behavior, helping organizations to better anticipate and prevent future attacks. In essence, cybersecurity is the preventative measure, and forensics is the investigative response.

Cybersecurity and forensics in India are experiencing significant growth due to increasing cybercrimes and the need for digital investigations. The field encompasses both technical expertise in digital forensics and a strong understanding of cyber law and regulations. India has established dedicated facilities like the National Cyber Forensic Laboratory and is actively training professionals in this domain.

Key Aspects of Cybersecurity and Forensics in India

Increasing Cybercrime, India faces a rising number of cybercrimes, driving the demand for skilled professionals in cybersecurity and



forensics; Growing Demand for Professionals, Both public and private sectors are actively hiring digital forensics experts to address these challenges; Specialized Training, Educational institutions offer programs like B Tech, M Tech, BSc, MSc and Research in Cyber Forensics Cyber Security, & Digital Forensics to equip individuals with the necessary skills; Government Initiatives, The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) and the National Cyber Forensic Laboratory (NCFL) are examples of government efforts to strengthen cybersecurity and forensics capabilities.

Career Opportunities and Essential Skills

For Career Opportunities, Cyber forensics professionals find opportunities in law enforcement, government agencies, private organizations, and research institutions. For Essential Skills, A strong foundation in computer science, information technology, and a deep understanding of cyber law are crucial for success in this field. The field is constantly evolving with new technologies and cyber threats, requiring continuous learning and adaptation.

Challenges with Cyber Security, Cyber Forensics and Digital Forensics

Data Science, especially, Cyber Forensics Experts extract data from a variety of sources and any technologies that may be used by an end-user. These include mobile devices, cloud computing services, IT networks, and software applications. Distinct vendors develop and operate these technologies. The technology limitations and privacy measures tend to restrict the investigative capacity of Forensic Experts as they face the following challenges like,

Data recovery; If the data is encrypted, the investigator will not be able to decrypt the information without access to encryption keys. New storage tools such as SSD devices may not offer immediate factory access to recover lost data, unlike traditional magnetic tape and hard disk drive systems. Visibility into cloud system; Investigators may only have access to metadata but not the

information content of the files. The underlying resources may be shared and allocated dynamically. That lack of access to physical storage systems means that third-party investigators might not recover lost data. Network log big data; Network log data grows exponentially and requires advanced analytics and AI tools to connect the dots and find insightful relationships between networking activities. Multi-jurisdiction data storage; If the data is stored in a different geographic location, cyber forensics investigators may not have the legal authority to access the required information. However, while there are challenges with cyber forensics, there are also resources that can help you minimize their impact, if not overcome them.

Demanding Cyber Security, Cyber Forensics and Digital Forensics

Cyber Security, Cyber Forensics and Digital Forensics is a developing field with significant career opportunities In India, where internet penetration is nearing 34%, and nearly 1.7 lakh cybercrime incidents are reported annually, both private and government organizations are steadily hiring Digital Forensic experts to address these challenges. The growing prevalence of cybercrimes and the rapid digital transformation in India highlight the increasing importance of Digital Forensics. With a steady rise in demand for skilled professionals, private and government sectors offer promising career opportunities in this field. The expanding IT, e-commerce, finance, and law enforcement sectors are actively seeking experts to tackle cybersecurity challenges, creating a dynamic and rewarding career path. As the industry continues to evolve with emerging technologies and regulatory frameworks, Digital Forensics professionals are poised to play a crucial role in safeguarding digital assets and ensuring a secure online environment. Today, Digital Forensics Analysts and Experts in India can easily earn salary of 10 Lac - 25 Lacs depending on the assignments from Junior to Senior Level Executives.

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 Upender Ambardar

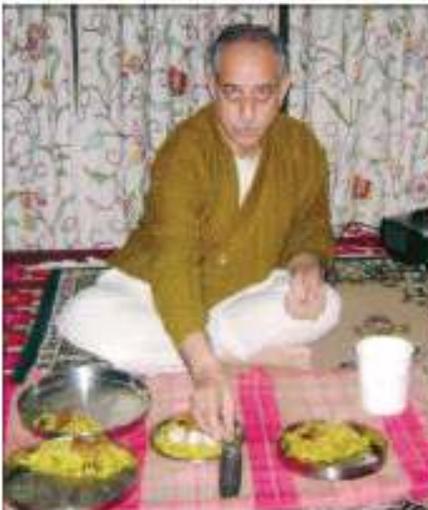
KHAECHIMAVAS

*K*hichdi Amavasya or Khaechimavas, as it is called in Kashmiri, is an ancient winter ritual of Kashmiri Pandits. It is celebrated on Posh Krishna Paksh Amvasaya (*Poh Ghata Pach Mavas*) with unshakeable faith by Kashmiri Pandits. Khaechimavas besides being an integral part of our religious-cultural life also encompasses the mythologized history of Kashmir.

Further, it authenticates and affirms the historicity of *Yakshas*, the ancient aboriginal tribe of Kashmir, who dwelled in the upper mountainous region of the Himalayan ranges extending from the present day Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh to Kashmir. The Hindu scriptures have elevated *Yakshas* to the status of demigods along with *Gandharvas* (the celestial musicians), *Kinnaras* (the divine choristers), *Kiraats* and *Rakshas*.

The influence of Shaivism on the ritual of Khichdi Amavasya is clearly visible. *Yakshas* were also ardent worshippers of Lord Shiva, the most adored and revered God of Kashmiri Pandits.

The *Yakshapati* Lord *Kubera* is regarded as an intimate friend of Lord Shiva. Lord *Kubera*, known as the Lord of wealth, is said to be the son of sage *Visravas* and grandson of the sage *Pulastya* besides being the half brother of the demon king, *Ravana*. As per the Hindu mythology, Lord *Kubera* resides in the mythological city of *Alkapuri*, which is said to be situated on one of the spurs of the Mount *Meru* in the exalted Himalayas. Incidentally, Mount *Meru*, which is believed to be densely forested with the divine '*Kalpavruksha*' trees is said to be the abode of Lord *Shiva* also. *Alkapuri* is also known by the names of



A Kashmir Pandit family observing the ritual of Khaechimavas.

Vasudhara, *Vasusathli* and Prabha. As per the Hindu epics of Ramayana and Mahabharat, Lord *Kuber* had his sway on the city of Lanka before he was ousted from there by his half brother, the demon king Ravana. He was also the proud owner of the celestial aerial chariot '*Pushpak Viman*', which was later-on snatched away from him by the demon king Ravana. The city of Lanka is believed to have been built of gold by the divine architect *Vishwakarma* for the residence of Lord Kubera.

Yakshi also known by the alternative names of *Charvi* and *Kauveri*, the spouse of Lord Kubera is said to be the daughter of Danav Mura. She is believed to serve Goddess Durga as one of the attendants. Manigriva (also known as Varnkavi) and *Nalkubera* (also called as *Mayuraja*), are Lord Kubera's sons, whileas Menakshi is his daughter. Lord Kubera, the King of *Yakshas* is also known as Dhanpati (the lord of wealth), *Nar-raj*a (the King of men), *Rajraja* (the King of Kings), *Ichchhavas*u (one who gets immense wealth at his own wish and will),

mounts. The subjects and devotees of Lord Kuber are called as *Yaksh* and they are believed to possess supernatural powers. They can change their shape and form at will. They are regarded to be full of kindness, compassion and benevolence.

According to *Kalhan's* Raj Tarangni, *Yakshas* resided on the mighty mountain ranges of Kashmir. They would descend to the plains during the winter season, where the *Naga* inhabitants would extend the hospitality to them by offering the delectable cuisine of Khichdi. The *Yakshas* are believed to be historical reality down the ages as innumerable villages and temples have been dedicated to them. They exist in vast stretches of land right from the present day states of Uttranchal, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. In the capital city of Shimla in Himachal Pradesh, there is a famous Hanuman temple on the adjacent Jakhu hill. It is believed that thousands of years back *Yaksha* sage performed austerities and penance there. Lord Hanuman is said to have made a brief stopover at the Jakhu hill during his search for

The influence of Shaivism on the ritual of Khichdi Amavasya is clearly visible. Yakshas were also ardent worshippers of Lord Shiva, the most adored and revered God of Kashmiri Pandits

Ratangarbha (one who possesses plenty of jewels and diamonds) and also as *Rakshasendra* (the chief of demons). He is also known as the presiding deity of the northern side of the universe and the house. Hindu mythology describes Kuber to have a white complexion, a deformed body with three legs and only eight teeth. Further, he is regarded not only as the lord of gold but also of silver, jewels, diamonds and all other kinds of precious stones. He is also known as the protector of the business class of the society.

In the mythological depictions, Lord Kuber is shown as seated on the shoulders of a man or riding a carriage pulled by men. Sometimes an elephant or a ram (an uncastrated male sheep) are also shown as his

'*Sanjeevani Bhooti*' for Lakshman. The sage *Yaksha* latter-on built a temple on the hill in honour of Lord Hanuman. In Rohru and Arki tehsil of Shimla district, two villages dedicated to *Yakshas* are known by the names of Jakhu and *Jakhol*. The word *Jakhol* in the local dialect means '*Yakshalai*' or the abode of *Yaksha*.

In the central part of Himachal Pradesh, there are many temples dedicated to *Yakshas* and *Yakshanis*, who are worshipped as the village deities of the natives. They are also regarded as the deities of domestic cattle. In order to ward off the evil spell and to guarantee plentiful of milk, *Yakshas* are propitiated by burning '*dhoop*' and incense sticks in the cowsheds. Dr. M.S. Randhawa, a noted researcher writes in his book "Farmers of

India" that *Pischas*, *Yakshas* and *Naga* tribes inhabited Kashmir in ancient times. Prof. DD Sharma, a well-known historian and researcher has identified numerous villages dedicated to *Yakshas* in the hilly regions of the Himalayas in his book "*Himalayan Sanskriti Kae Muladar*". There is a strong belief among the people in the hilly areas that affluence and fortune will come one's way if the Yaksha King Lord Kuber is propitiated and pleased. The said belief also exists in the folklore of Kashmir.

According to Prof. D.D. Sharma, the villages of *Jakh*, *Jakhet* in *Karanprayag*, *Jakhola* in *Joshimath*, *Jakhni* and *Jakhoal* in Chamoli, *Jakhand*, *Jakhanyali*, *Jakhvadi*, *Jakholi*, *Jakhni* and *Jakhi* in *Devprayag*, *Jakh* and *Jakhol* in *Tehri Garhwal*, *Jakh*, *Jakhni*, *Jakhola* and *Jakhmoli* in *Pauri Garhwal* and *Jakhu* on *Dehradun-Rajpora* road not only had strong association with *Yakshas* but also speak volumes about their possible high concentration in these places in the ancient times. In addition to it, the entire area of *Alaknanda* right from *Joshimath* to *Karanprayag* is known as '*Jakh*' or the area which was once occupied and dominated by *Yakshas*.

According to Dr. Jagdish Prasad Samval, a celebrated researcher, a temple known as '*Yakshraj*' exists on a mountain top about one km. away from *Narayankote* on the road leading to *Kedarnath*. *Yakshraj*, Lord Kuber is the local deity of the surrounding eleven villages of the area. Likewise, there is a *Yakshraj* temple in *Pithoragarh* also, where meat offerings are made to the deity. *Yakshraj* is also the guardian deity of the adjacent villages. *Almora* also has a famous temple known as *Jakhani Devi* temple.

According to Prof. D.D. Sharma, *Almora* area has *Jakhnola*, *Jakhnoli*, *Jakhani*, *Jakh* villages, whileas *Ranikhet* has *Jakhni*, *Jakh* and *Nainital* has the village by the name of *Jakh*. In *Jammu* province also there are two villages-*Jakhni* (65 kms from *Jammu* city on way to *Udhampur*) and *Jakhbhar* (4-5 kms from *Kathua* on *Nagari* road).

In *Kashmir* also, the *Yakshas* have left their impressions behind. These have survived

in the form of village names even upto the present times. The villages of *Ichikote*, *Ichigam*, *Ichihama*, *Ichigoz* and *Rairyach* situated in the central district of *Budgam* (*Kashmir*) might have been *Yaksha* settlements at certain stages of time. I have also been able to locate one more village by the name of *Yachihoum*, which is nestled in the foothills of forested mountain on *Srinagar - Sonamarg* road in *Ganderbal* district in *Kashmir*. One more village known by the name of *Yachinar* is situated in the southern district of *Anantnag* in *Kashmir*. According to Late Prof. *Laxmidhar Kalla*, a noted Sanskrit scholar of *India* and *HoD Sanskrit*, *Delhi University*, a village by the name of *Alkapuri* exists near the village *Manigam* in *Ganderbal* (*Kashmir*). Some scholars state that a tribe by the name of *Yakshun* lives in *Dardistan* area, which is located in north of *Kashmir*. They assert that the name *Yakshun* is a derivative from *Yakshkun* meaning *Yakshas*. A township to the west of the present day new airport near *Humhama* village in *Budgam* village locally known as *Damodar Wudar* is said to have been built by an ancient King of *Kashmir*, *Damodar*. *Yakshas*, who were adept in the construction skills are believed to have contributed help and expertise.

Yakshas have also left their imperishable imprints on the social fabric of *Kashmir*. They are in the form of Surnames of '*Yaksha*', '*Yach*' and '*Rakshas*' retained by *Kashmiri Pandits*.

Lord Kuber is said to be the chief of both *Yakshas* and *Rakshas*. Late Sh. *Dina Nath Yaksh*, a noted Sanskrit scholar of *Kashmir* was a resident of *Bulbullankar*, *Alikdal Srinagar* upto the year 1990. About five to six *Pandit* families having the surname '*Yach*' were residents of *Rainawari* (*Karapora Khushki*) area in *Srinagar* upto their migration from there in 1990. A few *Pandit* families with the surname '*Yach*' were also residents of *Karfalli-Mohalla*, *Srinagar* and *Sopore* township of *Baramulla* district. According to few *Hindu* scriptures '*Rakshshas*' are not demons but on the contrary benefactors and defenders.

According to Kashmiri folklore, Yaksh is believed to make two and half sounds of 'Waaf' (two high pitched and one low volume sounds). The same folklore says that Yaksh dons a red cap made of gold, which is studded with jewels and diamonds. This cap known as 'Phous' is said to bestow enormous supernatural powers to Yaksh.

As per prevalent lore in Kashmir, anyone who succeeds in snatching the cap and then hides it under a mortar or a hand mill stone or a pitcher filled with water or an earthen pot full of fermented kitchen leftover vegetables called 'Saderkanz' is believed to tame Yaksh. The snatcher is given unlimited wealth if the cap is given back to Yaksh.

According to family lore of Ambardars, one of their ancestors is believed to have seized the cap of Yaksh. After the cap was returned to Yaksh, the Ambardar families were exempted from offering the oblation of *Khitchdi* to Yaksh on the ritual of *Khitchdiamavasya*. The same family lore states that once one of their ancestors, who in violation of this exemption dared to observe the ritual of *Khitchdiamavasya* had his house engulfed by fire. Since that time the Ambardar families of Kashmir continue to abstain from observing the said ritual.

Observance of the Ritual:

On the evening of Khichdi Amavasya (Khaechimavas), rice mixed with turmeric powder and ungrounded *moong dal* is cooked. Khichdi is also prepared with meat or cheese as per the individual family's tradition. Khichdi cooked with sanctimonious purity is kept either on a fresh earthen plate (*toke*) seated on a hand woven circular grass base called '*aer*' or in a '*thali*'. Adjacent to it, a pestle (*Kajvut*) is also seated on a round grass base (*aer*) in an upright state.

During the ritualistic *pooja*, *tilak* is applied to the pestle. The pestle is a symbolic representation of Lord Kuber, the King of Yakshas. After the completion of navigational *pooja*, the offering of Khichdi kept in the earthen plate and seated on the grass base (*aer*) is placed on the court yard wall of the house. Afterwards, the consecrated potion of

Khichdi is taken by the family members as 'prasad' either with uncooked reddish or Knolkhol pickle.

In some rural areas of Kashmir, Khichdi of 'mash dal' called '*Maha Khaechar*' or Khichdi of black beans or '*Varimuth*' is also cooked. It is prepared for the domestic cattle. This kind of Khichdi along with a bit of honey is kept in the cowsheds, paddy storage room (*daan-kuth*) and on cow dung heaps. In the morning it is fed to the cows. As per belief, it not only increases the milk giving capacity of the cows but also protects them from the various ailments as the Lord Kuber is also the Lord of domestic cattle. It bears close resemblance with a practice followed in certain rural pockets of Utranchal and Himachal, where *pooja* is performed in the cowsheds. The pestle kept during the ritual of Khichdi Amvasaya is symbolic representation of our steadfastness and unwavering faith for the said ritual. It is also metaphoric representation of the hilly regions where Yakshas lived in the past.

The pestle denotes the absolute formlessness of the all powerful God. On the evening of Khichdi Amavasya, a few Pandit families of Sopore township of Baramulla district make a bonfire of wood on the riverbank (*Yarbal*) and burn crackers. It is believed to bestow health as fire is supposed to consume all kinds of human ailments since Yakshapati, Lord Kuber is also regarded as the deity of health.

Sharing a ritual related incident of the year 1981, Sh. PN Tikoo, a retired engineer of Vijayanagar, Talab Tillo Jammu, recalled. "The residents of the newly constructed government quarters of Khannabal, Anantnag (Kashmir) were baffled by the unusual sounds of 'waaf', heard continuously during wintery nights. All the measures undertaken by the residents neither stopped the unusual sounds nor led us to the origin of sound. Astonishingly, the sounds of 'waaf' stopped the moment I made a ceremonial offering of Khichdi to Yaksh".

All the rituals need to be celebrated with fervor and faith as they give spiritual resonance to our lives.



Sanjay Pandita



THE SACRED GEOMETRY OF MARRIAGE THE TIMELESS SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KASHMIRI PANDIT DEJHOOR...

The dejhoor, the delicate and geometric ornament worn by Kashmiri Pandit women after marriage, is far more than an adornment hanging from the ear. It is a symbol that carries centuries of memory, ritual, belief, and identity, woven into the very fabric of Kashmiri Pandit tradition. To understand the dejhoor is to understand a large part of Kashmiri cultural consciousness, for this small sacred piece of jewellery holds within it the echoes of ancient Kashmir, its spiritual philosophies, its isolated evolution, and the emotional continuity of a community that has endured dislocation yet preserved its rituals with remarkable fidelity. Across generations, the dejhoor has survived as a marker not merely of marital status, but of a lineage that extends back into the early Shaiva and Shakta traditions of the Valley, a lineage that refused to vanish even under immense historical pressures.

The history of the dejhoor is inseparable from the history of Kashmir itself. Archaeologists and historians who have studied ancient Kashmiri ornaments often point to the continuity between the geometric motifs carved on the temples of the Utpala, Karkota, and Lohara periods and the shape of the traditional dejhoor. The temple art of Kashmir—such as that seen at Martand, Avantipur, Pandrethan, and Parihaspora—makes frequent use of yantric designs, stylized triangles, intersecting lines, and forms symbolizing the union of energies. These shapes were not merely decorative; they reflected the metaphysical ideas of Kashmir Shaivism, where the union of Shiv and Shakti was central to understanding existence. Over time, these motifs seeped from the stone of temples into domestic rituals, eventually taking a tangible form

in the dejhoor, worn by women as a personal yantra, a living extension of sacred geometry. Folklore suggests that even in pre-medieval times, Kashmiri brides were adorned with ornaments symbolizing cosmic union, a tradition that gradually crystallized into what we now recognize as the dejhoor.

Kashmir's geography also played a crucial role in shaping the uniqueness of this ornament. Surrounded by mountains for centuries, the Valley developed rituals and symbols that were distinct from the rest of the Indian subcontinent. The dejhoor did not spread to neighbouring regions because Kashmir's cultural evolution was remarkably self-contained, shaped by its own philosophical schools, its practice of lineage worship, and its particular form of Shaiva-Shakta integration. While regions of India adopted the mangalsutra, the thali, the sindoor, and various forms of bangles as markers of marriage, Kashmiri Pandits developed an ornament that functioned as a yantric emblem of marital union. In that sense, the dejhoor is not just historically unique; it is culturally singular, a sign of a civilization that preserved its individuality despite centuries of external influence.

The shape of the dejhoor itself is deeply symbolic and has been interpreted in multiple ways, all of them rooted in Kashmiri spiritual traditions. At first glance, the dejhoor appears like a stylized hexagonal or angular pendant. But its geometry is intentional. It resembles a yantra made of two interconnected triangles, representing the eternal union of Purusha and Prakriti, Shiva and Shakti. The upward triangle signifies Shiva, the conscious principle, while the

downward triangle signifies Shakti, the creative force. Together, they form the cosmic balance from which the entire universe manifests. To wear this shape is to acknowledge that marriage, in its ideal form, is also a union of complementary energies. In many Kashmiri families, elders describe the dejhoor as “a house of harmony,” a symbolic dwelling where the masculine and feminine forces coexist in equilibrium. This explains why the dejhoor is worn from the moment of marriage—it is a constant reminder that the bride now steps into a space of union, balance, and responsibility.

There is also a second layer of symbolism associated with the shape. Many scholars claim that the dejhoor resembles the shape of the yoni-linga union—an ancient symbol of creation found in Kashmir’s temples and shrines. This connection reinforces the idea that the ornament is not just decorative but sacred, linking the bride to the eternal cycle of life, fertility, and cosmic balance. Some historians also note that its shape mirrors the jewel motifs found on the crowns and ornaments of Kashmiri deities in medieval iconography. Thus, the dejhoor becomes both a personal yantra and a miniature emblem of the Valley’s spiritual heritage.

The ritual significance of the dejhoor is equally profound. On the day of marriage, when the bride’s mother ties the dejhoor to a red thread and places it on her daughter’s ear, it symbolizes more than a blessing. It represents the protection of the Kuldevi or Kuldevta, the family deity who guards the lineage. This act signifies the daughter’s connection to her ancestral home, its values, its heritage, and its spiritual guardians. It is a sacred moment when the mother, often with moist eyes and trembling hands, transfers the accumulated blessings of generations to the bride. Later, when the bride arrives at the groom’s home, the thread is ceremonially replaced by a golden chain known as the *ath* or *atah*. This gesture marks her transition from her mother’s home to her new household, symbolizing that she now carries the blessings of two lineages. The dejhoor thus becomes a bridge between two families, a visible thread connecting past and future.

This religious significance is further enhanced by the belief that the dejhoor acts as a talisman, protecting the bride from negativity and misfortune. Its geometry, rooted in tantric yantras, is thought to draw auspicious energies and strengthen the spiritual aura of the woman who wears it. In many traditional Kashmiri

households, elders still believe that a married woman should never remove her dejhoor entirely, for it represents the sanctity of her marital bond and serves as a divine shield. Even today, despite social changes and modern aesthetics, many Kashmiri Pandit women continue to wear the dejhoor daily, not as an obligation but as an heirloom that connects them to their roots.

What makes the dejhoor even more culturally significant is that it is exclusively a Kashmiri Pandit tradition. No other Hindu community across India possesses a similar symbol of marital identity. This exclusivity arises from Kashmir’s unique fusion of lineage worship, Shaiva-Shakta philosophy, ancestral rituals, and strong community consciousness. The dejhoor became, over time, a visible marker of Kashmiri Pandit identity—especially in periods of historical upheaval when preserving rituals became an act of cultural survival. During centuries of turbulence, when many customs gradually faded, the dejhoor remained steadfast. It was worn quietly, almost defiantly, by women who understood that a small ornament could hold the weight of an entire civilization’s memory.

Many Kashmiri Pandit families consider the dejhoor not merely an item of jewellery but a sacred inheritance that carries emotional and historical weight. Mothers preserve their own wedding dejhoor for years, hoping to pass it on to daughters and daughters-in-law. These ornaments often travel across generations, migrating with families through displacement, exile, and resettlement. Even in faraway lands, Kashmiri Pandit women continue to wear them, ensuring that the tradition remains alive despite geographical distance. In this sense, the dejhoor has become a symbol of resilience, continuity, and unbroken heritage.

The spiritual echoes of the dejhoor resonate even today, reminding every Kashmiri Pandit woman who wears it that she carries with her the blessings of her ancestors, the philosophical vision of Kashmir’s sages, and the cultural distinctiveness of her community. Its history is carved in ancient stone, its significance woven into sacred rituals, its shape informed by the metaphysics of yantras, and its endurance a testament to the strength of Kashmiri Pandit identity. The dejhoor is thus not an ornament but a microcosm of Kashmir itself—an artefact of faith, a symbol of cosmic harmony, a carrier of lineage, and a silent witness to the long journey of a people who have always held their traditions close to heart.

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Sringeri Shankracharya Sends a Strong Message for Reopening of Sharda Peeth in PoK



Gurgaon, Haryana, 27 November'2025

Sringeri Shankracharya has strongly advocated for reopening of Sharda Sarvagnya Peeth in PoK. In His anugreh bashnam at Bani dham gaushala temple Gurgaon, Shankracharya of Sringeri H H Vidhushekhra Bharti ji said struggle will continue while addressing a large number of kashmiri pandits today. Besides, He did pushp archana at site of proposed sharda temple on hillock opposite Banidham temple. Shankracharya ji also visited the Gaushala at Banidham which is being jointly run and

managed by Banidham Gaushala and Kashmiri pandits. Shankracharya's visit on the concluding day of his 20-day visit to Delhi NCR was organised by Kashmiri Pandits in Delhi NCR. All India kashmiri samaj Regd (AIKS) president Ravinder Pandita in his welcome address stressed the need of religious corridor on the lines of kartarpur corridor. He greeted Shankracharya and took Him alongwith hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits to proposed Sharda temple site in the complex and lit the oil lamp at Sharda Peeth portrait. " All the four sharda mutts should write to Prime minister for reopening of Sharda Peeth in PoK" said Ravinder Pandita.

Banidham Gushala members Pt. Keshvanand, Madan ji, Ajay Pandita, Suneel Kachroo, Ashwini Pandita and many others took a comprehensive tour of Gaushala where about 1000 cows are being managed.

Ravinder Pandita presented Sharda Shawls to Shankracharya and His followers, which was followed by prasad vitran.



KPs Disappointed for not Taking up Vivek Tankha's Bill in Rajya Sabha



KPs disappointed for not taking up Vivek Tankha's Bill in Rajya Sabha

PEERZADA SAYEED

Srinagar: We, the displaced Kashmiri Pandits deeply appreciate the sincere efforts made by Hon'ble Member of Parliament ShVivek Tankhaji in drafting the bill "Recourse, Restitution, Rehabilitation and Resettlement bill of 2022" that was listed at serial no. '1' to be taken up for discussion on 5th December, 2025, in the parliament.

We Kashmiri Pandits are deeply hurt for the bill having not been taken up for discussion for whatever reasons. We had eagerly awaited that the bill will be discussed and our woes will be addressed to on humanitarian grounds. "I was a witness in Public gallery yesterday during proceedings , only to get disappointed. Even Shankracharyas had also blessed through a public statement"said Ravinder Pandita, President AIKS We earnestly appeal to the GOI to address the issue of Recourse, Restitution, Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Kashmiri Pandits who are without a home address for the last 36 years now.



It is 17 years since the Late Sushma Swaraj Committee Parliamentary report was submitted to the Government but that too is gathering dust. We understand that Ministry of Parliamentary affairs is forwarding a recommendation on the subject matter to Home ministry for consideration and believe the matter will come up in Upper house again

Once again we appeal to GOI to help us to reclaim our ethnic roots that have enriched Indian ethos, Culture and Philosophy down the millennia.

New Delhi, 06 December' 2025

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First Samoohik Yagneopavit of KPs Performed at Banidham Gurgaon

Gurgaon, Haryana, 8 December'2025

A first of its kind samoohik yagneopavit of 8 children of kashmiri pandit community was performed at Banidham Gaushala Temple, Haryana. Organised by Yiakunth Mandli ashram, it attracted lot of members of community to witness this historic religious

event. All arrangements for smooth conduct of events was done by Banidham Gaushala team. All India Kashmiri Samaj president Ravinder Pandita gave Sharda portrait and box to the children and reminded them of the religious sanctity of the sanaskar in the community. He drew attention to reforms



done through Kashyap Bandhu times and requested community to organize many more events like this for those especially who cannot afford it singlehandedly. Members from KPC, RIK and Yiakunth ashram took

part in the celebrations. M K Talashi conducted the hawan proceedings. Yiakunth ashram head Manoj Pandita thanked all who contributed and donated towards this noble cause.

KP Community Revival Meet Held in Jodhpur During Saraswat Brahmin Mahasammelan



Jodhpur, Dec 19–22: On the sidelines of the Saraswat Brahmin Mahasammelan held in Jodhpur this week, a large and meaningful gathering of the Kashmiri Pandit (KP) community took place, widely seen as a revival meet, with participation from families repres-

enting multiple generations of displacement — from those forced out nearly 400 years ago during Aurangzeb's reign to migrants of 300 years, 200–100 years, and the 1990 exodus from across the Kashmir Valley, including areas like Drabiyar and Vessu; the meeting, facilitated at short notice by senior and fourth-generation KP residents of Jodhpur, brought together professionals, elders, and young families, where Team ESSAY presented the vision of its Online Essay Contest Project and urged parents to encourage children to participate in the ongoing 5th Essay Contest, while the gathering was briefly addressed by the local RSS Pracharak of Jodhpur and Shri Prem Ji Sothwal of Vivekanand Kendra, underscoring the spirit of unity, continuity, and community revival.





ABT Accomplishes Samohik Yagnopavit

For the Amar Balidan Trust (ABT), Samohik Yagnopavit is a regular annual religious event that has been performed for decades to help families overcome financial burdens in performing the spiritual duty. This year, the



occasion took place on 5th December 2025 at Swami Kral Bub Ashram, Bantalab, in Jammu. Many community activists participated in and blessed the boys at the thread ceremony.

The chanting of mantras from the Vedas reverberated in the atmosphere. All those present were served with prasad.

Chief Secretary J&K Visits Mini-Township Jagti

Chief Secretary Atal Duloo visited the Jagti Nagrota mini-township in Jammu on December 13 2025, to inspect development works and inaugurate key projects.

Chief Secretary visits mini-township Jagti and distributes sanction orders under SSSs and allotment orders among migrant beneficiaries. The Chief Secretary inspected the Sub District Hospital and Government Higher Secondary School, Jagti; ongoing work on the multi-purpose community hall, estimated to cost Rs 6.5 crore; and other development works. He also inaugurated five bore wells and visited the NFSA integration centre. Later, the Chief Secretary distributed sanction orders under various Social Security Schemes, such as Old Age Pension, Widow

Pension, and Disability Pension, to about 125 migrant beneficiaries. He also distributed allotment orders to eligible migrant beneficiaries for 48 government shops and 12 residential quarters. On the occasion, the Chief Secretary also felicitated the meritorious girl students of Government Higher Secondary School, Jagti and distributed digital ration cards among the beneficiaries. Additionally, regularisation orders were issued to some employees of the School Education Department.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by a large number of officers that included Commissioner Secretary, FCS & CA, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare, Commissioner, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Director School Education Jammu, Director FCS & CA, besides other Heads of Departments and district officers.

A sizeable gathering of migrants from Nagrota, Purkhoo and Muthi camps was also present. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary emphasised the importance of the historic moment of extending social sector scheme benefits to Kashmiri and Jammu Migrants, who had been deprived of these benefits because their ration cards were non-digitised and not integrated with the national database. He urged all migrants to take advantage of government schemes by having their ration cards integrated on the national portal. He directed all government departments to maintain budgetary provisions for the operation and maintenance of services in their departments in migrant camps and transit accommodations in Jammu and Kashmir, in line with the recent directions issued by the General Administration Department on the subject.

The Chief Secretary directed the Science and Technology Department to install solar

lights in the Mini Township Jagti. He directed the Public Works Department to ensure time-bound completion of repair and renovation works, with emphasis on maintaining all the quality parameters.

The Chief Secretary asserted that the administration is making strenuous efforts to address the issues and concerns of the migrant population. The latest initiatives included maintenance of old and damaged residential quarters, proper sanitation by the Jammu Municipal Corporation and Transit accommodations in the Kashmir Valley. Additionally, issues affecting PM Package employees are being addressed. He conveyed that under the Mission Youth of the J&K government; several young people are given opportunities to become entrepreneurs. The Chief Secretary urged migrant youth to take advantage of self-employment schemes. He directed the Employment Department to raise awareness among migrant youth about self-employment and entrepreneurship schemes.

The Chief Secretary directed the Culture Department to draft a proposal to utilise the upcoming Multi-Purpose Community Hall at Jagti to showcase Kashmir's rich cultural heritage. The Chief Secretary further said that religious places of the migrant community are also being renovated in Kashmir.

Earlier, Commissioner for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Dr Arvind Karwani, presented a detailed overview of the steps being taken by the Relief Organisation. These, inter alia, included infrastructure upkeep, major repairs and renovations, annual maintenance, development of playgrounds, integration of the migrant community into Social Security Schemes, digitisation of migrant records, and outreach initiatives for Ayushman Bharat and other schemes.

Credits: Information Department, J&K

CS J&K Paid

Several Visits to Jagti During 2025

During 2025, the Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir visited the Jagti camp in Jammu many times. Even in 2024 had visited the camp several times.

The Chief Secretary's visit to the camp was focused on administrative reviews.

Visits to the Jagati camp by the Chief Secretary included listening to residents' grievances, assuring them of the implementation of welfare schemes such as the National Food Security Act (NFSA), and reviewing available amenities, including the local hospital and school. The construction of a mega community hall at the camp is expected to be completed by March 31, 2026.

The CS has directed departments to improve citizen grievance redressal and strengthen citizen responsiveness.

PNBMT Held Review

Meeting of Chetna Diwas

In Jammu on December 15 2025, the Pandit Prem Nath Bath Memorial Trust (PNBMT) held a meeting to review the progress of the corner meetings for Chetna Diwas on December 27 2025. Prof. O. N. Koul chaired the meeting.

The meeting was attended by a large number of the community activists that included Justice (retd) Sunil Hali, Justice (retd) Bansilal Bhat, B L Saraf retired District and Session Judge, Swami Kumar, Moti Lal Malla, Roshan Lal Pandita, Kashmiri Lal, PN Goja, Dr R L Bhat, Dr Ramesh Bhat, H L Bhat, Kuldeep Raina, A K Raina, I K Raina and Lenin Kumar Bhat of Panun Kashmir, Vijay Bhat, M K Jalali, Desh Rattan, Kuldeep Raina president, Manzgam Kheer Bhawani Sanstha, Ramesh Hangloo, Aadarsh Ajit, Manmohan Thaploo, Shadi Lal Rais, Sundri Lal Koul, Nana Raina, Chand Bhat and Raju Pandita of BJP, Chand Raina, Bushan Lal Bhat ex MLC, Dilip Pandita.

The Chetna Diwas is held annually to commemorate the martyrdom of Pt. Prem Nath Bhat. On the occasion, the community spokesperson re-reads the community's problems. This year's community speaker, Justice (retd) Bansilal Bhat, was announced in the meeting.

The above advocates of community issues expressed grave concern over the

constant stoic silence of the Union Government and the Government of the UT of J&K.

The meeting expressed its dismay at the way the Kashmiri Hindu Shrines and Temples Bill has been put in cold storage despite the repeated pleas of the Trust to successive Governments in this regard during the last two decades. It demanded the immediate enactment of the law for the protection and management of Hindu shrines in Kashmir.

Further, the meeting flayed the Government for its stoic silence about steps for the honourable and dignified rehabilitation of displaced people in Kashmir, their homeland.

Other issues of the concern that were deliberated upon are grant of compensation for houses set ablaze or damaged by terrorists, renovation of Jagti and other migrant camps, providing basic amenities to camp inmates, enhancement of cash relief, providing of safe and secure accommodation to PM package employees, creating of employment avenues for displaced youth, giving benefits of all Centrally sponsored schemes to displaced Pandits and removal of encroachments from shrines and temples land as well as property of displaced Pandits in the Valley.

Editing: Vijay Kashkari

Source: Agencies

Shadows of Homeland

Vijay Kashkari

Losing Home and Homeland

The earth remembers my footsteps,
But my feet no longer recognise the soil.
My tongue forgets the language of the wind,
And the stars above have rearranged their vigil.
In foreign streets, I trace the shadows,
Searching for the silhouette of what was mine.
The scent of cardamom and rain,
A ghostly whisper that cuts like a knife.
My homeland bleeds in silence,
A mosaic of memories shattered like glass.
The river's melody, now a dirge,
Echoes of prayers in a language lost in translation.
I carry fragments: a stone, a song, a scar,
Trying to rebuild a nest from feathers.
But like a bird with wings clipped,
I hover, grounded, between skies



PRESS RELEASE

THE NANCY FOUNDATION TRUST (REGD.) ORGANISED ITS ANNUAL SEMINAR ON THE THEME “YOGINI

Lalleshwari in the Light of Trika Darshan,” with Dr. Raj Nehru, Officer on Special Duty to the Chief Minister of Haryana and former Vice Chancellor of Vishwakarma University, Haryana, presiding over the event as Chief Guest.

The seminar emerged as a significant platform for promoting the spiritual and philosophical legacy of Kashmir Shaiv Darshan. The programme witnessed an encouraging response from scholars, enthusiasts and spiritual seekers. A notable highlight



was the strong participation of youth, who constituted over 50 per cent of the audience, indicating a renewed interest among the younger generation in India’s ancient philosophical traditions. Chairman of the Nancy Foundation Trust, Shri Bhushan Jalali, informed that all speakers were below 25 years of age and were grouped into Junior and Senior categories to foster encouragement, motivation and healthy competition.

In the Senior category, Muskaan Razdhan secured first position, followed by Bhumika Raina and K.V. Mehta in second and third places respectively. The Junior category was topped by Tejasvi Pandita, with Tanshika Sumbli and Kristina Razdan securing second and third positions. The young speakers delivered insightful and emotionally engaging presentations on Yogini Lalleshwari and Trika philosophy, which were highly appreciated by the audience and scholars alike.

Dr. Raj Nehru commended the Nancy Foundation Trust for creating a vibrant intellectual and cultural platform for youth and announced a cash award of ₹1,000 for each young speaker to encourage their scholarly pursuits. Several audience members also announced individual prizes for select performers, inspired by the depth and clarity of the presentations. Special appreciation was accorded to Ms. Vimarshi Koul for her exceptional discourse on Trika philosophy and the vaakhs of Yogini Lalleshwari.

The seminar was further enriched by scholarly inputs from eminent experts including Sanjay Raina, Prof. R.P. Shukla, Head of the Sanskrit Department, University of Jammu, and Dr. Jageer Singh, former professor of Jammu University and a noted authority on Trika philosophy. Cultural performances by young children, including Shiv Tandav Nritya, devotional bhajans and recitation of Lalleshwari’s vaakhs, added colour and spiritual fervour to the event.

The programme concluded with felicitation of the Chief Guest and dignitaries, followed by a vote of thanks, reaffirming the Trust’s commitment to nurturing cultural and spiritual awareness among the youth.

- B L Jalali,
Chairman www.nancyfoundation.in

Overview of

Various Management Entrance Tests

An MBA degree develops crucial managerial and leadership skills, provides business acumen for higher-level roles, and offers opportunities for career and industry changes. The degree can also serve as a pathway to career advancement and entrepreneurship, equipping individuals with the knowledge to start their own businesses. An MBA can help individuals advance to senior corporate roles across industries and geographies.

Employers often seek MBA graduates for their managerial skills, which increases their marketability and the number of job prospects.

MBA entrance exams assess candidates' aptitude and readiness for management studies, providing a standardised way for business schools to evaluate a large pool of applicants from diverse backgrounds. These exams assess key skills such as quantitative, logical, and verbal abilities, and a high score can improve a candidate's chances of admission, access to scholarships, and future career prospects at top-tier schools.

Admission to a top business school through a competitive entrance exam can lead to better job opportunities and higher earning potential after graduation.

The top MBA exams in India include the Common Admission Test (CAT), Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT), Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP), and Common Management Admission Test (CMAT). Other major exams are the Management Aptitude Test (MAT) and the NMIMS Management Aptitude Test (NMAT). These national exams, along with university and state-level tests, provide a gateway to admission into various business schools.

National level

CAT (Common Admission Test):

The most popular exam for admission into the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and over 1,300 other business schools.

The Common Admission Test (CAT) is a computer-based exam in India for admission to graduate management programs, particularly at the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

The exam is divided into three sections: Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension (VARC), Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning (DILR), and Quantitative Ability (QA).

The official CAT website, iimcat.ac.in, is the source for the latest information and resources.

To be eligible for the CAT exam, a candidate must have a Bachelor's degree with at least 50% marks. CAT registration starts in August, and the examination is given in November.

XAT (Xavier Aptitude Test):

The Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT) is a national-level entrance exam for MBA/PGDM programs, conducted by XLRI Jamshedpur on behalf of the Xavier Association of Management Institutes (XAMI). Over 250 business schools in India accept XAT scores.

It is a Computer-based test (CBT). Graduates from any discipline with no age limit can apply.

XAT 2026 registration closed on December 5, 2025; the exam is scheduled for January 4, 2026. The computer-based test includes sections on Verbal and Logical Ability, Decision Making, Quantitative Ability & Data Interpretation, and General Knowledge. Registration opens in July.

CMAT (Common Management Admission Test):

CMAT is conducted by the NTA and accepted

by approximately 1,300 AICTE-approved MBA colleges across India.

The Common Management Admission Test (CMAT) is a national-level entrance exam for MBA programs in India that assesses quantitative ability, logical reasoning, language comprehension, general awareness, and innovation & entrepreneurship. The CMAT 2026 exam is scheduled for January 25, 2026. Key dates for the 2026 cycle include the registration period from November 14 to December 25, 2025. The exam is conducted online and consists of 100 questions, with a total score of 400 marks.

SNAP (Symbiosis National Aptitude Test):

Required for admission to the MBA programs at Symbiosis International University and its affiliated institutes.

The SNAP (Symbiosis National Aptitude Test) is a national-level entrance exam for Symbiosis International University's postgraduate management programs. It is a 60-minute computer-based test with 60 multiple-choice questions covering General English, Quantitative, DI & DS, and Analytical & Logical Reasoning.

The 2025 exam dates are December 6, 14, and 20. Candidates may take the test up to three times, with the highest score considered. Registration ended on November 20, 2025.

MAT (Management Aptitude Test):

The MAT (Management Aptitude Test) is a standardised national-level entrance exam administered by the All India Management Association (AIMA) to help business schools screen candidates for MBA and allied programs. It is conducted four times a year and accepted by over 600 B-schools across India. The exam is multiple-choice and consists of five sections, totalling 150 questions.

The registration deadlines for the MAT 2025 (December session) are December 7, 2025, for the Paper-Based Test (PBT) and December 15, 2025, for the Computer-Based Test (CBT). Both registration periods have started and are ongoing on the official AIMA website. Other tests are conducted in February, May, and September.

NMAT (NMIMS Management Aptitude Test):

Used for admission to the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) and other participating institutions.

The NMAT by GMAC (NMIMS Management Aptitude Test) is a national-level MBA entrance exam conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) for admission to NMIMS and other B-schools. The 2025 exam was held from November 5 to December 19, 2025, with registration closing on October 18, 2025. It is a computer-based test with three sections: Language Skills, Quantitative Skills, and Logical Reasoning.

ATMA (AIMS Test for Management Admissions):

ATMA, or the AIMS Test for Management Admissions, is a national-level entrance exam for postgraduate management programs like MBA and MCA, conducted by the Association of Indian Management Schools (AIMS). It is a computer-based test with 180 multiple-choice questions across six sections, typically held four times a year in February, May, July, and August. The exam is often held on the same day across multiple sessions, with registration and admit card release dates set in advance.

Over 600 B-schools in India accept the test score.

State and university level

MAH MBA/MMS CET

MAH MBA/MMS CET is the Maharashtra Common Entrance Test, an entrance exam for management admission (MBA/MMS) programs in Maharashtra. The test is conducted by the Maharashtra State Common Entrance Test Cell. The registration for the 2026 exam period is expected to open in December 2025.

TSICET (Telangana)

The Telangana Integrated Common Entrance Test (TG ICET) 2025 is a Computer-Based Test (CBT) conducted for admissions into MBA and MCA programmes offered by Universities in Telangana and their affiliated colleges. This examination for the academic

year 2025-26 was conducted by Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda, on behalf of the Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE), Hyderabad.

TANCET (Tamil Nadu)

The Tamil Nadu Common Entrance Test (TANCET) is an annual state-level entrance exam for postgraduate courses, including MBA, MCA, ME, M.Tech, M.Arch, and M.Plan, offered by colleges across Tamil Nadu. Conducted by Anna University, it serves as an eligibility test for admission to these programs.

Registration is tentatively scheduled to begin on January 24, with a deadline in February.

Some institutions have their own exams, such as the MICAT for the Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA), and the IIFT exam for the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade.

Other Aptitude Tests

IIFT (Indian Institute of Foreign Trade)

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) is a public business school headquartered in New Delhi. It has been proposed for designation as an Institute of National Importance by the Government of India. [Established in 1963, it functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Government of India. It also serves as a training institute for the probationary officers of the Indian Trade Service. Its headquarters are in New Delhi, and it has additional campuses in GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City, Gandhinagar), Kolkata and Kakinada.

Eligibility for admission in 2026 requires qualifying for the CAT.

OJEE (Odisha Joint Entrance Examination)

OJEE holds Common Entrance Examinations and conducts a counselling process for admission to various Undergraduate / Postgraduate Level Professional Courses, including MBA, in the State of Odisha.

Candidate registration/choice filling is expected to start in July.

KMAT (Karnataka Management Admission Test)

KPPGCA (Karnataka Private Post Graduate Association) provides proactive support for professional education and facilitates and streamlines admission to postgraduate professional courses, viz., MBA, PGDM, and MCA. KPPGCA, approved by AICTE. One hundred eighty-nine member institutions are affiliated with respective universities in Karnataka.

KPPGCA fill the management quota of seats in the member institutions by holding the "Karnataka Management Admission Test (KMAT)" conducted online, remotely proctored.

KMAT was the last standard entrance exam for MBA/PGDM Admissions in 2025.

MICAT (Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad)

MICAT (MICA Admission Test) is the entrance exam for Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA), assessing candidates for the management (PGDM) and communication (PGDM-C) programs. It is usually held twice a year (Dec/Jan) for communication-focused MBA aspirants. It is an online test.

KIITEE (Kalinga Institute of Industrial Management) MBA

The online application is for admission to programmes offered in the KIIT School of Management, Bhubneshwar, Odisha.

For your information, applicants are strongly advised to use the KSOM Query Management System (KSOM-QMS) instead of emailing to receive a quick response.

Karnataka PG CET

GMAC (Graduate Management Admission Council)

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) is a global nonprofit association of leading graduate business schools. GMAC has expanded to a worldwide association of more than 225 member institutions, offering products and services trusted by 7,000+ business school programs worldwide.

Create an MBA.com account and provide some basic information, and you will be registered for the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)

NMAT GMAC

Registering for the NMAT by GMAC exam is easy. Register & Schedule the exam as per your preferred slot. Registration starts in August,

and test slots can be selected up to December.

The NMAT by GMAC exam registration and the school application process are two separate steps.

The NMAT exam is used for admissions to the leading graduate business programmes in India, South Africa, the Philippines, Hungary, Nigeria, and Morocco.

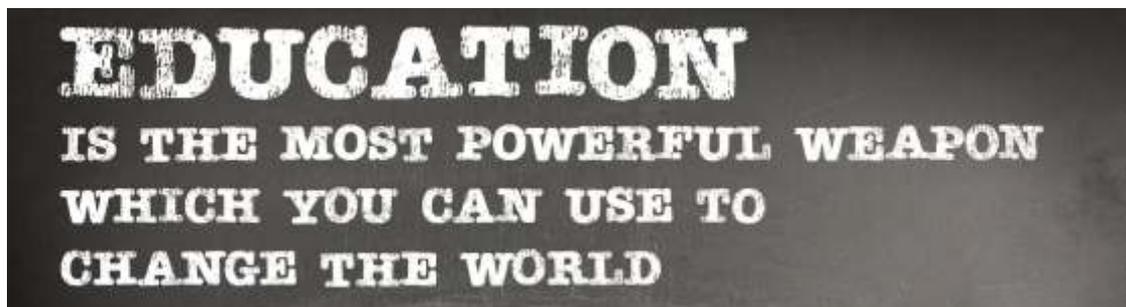
State Common Entrance Test Cell, Mumbai Tentative Schedule of CET 2026

S. No	Department Name of CET Exam	Name of CET	Tentative Exam Date
1	Technical Education	MAH-MCA CET-2026	30-03-2026
2	Technical Education	MAH-B.Design CET-2026	05-04-2026 to
3	Technical Education	MAH- MBA/MMS-CET-2026	06-04-2026 to 08-04-2026
4	Technical Education	MAH- MHT CET (PCM Group) -2026	11-04-2026 to 19-04-2026
5	Technical Education	MAH- MHT CET (PCB Group) -2026	14-21-04-2026 to 26-04-2026
6	Technical Education	MAH- B.HMCT /BCA/BBA/BMS/BBM CET-2026	28-04-2026 to 30-04-2026

Tentative Schedule Second MHT CET and MBA CET 2026

S.No.	Department	Name of CET	Tentative Exam Date
1	Technical Education	MAH- MBA/MMS-CET-2026	09-05-2026
2	Technical Education	MAH- MHT CET (PCB Group) -2026	10-05-2026 to 11-05-2026
3	Technical Education	MAH- MHT CET (PCM Group)	14-05-2026 to 17-05-2026

Feedback: vijaykashkari@gmail.com





AIKS Matrimonial Service



We are seeking a suitable alliance for our daughter. Date of Birth: 13.08.1996 (01:38 AM), Place of Birth: New Delhi, Height: 5 ft 4 in, Manglik: Anshik Manglik

Qualification: M.Sc. in Pharmaceutical Design and Engineering – Technical University of Denmark (DTU), Denmark. B.Sc. in Biomedical Engineering – University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), USA. Professional Details: Presently working in Denmark as a Senior Regulatory Affairs Specialist in a global organization providing medical devices and technologies for chronic care management. Career is well established with strong long-term prospects.

India Address: Faridabad, Delhi NCR (Currently residing in Denmark) Preference: Kashmiri Pandit boy residing in Europe (working and well-settled). Tekni Milap is a must.

Interested may kindly contact: +91 98104 21789 or Email: vinay@bhat.co



Seeking a suitable alliance for our well-cultured, and family-oriented daughter, born on January 21, 2000 at 8:46 AM in Delhi, holding Bachelor's in Forensic Sciences and a Master's in Digital Forensics, Cyber Security, and IT. Currently, employed with a leading Big 4 firm. Interested families are kindly requested to contact us at 9312007931 or 9999573333, or email at alliancecp65@gmail.com.



Looking for a suitable match for our younger Son. Masters in Engineering, presently employed with leading Indian Auto Multinational as Asst Manager International Operations @ Chennai. Date of Birth: 07/06/1996, Time of Birth: 2.57am, Place of Birth: Noida. Family based at Noida. Pls respond on shahnshah108@gmail.com / 9910076101



Seeking alliance for my daughter. DOB: 8-06-1994, Time: 15:45(PM) in Chandigarh, Height: 5.1” Qualification: B.Sc in Microbiology from Punjab University Chandigarh. MBA in Marketing, Diploma in Computers applications. Working as Product Manager in Torrent Pharma one of the leading Pharma Company in Ahmedabad. Valley Address: Nai Sarak, Srinagar. Present Address: Ahmedabad/Chandigarh. Please contact on WhatsApp 9417687460 for Takini and Biodata.



We are looking for a suitable match for our son born on 09th June 1995 at 9:30 am at Dehradun. Qualification: B.Tech in E&I from Amrita School of Engineering, Coimbatore, TN, India. MS from Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Working in an e-commerce company in Boston. Ht. 180 cms. Parents: Father retired from ONGC as GM & Mother retired as Gazetted Officer from Central Government department are settled in Dehradun & Chennai. Sister working in Microsoft is married and settled in USA. Preferences: US based girl & ht. 5.6 feet or above. Interested family may contact on +919445005028, +919840345098 kamalzutshi60@gmail.com.

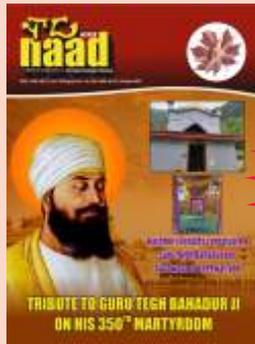
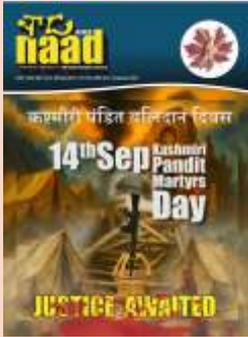


Seeking alliance for our daughter DOB October 1999, born in Jammu. Height 5'-8". Qualification: - BA in Mass Communication (Journalism), diploma in International Humanitarian Law, Post Graduation in Rural Development (result awaited). Working as partnership manager in Edu. Tech Company at Hyderabad. Valley Address: - Safa Kadal, Srinagar, Present Address: - Talab Tiloo, Jammu. If interested please contact or WhatsApp Tekni & Kalawali on 9796220711, 8899284050.

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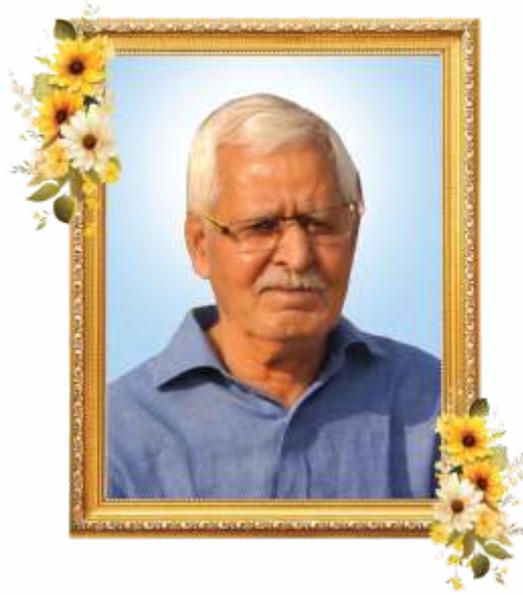
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Bhushan Lal Ogra

2 May 1941 – 9 Dec 2025

(Original Resident of Sheshyar, 2nd bridge, Habba Kadal Srinagar, Kashmir)

With hearts overflowing with both sorrow and profound gratitude, we remember a man whose life was a beacon of love, strength and grace.

He was more than the pillar of our family - he was our guiding light, offering quiet wisdom, steadfast support and a reassuring presence through every season of life. His exceptional generosity knew no bounds, his warmth made strangers feel like family, and his genuine compassion touched every soul he encountered.

Independent in spirit and resolute in character, he was an entrepreneur by instinct who lived life with remarkable authenticity at his own terms and always true to himself and his values. His aura, charisma and infectious vibrancy inspired us daily, reminding us to find meaning in every relationship and joy in every moment. He had the rare gift of making people feel seen, valued and instantly at home.

Though he has left us, his legacy of kindness, strength and unconditional love will live on in our hearts forever.

In deepest grief and lovingly remembered by:
The Ogra, Kilam, Raina, Dullu, Ambardar, Kak, Dhar families & friends.

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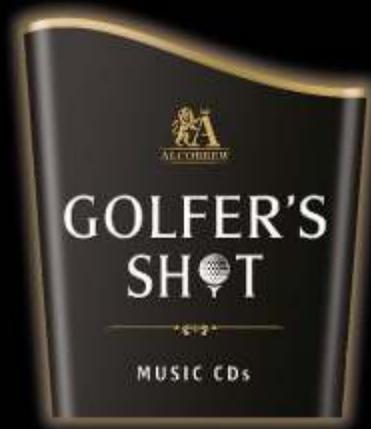
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