



## KASHMIRI PANDITS OF DHURANDHAR



ADITYA DHAR



LOKESH DHAR



ADITYA RAJ KAUL



GITIKKA GANJU DHAR



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Sudhir Shah

9910076101

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR

Bharti Raina Kaul

8130538867

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Pranav Koul, Suman Kumar  
M/s Print Orbit

THIS MONTH'S COVER

Reflects Kashmir's  
New Wave in Indian Cinema.

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# Editorial



**Dear Readers,**

Many among us have watched *The Kashmir Files*, a film that brought to light the painful reality of the Kashmiri Pandit genocide. However, the truth in real life was even more brutal, Kashmiri Pandits endured immense suffering at the hands of terrorism compounded by administrative neglect. A 5,000-year-old civilization was uprooted from the Valley, while much of the world remained silent.

Yet, amidst this adversity, the community especially its youth demonstrated remarkable resilience, patience, and determination. They committed themselves to rebuilding lives and uplifting their families who had borne the brunt of displacement and trauma. Today, this resilience is reflected in their achievements across diverse fields be it corporate sectors, academia, media, business, travel, literature, and increasingly, cinema and performing arts.

In earlier times, only a few names from the community, such as Anupam Kher and Kunal Kemmu, made their mark in mainstream Bollywood. However, the paradigm has shifted significantly with the emergence of visionary filmmakers like Aditya Dhar. His work reflects a powerful blend of storytelling, visual depth, and nuanced character portrayal that has captivated audiences across the nation.

Films like *Uri: The Surgical Strike* have

already demonstrated his cinematic strength. Projects like *Article 370*, *Baramulla*, and *Dhurandhar* reflects the growing appetite for bold, rooted storytelling. However, it's worth noting that some of these films especially *Dhurandhar I & II* are crossing ₹3000 crore globally.

There is a visible and encouraging rise of Kashmiri talent in cinema. The inclusion of artists like Raj Zutshi, Basha Sumbli, Gitikka Ganju Dhar, Shresh Zutshi, Mohit Raina, Ashwani Dhar, and Harshul Kaul reflects a meaningful shift one that provides a platform for local voices and authentic representation. One must also acknowledge the research work done by ace journalist Aditya Raj Kaul. His in-depth study of the Pakistan and its terror mechanisations is worthy of praise. We wish him continued success in all his future works.

This growing participation will undoubtedly inspire more youth to consider performing arts as a viable and respected career path. Their performances mark just the beginning of what promises to be a significant cultural and artistic journey.

We extend our best wishes to all these talented individuals and hope they continue to scale new heights, bringing recognition not only to themselves but also to the rich legacy they represent.

मनील रैन रावक



## From the *President's* *Desk*

During April 2026, AIKS continued its focused efforts on key policy, advocacy, and community issues impacting the displaced Kashmiri community.

The Core Committee deliberated on the Public Notice issued by the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants), Jammu, regarding the integration of migrant ration cards into the National Food Security Act (NFSA) database. Serious concerns were raised over the ambiguity surrounding the nature and extent of benefits, which has led to confusion and anxiety within the community. AIKS highlighted that the NFSA 2013 does not explicitly recognise Kashmiri migrants, thereby raising critical questions about the applicability and accessibility of these provisions. The matter has been formally taken up with the Chief Secretary (Member, State Food Commission, J&K) and the Secretary, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction, seeking clarity on both the benefits and the mechanism for their delivery to displaced families residing outside the Valley.

It has also been observed that beneficiaries registered under NFSA are facing significant difficulties at fair price shops. Reports indicate that senior citizens are being subjected to inconvenience and, in some cases, harassment, including receiving inadequate quantities of ration. The situation is further aggravated by long queues during peak daytime hours, exposing elderly individuals to extreme heat and health risks.

AIKS strongly urges the administration to address these basic yet critical issues on priority to ensure dignity and ease of access for vulnerable sections.

On the advocacy front, AIKS intensified its engagement with the administration on the long-pending issue of compiling an inventory of immovable properties left behind during the 1990 exodus. A formal representation has been submitted to the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, calling for public disclosure of a comprehensive inventory, fixation of 1990 as the cut-off year for revenue records, conduct of localized surveys for undocumented ancestral properties, and submission of an Action Taken Report (ATR) before the Hon'ble High Court of Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh in OWP No. 477/2016 – *All India Kashmiri Samaj & Ors vs UOI & Ors*.

During the month, AIKS also held a follow-up meeting with the Director, IGNCA, and the Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Culture. The delegation was assured of continued support for initiatives aimed at the preservation, documentation, and promotion of the community's rich cultural heritage.

AIKS reiterates its unwavering commitment to addressing the concerns of the displaced community through sustained dialogue, structured advocacy, and constructive engagement with all stakeholders.

*May Sharda Mata bless us all.*



 Sunil Kaul



## General Secretary's Column

**A** Core Committee Meeting was held on 11th April 2026 at the AIKS Office, GK-1. The meeting witnessed detailed deliberations on several important matters concerning the organisation.

One of the primary agenda items was the submission of the Chairman's Report by the Constitution Review Committee, constituted to suggest amendments to the existing constitution. The committee, functioning under the convenership of Dr. Col. Tej Tickoo (Ex-President, AIKS), presented a comprehensive and well-structured report. The recommendations have been noted and will be placed for detailed discussion and approval in the forthcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) with the larger membership.

The financial position of the organisation was also reviewed during the meeting. In view of the current situation, it was collectively decided to initiate a joint fund-raising effort. Eminent individuals and well-wishers associated with the organisation will be approached for support. A list of such well-wishers has been finalised by the President, and the process of outreach will commence shortly.

On the organisational front, significant progress has been made in updating affiliate data and clearing pending records. Most affiliates have submitted their

current-year data, including reports on monthly activities conducted across various states. This has helped streamline records and improve coordination. Efforts are also underway to expand the network by incorporating more affiliates in the coming months.

A proposal was also put forward by the Core Committee to organise a joint event in Jammu in the coming months. This initiative aims to strengthen coordination with our esteemed legal fraternity in Jammu and to extend organisational and logistical support in connection with the Civil Writ Petition filed by AIKS before the Hon'ble High Court at Jammu. This engagement is expected to further consolidate our collective efforts and ensure effective representation of the community's concerns.

On behalf of the organisation and the wider community, AIKS expresses its profound gratitude to the team of distinguished legal professionals who have been diligently handling the matter. Their commitment, expertise, and unwavering support in pursuing the case are deeply appreciated and acknowledged.

The organisation expresses its sincere appreciation to all affiliates for their timely cooperation and contribution in providing updated data and records.



 Prof. S. Sapru



# HINDU EDUCATIONAL TRUST UNIVERSITY (HETU) (A view Point)

**O**n November 15, 2009 at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi our community held a conclave at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi, where the concluding statement was :-

“Acutely aware of the continuing trauma faced by the Kashmiri Pandit community, even after 20 years of its displacement, leading to the erosion in their social, political and economic rights. While appreciating the efforts made by the Central Government in providing some incremental economic relief especially in the shape of the Prime Minister's Package, though far short of our expectations, the Conclave maintains that the survival of the community, and its eventual return to the Kashmir valley, is closely linked to its political empowerment.” Thereafter 08 resolutions were passed, with a pledge to struggle for their

achievement. The last resolution reads as, “AIKS Conclave 2009 acclaims and expresses its pride in the Kashmiri Pandit Community's intellectual acumen and academic excellence which constitute the core strength of the community as a whole and has bestowed on them a place of pride in the country and abroad. To harness this vast acumen and the divine grace of Devi Saraswati, this Conclave resolves the setting up of an Institution of Excellence by Kashmiri Pandits themselves. Its main objective will be to promote multi-dimensional academic, scientific and technological advancement that benefits the Community, the Nation and the World at large.”

With the recent passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Private Universities Bill, 2026 (L.A. Bill No. 08 of 2026) in the Jammu and



Kashmir Assembly it is perhaps the most appropriate time for Hindu Education Society Kashmir (HESK) to Leverage this bill and think of establishing a University, as the bill facilitates the establishment, incorporation, and regulation of private universities in the Union Territory, with a focus on enhancing the quality of education and protecting student interests. The legislation facilitates to concretize a long cherished dream of the community, establishing the Hindu Educational Trust University (HETU).

As was very rightly resolved in the 2009 conclave, this institution must have excellence. However, I feel it should also fit into Joel Barker's criteria of innovation and anticipation. In his book titled "FUTURE EDGE" Joel Barker, one of the earliest and most articulate promoter of the concept of "Paradigm Shift" and its effect on organizations, establishments, services etc., lists three key capabilities needed by them to be constantly successful in the future, **Excellence, Innovation and Anticipation**. If you don't have the components of **Excellence** then you figure nowhere as a competitor because excellence is the base of success in the 21st Century. **Innovation** helps you gain the competitive edge and **Anticipation** provides the information that you need to be in the right place at the right time.

For an educational institution to confirm to the norms of **Excellence** it is important to have the state of the art infrastructure (buildings, laboratories, libraries, connectivity, landscapes & play fields etc.) and more

importantly an excellent faculty, which may be drawn from across the world. In order to put these two components in position the institution needs to have a very solid economic base. The idea mooted in some quarters, that the community members who are doing exemplary work in their respective disciplines, can be invited to join the institution in the capacity of visiting faculty and guide students along with the preposition of consultancy work is very well taken but we need to have an institution of our own.

An important dimension that needs to be thoroughly debated is the location of this institution. An institution of excellence has to be located at a place which is very close to a fully developed city having excellent connectivity as otherwise we may not be in a position to attract the right kind of faculty. In addition to the best academic environment, the faculty needs, include good schooling and growth opportunities for their children and excellent social environment for their families.

However once the location is identified the initial seed money of around 100 crores may be required for the startup and thereafter recurring costs shall have to be met with. While the recurring costs can be managed by proposing a suitable fee structure, I believe the initial seed money may also be possible, should the community support the proposal. Central and State Governments can be approached for the purpose. We can even request the Central Govt. for this money under the Prime Minister's Economic Package. As pointed out by Sh. M.K. Kaw the initiative taken by the Kashmir Education, Cultural and Science Society may be revisited and reframed to try for the possible launch of the University. Furthermore the suggestion put forth by him that we could gain control over the funds if, as and when the temple bill is passed seems excellent and therefore all out efforts need to be made to ensure that the temple bill is passed, and passed soon.

Assuming that we are in a position to put in place the right blend of human and physical resource in our institution of **excellence**, we need to be **innovative** in selecting the courses



of study which have to be based on **anticipation**, i.e., imagining what could be the best fields of study in the next 20-30 years. A **suggestive list** of subjects could be chosen broadly from the frontier and prospective branches of:-

01. Management Studies.
02. Genetic Engineering and/or Bio-Technology
02. Computer software and hard ware.
04. Space technology & Marine Engineering
05. Climate Change
06. Space & Marine ecology
07. Industrial Mathematics
08. Nano Technology
09. Artificial Intelligence

However in order to inculcate the Kashmiri Pandit Philosophy in the minds of our youth a special course be designed which would focus on the Kashmiri Pandit Ethos, Philosophy, Culture and Religion. All the students may compulsorily have to take this course.

The University may have a cafeteria course structure based on credits and having a strong interdependence between various disciplines, which would allow the benefit of building strong foundations of Kashmiri Pandit values and ethics by taking courses in Kashmiri Pandit Philosophy, Culture and Religion, while building cutting edge analytical skills in the above referred to (suggestive) technical and management courses.

I have talked about merit based admissions, because I believe that it is better to have 100 excellent brains than a large number of mediocre. However, we shall have to confirm to the other two important norms for education i.e., **Equity and Access**. While providing the facility of equity and access to our students it is important to ensure that these parameters are not misused and therefore I would propose that the student admitted to the institution may have to pay a very heavy tuition fee, say of the order of say Rs 50 lakhs per annum. This may look ridiculous, but my idea is to equally provide around Rs 49 lakhs as free ship to all the students admitted, with the condition that should a student not do well in

his/her courses (a bench mark to be defined), he/she loses the free ship (*The figures are representative only*). In view of the financial involvements of the suggested magnitude, in addition to the students the parents shall also ensure that their children do well. The student performance shall there upon confirm to the very purpose of the institution and the resolution of the community i.e., to provide the best brains to the community, the Nation and World at large, who have attained multi-dimensional academic, scientific and technological advancement. My notion of the university confirms with that of Prof. Bhim Singh Dahiya (former Vice-Chancellor Kurukshetra University) who in his recently published book titled MESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION says and I quote "*The idea of the university envisages dealing with ideas, not training; with research, not skill. The idea is not to collect crowd of raw minds but to have a small community of scholars exploring new areas in the respective fields.*"

Though difficult but not impossible, the dream of a HETU is achievable provided we follow a leader or a group of well chosen people, ignore and forgive their mistakes even if they make some. It is said that a leadership emerges when crisis erupts. We the Kashmiri Pandits have gone through the worst type of crisis and all of us suffered, only the type of suffering and the magnitudes differed, but we suffered. Let us allow a leadership to emerge and let us support it. The words of Prof. Surendra Munshi are very befitting and reassuring when he says and I quote "*We need a vision of our collective future and for that we need to go beyond immediate concerns, though they are important in their own spheres. A vision that is developed collectively, drawing upon our best resources, will unite us and show us the path.*"

**I conclude by saying that we do need to develop the vision collectively and equally important is the need to execute the same collectively.**

*(Former Fellow of the United Nations University)*



 Sanjay Kundu, IPS (Retired)



# A Son's Return to the Kashmir Valley

## MY TIME WITH THE BSF

**M**y return to Kashmir was not merely a professional assignment; it was a homecoming to the land of my birth in Rainawari, Srinagar. After being promoted to the rank of Deputy Inspector General (DIG), I opted for a deputation to the Border Security Force. In the 2000's, an era when the valley was the ultimate security hotspot, I served as the Sector Commander of the prestigious Srinagar Sector.

My roots in the valley run deep, though the memories of my earliest years in Rainawari and Bal Garden remain faint, like mist over the Dal Lake. I was the child of academics; my father Lecturer at Kashmir University and my mother at Government College in Nawa Kadal. In 1968, seeking better horizons, my parents moved our lives to Kurukshetra. As the years passed and our visits during summer breaks grew infrequent, the Kashmir of my youth became a collection of stories rather than a home. After 1990 exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley, the link to my roots was abruptly severed. I could not have known then that decade later, I would return to these very coordinates, not as a visitor, but as a sentinel.

By the early 2000's, Kashmir had

become the epicentre of instability, and it was into this 'high voltage zone' that the BSF leadership posted me to command the Srinagar Sector. Operating from my headquarters at Pantha Chowk, I inherited a massive establishment and an even weightier set of responsibilities. My command was threefold: we spearheaded the defence of the Line of Control (LoC) along the prestigious Gulmarg Sector; secured the valley's most vital installations; and conducted high-stakes anti-militancy operations in the region's most volatile districts.

Because of the BSF's recognized professional prowess, we were entrusted with the safety of the Raj Bhawan, the Chief Minister's residence, the strategic Gupkar Road, and the Zabarwan range overlooking the capital. Furthermore, we guarded the critical Air Force Stations at Srinagar and Awantipora. While one of my battalions responsible for LoC, was headquartered at the Nishat, three others locked in a relentless struggle against militancy were located in the notorious hot beds of Tral, Sopore, and Bandipore.

### **The Line of Control: Guarding the Gateway**

Along the Line of Control (LoC), my

India had won the Haji Pir Pass in the 1965 war, only to return it during the Tashkent Peace talks. It was a grave strategic error, as this feature connected Poonch with Baramulla, and left us facing a labyrinth of militant launch pads just across the border fence.



*(Author being complimented by Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India for excellent work by BSF.)*

command centered on the traditionally sensitive Gulmarg Sector, a jagged and rugged frontier stretching from Poonch to the Salamabad Nallah in the Uri Sector. Here, the BSF was tightly interspersed with the Indian Army in a network of Forward Defended Localities (FDLs), fortified eyes and electro-optics scanning a landscape where history and geography conspired against us. Because this sector served as the fastest route for aggressors to reach the capital Srinagar, its security was paramount.

To truly grasp the treacherous terrain, I

chose to trek the entire sector on foot. We marched from the Khalsa-I and Khalsa-II posts, traversing the shadow of the strategic Haji Pir Pass feature—crossing Padan Patri, Sarson, Doghi, and Ganesh until we reached our final post, Plateau. Beyond lay the Salamabad Nallah and the Uri Brigade's jurisdiction. Walking those ridges, the weight of history was heavy; India had won the Haji Pir Pass in the 1965 war, only to return it during the Tashkent Peace talks. It was a grave strategic error, as this feature connected Poonch with Baramulla, and left us facing a labyrinth of militant launch pads just across the border fence.

The terrain was as much an enemy as the infiltrators. In winters, the sector was buried under 35 feet of snow, turning every post into an avalanche-prone island. I watched my soldiers beat the soft snow into a hardened surface, a desperate necessity to ensure helicopters could land for vital supplies or medical evacuations. In the midst of a storm, the risk was absolute: a post could be swallowed by the white shroud of drifts in hours, burying our men alive. Our woes did not end there, increased exposure to snow could lead to “snow blindness” and “frost bites” could lead to gangrene and ultimately amputation of the limbs. This was the omnipotent 'second line of threat', a constant battle against nature itself.



*(Author interacting with BSF troops in Sopore- 2004)*

“

The greatest peril came from the Border Action Teams (BATs)—predatory, mixed commando units of Pakistani regulars and militants known for their brutality.

”

### The Kill Zone: Snipers and Shadow Warriors

Because the Gulmarg Sector was so vulnerable, I frequently led high-altitude treks to inspect our FDLs. In this landscape, 'proximity' was a deadly reality; at many points, the Pakistani posts were well within firing range, their muzzles trained on anyone who dared to break the skyline. I vividly recall reaching our final post, 'Plateau,' at the end of an exhausting trek. My mobile phone suddenly shattered the silence, it was my Inspector General, Mr. J.B. Negi. I answered with a whispered urgency: 'Sir, I will call you back. I am directly in the sights of a Pakistani post, and they may snipe me at any moment'. At that time, I was young, and while the adrenaline of such moments was a thrill, but later the raw reality of being a target sent a paralyzing chill down my spine.

From our vantage points, the scale of the threat was visible: Pakistani artillery batteries and missile stations were positioned just across the LoC, marking this as the most militarized zone on earth. My mandate was absolute: zero attacks on the LoC and zero infiltration. However, the greatest peril came from the Border Action Teams (BATs)—predatory, mixed commando units of Pakistani regulars and militants known for their brutality. Their objective was to ambush, kill, and desecrate, making our duty of ever-present vigilance the only thin line between safety and brutal tragedy.

### A Brotherhood of Arms : Strategy in the Hunting Palace

Securing the LoC required a seamless synergy between the Indian Army and the BSF. I maintained excellent relations with the Army Brigadier and his officers, often meeting up at their headquarters, a building that had once served as the Maharaja's hunting palace on the banks of river Jhelum. Within those historic walls laden with animal trophies, amidst shared meals, we put our minds together to tighten the net across the border.

My command was guided by four unwavering objectives. The first was personal and tactical: I had to ensure I did not become a victim of Pakistani violence. The enemy was perpetually on the lookout for senior officers, viewing such a killing as a 'prized trophy'—a mistake made earlier by many commanders that I was determined not to repeat. My second objective was the safety of my men; I could not allow my soldiers to fall victim to the calculated violence the Pakistani regulars were fully capable of inflicting. Third, we maintained a posture of aggressive deterrence : we were prepared to inflict heavy damage on Pakistani regulars or their state-sponsored militants should they find the courage to harm us or try to infiltrate. Finally, our success was measured by a single metric: zero infiltration. Reflecting on that time today, I view my tenure as a validation of these goals.

We achieved a rare period of nil violence against our troops, neutralized numerous



*(Author being awarded the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service by Rajnath Singh, Union Home Minister)*

militants attempting to breach our LoC, and ensured that Srinagar and the wider valley remained peaceful under our watch.

### **The Zero-Error Mandate : Guarding the Crown Jewels**

As an elite force, the BSF was entrusted with the security of Jammu and Kashmir's most sensitive VIPs and vital installations. Our responsibility extended from the Raj Bhawan and the Chief Minister's residence to the strategic Gupkar Road. We held the high ground of the Zabarwan Range, a vantage point that overlooked the serene Dal Lake and Srinagar City on one flank, and the sprawling Badami Bagh Cantonment on the other. This was not merely a guarding task. This was the protection of the state's nerve center. The responsibility was particularly onerous when it came to the Indian Air Force. We secured the Srinagar Air Force Station and the Awantipora Air Force Station, the latter being a critical logistics hub for northern India. Awantipora presented a unique challenge: located in the Pulwama district, it sat ten kilometers off the national highway in the heart of South Kashmir's most volatile territory. To secure this 'zero error' zone, we maintained relentless Road Opening Patrols (RoPs) to ensure safe passage for Air Force and security personnel. Looking back, I feel a profound sense of relief that no tragedy like the Pulwama blast occurred during my watch. The burden of such a loss is a guilt I would have carried for a lifetime; instead, our diligence ensured that the 'zero error' standard remained unbroken.

### **Guardians of Faith and Heritage**

As our reputation for 'zero-error' security grew, so too did the scope of our responsibilities. We were entrusted with the protection of the revered Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple in Tula Mula. During my inspections there, I would stay in a modest tourism hut within the precincts, waking before dawn to pay my obeisance to the Goddess. Those quiet moments of early morning prayer provided a spiritual anchor to the high-tension demands of my command. We were also tasked with



*(Author with family at  
Mata Shri Kheer Bhawani Temple, Winter 2004-)*

guarding Karan Mahal, the majestic palace of Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh on Gupkar Road. Dr. Karan Singh graciously allowed me access to the palace; walking among the artifacts within was a vivid lesson in history. The grandeur of the collection underscored why the Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir held such a pivotal role in the subcontinent, meriting a 21-gun salute during the British era.

We performed these duties with absolute professionalism and a deep sense of commitment. The geopolitical climate at the time was fraught with peril marked most notably by the violent assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, yet despite the external chaos and the enemy's attempts to incite violence, we ensured that not a single untoward incident occurred under our watch. We stood as a firm bulwark against the instability radiating from across the border.

### **The Hinterlands : The Saucer of Tral**

Few places in the valley can send a chill down the spine quite like Tral, Sopore, and Bandipora. To the uninitiated, these are mere names on a map; to a commander, these were

***We achieved a rare period of nil violence against our troops, neutralized numerous militants attempting to breach our LoC, and ensured that Srinagar and the wider valley remained peaceful under our watch.***

If Tral was a tactical saucer, Sopore was an urban labyrinth of hostility. Often referred to as 'Mini-Pakistan,' the town was a bastion of rabid anti-India sentiment where Pakistani flags frequently fluttered in open defiance

some of the most ominous landscapes in the world. Yet, the danger did not deter us. I had two battalions deployed in Tral, a region geographically shaped like a saucer. This natural basin served as a magnet for the insurgency, a place where militants from across South Kashmir, including battle-hardened foreign fighters who had infiltrated through the Pir Panjal Range would congregate to plot and regroup. The social landscape was as challenging as the terrain. The population was deeply orthodox and harboured a fierce separatist sentiment, providing a silent, watchful backdrop to our operations. During my tenure, it was a labyrinth of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The militants' preferred tactic was a lethal combination: trigger an explosion to disable a security vehicle, lay a sudden ambush, and then move in to kill. Despite these terrifying stakes, my battalions performed with exceptional bravery. They systematically dismantled the terror networks, neutralizing high-value targets and reclaiming the 'saucer' from the grip of the insurgency."

### Sopore: Navigating 'Mini-Pakistan'

If Tral was a tactical saucer, Sopore was an urban labyrinth of hostility. Often referred to as 'Mini-Pakistan,' the town was a bastion of rabid anti-India sentiment where Pakistani flags frequently fluttered in open defiance. The very geography of the place felt ominous, marked by locations with names that seemed to echo their dark reputations: 'Kutta Mor,' 'Sangrama Chowk,' 'Hathi-shah,' and 'Wadura.' As the stronghold of separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the town's air was thick with resentment. My battalion was

deployed in the literal heart of this city, under the constant, unforgiving gaze of 'separatist eyeballs' from every surrounding window. In Sopore, we were vulnerable from every flank. This was the era of the 'Fidayeen'—highly motivated, suicidal strike teams whose sole objective was to storm security installations with lightning speed. Their goal was to inflict maximum casualties before being killed themselves, seeking the title of 'shaheed' while attempting to demoralize our forces. To command in Sopore was to live in a state of high-alert permanence, knowing that the distance between a quiet afternoon and a lethal storming attack was just a few seconds and also the line between "life and death" was razor thin.

### Reversing the Tide:

#### The Fidayeen at Hathishah

The era was defined by the terrifying specter of the Fidayeen. These suicide squads had grown so audacious that they began storming the very hearts of our command, including a devastating breach of the XV Corps Headquarters at Badami Bagh. The momentum seemed to be with the insurgents, until they tested the gates of our Hathishah post in Sopore. In a display of split-second lethality, my two sentries remained unshakable. As the Fidayeen launched their assault, our boys opened fire, dropping three hardcore terrorists right at the threshold of the gate. We left the bodies where they fell for hours, anticipating a secondary wave that never came. The message radiating from Sopore that day was unmistakable: *'Don't mess with the BSF.'* A week later, I received a personal letter from the Governor, Lt. General S.K. Sinha, commending our 'courageous boys' and noting that we had finally reversed

As the Fidayeen launched their assault, our boys opened fire, dropping three hardcore terrorists right at the threshold of the gate. We left the bodies where they fell for hours, anticipating a secondary wave that never came.

the trend of Fidayeen successes in the valley. Subsequently, the two boys were awarded Gallantry Medals by the Government of India.

North of the Wular Lake, in Bandipora, the challenge was different but equally lethal. Foreign infiltrators and local cells found sanctuary in the treacherous marshes created by the lake's heavy silting. We tracked them through those silts mercilessly, neutralizing the threat in a landscape where the water and marshy islands were as dangerous as the enemy. This sustained excellence led to moments of profound honour. At the Governor's annual investiture tea at the Raj Bhawan, attended by Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and the highest military, civil and police brass, the seating was strictly dictated by gallantry and merit. On two consecutive occasions, I found myself seated directly between the Governor and the Chief Minister. For a boy born in Rainawari, returning to secure his homeland, it was a moment of supreme affirmation—a sign that this impactful tenure had left an indelible mark on the safety of the State of Jammu & Kashmir and India.

### **Guardian of the Pilgrimage : The Amarnath Yatra**

As word of our 'zero-error' reputation spread, I was entrusted with one of the most culturally and strategically significant tasks in the valley: Nodal Officer for the Shri Amarnath Yatra. For two years, I shouldered the responsibility of ensuring the safety of thousands of pilgrims. Our work began long before the first devotee arrived. A month prior to the official commencement, while the peaks were still buried in deep snow, I dispatched an advanced BSF team to secure the Amarnath Cave and its sacred ice sanctum. Establishing a base camp in those frozen heights, my men stood watch to protect the holy 'lingam' from any threat of subversion or militant attack. During the pilgrimage, the security apparatus was a complex machine. While the Army held the outer cordon and the CRPF secured the camps, the BSF was tasked with the most gruelling responsibility: the Road Opening Patrols

(RoPs). We secured the entire artery of the Yatra, from Pahalgam to the Cave and down to Baltal. This role demanded that I lead from the front. I trekked the arduous path to the cave numerous times, but one journey remains etched in my memory.

Along with a fellow IPS officer from Haryana, I set out from Chandanwari at dawn. We covered the entire 42-kilometer mountain trek on foot, reaching the cave by afternoon. As we arrived at the lingam, I encountered the Chief of Army Staff, General Deepak Kapoor, accompanied by the Northern Army Commander. Having heard of a DIG trekking the full 42km route, the General gave me a warm, spontaneous hug. Turning to his generals, he pointed to me as an example of endurance and leadership. In that thin mountain air, it was a moment of supreme personal triumph, a validation of the grit that defined my tenure.

### **The Democratic Duty : The 2008 Assembly Elections**

As my tenure progressed, I was assigned a mission of immense democratic consequence : serving as the Nodal Officer on behalf of the Ministry of Home Affairs for the 2008 Vidhan Sabha elections. My mandate was to coordinate the deployment and strategic movement of all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) across the Kashmir region. This was a logistical operation of staggering proportions. I worked closely with Mr. Karambir Singh of the CRPF, a meticulous senior officer who would later lead the Uttar Pradesh Police as its DGP, balancing the strengths of our forces: the BSF as the primary pillar in the Kashmir Valley and the CRPF in Jammu. The requirements of the election took me to the furthest reaches of the map. I traversed the valley from the constituency of Dooru at the base of the Pir

***On two consecutive occasions, I found myself seated directly between the Governor and the Chief Minister.***

Panjal Range to the rugged heights of Gurez in the extreme north, and from the volatile orchards of Wachi in Shopian to the high-altitude gateway of the Zozila Pass in the east. These were hectic, sleepless weeks spent in remote outposts, far from the relative security of my Pantha Chowk headquarters. However, 'all is well that ends well.' The 2008 elections were conducted in total peace—a rare and significant feat in the history of the valley. The success of the democratic process was the ultimate validation of our planning and a source of profound professional appreciation.

### A Son's Payback on a Bed of Nails

Serving as the DIG of the Srinagar Sector was, for me, a profound experience of *déjà vu*. Walking the streets of my birth, I felt the weight of a lifelong circle finally closing. It was more than a posting; it was 'payback time'—a rare and deeply satisfying opportunity to

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Kashmir remains a crucible of danger, where radicalized elements and external adversaries perpetually invent new methods of destruction.

contribute to the peace of the land that had shaped my family's history. Yet, the sentiment of homecoming never clouded the stark reality of the mission. Kashmir remains a crucible of danger, where radicalized elements and external adversaries perpetually invent new methods of destruction. To serve here is to walk a 'bed of nails,' where cost of a single misstep is written in blood. In such an environment, complacency is fatal. I learned that the only way to triumph over those who seek to cause violence

is to relentlessly stay a step ahead of them. This philosophy of proactive intelligence and vigilance is what defined our 'no room for error' tenure, a period of maximum impact that ensured the valley remained secure under the watchful eye. For a boy from Rainawari, there was no greater professional vindication than leaving my birthplace safer than I found it.

*(The writer is Former DGP of Himachal Pradesh)*

### Cartoon by- Anil Nakhasi

TO TAKE SELFIE WITH MY LOST HOMELAND WHILE BEING REFUGEE IS ANOTHER LEVEL OF DEMOCRACY!





 Krishen K Kemmu



## Remembering A Legend

# Padma Shri Moti Lal Kemmu

**A**nybody would feel great if nominated for a national honour/Award. How many people get a national award or recognition twice in life? In the field of writing, the **Sahitya Academy Award** is a national honour that a person can get once in a lifetime. Similarly, the **Sangeet Natak Academy** award is a national honour, a person gets towards contribution in the field of drama and dance, once in a lifetime. How many people have got both these awards? Sh. Moti Lal Kemmu was not just a recipient of both these national honours; he was also honoured with the **Padma Shri** and the **Varisht Nagrik Sammaan** thereafter. Thus, honoured by the GOI with a national award four times in his lifetime. To receive a national award is a matter of great honour and prestige; to receive it twice is phenomenal, and to receive it four times is nothing but legendary!

Describing Sh. Moti Lal ji, in a few sentences, would be a gross injustice to a man of his calibre and talents. He was a multifaceted person with a dynamic personality that could be replicated by none other than the maestro himself! A doyen in the field of theatre, a legend of a writer, a satirist, a social reformer, a revivalist; he revived the folk theatre form of Kashmiri known as the Bhand theatre. He was an absolute authority on Kashmiri language and culture and an organiser par excellence.

Born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1933, his interests in dance and drama were discovered early in life during school days. Impressed with the performances of 'Gupa Bacha', he decided to pursue dance. After graduating in 1953, he received a scholarship and enrolled in Kathak dance under Prof Sunderlal Gangani at Baroda



*Padma Shri Moti Lal Kemmu*

University (1957-58). However, he had to discontinue and return to the valley due to then-compelling family circumstances at home. After some time, he again enrolled at Baroda University under a national scholarship for Drama (1961-64). It was here, while learning the finer aspects of acting and drama, that he met his Guru, Prof. Shri Chandravadan Chamanlal Mehta, popularly known as 'Chandamama'. It was during the course at Baroda University that his Guru, Prof. C.C. Mehta, advised him to start writing, and the writer in him was born. He wrote the first three plays in the Hindi language. The first three plays were: 'Sandhya Beeti', 'Nangey' and 'Darpan Antahpur Ka'. These plays were later published in a book titled 'Teen Asangat Ekanki'

While his Guru persuaded him to stay

back and continue in Baroda, the destiny lay elsewhere. The family conditions were such that he had to return to his home and look after the family. He was the only son in the family with three sisters. So, he took up a job with the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages as a Special Officer. He continued to work with the state Cultural Academy and retired as the Secretary in the year 1991.

### Playwright/Author: A Legend

Kemmu Sahab, as he was popularly known, wrote many plays, and these were published in books. After the first book, which was a set of three plays written in Hindi, he wrote all the plays in the Kashmiri language. Many of these were translated into Hindi, and the Hindi versions were published separately. His plays and books that were published:

1. Teen Asangat Ekanki (3 Hindi Plays); Darpan Antahpur Ka; Nangey; Sandhya Beeti
2. Trunov (3 Kashmiri Plays): Trunov; Mangay; Manzilya Nikka
3. Lala Bu Drayas Lo Larey : One 3-Act play
4. TSAI: One 3-act play
5. Natak Truch (3 Kashmiri Plays): Haram Khanuk Aana; Manzilya Nikka; Kansi Maa Rowmut Hai Kya Goam
6. Tota Tu Aana: One Kashmiri Play
7. Palney Ka Poot: Hindi Translation of Manzilya Nikka
8. Tri-Naam (Hindi translation of Trunov)
9. Dakh Yelli Tsalan : One complete play
10. Nagar Udasya : 4-act play
11. Bhand Duhayi: Hindi version of Dakh Yelli Tsalan
12. Pashu Gathat : Hindi Novel
13. Nagar Udaas : Hindi version of Nagar Udasya
14. Heemal Nagiraay : One play
15. Tota Aur Aaina : Hindi version of Tota tu Aana
16. Shaaph Akanandun: 2 Plays (Shaaph & Akanandun)
17. Vih Tu Var : 2 Plays (VIH & VAR)
17. Vidhushika : Hindi version of Vih tu Var (Ree Lo Laree & Vidhushika)
18. Bhand Natyam (A well-researched study of the Bhand Theatre)
19. Oak Angi Natak (10 one-act plays)
20. Natak Duche (Two folk plays)

All of these, except the 'Pashu Gatha' and 'Bhand Natyam', are plays in the Kashmiri language, and their Hindi versions. 'Pashu Gatha' is a novel written in Hindi and was serialised in the Koshur Samachar after the exodus. Besides drama, He also wrote well-researched articles on folk theatre, music, dance and culture of Kashmir in Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi and English, which were published in various prestigious journals. Bhand Natyam was the result of one such comprehensive research work into the Bhand Theatre.

### Dramatist/ Revivalist/ Theatre Personality: A Doyen

He was associated with the revival of the theatre movement in the Valley. He had been actively connected with the Rangmanch, Navrang and Kala Kendra theatre groups and was a founder member of the Abhinav Bharati theatre group. These groups were also involved in the performance of his plays, some years or the other. But perhaps the greatest contribution to the culture and theatre movement in Kashmir was his revival of the **Bhand theatre**, which was otherwise a dying form of traditional theatre.

He studied the folk theatre of Kashmir and trained Bhands, and reorganised them into various professional groups. Some of these were Kashmir Bhagat Theatre, Akingam; National Bhand Theatre, Wathora; Wullar Theatre, Zainagir; Kounsar Theatre, Shopian; Shahwali Luka Rang, Drugmulla; Bomai Luka Theatre, Bomai, Sopore; Arnimal Theatre, Palhallan. The documentary film '*The Bhands of Kashmir*' by Sh. Sidharth Kak was produced under Sh—Kemmu's expert guidance.

Not just the Bhand theatre, He was also instrumental in reviving the **Dhamali** form of dance and the **Hafiz Nagama**, a popular form of dance in Kashmir. He even founded the Dhamali dance centre.

*"There was no tradition of theatre in*

*Kashmir except folk theatre, which too was at a dying stage. Therefore, I had to write my plays, guide other amateur theatre activists, revive the dying folk theatre form with modern sensibility,"* he said in one of the interviews.

### **Organiser/Manager Par Excellence:**

During his association with the J&K Cultural Academy, he organised numerous seminars, Conferences, Mushairas, Workshops, artists' camps, Writer's Camps, Children's Painting Competitions, Music Competitions, Sculptors camps. etc., etc. He was also instrumental in organising many Theatre Festivals, Theatre Workshops, Folk Theatre Workshops, and Playwriting Workshops.

He led many Cultural Troupes from J & K to Delhi, Mumbai, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, Manipur, Bangalore and Himachal Pradesh and played a huge role in discovering new artistic talents. He also led the state contingents on the Republic Day celebrations many times.

The Tagore Hall of Srinagar, which he was in charge of for a few decades, was always bristling with activity, with drama competitions, Dance festivals, painting competitions, and exhibitions. He had managed to bring many an artist (Dancers, Singers etc.) of national repute to perform at the Tagore Hall.

### **Satirist and a social reformer:**

In his plays, you find a theme of social reform and political satire. While *Lala ba Drayas Lo Larey* exposes the dowry system and atrocities against women, *Shaaph* is more about the empowerment of women. *Manzilya Nikka* and *Haram Khanuk Aana* expose the corruption in the system and the political machinations of the day. *The Pashu Gatha* is about the politics of the time. *Dakh Yeli Tsalan*, written during the jihadi turmoil in Kashmir, highlighted the role the Folk artists could play in bringing out a revolution. Many of his plays also have a historical context and are deeply rooted in the culture of Kashmir.

### **Authority on the Kashmir Culture & Language:**

He was an authority on the Kashmiri Language and culture. His books were prescribed as textbooks for an MA degree in the Kashmiri

language. Having travelled across the length and breadth of the state and having interacted with a wide and diverse set of people from different regions of the state, he had an acute sense of the culture and its preservation.

### **Awards and Accolades**

- In 1960, he received the Best Actor Award from the state academy.
- In 1960, he also received the best Drama director award.
- Best book award for his Hindi play *Teen Asangat Ekanki* in 1966.
- Best book award for *TRUNOV* in 1969.
- Best Hindi Playwright of Kashmir– from *Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti* – 1972.
- Best book award for *TSAI* in 1973.
- Best book award for *NATAK TRUCHE* in 1980.
- **Sahitya Academy Award** (National award) for the play *Natak Truch* in 1982.
- Best Book Award for *Tota Tu Aana* in 1985
- **Sangeet Natak Academy Award** (National award) for Playwriting in Kashmiri in 1997
- *Ramakrishna Jaidayal Harmony Award* in 1997
- **'Robe of Honour'** Felicitated by Shri Sunder Lal Patwa, then Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, at the 10th All India Annual Session of *Sanskar Bharati* at Bhopal, 1991.
- **National Fellow**, Human Resource Development Ministry (1996-98)
- **Padma Shri** in 2012
- **Varisht Nagrik Samman** (National Honour) in 2014

With his passing, the stage dimmed, yet the stories he revived and the traditions he preserved continue to breathe through every performance and every artist he inspired. He did not merely study culture—he lived it, shaped it, and passed it on as a living legacy. Though the curtain may have fallen on his life, his spirit will forever linger in the rhythm of art and the soul of drama. The heritage he safeguarded and the voices he amplified will continue to resonate across generations. In

every performance rooted in tradition and every creative expression seeking meaning, his influence will endure. He was both the storyteller and the story—bridging past and present through art and drama. His script remains unfinished, carried forward by those he inspired.

He ensured that the stories of the soil were never lost to time. His life itself was a performance of dedication—one that will continue to inspire future generations. His profound contributions ensure that the traditions he cherished and the narratives he explored will continue to thrive.

**His spirit lives on. Folk theatre will continue to thrive—and so will his legacy within it.**



*Receiving the Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1997*



*Receiving the Padma Shri Award in 2012*



*Legend in Action*



*Legend in Action*



*With better half, Smt. Kaushalya Kemmu, celebrating the Padma honour*



*Legend in Action*



*Receiving Varisht Nagrik Samman*



 Surinder Koul

# Selective Outrage and the Politics of Grief in Kashmir

A striking Kashmiri epigram — *“Deenuk thum chuee seenus peth koet hoo mornus khadayo”* — captures a difficult and enduring truth: that religious identity can, at times, overshadow all other affiliations. This sentiment resurfaced with renewed force following reports of the assassination of Ali Khamenei amid escalating tensions involving Iran, Israel, and the United States. The reaction in Kashmir was immediate, emotional, and highly visible—yet it also reopened an old and uncomfortable debate about the nature of public empathy and political expression in the Valley.

Across Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in Kargil, Budgam, Pattan, and Srinagar, thousands gathered in mourning. Shia Muslims led solemn processions marked by grief, ritual, and symbolism, while sections of Sunni Muslims joined in solidarity, often carrying Palestinian flags. The intensity of these demonstrations was not confined to the region; protests and expressions of anger were reported in cities such as Delhi and Hyderabad, as well as in parts of Uttar Pradesh. The Valley's political leaders—including Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti, and Ghulam Nabi



Azad—were quick to condemn the killing and express deep sorrow, framing it as a serious and destabilising act.

Such responses, in isolation, are neither surprising nor unjustified. In an interconnected world, communities often respond to events far beyond their immediate geography, particularly when these events resonate with shared religious or ideological identities. The Shia community's mourning, for instance, draws upon a centuries-old tradition rooted in the martyrdom of Imam Hussain at the Battle of Karbala. The emotional vocabulary of grief, sacrifice, and injustice that emerged from Karbala continues to shape contemporary expressions of solidarity, extending naturally to figures and the incident perceived within a similar moral framework.

However, in the specific context of Kashmir, these reactions raise a more layered and disquieting question: **why does outrage travel more easily across borders than empathy within them?** The visibility and intensity of public grief for distant events often stand in stark contrast to the comparatively muted responses to tragedies closer to home. This perceived imbalance has, over time, contributed to a sense of selective moral engagement—one that is increasingly difficult to ignore.

The forced displacement of Kashmiri Pandits in 1989–90 remains one of the most traumatic episodes in the region's modern history. Tens of thousands were uprooted from their ancestral homes, many forced into prolonged exile under harsh conditions. Yet, this tragedy rarely evokes the kind of sustained public mobilisation or collective mourning seen in response to international incidents. Similarly, the aftermath of the Pulwama attack, in February 2019, which claimed the lives of dozens of Indian security personnel, did not generate comparable expressions of grief within the Valley. Likewise, the dastardly killing of innocent bubbling tourists in Pahalgam, in April 2025, was unequivocally a crime against humanity, but it did not evoke local empathy in similar proportion. These contrasts are not merely

anecdotal; they point towards a deeper inconsistency in how suffering is acknowledged and prioritised.

Highlighting this disparity is not to question the sincerity of those who mourn global occurrences, nor to deny the legitimacy of transnational solidarity. Rather, it was to ask whether empathy, when filtered through the lens of identity, risks becoming selective. When grief is consistently amplified for causes that align with religious or ideological affinity, but subdued for those that challenge internal narratives, it raises concerns about the moral coherence of public discourse.

Kashmir's own political history offers important context for understanding this phenomenon. The region has witnessed dramatic shifts in allegiance, often driven by changing political aspirations and emotional currents. Sheikh Abdullah, once revered as the towering leader of Kashmiri aspirations, later faced public disillusionment when his decisions diverged from popular expectations. His support for the accession to India marked a turning point, transforming admiration into resentment among sections of the population. The fear of exhuming his body from the grave loomed over; consequently, security was deployed around his graveyard at Nasim Bagh, Srinagar.

Similarly, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was widely acknowledged in Kashmir for championing the Kashmiri cause on international platforms. His execution in 1979 triggered widespread protests in the Valley, reflecting a deep emotional connection that transcended national boundaries. Yet, in a striking reversal, Zia-ul-Haq—initially viewed with suspicion—later gained acceptance among sections of Kashmiri youth after supporting militant movements that reframed the Kashmir struggle in religious terms. Those very youths lulled Zia Ullah Huq, “Mard E Momin Mard U Huq Zia Ullah Huq Zia Ullah Huq”. These shifts reveal a pattern of political fluidity, where allegiances are often shaped less by native principles and more by evolving narratives of identity and religious beliefs.

The late 1980s marked a decisive rupture

in Kashmir's socio-political fabric. Political discontent gradually gave way to armed insurgency, ushering in a prolonged period of violence, instability, and fear. The consequences were devastating: targeted killings, economic disruption, and the mass exodus of the Kashmiri Pandit community. Entire neighbourhoods were emptied, and a centuries-old coexistence was fractured. Yet, despite the magnitude of this upheaval, the collective reckoning with its causes and consequences remains incomplete.

This incomplete introspection has, in many ways, influenced contemporary responses to both local and global events. Kashmir has long shown a strong emotional connection with developments in the wider Muslim world. From the Six-Day War to the ongoing Israel–Palestine conflict, the Valley has repeatedly seen protests, shutdowns, and expressions of solidarity. These reactions are often seen as moral responses to perceived injustice, but they also reveal an outward-looking political consciousness that sometimes outweighs internal reflection.

The pattern, therefore, is not merely one of religious solidarity, but of **selective outrage**—a tendency to respond intensely to certain conflict while remaining comparatively restrained towards others. This selectivity is not unique to Kashmir; it can be observed in different forms across societies worldwide. However, in a region already burdened by conflict, displacement, and mistrust, its implications are particularly profound.

One of the consequences of this selective engagement is the deepening of social and political divides. For communities that feel their suffering has been overlooked or minimised, the absence of visible empathy reinforces a sense of alienation. It fosters the perception that grief itself has become politicised—that whose pain is acknowledged depends on who they are, rather than what they have endured.

At the same time, it is essential to avoid reducing Kashmiri society to a single narrative. The Valley is not monolithic; it

encompasses diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives. Some individuals and groups have consistently called for introspection, reconciliation, and a more inclusive understanding of justice. Civil society initiatives, inter-community dialogues, and individual acts of solidarity often go unnoticed, overshadowed by more visible and polarising ঘটনাবলি.

Yet, the larger question persists: **can a society move forward without confronting the inconsistencies in its moral responses?** Empathy, to be meaningful, must transcend identity. It cannot be conditional, nor selectively applied. A society that mourns passionately for distant injustices but hesitates to engage with its own past risks perpetuating cycles of grievance and misunderstanding.

For Kashmir, the path towards stability and reconciliation lies not only in political solutions but also in a deeper moral reckoning. This requires acknowledging all forms of suffering—past and present, local and global—with equal seriousness. It demands a willingness to question entrenched narratives, to listen to uncomfortable truths, and to extend empathy beyond familiar boundaries.

The reactions to recent global strife have once again highlighted the local nature of collective feelings in Kashmir. But they have also underscored the need for balance—for an ethical framework that does not privilege one form of suffering over another. Without such a balance, public conscience risks becoming fragmented, shaped more by identity than by universal principles of justice.

In the end, the true measure of a society's moral strength lies not in the intensity of its outrage, but in the consistency of its compassion. Kashmir's history is replete with pain, resilience, and complexity. Its future will depend on whether it can transform that history into a more inclusive and self-aware moral vision—one where empathy is not selective, but shared



 Prof. ML Pandit



# Pandits Back in Kashmir

## Why Homeland is the Only Option if They are to Stay Back and Resettle?

*(The paper on the basis of an overview of radically changed ground realities over the past four decades argues relocating Kashmiri Pandits back to their native places or in clusters around them is not viable in case the 37 year old exile is to be reversed for long, rather permanently. Only a single cluster by whatever name is feasible for reasons listed in the text after a detailed background).*

### Background to the exodus

With Queen Kota Rani's defeat and death in 1339, Kashmir's long Hindu sovereignty and the too well-known Saraswat Civilisation began to fade with the beginning of a long era of Muslim rule and forced conversions starting with Shah Mir (Sultan Shams-ud-Din, granted asylum and a role in government by the Queen's late husband king) and whose dynasty, including Sikandar Butshikan (Idol Breaker), ruled for over two centuries. The

dynasty rule was followed by Chaks, Moguls, Afghans, Sikhs and Degras until independence. Barring some exceptional tolerant Muslim Kings led by Bud Shah (Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, reigned 1420–1470), rest of them are too well known for outsmarting their predecessors in tormenting the aboriginal Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) to force conversions, demolishing temples and religious symbols. Only a small minority could repeatedly escape across the mountains which earned the nick



name of 'Kashtwar' (meaning troubled days abode in Kashmiri) now Kishtwar. The returnees did not face any major security problems after reaching back their native places when troubled days ended or the king relented during monarchy as a word from the monarch itself offered fool proof security. A large number of displaced KPs tired of escaping and returning back repeatedly, made Kishtwar their permanent abode as is evident in their presence in large numbers today. No surprise, land locked Kashmir became almost exclusively Muslim much before independence despite the aboriginals comprising a near homogeneous community of Brahmins as caste system was mostly absent. In contrast, Muslims in rest of the undivided India where Muslim rule and forced conversions had begun centuries earlier, accounted for only a quarter of population at the time of the partition. Although KPs centuries of state repression had ended during the Sikh and Dogra rule (1819-1947) but by this time the community had already been reduced to a microscopic minority. Additionally, an early twentieth century uprising against the Dogra ruler had made the community a victim again as it turned violent and communal in July 1931.

After independence, Kashmir became the first and the foremost flash point between the new nations the partition had created. While the then ruler had acceded to India, Pakistan staked the claim on its Muslim majority as the partition had happened at the behest of Muslim League's two nation theory under which Hindus and Muslims comprise separate nations which cannot coexist. The fact that Indian Muslims were Hindu converts only did not matter as converts to Islam are mandated to forget their non-Muslim past instantly. This is why Muslims do not enter temples their ancestor worshiped while Hindus have no hesitation in seeking blessings and making offerings in large numbers at Muslim shrines without ever having been Muslims. Indian Muslims for the same reason are opposed to reciting the national song *Vande Mataram* (mother, I bow to thee) which had united and inspired the nation during the long freedom

struggle. Incidentally, India in 1941 was not only the world's largest Muslim populated country (92 million) but accounted also for a major share of the world Muslim population.

Coming back to the contentious Jammu and Kashmir, the dispute exploded even while the senseless and the bloodiest partition of the sub-continent was underway as Pakistan army supported tribal raid (Pashtun tribal militias) came to be launched on October 22, 1947. The raid led to additional bloodshed, loss of lives, rapes, abductions and a division of the state into J&K (India) and POK (Pakistan) after a UN sponsored ceasefire. In the then Kashmir province, major victims were again KPs as the raiders attack started at Muzaffarabad (now in POK) and extended to Baramulla and beyond, almost up to Srinagar. The raid is said to have progressed slowly primarily as the raiders got engaged more with murder, loot, rape, abductions and movements back home to encash the proceeds, rather than conquering the territory (Pakistan is said to have had a verbal agreement with the raiders that they would be entitled to the entire proceeds of loot and government only the territory they conquer). The raid expectedly turned the two new nations round the clock enemies from the start and with serious consequences. Had the partition been planned and executed by statesmen, it would not have been the bloodiest ever and even without accomplishing the stated objective, namely dividing the country between Muslims and Hindus. It instead delivered erstwhile Pakistan (now Pakistan & Bangladesh), rather two Muslims nations and a secular India with more Muslims than Pakistan then and as of now. More importantly, it would not have delivered perpetually round the clock enemy nations but friendly, rather brotherly nations like, for example, Malaysia and Singapore (split in 1965) and who soon after became partners in shaping the too well known East Asian Economic Miracle. In reality the partition and the Kashmir dispute were deliberately and cleverly planted by the outgoing colonial rulers to ensure the free

nations stayed perpetual enemies. This is why the tribal raid came to be followed by 1965 and 1971 wars and the 1999 Pakistan's Kargil incursion, among many other things. Pakistan also began to sponsor a host of insurgency type activities by garnering support from the separatist segments. POK become the main launchpad for such activities as also for sheltering militants and separatist leaders after they cross over for training or safety. Incidentally, none of offspring/close relations of any of the separatist leaders themselves took up arms.

Militancy and the armed struggle exploded in the aftermath of allegations of large scale rigging of 1987 state election. MUF, a coalition of Islamic and separatist groups, had for the first time joined hands to explore ballot option and was projected to win many of the contested (44) seats. But most of its candidates were declared to have lost the elections despite wide and open public support. The electoral defeat made the leaders of the front to conclude that ballot was not an option and it paved the way for massive public protests that ultimately led to a long phase of armed militancy in which microscopic minorities, notably KPs became the major causality. It began with selective killings of some prominent KPs initially and then followed by random and brutal killings of community members across Kashmir to spread fear and thereby leading to the 1990 exodus and the consequent near ethnic cleansing. This exodus also highlighted another uniqueness of the Indian secularism, namely KPs in overwhelmingly Hindu India had to leave Kashmir but not the Muslim separatists for whom security arrangements came to be put in place under a special budgetary although they hardly faced any threat. Surprisingly relief camps for the displaced KP community came to be erected not within but outside Kashmir and thereby distancing the



community from homeland and making the return a formidable challenge. As protests escalated and insurgency took hold, the democratic monarch (CM) abdicated the throne and the country, leaving the people, notably the microscopic minorities to wolves.

Despite undivided India having been reduced to one of the world's most impoverished large nations under long colonial rule, the post-partition focus should have been on economic transformations and poverty eradication but the enmity between the new nations made them to prioritise defence and border security. Given their rich natural and manpower resources, both the nations could have shaped an East Asian type Economic Miracle by becoming each other's business, trading and tourism partners instead of round the clock enemies. Incidentally, Pakistan's Kashmir claim on religious basis also does not hold much water as India had more Muslims (35.4 million) than Pakistan (32 million) after the partition. On top, POK is already with it. More importantly, India's share of Muslim population has increased from under one-tenth in 1951 to around 15 percent today, while Pakistan's share of Hindu population has nosedived from over 20% to under 2% over the same interval.

In a Muslim majority region or country a

minority, notably the microscopic, has to be ever vigilant not to be accused of hurting religious sentiments of the majority. In fact Muslims themselves have to be cautious enough not to be accused of blasphemy as it mostly results in direct action and public lynching. Surprisingly converts to Islam seem to be religiously more sensitive than their West Asia counterparts as blasphemy charges are unheard there but frequently reported in our neighbourhoods, especially Pakistan, and India not excluded. It is worth recalling how a TV debate involving BJP spokesperson, Nupur Sharma and a Muslim clerk resulted in her being accused of insulting Muslim religious sentiments which not only costing her the job but had also to go underground to save her life. It had also led to beheading of two Hindus accused of standing with her.

KP community scattered across the valley had mastered the art of co-existence with an overwhelming Muslim majority. This mastery, among other things, involved never getting engaged in any discussion related to Muslim religion not even when provoked by undermining or denigrating Hindu religion and beliefs. This lesson was taught repeatedly to every child everyday by his/her parents. Consequently, no KP has ever been accused of blasphemy. Kashmir's another unique feature is that Muslims themselves do not hesitate to call themselves converted KPs. These unique

qualities of both the communities came to be referred to as “Kashmiriat”, rather the art of coexistence. This quality did not weaken even during the brutal 1947 tribal raid as the two communities stood shoulder to shoulder and no exodus took place. But Kashmiriat began to weaken after independence for a variety of reasons. First and the foremost, was the two-nation partition itself as it divided the Muslim community between those supporting accession to India (Sheers) and those opposed to it (Bakras). The former group comprised supporters of Sheik Abdullah who opted for India and the other who supported accession with Pakistan and thereby creating space for the separatist groups.

Secondly, some of the post-independence state policies also began to create a divide between the two communities and thereby weaken Kashmiriat further. Prominent among these were the state policies prioritising employment and promotions of Muslims in government jobs which in particular impacted initially the then educated and government job dependent urban segments of the community. The following quote from the state government's submissions before a SC bench hearing a petition related to discriminatory promotion policies for teachers is, by itself, revealing enough:



“The case related to persons below them in seniority list promoted to higher grade: “because the State Government in making the promotions gave - 50% of the higher posts to Muslims, 60% of the remaining 50% to Jammu Hindus and the rest to Kashmiri Pandits and Sikhs. Its method of reservation was justified under Art.16 of the Constitution on the ground that Muslims all over the State and Hindus in Jammu were backward communities. The petitioners were Kashmiri Pandits” (“Triloki Nath Tiku and Anr vs State of Jammu and Kashmir & Ors heard by the SC bench headed by Justice K. Subba Roa in December 1966).

The submission implied that the aboriginal KP community prosecuted over centuries and reduced to a microscopic minority was not backward while all Muslims under centuries of Muslims rule in Kashmir and Hindus of Jammu again ruled by local Hindu kings only were backward. In reality the submission indicates how the Indian democracy and unique secularism operate. Equally noteworthy is the logic that Muslims with over 95% population in Kashmir are a minority.

Third, agrarian reforms enacted by post-independence governments, notably the second (1971) were discriminatory against KPs and which, expectedly, impacted the land owning rural segment of the community. While the first agrarian reform had abolished large holdings without any compensation, the second one abolished tenancy altogether besides declaring income tax payers and

those working beyond five kms. from their villages ineligible for reclaiming even the owners share of land under tenancy. Moreover, the compensation for the forfeited share of owners land was fixed at Rs.15 a kanal (5400 sq.ft) and that too had to be claimed from the revenue department after completing host of formalities and repeated visits. The reform naturally led to heart burnings and a sharp divide between KP landowners and their Muslim tenants, rather the two communities. Discriminatory employment and promotion policies had also led to similar divides and growing communal rivalry. Admissions to professional institutes over decades were also not made on merit and there by straining relationships further.

Simmering discontents and unease did reflect in occasional outbursts, protests and litigations. Prominent among these were the 1967 urban uprising lasting many weeks and triggered by the abduction, conversion and marriage of a 17-year old girl named Parmeshwari with a Muslim in Srinagar and the state failing to intervene or help. It incidentally the incident became an excuse to vent anger and frustrations over the neglect and discriminations. The agitation led to communal unease, clashes, rioting and some casualties within Srinagar city and days of curfew. Despite high voltage agitation and which had unnerved the state government, the union government intervened cleverly and got the agitation withdrawn but without resolving any simmering issues. The impact of post-independence state policies on weakening Kashmiriat and coexistence is indeed loud and clear. No exodus of KP community had happened in 1947 despite the brutal tribal raid and when the majority community was mostly poor and illiterate but Kashmiriat intact. In contrast, the educated and economically better off majority in 1989-90 insurgency remained silent while the guns were mostly in the hands off the sons of the soil. Had the majority given a single call for a protest or hartal in support of the minority community then, no militant would have dared to harm KPs.

*Continue in Next Issue*





B L SARAF



# FLAVOR OF THE SEASON

## Pandit's Return and Rehabilitation

**L**ike a geographic seasonal cycle, the issue of Pandits return to the Valley is in a state of permanent rotation: sometimes it lapses into darkness and then true to the cyclic phenomenon emerges out in a day light. Political season too plays out same way for them.

These days cycle of reappearance is on: with the celebrations of Navreh and Navratra right noises are heard, from every corner of the globe for the return and rehabilitation of the displaced KPs in the Valley. The auspicious days of Navreh and Navratri days are over for this year. However, the hangover of celebrations still carries on. As usual the festivities refreshed the pleasant memories of the past which still linger in the minds of the displaced Pandits. It was flash back time to

recall the atmosphere habitat and the ambience which added luster to the festivities celebrated back home.

Even in exile the displaced people carried on the tradition in an appropriate manner. Many organizations and individuals arranged congregations celebrating the event. "Who is who" in the political and social field was sought after to grace the occasion. In this process L G Manoj Sinha took time out to be present on the dais and shared his thoughts about the religious and social aspects of the auspicious day. While addressing the devotees the LG assured the displaced persons that their ordeal would end soon and if all goes as planned next year they would celebrate the Day in their homes in familiar ambience. In Kashmir similar kind of

## Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was right when he, in a recent Podcast told the interviewer that KPs won't return until a sense of physical security is instilled in them.

assurance came forth from political and social circles. PDP MLA has come up with a Bill to be introduced in the Assembly to ensure a statutory pledge for the return and reintegration of the displaced persons.

It is pertinent to recall that in recent times L G Manoj Sinha twice held out assurances to resettle the KPs in Kashmir. Earlier, it was in an auditorium of Jammu University on the occasion of a book release authored by an KP academic; second time it came when he addressed Kashmiri Hindus assembled to celebrate Navreh. He referred to the glorious past of the Pandit community and exhorted youth to be conscious of it reclaim the rich heritage and advised them to refresh these memories and unshackle the stereotypes.

Pandits are not homeless by choice. They have been hounded out. Therefore, one may be right in asking the persons who are at the helms of state administrative and political affairs who prevents them from translating these assurances into a reality on the ground. It may sound unpleasant, but the fact remains that till this assurance are made good to the displaced persons they will ring hallow -- doled out intermittently to keep them in a good humor.

Sometime back both the Houses of State Legislature unanimously, passed a Resolution conveying a sense that the law makers were earnest and sincere to see the return of displaced Pandits to the Valley and an effort would be made to ensure so. But nothing materialized on ground. It is in this back ground that we have to judge the latest move of a MLA who proposes to introduce a Bill in the Assembly for the return of the displaced Pandits to the Valley. No doubt it is a welcome development that a PDP MLA has initiated a statutory process for return and rehabilitation of KPs in Kashmir. The 2012 Resolution then evoked mixed feelings in the displaced

community. Some not without a reason described it as yet another "Pious declaration " meant only for recitation and not for the implementation. These "declarations", they said had been coming

forth off and on just to humor an exile. They certainly had the point. But there were some within the community, who saw a way forward in the Resolution. Perhaps it was first ever resolution of the kind. That itself may not be a big deal but, then, it indicated an intention and recognized certain hard realities of the Pandit's displacement. At least we feel that the proposed Bill will reiterate the intent and bring back focus on the plight of the displaced community.

Understandably it is not easy to sort out the problem of exile's return. With the passage of time it has become so complex that it will take a herculean effort to sort it out. So many people have thrown in the stakes many contradictions have crept in. Assembly Resolution was just an expression of interest.

It is common sense that Pandits will not return on mere 'pious intentions' of the State. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was right when he, in a recent Podcast told the interviewer that KPs won't return until a sense of physical security is instilled in them. If he is really concerned about KPs return which we have every reason to believe he is then he and the LG must work together to ensure such safe atmospheres is created in the Valley which will enable the displaced persons to return to the home in Kashmir. This is the time the quarters concerned come good on their assurance substantially and provide for exile's livelihood psychological and physical security in Kashmir. State government as also the one at Centre must instill confidence in them before the displaced persons embark on a return journey. As a token of its sincerity let the Government bring in legislation for the protection of Temples and Shrines of Hindus in Kashmir. It is long pending demand of the community - fair and innocuous one.

It is for the community also as it is for the government to make a forward movement on the issue.

*Former Principal District & Sessions Judge*



# Kashmiri Pandits

## RAISED ON ASSURANCES, LIVING IN UNCERTAINTY....



There are histories that conclude with a date, an agreement, a moment that signals closure. And then there are histories that resist endings, that stretch themselves across generations, embedding their weight not only in memory but in expectation. The story of the Kashmiri Pandits belongs to this latter category—a history that refuses to settle into the past because it has never been resolved in the present. It lives on, not merely in recollection, but in the quiet, persistent anticipation of something that was promised yet never delivered. It is, in many ways, a history of waiting—of lives shaped not by events alone, but by the prolonged deferral of justice.

The exodus of the early 1990s stands as the defining rupture, but it is only the beginning of the narrative. What followed was not a transition toward resolution, but an extension of uncertainty. Those who left did so under circumstances that rendered departure inevitable, yet they carried with them an unspoken assurance that exile would be temporary. The belief in return was not constructed out of optimism alone; it was reinforced by the language of the state, by assurances that framed displacement as an interim phase rather than a permanent condition.

In those early years, hope possessed a certain clarity. It was anchored in the

expectation that systems existed to correct such ruptures, that governance, despite its imperfections, would ultimately restore what had been lost. Relief camps were seen not as settlements but as pauses, brief interruptions before the restoration of normalcy. Every announcement, every declaration of intent, seemed to affirm this belief. The future, though uncertain, appeared to be moving toward resolution.

But time, with its quiet persistence, began to alter the meaning of these assurances. What was once immediate became distant; what was once definite became conditional. Promises did not disappear—they evolved. They became recurring motifs in political discourse, resurfacing with each shift in power, each renewed articulation of intent. Yet their repetition did not translate into fulfillment. Instead, it created a peculiar rhythm where expectation was continually renewed but never realized.

For those who experienced the exodus firsthand, this transformation was gradual but profound. Their memories remained vivid, unaltered by time, but their relationship with hope began to shift. What had once been an active belief slowly took on the form of endurance. They continued to wait, but the nature of that waiting changed. It became less about anticipating a specific moment of

return and more about sustaining the idea that such a moment was still possible.

It is within this evolving landscape that a new generation emerged—a generation for whom exile was not an interruption but a condition of birth. They did not witness the departure; they inherited its consequences. Their understanding of Kashmir was not shaped by direct experience but by narratives passed down through family conversations, by fragments of memory that belonged to others yet defined their own sense of identity.

For them, the homeland existed in a space that was neither entirely real nor entirely imagined. It was constructed through stories—of homes left behind, of neighborhoods where coexistence once flourished, of a cultural rhythm that had been abruptly disrupted. These stories were not merely recollections; they were acts of preservation, attempts to sustain a connection that physical distance had rendered fragile.

Yet this inheritance was not without its complexities. To belong to a place one has never fully experienced is to navigate a subtle dissonance. The younger generation found themselves rooted in narratives of return while simultaneously building lives in environments far removed from the Valley. Their identity became layered—anchored in a past they did not live and a present that did not entirely reflect that past.

The politics of delay played a crucial role in shaping this generational consciousness. Unlike their predecessors, who initially encountered promises as assurances of imminent action, the younger generation encountered them as recurring patterns. They grew up hearing the language of commitment—rehabilitation packages, employment schemes, plans for return—but they also grew up witnessing the gap between articulation and implementation.

Over time, this exposure cultivated a more measured



relationship with hope. It did not extinguish their desire for justice, but it altered the way they perceived it. Promises, once seen as pathways to resolution, began to carry an inherent ambiguity. They were no longer taken at face value; they were assessed, questioned, contextualized within a history of deferral.

For this generation, the idea of return is layered with both longing and hesitation. It is not simply about reclaiming a geographical space; it is about engaging with a reality that has evolved in their absence. The Kashmir they have inherited through memory is not the Kashmir that exists today. Decades of transformation—social, political, and cultural—have reshaped the Valley in ways that complicate the notion of return.

This awareness introduces a new dimension to their aspirations. They seek not only the fulfillment of past promises but also a reimagining of what return itself entails. It is no longer sufficient to speak of relocation without addressing the conditions that would make such a return meaningful. Questions of security, dignity, and coexistence become central. The psychological dimensions of displacement—fear, mistrust, the lingering sense of vulnerability—demand acknowledgment alongside logistical considerations.

Within the broader political discourse, however, the Kashmiri Pandit issue continues to occupy an inconsistent space. At moments, it is brought to the forefront, invoked as a symbol of unresolved injustice. At other times, it recedes into the background, overshadowed by more immediate political concerns. This fluctuation contributes to a sense of uncertainty, reinforcing the perception that recognition does not necessarily translate into prioritization.

For the younger generation, this dynamic creates a nuanced form of engagement. They are acutely aware of the symbolic weight their community carries, yet they are equally conscious of the limitations of that symbolism. This awareness fosters a form of cautious engagement—an insistence on accountability that is informed by lived observation rather than inherited expectation.

The contrast between the generations,

therefore, is not one of disconnection but of evolution. The first generation continues to embody the immediacy of loss, their memories serving as anchors that resist the erosion of time. The second generation, while deeply connected to that loss, approaches it with a perspective shaped by distance and reflection. They are less bound by nostalgia and more attuned to the complexities of the present.

Memory, in this context, assumes a dual role. It functions as preservation for the older generation, a means of sustaining a connection to what was lost. For the younger generation, it becomes both inheritance and construction—a mosaic assembled from stories, fragments, and occasional encounters with the homeland. This interplay allows for continuity, even as the nature of that continuity evolves.

Amidst these layers of complexity, the resilience of the Kashmiri Pandit community stands as a defining feature. Displacement did not diminish their capacity to rebuild; it, in many ways, intensified it. Across different regions, they established new lives, contributed to diverse fields, and maintained a cultural identity that resisted dissolution. Their language, their traditions, their collective memory—these became forms of resistance against the erasure that prolonged exile often threatens.

Yet resilience does not negate loss. It coexists with it. Beneath the narratives of adaptation lies an enduring sense of incompleteness—a recognition that material stability cannot substitute for the absence of homeland. This coexistence of strength and longing defines much of their contemporary experience.

The politics of delay, when viewed through this lens, transcends administrative inefficiency. It becomes a shaping force, influencing not only policy outcomes but also the psychological and emotional landscapes of those affected. It alters perceptions of time, transforming it from a linear progression into a cyclical experience marked by recurring promises and deferred outcomes.

For a generation raised within this cycle, delay is not an external anomaly; it is an embedded reality. It informs their expectations, tempers their optimism, and shapes their understanding of institutions. It creates a condition where waiting is no longer passive but deeply conscious—a recognition of both the necessity of hope and the patterns that have historically undermined it.

As the years advance, the urgency of addressing this condition becomes increasingly pronounced. Time does not dilute the need for resolution; it complicates it. Each passing year introduces new variables, new challenges that make the question of return more intricate. The task is no longer simply to fulfill promises but to redefine them in a manner that aligns with present realities.

For the younger generation, the future remains an open, unresolved space. They stand at the intersection of memory and modernity, carrying forward a legacy while seeking to reinterpret it. Their engagement with the idea of return is neither purely nostalgic nor entirely pragmatic—it is a negotiation between what has been inherited

and what can be realistically achieved.

In this ongoing narrative, one truth remains constant: the story of the Kashmiri Pandits cannot be confined to the past because its central question remains unanswered. It is a story that continues to unfold, shaped as much by what has been done as by what has been deferred.

And so, the waiting continues—not as resignation, but as a form of quiet insistence. An insistence that promises must eventually transcend rhetoric, that history must find its resolution not in remembrance alone but in action. Within this waiting lies a resilience that refuses to be diminished, a belief that even in the longest delays, the possibility of justice endures.

Until that possibility is realized, the silence will persist—not as absence, but as testimony. A testimony to lives interrupted yet unbroken, to a community that continues to exist between memory and aspiration, and to a generation that, despite everything, has not relinquished its claim to belonging.

*The writer can be reached at [sanjaypanditasp@gmail.com](mailto:sanjaypanditasp@gmail.com)*

## Calendar of Month

Akshay Tritya	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Kumar Shashti	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2026
Ashtami (Shukla Paksha)	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Ekadashi (Shukla Paksha)	27 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Ganesh Chaturthi	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Poornima	01 <sup>st</sup> May 2026
Sankat Nivaran Chaturthi	05 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Ashtami (Krishna Paksha)	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Ekadashi (Krishna Paksha)	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Amavasya (Nandkeshwar Yatra)	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2026

### Note

Panchak starts on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026 ends on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Vaishakh (Shukla Paksha) from 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026 to 01<sup>st</sup> May 2026  
Zyeastha (Krishna Paksha) from 02<sup>nd</sup> May 2026 to 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026



# Shortage or Hoarding

## Saga of Fuel Amid Middle East Crisis

It has been more than a month to the war and the game of sabotage and retaliation is still on. All belligerent nations are concluding their triumph over others, but all are facing its consequence. Recent war development among developed nations have created fear among the developing nations and impacted underdeveloped ones.

Every nation has its own resources which attributes its sustainability amongst. If the target becomes the resources of the nation, then it not only causes grave loss but also enroutes challenges and impact. Simultaneously, it affects the balance of supply and demand which gives rise to anti-social elements in one or other ways.

This time it has fallen for fuel adding in for cashing in politics. Rumours are spread especially in the context of India and unfortunately Indians promote despite of observing major developments which is proving India a protagonist amongst the acclaimers. Middle East crisis created tensions and conflict but more than that rumours regarding shortage created ridicule resulting in hording.

The Government of India and The Supreme Court of India emphasized strict measures to ensure smooth supply of fuels cracking down on hoardings with strict actions, regulations to prevent artificial scarcity, targeted enforcement, restriction on sales, prioritising essential supplies and strict actions against the rumours.

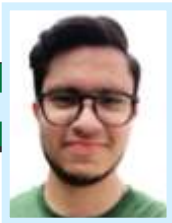
Till now India has not faced any kind of shortage. Government has prudently taken



advance care and steps by importing and reserving fuels through tanker ships. It is taking every measure to ensure uninterrupted fuel services so that the progress of India and the Indians are not affected due to casing in politics and web of dis-illusion spread by the people for their selfish and malafide intentions.

India has always proved itself in every circumstances especially in the last decade and has come out as a game changer in world politics. Population is the most important resource of a nation and it depends how the population of a nation contributes towards it. As a citizen, it is the duty to stand by its nation and practise the sense of transparency, efficiency, unity and integrity and come forward for the cumulative welfare. The sense of selfishness should be realised in genuine conscience. Nation and its people are inter dependent and both decide and shape the future of each other.

*Writer is an Advocate at Supreme Court of India Views expressed are Personnel*



 Prabhaat Autar Mam



# BLINK

“Mom and Dad are gonna kill me...”, said Raivat to himself as he walked up the stairs in his apartment building to his home, as he reached his floor. Through the staircase railing he saw the figure of his father looking out from the veranda, smoking a cigarette as he often did, standing in anticipation. “Shit”, Raivat whispered to himself as he approached his father.

“Return of the king, huh? You know what time it is?” he asked in anger.

“Sorry dad, I—”,

“No. No excuses. You're an adult now, Raivat. You don't get to vanish into the night like this, while we weren't even able to reach

you.” He stubbed the cigarette out on the iron railing, not looking at him. Raivat hated when his dad didn't look at him—it meant he wasn't just angry. He was disappointed.

“I just lost track of time,” Raivat mumbled. His father scoffed, still staring out at the empty street below. “That's all we ever do, isn't it?”

“Now get inside and apologize to your mom.”, his father ordered.

Another lecture awaited Raivat inside, one that dragged on for quite a while.

He stood there, nodding at the right moments, letting the words wash over him like static. He wasn't really listening—not because



he didn't care, but because he was too tired to respond.

When it was finally over, he muttered a soft “Goodnight,” and turned to leave.

“Happy birthday again,” his mom called after him, her voice softer this time. “You're eighteen now, Raivat. That means being responsible. We just worry, you know?”

He paused and looked back at her—her eyes tired but kind.

“I know,” he said.

“Goodnight.”

“Goodnight, Mom.”

He walked across the living room to his bedroom and shut the door behind him, and released a deep sigh. The room was just as he'd left it: clothes on the chair, textbooks scattered on one half of the bed, while the other half, where he usually slept—was bare, the blanket always pushed off sometime after he woke up. It was never fully made, and never really bothered him, other than his mom bothering him to tidy it.

He slipped off his shoes, didn't bother changing, and lay down in the same familiar half. Staring at the ceiling, he let his thoughts drift, just for a moment. His head was heavy, but his mind wouldn't settle. “Wow, how am I actually EIGHTEEN already...”, he thought to himself, somewhat excited and anxious about his future but more nostalgic of the childhood he's leaving behind.

He turned to his side to get more comfortable, and his eyes landed on the photo frame on the bedside table. It was a picture of him with his parents on a trip to the mountains, wide smiles, wind in their hair, his jacket a size too big as it always was for him at that age. “You'll grow into it” his mother used to say.

“I was nine then. Literally half a lifetime ago,” he whispered, disbelief in his voice.

It didn't feel that long ago. In fact, he could remember that day vividly, his mom panicking when he stood too close to the edge, his dad laughing but trying to hold him back. The sunset rolling in as they sat on a roadside tea stall eating some instant noodles. And later, taking this photo just outside the homestay where they were staying.

It all felt like maybe a few years ago, certainly not a decade.

He blinked slowly, still staring at the photo, a small smile on his lips as he pulled a blanket over his head.

And somewhere between one thought and the next, between nostalgia and disbelief, sleep finally pulled him under.

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Raivat stirred awake to a dull ache in his back and an unfamiliar stiffness in his neck. His body felt heavy, like he'd slept far too long. He stretched his legs, but a sudden cramp struck his left calf, sharp and unforgiving. He winced, clutching at it instinctively, confused by the pain's intensity. After struggling a bit with the cramp and pain, Raivat groaned and reached out blindly toward the bedside table to check the time. His hand knocked against something. The photo frame tipped over and fell flat, sending a small puff of dust swirling into the air. He froze. The table's surface, once cluttered but clean, was now coated in a thin layer of grey.

He rubbed his eyes, confused and trying to gain back his vision. Everything still felt slightly blurry, like he hadn't fully woken up. Confused he saw an outline of spectacles beside his pillow. He picked them up and turned them in his hand. They felt oddly familiar, like something he'd handled a thousand times before, yet he couldn't remember ever owning a pair.

He slipped them on. They sat perfectly on his nose, and in an instant, his vision snapped into clarity. He rolled out of bed in a desperate attempt to make sense of his surroundings. The room felt familiar, yet something was off. He reached for the fallen photo frame, brushing his fingers across the glass to wipe away the dust. But no matter how much he tried, the layer remained, stubborn and clouded. He finally accepted defeat and put the photo frame back on the dusty surface of the bed side table.

The room felt dim, unnaturally so. It took him a moment to notice the lack of sunlight the soft golden glow that usually spilled through the curtains at this hour was

missing. Curious, he walked over and pulled them aside.

Outside, where there had once been an open stretch of skyline, now stood a tall, unfamiliar building. Grey, imposing, and far too close, its shadow blanketed the entire window. It had blocked out the sun completely.

A chill crept up his spine.

He was already deeply confused, but now a quiet sense of unease had begun to settle in. Raivat shuffled into the washroom, hoping that a splash of cold water would clear things up.

He turned the tap, cupped the icy water in his hands, and splashed his face. The shock of it made him gasp. Reaching for the towel, he rubbed his face briskly, trying to clear the fog in his head.

Then he looked up at the mirror. And froze.

The face staring back at him looked like his, but not quite. The hair was longer, touched with streaks of grey. His eyes had dark circles beneath them, deeper than he remembered, and faint lines creased his forehead and cheeks. There was a weariness in his reflection he didn't recognize.

He leaned in closer, heart beginning to race. Still in disbelief, he turned the tap back on and splashed his face again, more desperately this time. The water was freezing, but it did nothing to wash away the image in the mirror.

He grabbed the towel and wiped his face with rough, frantic motions, as if scrubbing hard enough might erase the wrinkles, restore the version of himself he remembered.

But the reflection remained unchanged.

The man in the mirror was older. Not by a day or two, but by years.

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A sudden, violent fit of coughing echoed from somewhere outside the room — deep, strained, and unrelenting. Raivat flinched, the sound cutting through the silence like a warning.

Then it hit him.

His parents.

His breath caught in his throat.

What were they going to think?

How would he explain this, the lines on his face, the weight in his bones, the aging he couldn't account for? Panic swelled in his chest. He staggered out of the washroom, every sound in the house suddenly louder, more ominous. The coughing continued, he rushed out of his room.

Everything was different.

The walls were unfamiliar, faded paint flaked off in patches, revealing rough plaster underneath. Cracks across corners, and dark damp stains spread across sections of the ceiling and upper walls.

He couldn't recognize the house he lived in.

Another round of coughing echoed through the hallway, more strained and rasping than before.

His eyes snapped toward the direction of his parents' room. Without thinking, he rushed forward, a hundred questions crashing through his mind. With a sudden thud, he swung the door open and his heart sank.

His parents were old.

Older than he'd ever imagined them to be.

His father sat hunched, connected to an oxygen cylinder, a steady hiss accompanying every laboured breath. He was still coughing, his body trembling with the effort. Beside him, his mother sat quietly, her back curved, her face tired and thinned by time. Her eyes, once sharp, now looked dull and worn.

His father looked up at him, his eyes dim but warm. "Sorry I had already gone to sleep yesterday when you came," he said, his voice rasping through the oxygen mask."

"So... how have you been?"

Raivat's throat tightened as tears welled in his eyes. He took a shaky step forward, voice cracking.

"I don't understand... what's happened?" he said, almost pleading. "Everything is different."

His words hung in the air, trembling with the weight of disbelief.

Raivat glanced around the room, his eyes narrowing at the walls.

"When did you paint the place?" he asked,

voice still unsure and trying to hold on to something.

“The colour... it's different.”

His father paused, a flicker of hesitation crossing his face as he looked around, then let out a dry chuckle.

“It's not a new colour,” he said, then after a moment, added, “Probably needs repairing again though.”

He looked back at Raivat, his voice softer now. “It's been a while, huh?” Raivat didn't answer. His throat felt dry. His chest still hadn't stopped aching since he'd seen the oxygen cylinder. He shifted his eyes to it again.

“How long have you been like this?” he asked softly, voice barely above a whisper. “What happened? What... what is all this?”

His father didn't reply right away. He shifted in his place, his breaths slightly laboured.

“They said it's lung cancer,” he said plainly, like he'd accepted it long ago. “Stage four now, so they don't even talk much about it anymore. Just management, they say. Chemo's over. Now it's just me and your mother.”

Raivat's lips parted slightly, but no words came out.

“You know what's funny though?” he said after a moment. “It's strange. I sit here like this... at this age, with this body... but in my head, it still feels like that the clock would hit five, and I'd race downstairs with my bat to play cricket with my friends.”

He let out a soft laugh, almost nostalgic.

“Those narrow apartment grounds... we'd pack it like a stadium. As soon as I heard them call out, 'Come down! We've started without you!' I'd drop everything and run. No hesitation. No second thoughts. We wouldn't stop till we would get an earful from the neighbours for either a broken window or complaints about the noise.”

He paused. The smile on his face lingered for a moment longer before fading into something more tired.

“I feel like, if I heard them now, if someone called me again from down there, I'd still go.”

He looked back at Raivat, eyes distant.



“But it's been sixty years.”

Raivat sobbed quietly, wiping his face as his father continued, voice light with memory.

“We used to ring doorbells and run, you know? Full chaos. One day we split into teams, trying to see who could ring the most without getting caught.”

He chuckled. “Turns out, the other team had already rung this one door, but we didn't know. So when we hit it again, the lady was waiting just behind it as if already knowing we would try it again.”

His eyes lit up with the mischief of his younger self. “Door flung open the second we pressed the bell. I bolted, Sanjay too. But poor Rahul got caught.”

He grinned. “She gave him a proper scolding. And we were hiding behind a wall, watching him get grilled, laughing our lungs out.”

Raivat's quiet sobs turned heavier, as he couldn't hold himself anymore. His breath hitching as he reached forward and wrapped his arms around his father. He held him tightly, like he was afraid he'd vanish if he let go. His father, frail but warm, embraced him back without a word.

They stayed like that for a while surrounded by fading walls and memories that suddenly felt too close.

“I'm sorry, Dad,” Raivat whispered, his voice breaking. “I just... I lost track of time.”

His father pulled back just enough to look at him, eyes glistening with unshed tears. A soft, bittersweet smile appeared on his face.

“That's all we ever do... isn't it?”

# Woeful Wails



Ashok K. Kak

A Shiver, a shudder goes down my spine  
To have lost what once was mine  
The merciless devils who strode the streets  
With guns pointing at us, to stop our beats  
Butchers, killers and hardened marauders  
Our houses and deities besieged by intruders

Pasted bills on our doors and blared sirens  
Threatening us of snuffing our lives  
Roaming with evil eyes and sinister designs  
Of looting, killing and maiming us  
Wresting our women for their lust

O God it was sheer mayhem all around  
A valley with suffering and death about  
We left our homes and our native soil  
Shocked and traumatized to face the toil  
Our riches, comforts and dwellings gone  
Young ones crying, no one to look upon  
The blistering heat and hot summers  
As if got thrown in hot cinders

Snakes around and in makeshift tents  
Found our breaths to face the torments  
O God what a cauldron of agony?  
Stuffed in cramped spaces with so many  
Confused, witless did we wander  
Tried our hard but failed to ponder

O Lord our supreme you know our woes  
How we braced-up and stood on our toes  
I bow to Him for all His piety  
What if we lost the prime of life?  
Our children indeed did us a pride  
Thanks to thee O Lord we are alive  
Bless us now and return us our smile

*Author is  
Head Orthoptics and Optometry Deptt.  
SMHS Hospital/Medical College Srinagar  
Ex Lecturer BVP Pune*



Dr. J I Bhat

## ZINDAGI CHE KAMAAL

**Author :** Roop Krishan Bhat

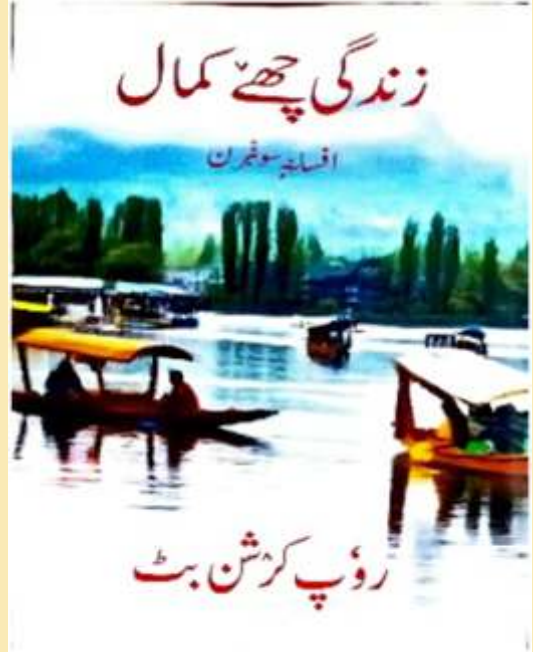
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In the introductory pages of his new collection of short stories *Zindagi chei kamaal*, Roop Krishan Bhat, quoting Hari Krishan Koul, affirms that the art of short story has taken a dive away from the story per se into the blurry realms of metaphor, allegory and other imaginary literary categories. The story has dissolved into oblivion under the pressure to sign into parallel meanings. Or is it the curiosity of the reader to procure more than what is in the story? The groping inside the penumbra. Instead of keeping the story the focal point, the main concern, without embroidering or without adding, perhaps unnecessarily, the literary frills, many short

story writers have flown tangentially away from the purity of story. Though short story from its masters in the western tradition, like Edgar Allan Poe, Kurt Vonnegut or the ones by Chekhov or Tolstoy are rich in symbols and metaphors, yet Bhat, like the veteran Hari Krishan Koul, has put his faith in the purity of story. Or *Kath* as he likes to remind. Kath as it was told and heard in the past before the invasion of laser-beam analysis. His stories are smooth, direct and yes, the stories before anything else, tell a story. There are no Delphic utterances. If you have just finished reading Hriday Kaul Bharti, you feel like entering a spring field of colors and breeze while going through Mr. Bhat's stories. You don't need a Kashmiri dictionary, to begin with, if you are wondering what I mean to say.

*Zindagi chei Kamaal* is made of 15 stories spread over 176 pages. The first and the longest story is *Zindagi che kamaal*. The narrator follows Mohd Sultan from his low beginning in the houseboat in Kashmir to Dubai and Berlin, and then back in Kashmir. He later becomes famous, as his business expands and becomes rich, by the abbreviated name M S. His second marriage to the daughter of his German benefactress does not happen without travails and impediments. The story ends with his felicitation by the government in Kashmir and a boat trip on the Dal. He picks water from the lake and wonders about the beauty of life. Most stories end on a mixed note of hope and despair. There are two stories that deal with the years of the Covid 19. A doctor is unable to meet his family, both because



he is fastidious in his care for the patients and also because he is cautious lest his family members catch infection. The story reminds the readers of the years of the disease that covered the whole globe, uniting human beings in their fragile nature and dividing due to the intimate distance created by the government protocols mandated for safety. Some stories deal with the pain of exile from Kashmir. Sheetal gets up early morning, in the story *Naev Reh Thaal*, and picks up the *naev reh thaal*. She goes to her mother-in-law's room. Kantaji, mother-in-law, is glad to see the *thaal*, with walnuts, milk, and other items. She soon turns unhappy. She misses the presence of some flowers that she used to pick from the courtyard of Ghaffar, in Kashmir. There's *naev reh thaal* in alien environs but actually it is not, for Kaantaji. The *thaal* preserves the shradda, the faith but the absence of some items revives memories of life outside Kashmir. Stories like *Daag*, *money plant* and *hazoor saeb* draw the reader to the pain of separation. Prof. Rakesh Kumar, the narrator's childhood friend, has lost his wife, and the narrator could not come to Rakesh's home. Finally, he does come and holds Rakesh in his arms, and is informed about the whole story of the death of Reshmi, Rakesh's wife; how breast cancer took away the life of his wife. *Hazoor saeb*, reminds the reader of a common scene nowadays, with family members scattered across different towns and cities of India and the world. The main character *Hazoor saeb* (born after a thread was tied at the shrine of Hazoor saeb) has raised her sons and a lone daughter. All do well in life. *Hazoor saeb* falls ill and is in hospital. Just when she is about to die, all siblings arrive from different places. *Hazoor saeb* only longs that they had all met like this before. Together, amid the warmth of the family. *Paenin paenin Khushi*, another tale in the collection, draws one to the life of a lady sitting on a bench in a park, with another man next to her. The latter gets curious about her life and the palpable joy and contentment on her face. The lady has retired and is receiving pension, but her two children are waiting for her death because her husband has made the will that children would get property only after their mother's death. The curious part of the story is when the man asks her about warmth and contentment on her face. To which the lady replies that she too was, like the man, after piling money and property until one day she fell ill and witnessed the sick and decaying human beings in the hospital. That was the day she refused to yield to the temptation of accumulation and reinvented herself as a thoroughly grateful human being. What is she then doing in the park? Waiting for giving fruits to the patients who are there in the hospital across the road.

Dr. Roop Krish Bhat has provided an addendum on the theme of 'Kashmiri short story outside Kashmir after 1990'. It is true that when you speak of the Kashmiri short stories, very often the attention moves inwards. We reel out name after name from Kashmir. However, the short story is alive outside Kashmir as well. And why should it not be? The displacement, often seen as exile inside the community, provides a rich soil in which to nurture a good story. He outlines the names of the short story writers, mostly belonging to the Kashmiri pandit community and their contribution. From a research point of view, this essay is important as a chronicle of the writers and corpus. Together with the supplementary essay, the book infuses a delicate calm and is contemporary in the way it casts characters and stories.

*Email id: javjnu@gmail.com*

*Cell: 9622832659*



 Honorary Lieutenant Inder Raina (Retd.)

# Understanding the WORLD AND ITS CONNECTIONS

*(A Clear View of Power, Resources, Conflicts, and Global Interdependence)*

The world order is changing at a very rapid pace. Nations across the globe are no longer progressing cautiously or slowly. They are moving forward with clear determination, rapidly strengthening their capabilities in defence, technology, and economic development. This race is not only about survival but also about becoming stronger, more self-reliant, and more influential on the global stage. Every nation aspires to be among the leading economies, to secure its interests, and to ensure it is not dependent on others in times of uncertainty.

Across regions such as Asia, the Middle East, the Gulf, Europe, and the Western world, nations are shaping their strategies based on their strengths, limitations, and global roles. Each region contributes differently to the global system, whether through resources, technology, trade, or strategic location, making the world deeply interconnected. With this broad understanding of the global structure, it becomes important to examine the foundations on which this system operates.

Understanding these factors is essential, as they form the foundation of global power and influence. When we observe the world through this perspective, it becomes clear that every nation operates within a larger system of opportunities, risks, and responsibilities.

One of the most important foundations of global power is the distribution of resources.



The distribution of resources across the world is uneven. Asia includes both resource-rich and technologically advanced regions. Europe is strong in industry and governance but depends on external sources for energy. Russia, though partly in Europe, has vast reserves of oil and gas and plays a major role in global energy supply.

The Gulf region holds some of the world's largest reserves of crude oil and natural gas, making it central to global energy security and economic stability. This makes energy not only an economic asset but also a strategic tool that influences global relations.

Energy itself requires careful understanding. Crude oil cannot be used directly; it must be refined into products such as petrol,

diesel, kerosene, aviation fuel, lubricants, bitumen, and LPG. Some nations export crude oil but rely on others for refining, while countries like India, the United States, and China have developed strong refining capacities and even export finished products. This reflects how global systems are built on interdependence.

India has a wide range of natural and human resources. It produces agricultural goods such as rice, wheat, spices, tea, and fruits, along with minerals like coal, iron ore, and bauxite. At the same time, it has developed strong industries in pharmaceuticals, textiles, information technology, and petroleum refining. These sectors contribute significantly to global trade and reflect India's role as both a producer and a contributor. Having understood resources, it is equally important to examine the geographical factors that shape their use and control.

Geography plays a decisive role in shaping global interactions. Rivers such as the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Indus support millions of people across borders. The Brahmaputra originates in China and flows into India and Bangladesh, while the Indus sustains Pakistan. Such shared systems create both cooperation and dependency, making water an important international concern. Glaciers also hold strategic importance. The Siachen Glacier is one of the highest and coldest battlefields in the world and holds significance due to its sensitive location.

Oceans, straits, and canals form the backbone of global trade. The Indian Ocean connects Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Critical routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, Suez Canal, and Panama Canal play a vital role in global supply chains. Any disruption in these routes directly affects fuel prices, trade, and economies worldwide. Thus, geography not only defines boundaries but also determines connectivity and control.

Along with geography and resources, technology has become a key driver of modern power. Growth today is shaped by a combination of geographical position,

resource availability, trade networks, technological capability, and relations with neighbouring states. These elements together determine how strong or vulnerable a nation can become. For example, the United States enjoys a unique geographical advantage, with limited land neighbours and vast oceanic protection provided by the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. This natural advantage provides a strong layer of safety and stability. Such conditions allow some nations to focus more on economic and technological progress, while others must constantly balance development with security concerns. This interplay of geography and technology naturally leads to the importance of borders and strategic positioning.

Borders define both opportunities and challenges for every nation. Every country is either surrounded by land boundaries or oceans, and this directly shapes its security, opportunities, and limitations. Island nations are naturally protected by water, which enhances safety but also increases dependence on imports. In contrast, nations with multiple land boundaries must manage both cooperation and tension with neighbours, making their position more complex.

India, for instance, shares its borders with Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. This makes its location both strategically important and sensitive. Similarly, large nations manage multiple boundaries, giving them influence but also increasing their responsibility to maintain stability. The Middle East and the Gulf region also play a vital role in the global system due to their strategic location and energy resources. These realities clearly show how geography, technology, and borders together shape national strength and vulnerability.

Managing such diverse and challenging geography is not easy. For a country like India, with long land boundaries, mountains, deserts, rivers, and coastlines, maintaining security requires constant vigilance. From freezing glaciers to extreme deserts and rough seas, the Armed Forces remain alert under difficult conditions. Their discipline and dedication

ensure national stability, allowing development and progress to continue.

This also highlights the importance of strong defence preparedness and adequate expenditure in the defence sector. A nation cannot focus on economic growth unless its boundaries are secure. Investment in modern equipment, advanced technology, training, and infrastructure is essential to meet present and future challenges. Defence spending is not merely an expense, but a necessary investment in national safety, stability, and long-term progress. Despite these efforts, differences between nations continue to shape global developments.

Differences between nations arise due to security concerns, competition for resources, and strategic interests, and these differences often develop into serious tensions affecting global stability. One of the most significant situations today is between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine's increasing alignment with Western powers has been viewed by Russia as a direct security concern, leading to prolonged confrontation. This situation has not only affected regional stability but has also influenced global energy supply, food distribution, and economic conditions.

At the same time, tensions between the United States and Iran have continued to grow over issues such as nuclear development, regional influence, and security policies. In recent developments, military actions and counter-actions have further strained relations, affecting stability in the Gulf region and raising concerns about global energy routes. Any disturbance in this region directly impacts oil supply and international trade.

The situation becomes more complex when viewed in connection with the long-standing rivalry between Iran and Israel. This relationship has moved beyond indirect rivalry to direct engagements, including missile strikes and targeted operations. These developments have increased instability across the Middle East and have drawn global attention due to their wider implications.

In addition, Israel's ongoing confrontation with Hamas and Hezbollah represents another critical dimension. Hamas operates from Gaza, while Hezbollah is active in

Lebanon and is supported by Iran. These engagements involve continuous exchanges, military operations, and strategic positioning, which not only affect the immediate region but also influence broader geopolitical alignments.

Taken together, these situations are not isolated. They are interconnected and influence one another, creating a complex global environment where developments in one region can have far-reaching effects across the world.

Strong economies use tools such as tariffs, sanctions, and regulations to protect their interests. Despite global pressures, India continues to engage with multiple partners, including Russia, based on national priorities while maintaining balanced relations.

India also benefits from its global diaspora. Many Indians work in the Gulf and Western nations, sending remittances that strengthen foreign exchange reserves. These reserves are essential for managing imports and maintaining economic stability.

Therefore, decisions related to foreign relations, trade, defence, and technology are taken with careful consideration. They involve expert consultation and long-term thinking, as even small actions can have wide implications.

In the end, understanding the world is not merely about gaining information—it is about developing clarity and balance in thinking. It helps us interpret global events wisely and avoid being influenced by incomplete or misleading narratives.

In today's fast-moving environment, where information is often shaped by specific interests, such understanding becomes essential. Running a country is a complex responsibility influenced by security, economics, and international relations.

At an individual level, this awareness enables responsible thinking and informed judgment. When citizens develop such understanding, they contribute to a stable and balanced society.

Ultimately, awareness of the world is not just knowledge—it is a guiding strength that helps us remain grounded, make informed decisions, and support progress that serves the larger good of the nation.



# THIN LINE BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION

Last couple of years have seen release of movies like the 'Kashmir Files', the 'Kerala Story' and the 'Sabarmati Report', etc. All these movies were based on research-based facts and evoked response on expected lines as the use of cinema to depict historical events, particularly those steeped in trauma and controversy, is a powerful tool that often sparks widespread discussion, appreciation and criticism. Today in this write up I would like to concentrate on 'The Kashmir Files' and 'The Sabarmati Report'.

The narrative around the events of forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandit community from Kashmir, depicted in the Kashmir Files and the Godhra train burning covered in the Sabarmati Report serve as mediums to recall, reflect, interpret, and bring attention to these pivotal moments in Indian history. However, it's essential to evaluate the distinction between cinematic storytelling and the verified historical record to navigate these portrayals effectively.

## 1. The Kashmir Files :

The Kashmir Files is a 2022 film directed by Vivek Agnihotri. It portrays the targeted killing and consequential exodus of the peace loving Kashmiri Pandits from their native land, the Kashmir Valley, in 1990s. The film highlights the brutal violence and displacement faced by the community during Pakistan sponsored insurgency in the Valley. While the film claims to be based on true events and has resonated deeply with many viewers, critics argue that it leaned heavily towards dramatization and selective presentation of



the suffering of Kashmiri Pandits only, ignoring the sufferings of the Muslims.

## Key Historical Facts : Insurgency in Kashmir

The rise of terrorism in Kashmir, combined with calls for an Islamic state, led to threats and targeted killings of Kashmiri Pandits. They were branded as the 'agents of India' and "kafirs" who needed to be dealt with as per tenets of Islam. Approximately, 70,000-100,000 Kashmiri Pandit families fled their homes due to fear of violence and threats. Documented cases of violence included brutal murders, kidnappings, rapes and acts of terror against selected individuals from the community.

The film has sparked debate about the alleged biased representation of the historical facts, the role of the state government, and the collective memory of the exodus. Critics argued that the cinematic liberties taken by the makers had lead to amplifying divisions as the subject was not handled with care and nuance.

## 2. The Sabarmati report:

The Godhra train burning incident occurred on

27 February 2002, when Ahmedabad bound Sabarmati Express train was attacked by a large Muslim mob at Godhra railway station in Gujarat. The attack led to the death of 59 Hindus, including 27 women and 10 children, who were returning from Ayodhya after performing “kar seva” at Purna Aahuti Maha Yagnya organised by the Vishva Hindu Parishad. This triggered widespread communal riots in Gujarat.

**Key Historical Facts :** The State Government appointed Nanavati - Mehta commission to investigate the incident. The commission concluded that the burning was a preplanned act of arson and that Muslim mobs set S 6 coach of the train to fire causing the death of the travellers though these findings remained a contested narrative. Some circles insisted that the fire started from within the coaches. For example, the Banerjee commission appointed to investigate the matter by the then Union Railway minister, Lalu Prasad Yadav, concluded that the fire was accidental and started from within the coach. However, the Gujarat High Court later ruled that the appointment of the commission by the Ministry of Railways was unconstitutional and quashed all its findings. Trial Court proceedings convicted multiple individuals in connection with the train burning. Later, the Gujarat High Court upheld the conviction of 31 Muslims while allegations about the broader conspiracy remained the subject of inquiry. The aftermath of the burning incident resulted in one of the most devastating criminal riots in India's history, leading to over 1000 deaths and displacement of thousands more.

Films and dramatisation of such incidents are inherently charged with emotions and tend to evoke strong reactions because they touch upon unresolved wounds often leading one to ask - is cinema a medium for truth or propaganda?

While both the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits and the portrayal of the Godhra incident highlights the importance of storytelling in shaping public memory, it also poses challenges –

a) Bias in storytelling: Films are not

academic treatises; they blend fact with interpretation, often for emotional impact;

- b) Polarisation: By focusing on specific communities' suffering, narratives tend to risk further deepening of societal divides;
- c) Accountability: Directors and producers bear a moral and professional responsibility to ensure that their work promotes understanding rather than inciting fresh hatred. When film makers, tackle sensitive issues, it is essential to approach the subject responsibly to avoid inciting hatred or misinformation.

### Some Key Precautions that Need to be Taken Are:

- a) In-depth and thorough research to understand the historical, cultural and social context of the subject to avoid stereotypes and inaccuracies;
- b) Sensitivity in representation of facts by avoiding generalisation or assigning blames without empathy and fairness;
- c) Ethical storytelling by being extra cautious to ensure that the narrative does not glorify hatred or provoke further conflicts; and
- d) Be socially responsible to use the story as an opportunity to spread awareness about the consequences of communal hate and the need for peace and harmony.

By following the above suggested precautions, film makers can responsibly explore controversial subjects while fostering understanding and dialogue.

In conclusion, the facts behind the subjects / events covered in the aforementioned movies are undeniable. The Kashmiri Pandit exodus was an unprecedented tragedy and the Godhra train burning and its aftermath left indelible scars. However, through celluloid or public discourse, the ultimate goal should be reconciliation, justice, and a comprehensive understanding of history that transcends bias. Cinema, when used responsibly, can contribute to this by fostering empathy and reflection.



 Rajan Nakhasi



# STRUGGLE

## Might End In Grave

**N**o matter what home means to you, there is surely something nostalgic about the place we call home. It is the place where we eat, drink and gossip with family and friends. Home decorations help us to remind ourselves of special occasions and memories related to these. If your loved ones leave home, they miss it and shall be reminded of all the good things like mother's unconditional love and the delicacies prepared and served by her. One wonders if we can really put into words what it means to be at home. Just thinking about the place you grew up or the place you come back every night warms your heart. Home is where our story begins...



The dark forces which seem to rule the modern world have shown great ability in diverting, deforming and annihilating all man's instinctive urges toward basic realities and the divine order of the world. As soon as a spark of light is glimpsed, it is taken over by those whose mission it is to pervert and exploit it, thus transforming what is beneficial into something maleficent.

My memories go back to Rainawari, Srinagar, where I was born and brought up in a small house. Rainawari is a place in Srinagar, Kashmir. It is believed to be the biggest area within the city of Srinagar, starting from Nowpora to Hazratbal. It has places like Hari Parbat hill with a fort on the top within its periphery. The fort has within it, a temple and a Sharika Temple, Maqdoom Sahib Shrine and a temple of Bhagwaan Ganesha around it. A maximum portion of the water bodies connecting the famous Dal Lake, on one side and Nigeen Lake on the other, is a part of Rainawari.

If there is a paradise on earth and that is only Kashmir and I had unfortunately to abandon my paradise that too forcibly. My days in Rainawari were the best as I have enjoyed life in every aspect. Be it schooling, friends, sports or adventure, I have done it at my best. Everything was going smooth till one day when I had to leave my sweet home.

I have heard : मैं अकेला ही चला था जानिब-ए-

मंज़िल मगर, लोग साथ आते गए और कारवाँ बनता गया (मजरूह सुल्तानपुरी)

I also started my journey alone when I was actually thrown out of my home. My journey was forceful and not at all willing. It was the fateful winter season of early 1990, when militancy erupted in entire Kashmir Valley and the humiliation for our community began. There seemed to be no respite as the militancy kept growing very fast and the only alternative was to flee my home and my motherland.

Many, like me, met with the same fate of running away from militancy and violence. I belong to the miniscule community of Kashmiri Pandits, who always believed in Non-violence and couldn't think of anything else other than running away to safety. Securing ourselves was important than anything else. We could only think of moving out of the valley and Jammu was the first choice for the masses. The valley which was once called the paradise on earth was slowly turning into living hell. The gun had taken over the love and humanity for which Kashmir was once famous for. The call and move for Azadi, began to turn against Kashmiri Pandit community resulting in mass migration.

Migration for safety, Migration for peace and Migration to survive and survival of the family, was the priority for me and people like me from my community because it was not like before, it was a very hostile and tense situation.

The situation before 1990 was never bad, as I had observed. There would be some incidents, but those never affected our community. But the situation during early 1990 was different. The shouting of Pro-Azadi, Pro-Pakistan and anti-India slogans were scary, and we couldn't stand to it nor face it and it resulted in uprooting our community. I will not exaggerate on that situation because we all know much about it.

Throughout, we were known as a peace loving community and we never got indulged in any sort of street fights, non-violence or harmful activities. And this was the reason that we preferred to flee and not face the non-violent moment in Kashmir. After a few

incidents of killings of our community members, the migration became for sure.

Curfew was imposed in whole of Kashmir Valley on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1990 and it continued for some days. It wasn't removed at once but in peace meals. After a few days it was relaxed for five hours and this was enough for us to think and decide about our safety and flee. But the only question in every mind was – When and Where?

Initially, a few families who had someone or the other living outside Kashmir, decided to leave and reach those relatives. My sister was one of the examples, who left on the first day of the relaxation of the curfew and reached Delhi and stayed with my second sister. She already lived there,

The migration of those few encouraged and made way for others and slowly and steadily all except a few left their adored home for some place unknown to them. Some people found the refuge with their relatives, some in tents and some in the rented accommodation. But all suffered in some way or the other. All grieved about leaving their home. And I was one among the lot of sufferers.

All, who migrated, be it rich or the poor or for that matter the so called middle class, all could be seen in a queue for the free ration etc; as all wanted it. Some organizations distributed blankets, utensils and other essential commodities and we without feeling shy took it. There was no disparity, both male and female could be seen standing for hours together and waiting for the freebies to be distributed and why not- it was the need for the time.

It has been more than thirty five years now that we are still struggling with life. One generation struggled and tried to make the others comfortable.

Everything in this world has a cost. If we compare the present living in Kashmir with our's, living outside valley, we see a lot of differences. We see huge and lavish houses across the Kashmir valley. Had the migration not happened, we would have had been a prosperous community. Expenses which we

never counted also matter a lot. Today ninety percent of the community might have their own homes in the form of pigeon holes like flats while as we could also afford good and lavish houses had most of the people not to spend maximum amounts as the rent for more than a decade during the early period of migration, while as we never had to spent a single penny for the same reason in Kashmir.

We had to spend money for purchasing new household items as we had left those back at home in valley. The money was spent on gadgets like fans, coolers, fridges etc. These gadgets were not even needed in the valley. And if we calculate all the unnecessary spent money, the total will be too high. Believe me for such amount we could have easily purchased a piece of land anywhere in the high end colonies of the Valley. And the good thing is that we still survived, ALONE.

I have been going around with the idea that one by one people would join me to make a group if not the crowd. But even after more than thirty five years of struggle, I find myself alone in this over populated world. I belong to none and none belongs to me.

Gone are the days when I lived in a cluster or a Mohalla where people knew and recognized me. I had an identity. People knew who I was, where I had come from and where I was going. I and my older generations had lived there for centuries.

But now I struggle to be identified. I live in a place surrounded by different categories. Most of them have also migrated. The only difference between them and me is that they often go to their home in their hometown and I can't even think of. They still own their houses there and I don't even own the atmosphere in my motherland. Some plan to move back after their retirement while as I can't even dream of.

Except this pigeon hole as my home, which I always boost about, I have nothing to think of. Sometimes I feel suffocated in this world but now it has become a routine and my compulsion.

With the growing years, I have only seen suffering and nothing else. I have suffered to

take care of myself, my family and our growing needs. I have suffered to construct a house so that we can live in it and call it a home and we no longer have to suffer the trauma to shift from one place to another. I have suffered to save for the rainy days. I have suffered to walk with world and keep abreast with them.

And in this process of suffering, I have lost and forgotten myself. Who was I? This question always haunts me. Now a new question is taking rounds in my mind – who am I? Believe me I have no answer. For some I am Rajan, for some more I am Nakhasi. Some call me Pandit Ji and others call me Kashmiri. I don't find myself in any of these.

Four walls and a roof over your head isn't the only way it makes a home. Home is more than just a shelter, it is where with live with our own, it is where we love, it is where we feel, it is where we can be ourselves and it is where life happens. But there is another problem happening with the most of the community members and that is isolation. Throughout the life especially after migration we have struggled to have a comfortable life atleast after the retirement. But now the time is different. Children prefer to stay away from home leaving the suffering and struggling parents to become vulnerable to disease like depression and anxiety. And I find no solution to it.

After more than thirty five years of struggling migration, I find myself alone and there is no remedy and end to it. This struggle will accompany me to my grave and it might perhaps end then but I can't see. It is heard that the pain ends when the soul leaves the body. So I hope my pain ends when I reach the grave. And instead of living in pain why not to prefer death. It is not bad to think of it because death is a golden gate through which everyone has to pass.

How Many of You Feel That This is Your Story?

मैं अकेला ही चला था जानिब-ए-मंज़िल मगर  
ना ही मंज़िल मिली, न लोग साथ आये और  
न ही कारवाँ बना!

बस अकेला ही चला जा रहा हूँ, दशत-ऐ-बे-तरफ (राजन)



# The Artist's Path

## A Spiritual Journey of Elevated Creativity

Understanding and cultivating creativity in art without formal guidance from an art teacher is absolutely possible. Many renowned artists have been self-taught, relying on exploration, observation, and practice.

I witnessed my mom Shobha (b.1906-nirvana .1970) knitting the Asana for the Deity and stitching the Anga Vastra for the Devi. It made me a handyman and a teacher.

The initial spark of imagination is the living force embedded at the core of creation. It is that luminous spark concealed within every artist, waiting to emerge. *The Artist's Path* is fundamentally a spiritual journey, one that begins and unfolds through the medium of creativity. Just as the first ray of sunlight pierces through darkness to usher in new light, this spiritual path dismantles inner barriers, revealing fresh horizons of creation.

As I traversed this path, using paper,

teaching Yoga Art, and sharing the tools like barks broken mirrors, rocks and fossils etc. for the purposes of giving Aakar --form to the matter, which is Prakriti or manifested creation, I observed how towering mountains of resistance crumbled under the force of fierce storms. Yet, even in this shattering, there was beauty—a profound transformation akin to a rainbow emerging from the aftermath of destruction. These barriers, once perceived as insurmountable, were entirely transformed through the act of creation, which is Kala Tattva in the Trika Philosophy.

This transformation occurred when I invited Shiva Tattva-- the Great Creator into my creative process. Like a tree striving to touch the heavens through its roots grounded in the earth, the artist seeks to fulfill this/her destiny by connecting with their spiritual depths.

What then?



Assembled by Saakshi Raina 5-year-old



**Broken Mirror -- I will graft it through Kala Tattva, was my Ichha Shakti**  
*(Put to shape by me & my granddaughter Saakshi)*

Is Shiva a Noun or otherwise a verb?  
 Should we confine "divinity" to a mere noun?

No. For the purposes of adoration and Dhyana, Shiva is a noun, but why not consider it a 'verb'—the most active and dynamic force of all actions?

Divinity is like a flowing river, scattering pearls of creation in every direction of life, through the Buddhi Tattva. It is the fire of Pragyatmak Kalpana--intuitive imagination, as taught by Swami Lakshman Joo Maharaj that not only, it burns away the old holding but also constructs palaces of novelty, through art, architecture, poetry, Drama music etc. in other words of Abhinavagupta's 'Theory of Aesthetics'. I tried the pen and brush alone.

Thus, the artist is not merely an instrument but a luminous beacon of creation, manifesting divine energy through their work. Like the fragrance of sandalwood spreading on the breeze, the artist's creations fill the world with a unique and unparalleled divinity.

*Author is "Mystic Revelations of Shree Roopa Bhavani, Quest and Reflections of the Sakti Tattva:, Facets of the Dasha Mahavidya etc."*



*Hiranyagarbha to Kalaa Tattva (A Trika understanding)*  
*An Assemblage, Kliim Beeja Mantra at the top. i circular Mandalakara of stones.*



## **The Government Conducts Outreach Camps in Jammu to Restore the Land**

Avtar Bhat, Special Correspondent, in his dispatch of April 5 2026, to the Daily Excelsior Jammu, has written in detail about the camps being held by the UT J&K government for the restoration of land to migrants whose land was encroached upon.

"To ensure the restoration of migrants land and property encroached in Kashmir Valley during the period of turmoil and settle the complaints of displaced people from Valley, the Government has ordered holding of regular outreach camps in Jammu where the revenue grievances of Kashmiri migrants in this regard will be on spot redressed by the Additional Deputy Commissioners of respective districts who have been appointed as Nodal Officers for the same by the Government.

Official sources said to take the cognisance of the complaints of Kashmiri migrants regarding the encroachment of their land in Kashmir Valley the Government constituted an Oversight Screening Committee headed of Administrative Secretary Home Department recently which inter alia has been mandated to oversee the decision taken on the complaints of encroachments of the properties encroached by Kashmiri migrants, to analyse the quality of disposal of complaints and monitor the progress of investigations being conducted by the police authorities has decided that regular outreach camps will be held at Jammu.

Official sources said that such outreach camps will be held after each quarter of the year to address grievances regarding encroachments on migrant land.

Vijay Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Relief, has been assigned by the Government the task of maintaining coordination with the Nodal officers of the Kashmir Valley.

The Government has issued a schedule for outreach camps in Jammu. Please approach the relevant officers with your land documents on the assigned date for your district.

The month-long outreach programme began on April 1 in Srinagar district and will conclude on April 28. The Additional Deputy Commissioners of the respective districts have been directed to visit, along with their dedicated teams of officers, including tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, Patwaris, and other revenue staff, on the dates specified for their districts in Jammu to resolve revenue-related complaints.

The Relief Organisation will act as the facilitator in this regard. The complaints regarding land mutation and encroachments will be looked into and redressed on the spot, official sources said.

The first outreach camp was held here on April 1 and 2 by Revenue officers of Srinagar district, which will be followed by Budgam district on April 6 and 7, Ganderbal on April 8 and 9, Bandipora on April 10 and 11, Baramulla on April 15 and 16, Kupwara on April 17 and 18, Pulwama on April 20 and 21, Shopian on April 23 and 24, Anantnag on April 25 and 26 and Kulgam on April 27 and 28.

The Government has already set up a dedicated online portal to settle migrants' complaints, said Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner, Dr Arwind Karwani. He said the outreach camps have been held to settle the property complaints.

It may be recalled that a large number of Kashmiri migrants have made complaints before the Government regarding encroachment of their land as well as that belonging to their religious places by unscrupulous elements in the Valley, and their cases have remained unsettled for years.

J L Khar a senior political leader said that

in some cases mutations have been fraudulently made after the death of the land owners while in some cases orchards and agricultural land of migrants has been encroached at various places in the Valley.

He, while expressing his satisfaction with the Government's decision, said that, for the first time in over 36 years, any Government has taken a positive step in this regard. He expressed the hope that speedy action will be taken by the authorities in this regard so that the displaced people whose land has been grabbed by unscrupulous elements will be relieved of unnecessary mental agony.

### **Prof Zutshi Conferred the M.K. Kaw Memorial Award**



The Kashmiri Education Culture and Science Society (KECSS) held a function in New Delhi today, attended by members of the civil society and prominent personalities.

The function was presided over by Chairman KECSS, Prof. R. N. Bamzai, Padam Shri. Prof B L Zutshi a well-known scholar and president Hindu Education Society Kashmir (HESK) was presented KECSS M K Kaw Memorial Award for his excellence in academic and intellectual discourse.

The award was presented to him by Prof Bamzai and other dignitaries who highlighted his role as an academician and president of HESK. Courtesy: Daily Excelsior

### **PNBMT to Intensify Agitation for Temple Protection Law**

On April 8 2026, in Jammu, the Pt Prem Nath Bath Memorial Trust (PNBMT) called a meeting of prominent Kashmiri Pandits to express their disappointment over the rejection of two private members' bills regarding Kashmiri Hindu Shrines and temples placed in the UT J&K Assembly.

The meeting was called to discuss the rejection of BJP Legislator Balwant Singh Mankotia's Bill to protect temples and shrines in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Mankotia's Bill was opposed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the House. The CM stood up after Mankotia tabled the Bill and said: "I oppose the Bill". The Bill was put to a voice vote, which was rejected, as the treasury benches voted against it.

Frustrated by the role of members and the insensitive approach of the Government, Kashmiri Pandits decided in the meeting to intensify their struggle of 15 years to get the law enacted to protect Shrines and Temples of the Kashmir Valley.

The meeting was chaired by former President KP Sabha Jammu, Prof. A. N. Sadhu. The other who spoke in the meeting included Prof P N Trisal a known linguist and B L Saraf, retired District and Session Judge.

The prominent participants in the meeting included heads of various temple committees and trusts, KP organisations and social activists.

### **Three Teenagers Drown in the Tawi River**

On March 30, in Jammu, a tragedy befell at Jagti, Nagrota, where three young boys drowned in the river Tawi. Rescue teams that included SDRF, NDRF, and Army divers recovered the bodies from the river in two days near Sainik School Nagrota.

The three teenagers who lost their lives were Aditya Pandit (15), Bavish Koul (15), and Sonam Dutt (16). They were found around 200 metres downstream from the site of the incident, a police official said.

The community went into shock, and

many assembled in Jagti to mourn the passing away of the young boys.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have expressed grief over the tragic incident and extended condolences to the bereaved families.

### **The Government Proposes to Repair and Renovate Migrant Camps for Rs 8245 Lakh**

In a despatch by Special Correspondent, Daly Excelsior Jammu Sanjeev Pargal has reported that the Jammu and Kashmir Government has prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the repair and renovation of migrant camps in Jammu for Rs 8245.62 lakh and the proposal has been taken up with the Finance Department for financial concurrence. According to him, this was revealed in the Legislative Assembly today by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who holds charge of the Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Department, in a written reply to BJP MLA Devyani Rana. Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary read the reply in the House on behalf of the Chief Minister. "The proposal has been taken up with the Finance Department for financial concurrence," he said in the written reply. The report states that the Government has initiated similar action for transit accommodations in the Kashmir Division and issued directions to ensure adequate budgetary provisioning and timely upkeep of infrastructure.

### **Shobha Yatra in Srinagar on Ram Navami**

In large numbers, Kashmiri Hindus took out a Shobha Yatra in Srinagar to mark Ram Navami with religious fervour and devotion, as scores of devotees participated in the procession.

The procession began from Tankipora, near the historic Kathleshwar, and moved through Habba Kadal, Barbarshah and Lal Chowk before culminating at the starting point. Men, women and children of all ages walked in groups, singing devotional songs and carrying religious symbols, creating a vibrant atmosphere along the route.

### **KP Sabha Hails Reopening of Raghunath Temple in Srinagar**

The Kashmiri Pandit Sabha has termed the reopening of the historic Raghunath Temple in Srinagar after a gap of over 36 years as an encouraging development for the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community. The President, KK Khosa, and members of the Executive Committee congratulated the LG, Manoj Sinha, on the occasion, and the Sabha urged the Government of India and the UT administration to formulate and implement a comprehensive return and rehabilitation policy for displaced Kashmiri Pandits within this year.

### **Sharika Foundation Jammu Interact with Students of Delhi University**



The Sharika Foundation in Jammu, a charitable trust that fosters socio-cultural resurgence and provides holistic education to children, trauma-informed yoga, and cultural preservation activities, recently welcomed students of Political Science during a visit to Jammu. The students were in Jammu to study the "ethnic cleansing" of Kashmiri Pandits. The visit included personal interaction with terror-affected victims to prepare an academic report. The studies focused on the emotional, social, and cultural impacts of displacement.

*Source: Agencies  
Editing Vijay Kashkari*

## Helpline Humanity & Saraswathi Education, Cultural & Charitable Trust successfully organized its 9th Annual Scholarship and 31st Book Distribution Function for needy students



The programme was graced by Chief Guest Dr. Arvind Karwani (JKAS), Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner, and Guest of Honour Miss Pearl Pandita (JKAS). Scholarships under the Indra Garyali, Ravi Garyali & Ravi Misri schemes were awarded to deserving single-parent students selected through a proper screening process. Free books and study material for the academic session 2026–27 was also distributed.

The Chief Guest appreciated the organization's consistent efforts towards promoting education and supporting underprivileged students. He emphasized the importance of guiding youth towards the right path and assured full support for such initiatives. Miss Pearl Pandita encouraged students to stay focused, work hard, and use their time wisely.

The event began with Saraswati Vandana and Ganesh Stuti by students, adding a cultural touch to the programme. Several distinguished guests, community members, parents, and students attended the function and appreciated the initiative.

Miss Pearl Pandita was also felicitated for her remarkable achievement of securing 19th rank in the civil services examination.

Founder Member Shri M.K. Bhat reaffirmed the organization's commitment to continue working for the educational upliftment of needy students and announced plans to expand library facilities in collaboration with the Relief & Rehabilitation Department.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all dignitaries, donors, volunteers, and participants for their support.

*Publicity Secretary, Helpline Humanity*



# KMECT BOT MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

KMECT BOT Meeting was held on 18.04.2026 at Samavar, Pamposh, Delhi. The members deliberated on several matters related to the Trust and Key highlights were as follows:

1. The Last 3 years financial highlights were discussed and we place these for your kind information as follows:

Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
No of patients funded (Nos)	259	258	262
Funds released (Rs Lakhs)	180.90	195.80	155.50
Funds received (Rs Lakhs)	121.90	165.60	145.70

2. The Chairman and the trustees placed on record the deep appreciation for the donors whose consistent support since inception has made it possible for KMECT to meet the community expectations for medical care.
3. The Board deliberated various steps to be taken to expand the base of donors, at both individual and at the community organizations levels.
4. It was agreed that renewed efforts would be required to Focus on improved communications with community and include interactive sessions as part of action, to maintain and reinforce Transparency with the donors, patients and Public at large
5. The Trustees after due deliberations, elected following members as the office bearers:

Chairman of BOT	Sh. Sunil K Thusu
Treasurer	Sh. Maharaj Kishen Pajan
General Secretaries	Sh. Jatinder Kaw Sh. Sanjay Dhar

6. After due deliberations, Sh. Romaish Pandita ji (who has been associate with trust as volunteer and then Member) was inducted as Trustee on board of Trustees. Sh Pandita is well known for community services.
7. All the office bearers committed to work effectively and efficiently to meet the objectives for which the Trust was incorporated.
8. The Members took note of the increasing cost of treatment of various diseases coupled with the rising number of patients (Emergency) and concluded to device the counter measures to meet these challenges
9. The Board deliberated various steps to be taken to expand the volunteer base.

The meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks from Sh. Ajay Pandita.

Jai Gurudev,  
Sanjay Dhar – General Secretary

# KASHIR SABHA AMBALA CELEBRATES ZANG TRAI, ELECTS NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ambala, March 22, 2026: Kashir Sabha Ambala marked the auspicious occasion of Zang Trai with great enthusiasm and community participation at Kashmir Bhavan, Sarsehri, Ambala Cantt. The event commenced at 11:30 a.m., bringing together members of the Biradari in a vibrant and devotional atmosphere.

The Matrashakti added colour to the celebrations, dressed in traditional attire and presenting soulful bhajans under the guidance of Mrs. Priya Upmanyu. Shri Virender Mohan Pandit captivated the audience with his melodious and powerful singing. The gathering was followed by a vegetarian lunch, along with tea and refreshments.

The function was graced by esteemed members of the Advisory Committee, including Prof. D.J. Raina, Prof. R.K. Bhan, Mrs. Sheela Bhan, and Shri G.L. Braru, whose presence made the occasion more memorable.

During the General Body meeting, a new Executive Committee was unanimously elected through a voice vote, recognising their contributions and commitment to the Sabha.

## Newly Elected Executive Committee

Position	Name
President	Prof. A.K. Watal
General Secretary	Shri Rajinder Kaw
Vice-President	Shri Murar Ji Raina
Vice-President	Shri Surinder Pandita
Joint Secretary	Shri Virender Mohan Pandit
Joint Secretary	Shri Sunil Braru
Publicity Secretary	Shri B.B. Das
Treasurer	Shri Virendar Bhat
Auditor	Shri V.K. Razdan

## Executive Committee Members

Shri Ramesh Kotroo	Shri Virender Mujoo
Shri Kuldeep Koul	Shri Ramesh Pandita
Shri Sandeep Pandita	Shri Sunil Koul Nagri
Smt. Basanti Bhat	Shri Ashok Wali
Shri Sanjay Bhat	Shri Avdesh Upmanyu
Shri Anil Raina	

## Advisory Committee

Prof. D.J. Raina	Prof. R.K. Bhan
Shri G.L. Braru	Capt. B.L. Pandita
Dr. Suresh Koul	Shri Chaman Lal Bhat
Shri M.L. Raina (Boh)	
Adv. Dhanunjai Dhar (Legal Advisor)	

Addressing the gathering, President-elect Prof. A.K. Watal expressed his gratitude for the trust reposed in him. He shared that he had initially intended to step aside in favour of younger leadership but accepted the responsibility in deference to the collective will of the members. He highlighted the Sabha's achievements during his previous tenure and outlined his vision for the 2026–28 term.

General Secretary Shri Rajinder Kaw thanked the community members for their continued support and urged them to provide details of the younger generation for updating the Sabha directory.

The programme was skilfully anchored by Shri B.B. Das, adding vibrancy to the proceedings. The event concluded with the distribution of symbolic sachets of salt and Atgath to the Matrashakti by Mrs. Sheela Bhan.

Earlier, a puja was performed at the Mahamrityunjay Mandir by Pt. Ganesh Ji, invoking blessings for the community.

— *Rajinder Kaw*  
General Secretary  
Kashir Sabha Ambala

### Banasthali Vidyapeeth, the Oldest Women's University

Motivated by Gandhi Ji's programme of rural reconstruction, Shri Hiralal Sashtri founded the Institution. He wanted to train his daughter, Shantabai, as a social worker. Unfortunately, Shantabai passed away on April 25, 1935. Her death gave him a new hope to educate others.

To complete the unfinished task, he started Shri Shantabai Shiksha Kutir in October 1935. The first Institution was in the mud huts. The Jiwan Kutir provided these mud huts. About half a dozen girls were the institute's first students.

Banasthali Vidyapeeth was established in 1943. The Vidyapeeth started UG courses in the year. The status of the Deemed to be University was sanctioned in 1983.

The University has grown from a school catering to only six students to a residential women's institute in the country. Now, girls are provided with education from primary school through doctoral studies. Banasthali Vidyapith has been accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with an 'A' Grade (Five-star Rating).

Banasthali Vidyapith's aim of a full and balanced development of students' personalities found concrete expression in 'Panchmukhi Shiksha', which evolved from initial experimentation.

Panchmukhi Shiksha attempts a balance of the five aspects of education, namely Physical, Practical, Aesthetic, Moral and Intellectual and aims at all-around harmonious development of personality.

The synthesis of the East's spiritual values and the West's scientific achievements is a key feature of the Vidyapith's educational programme. Simple living, self-reliance, and khadi-wearing are hallmarks of life at Banasthali.

The Vidyapeeth has several faculties that include the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Home Science, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Faculty of Mathematics and Computing, Faculty of Management Studies, Faculty of Life Sciences, Faculty of Social Science, Faculty of Physical Sciences, School of Automation, and Faculty of Law.

Banasthali Vidyapith offers a unique form of women's education. It blends two types. First is the Elementary Education, and second is the Secondary & Senior Secondary.

#### Elementary Education

The following are the subjects of study from classes 1 to 8.

- Class 1 to 2: Hindi, Maths, English, Music, and Drawing
- Class 3 to 5: Hindi, Maths, English, Environmental Studies, Music, Drawing, Cooking, Introduction to Computer, and Craft
- Class 6 to 8: Hindi, Maths, Sanskrit, English, Social Studies, General Science, Home Science, Music/Drawing, Introduction to Computer, and Craft

**Secondary Education:** The subjects of study for the Secondary School Certificate Part I and II Secondary (Class IX & X) are: (i) Hindi, (ii) English, (iii) Sanskrit, (iv) Social Science: (a) History+Civics+Economics, (b) Geography (v) General Science: (a) Physics (b) Chemistry (c) Biology (vi). Mathematics, (vii) Education for Home (viii) Aesthetic Education: (a) Music (Vocal & Instrumental), (b) Drawing & Painting, (c) Dance: Kathak / Manipuri / Bharat-natyam (ix) Introduction to Computer (x) Physical Education (xi) Social Service, Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (Class XI & XII), The subjects of study for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Part I and Part II examination :

Compulsory Subjects: Hindi, English, Computer Programming and Application

#### Optional Subjects:

##### (i) Humanities Group:

Every student has to opt for one subject from each group given hereunder:

- ❖ Group I: 1. Hindi 2. Physical Education 3. Economics 4. Home Science
- ❖ Group II: 1. Geography 2. Political Science 3. English 4. Music Instrumental 5. Music Vocal
- ❖ Group III: 1. History 2. Drawing 3. Sanskrit 4. Mathematics

## (ii) Science Group:

- ❖ Science (Mathematics:1. Physics 2. Chemistry 3. Mathematics)
- ❖ Science (Biology): 1. Physics 2. Chemistry 3. Biology
- ❖ Science (Maths / Bio / Geo): 1. Physics 2. Chemistry 3. (Mathematics / Biology / Geography) (Any two)

(iii) **Commerce Group:** 1. Accountancy 2. Business Studies 3. Economics / Mathematics

or 1. Accountancy 2. Business Studies 3. Economics 4. Mathematics

New admissions based on merit cum aptitude test are made only in classes VI and IX. Aptitude Test is scheduled to be held at Banasthali Vidyapith, Delhi and Varanasi Centres on 17th May, 2026.

Admissions to class XI are based on the merit of marks of the secondary certificate /equivalent examination.

## Undergraduate Programmes

Admission to all three-year undergraduate degree programmes of Banasthali Vidyapith is based on merit in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (for the purpose of preparing the merit list, the marks from various Boards are normalised).

The eligibility to B.Tech. (Computer Science and Engineering/ Computer Science-Artificial Intelligence (CSAI) / Electronics and Communication / Electronics and Instrumentation/ Electrical and Electronics/ Information Technology/ Bio Technology / Chemical Engineering/ Mechatronics) is 60% aggregate in 10+2 with Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics (PCM) and/or Biology

B. Pharm.: 60% aggregate in 10+2 with Physics, Chemistry, Biology (PCB) / Maths (PCM)

B.Sc. (Aviation Science) : The candidates who have attained the age of 17 years and who have passed the Senior Secondary School Examination/ 12th examination conducted by State Board/ CBSE or any other examination recognized as equivalent thereto, irrespective of the stream. (Note: Students from non-Science background have to pass the Physics and Mathematics papers (of 12th standard) in their B.Sc. I year in addition to the core papers of B.Sc. (Aviation Science)).

B.Sc. (Aviation Science) (Hons.) - 4 Years Degree Programme: The candidates who have

attained the age of 17 years and who have passed the Senior Secondary School Examination/ 12th examination conducted by State Board/ CBSE or any other examination recognized as equivalent thereto, irrespective of the stream. (Note: Students from non-Science background have to pass the Physics and Mathematics papers (of 12th standard) in their B.Sc. I year in addition to the core papers of B.Sc. (Aviation Science)).

- B. Des. (Bachelor of Design): 50% aggregate in Senior Secondary 10+2
- B.A. (Journalism and Mass Communication): 50% aggregate in Senior Secondary 10+2
- B.A. (Hons.) / Hons. with Research (Journalism and Mass Communication) - 4 Years Degree Programme: 50% aggregate in Senior Secondary 10+2
- B.A. (LL.B.) (I) / BBA (LL.B.) (I) / B.Com. (LL.B.)

5-Year Course (Dual Degree) with a semester scheme. No lateral exit is permissible by way of awarding the degree, splitting the integrated double degree course at any intermediate stage of the programme.

45% aggregate Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination of Banasthali or an examination recognised by Banasthali Vidyapith as equivalent thereto in any stream. The admission would be based on the merit of the qualifying examination.

## B.Arch.:

50% in aggregate in 10+2/ Senior Secondary School certificate examination with Science and Mathematics. Additionally, the student must meet the minimum qualifying marks in the National Aptitude Test in Architecture (NATA) examination (valid NATA score) as prescribed by the Council of Architecture for the corresponding year.

## PG Courses

M.A. (Economics, History, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Geography, Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Drawing & Painting, Music (Instrumental), Music (Vocal), Dramatic Art (Theatre), Master of Performing Arts, Kathak Dance, Textile Designing (Weaving), Textile Designing (Printing)

## Master of Social Work (MSW)

M.Sc. (Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Data Science#, Mathematical Science, Electronics, Botany, Zoology, Bioinformatics, Biotechnology, Microbiology#, Applied Microbiology &

Biotechnology, Environmental Science, Geography, Geology)

- ❖ M.Sc. (Home Science) (Human Development, Food Science & Nutrition, Clothing & Textile)
- ❖ Master of Computer Applications (MCA)
- ❖ Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Applications (PGDCA)
- ❖ Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- ❖ Master of Business Administration (Integrated) # (MBA)(I)
- ❖ M. Pharm. (Pharmaceutical Chemistry/Pharmaceutics/Pharmacology)

M. Tech. (Computer Science / Artificial Intelligence# / Robotics & Automation# / VLSI Design /Information Technology/Remote Sensing /Bio-technology/Chemical Engineering / Nanotechnology/)

M. Tech. (Integrated) # (Computer Science / Mechatronics)

M.Phil. (Economics, Political Science, History, Geography, Sociology, English - Language Teaching, Hindi, Sanskrit, Indian Music, Drawing & Painting, Mathematical Sciences)

LL.M. (Constitutional Laws / Criminal Laws and Forensic)

M.Com

M. Des

Admission is open to all women irrespective of their race, religion, caste, colour or domicile.

A student admitted to the Banasthali Vidyapith has to compulsorily join a hostel of the Vidyapith unless the student is a ward of some worker of the Vidyapith and stays with the worker on the campus, or the student belongs to a neighbouring village community.

Every student seeking admission to Banasthali Vidyapith must submit an application on the prescribed form and pay the requisite application fee by the prescribed date.

(GAT B qualified candidates need not pay the application fee. The same will be collected/adjusted from the admitted students.)

### Admission Alerts

**University Institute of Hotel and Tourism Management (UIHTM) Panjab University, Chandigarh (India)**

For Admission to: Bachelor of Hotel Management and Catering Technology (BHMCT) Bachelor of Tourism and Travel Management (BTTM)

- Last date for submission of information on the website to generate the Login & Password May 01, 2026 (Friday)

- Date and Time of Entrance Test: May 15 2026 (Friday)
  - 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for 11:30 a.m. Entrance Test: Chandigarh Only
- Reservation for the Kashmiri Displaced Persons

Website: <https://puthat.puchd.ac.in>

### Panjab University, Chandigarh PU-CET (U.G.)-2026

For Admission to the BSc (Hons) 4-year Programme and B. Pharmacy at Panjab University Campus, Chandigarh.

- Last date: <https://cetug.puchd.ac.in>
- Date of Test: 10-05-2026 (Sunday)

The PU – CET (UG) Entrance Test will be held at CHANDIGARH, LUDHIANA, MUKTSAR AND HOSHIARPUR.

### International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad

Admissions through JEE (Main) Score

The JEE Mode of admissions is for the following 4-year programmes at the institute:

- B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering
  - B.Tech. in Electronics and Communication Engineering
- Application Portal Closes: May 1 19 2026  
<https://ugadmissions.iiit.ac.in/jee/>

### NIT MCA Common Entrance Test (NIMCET)

The NIT MCA Common Entrance Test (NIMCET), is a National Level test conducted for admission into Master of Computer Applications (MCA) programme of 11 NITs and 2 IIITs.

- Last date for online submission of Application Form Friday, 01/05/2026 (up to 5 p.m.)
- Date and time of 5 p.m. Line Examination at the allotted centres Saturday, 06/06/2026 (02:00 PM -04:00 PM)
- 02:00 p.m. to 04:00 p.m. CE filling by paying the non-refundable counselling fees of Rs 1000/- Tuesday, 30/06/2026 (10 a.m.) to Friday, 03/10 a.m. 26 (5 p.m.)  
<https://nimcet.5p.m.ssions.nic.in>

Feedback: [vijaykashkari@gmail.com](mailto:vijaykashkari@gmail.com)

**LEARNING IS  
THE PRODUCT  
OF THE ACTIVITY  
OF LEARNERS**

John Dewey



## OFFICE OF THE SHRI MARTAND TIRATH TRUST

H.O. : MARTAND, MATTAN ANANTNAG, KASHMIR (J&K) PIN - 192125  
CAMP OFFICE : SURYA BHAWAN, PALOURA JAMMU (J&K)

शुुरी मारुतणुड तीरुथ तुरुस्ट

मुखुय करुयालय : मारुतणुड, मडन अनुतनलग, कशुमीर, 192125  
कैम्प आफीस : सुूरुय भवन, पलुुरा जम्मु

Ref. No. SMTT/54/26

Dated 28/4/26

### APPEAL

Dear Devotees,  
Namaskar,

It is to inform you all, that Adhik Maas /Malimaas-Banumaas (Purushottam Maas) Kumbh 2026 will be observed at the ancient pious Shri Martand Tirath Mattan from 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2026 to 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2026. . As per Purans during Adhik Maas performing religious rituals of Shradh and Pind dan of their heavenly ancestors for Moksha is of great significance. Moreover during this month one holy dip at Martand Tirath is equal to several holy dips in Haridwar and Gaya ji.

All the necessary arrangements like round the clock langar and prasad, temporary shelters, medical facilities, uninterrupted power supply, neat and clean ghats, shradh samagri etc. have been done by the trust at Martand.

We invite you all to come and be part of this divine Kumbh and perform Shradh and Pind dan. Our trust will leave no stone unturned to make this pious and spiritual event successful and memorable.

Jai Shri Martand.

With regards

  
Sh. Ashok Kumar Sidha  
President

Shri Martand Tirath Trust Mattan.  
Mob.no.9419685222,7889938407



# AIKS Matrimonial Service



Seeking a suitable match for my daughter, born on 05/02/1998 in Jammu, height 5.2 ft. She has completed her B.Tech in Computer Science from JNTUH and MBA from the Indian School of Business (ISB). Currently, she is working as a Product Manager in a multinational company in Gurugram. Father is a retired Central Government officer and mother is a homemaker. The family is presently residing in Dehradun and originally belongs to Baramulla, Kashmir. Interested may kindly contact at 8077364644



Seeking alliance for my son, 5'9", B.E. (EXTC, Mumbai University), MBA (Business Analytics, Symbiosis Pune), born 28th May 1995 at 12:06 noon in Jammu. Working as Business Insights and Engagement Partner at TE Connectivity, Bangalore. Contact Ramesh Pandita (9419189513), 3/1 Anand Nagar, Borhi, Jammu; aryanramesh99@gmail.com



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 allianceckp65@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 shahshah108@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.



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AIKS Camp office at Samavar Club, Pamposh Enclave New Delhi  
Web : [www.aiks.org](http://www.aiks.org) E-mail : [hqaiks@gmail.com](mailto:hqaiks@gmail.com)

Application No. : .....

Date : .....

**The President**

**All India Kashmir Samaj**

AIKS Camp office at Samavar Club,  
Pamposh Enclave New Delhi

**Dear Sir,**

I hereby apply for Patron/Life membership of the All India Kashmiri Samaj.  
My Particulars are as under :

**Name (In full) :** .....

**Date of Birth :** ..... **Father's/Husband's Name :** .....

**Address :** .....

.....

.....

..... **Pin :** .....

**Tel : (Res.) :** ..... **Office :** .....

**Mobile :** ..... **Email :** .....

I have studied the AIKS Constitution and agree to abide by the policies and programmes of the AIKS.

**With best wishes**  
**Yours Sincerely**

**Signature**

A cheque of Rs. 10,000/- for Patron Member and Rs. 5,000/- for Life Member favouring All India Kashmiri Samaj is enclosed here with.

**Cheque No. :** ..... **Drawn on (Bank) :** .....

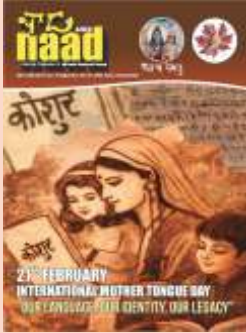
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