

# Kashmir Convener



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## Conducive Environment For Development In J&K After Art 370 Abrogation: President Murmu

KC NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI:** President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said there is a conducive environment for development in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370.

Addressing both Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Lok Sabha chamber, Murmu noted that the Lok Sabha and assembly elections were conducted in a peaceful manner in Jammu and Kashmir and the people deserve commendation for this achievement.



"After the abrogation of Article 370, there is a conducive environment for development in Jammu & Kashmir," she said.

The President said the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project has been completed, connecting the nation from Kashmir to Kanyakumari through railway line.

"Under this ambitious project, the Chenab Bridge has been constructed, which is the highest railway bridge in the world," she said.

Murmu said India's first rail cable-stayed bridge, the Anji Bridge, has been completed and the work on the Shinkun La tunnel was also progressing successfully.

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## J&K: Business Rules Committee To Meet Next Week To Deliberate Draft Rules

Ishtiaq Kar

**JAMMU:** The Business Rules Committee of J&K Legislature will be meeting next week to deliberate draft rules which have been prepared for the functioning of the House.



News agency KINS, reported that the committee members are expected to deliberate on the draft rules during their upcoming meeting on February 4. "If there is a consensus among the majority of the members at this meeting, the draft rules will be formally adopted and forwarded to the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for final approval," officials told news agency KINS.

Headed by Rather, the Rules Committee comprised Mubarak Gul, ex-Speaker, Saifullah Mir, former Law Minister, Hasnain Masoodi, ex-MP and Retired High Court Judge, all from National Conference,

Pawan Kumar Gupta, former Minister and Ranbir Singh Pathania, both BJP, MY Tarigami (CPM), Nizam-ud-Din Bhat (Congress) and Muzaffar Iqbal Khan (Independent-Thannamandi).

Barring two BJP Members, all others are part of the NC alliance.

Sources said that after the Lieutenant Governor's approval, the new rules will be implemented during the Budget Session of the Legislature, set to begin on March 3.

The introduction of these draft rules is a significant step towards streamlining legislative procedures and ensuring smoother functioning in the coming sessions.

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## Mirwaiz Umar Calls for Return of Kashmiri Pandits

● "Their Return Should Not Be Linked to Politics"

KC NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR:** Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has said that the issue of Kashmiri Pandits is a humanitarian one, and the Muslims of Kashmir want their return.

"They will return to their homes and live peacefully with their Muslim brethren and again live in the same environment of love," he stated. He emphasized that their return should not be linked to the Kashmir issue or politics.

In an exclusive conversation with Kashmir News Service (KNS), Mirwaiz revealed, "I have appealed many times from the pulpit of Jamia Masjid for the return of Kashmiri Pandits." He



stressed that their return has to be a collective effort. "The majority community will play its role in welcoming them

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## Set up Palliative care centres in backward and remote areas: LG Sinha



KC NEWS NETWORK

**SAMBA:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha asked the private sector to work with the administration to set up Palliative care centres in backward and remote areas.

He made these remarks after inaugurating the 32nd International Conference of the Indian Association of Palliative Care (IAPC), at AIIMS Jammu.

More than 800 national and international delegates will join deliberations to foster advancements and innovations in palliative care for quality of life for

patients diagnosed with terminal illness. The three-day conference is being organised by IAPC J&K Chapter and AIIMS, Jammu.

In his keynote address, the Lieutenant Governor exhorted the experts to keep Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs)

up to date and be more sensitive towards the needs of individuals diagnosed with life-threatening disease, well-being of families, alleviate pain and suffering and provide spiritual support.

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## LG Wants Youth To Spearhead Transformational Journey Of J&K

● Interacts with NCC cadets who attended R- Day Camp at New Delhi



KC NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Maintaining that youth are the future, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said "they are our hope for a better world and a brighter tomorrow for J&K. Youth have a great responsibility to carry forward the ideals and values of our ancient civilization and build a stronger J&K UT."

He made these remarks while interacting with the NCC cadets, who returned after attending Republic Day Camp at New Delhi.

The Cadets shared their experience at the Republic Day camp.

The Lieutenant Governor complimented the Cadets and NCC officers for their excellent performance on Kartavya Path and at various other

competitions. He congratulated SUO Ekta Kumari for making J&K proud by leading All India NCC Girls Contingent.

He said the historic participation in the Republic Day celebrations, securing several prestigious awards and accolades has reinforced the NCC's vital role in nurturing future leaders of the nation.

"NCC Cadets have always shown exceptional skills, discipline and discharged their duties with dedication and commitment. I must applaud the idea and energy of our young cadets to develop and improve the society and address the challenges through innovative solutions and selfless service," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Spirit of NCC

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## SC issues notice to Centre, BCI on plea for bar council in J&K

KC NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Friday sought responses from the Centre, the Bar Council of India and others on a PIL seeking a bar council in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta took note of the submissions of senior



advocate Javid Shaikh, appearing for the Kashmir Advocates Association, and issued notices to the Centre, the BCI and the Registrar General of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. A state bar council is a statutory body that regulates enrolment of law graduates

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Economic Survey Report

## India's GDP Expected To Grow Between 6.3 & 6.8 Percent In FY-26

● 'Foreign Exchange Reserves Increase From USD 616.7 Billion'

KC NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI:** "The global economy grew by 3.3 per cent in 2023. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects global growth to average around 3.2 per cent over the next five years, which is modest by historical standards", says the Economic Survey 2024-25 tabled by Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman, in the Parliament today.

As per the Survey, the global economy exhibited steady yet uneven growth across regions in 2024. A notable trend was



the slowdown in global manufacturing, especially in Europe and parts of Asia, due to supply chain disruptions and weak external demand. In contrast, the services sector performed better, supporting growth in many economies. Inflationary pressures eased in most economies.

However, services inflation has remained persistent, notes the Survey.

According to the Associated News Bureau, the Survey highlights that, despite global uncertainty, India has displayed steady economic

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## Nearly One Lakh Devotees Converge At Dargah Hazratbal

Rehan Qayoom Mir

**SRINAGAR:** Nearly one lakh devotees from different parts of the Valley converged at the Dargah Hazratbal shrine on Friday following Meraj-ul-Aalam (SAW) to participate in the special prayers.

The congregation reflected deep-rooted faith and devotion of the people, who thronged the shrine to seek blessings.

According to the details obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), from early hours of the morning, men, women and elderly devotees in large



numbers made their way to the shrine.

As the holy relic, believed to be of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), was displayed after the Friday prayers, the atmosphere turned emotional, with people

breaking into tears. "The air was filled with hues and cries, as many raised their hands in supplication, overwhelmed by the moment of divine connection."

Among the crowd was

Ghulam Ahmad, an elderly devotee from Baramulla, who while wiping his tears, said this is a blessed occasion, and coming here fills my heart with immense peace. Seeing the holy relic is a spiritual experience that words cannot describe, he said.

Similarly, the shrine echoed with the recitation of Quranic verses, Darood, and Naats, as thousands engaged in prayers, seeking mercy and guidance.

Religious scholars and clerics also delivered sermons, noting the significance of Meraj-ul-Aalam

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## OTM Mumbai: Tourism Stakeholders express satisfaction to CM, Tourism Deptt

KC NEWS NETWORK

**MUMBAI:** Jammu and Kashmir's travel and tourism industry has expressed the hope that the successful participation of J&K Government in the OTM will herald more tourist footfall to the UT even as they have thanked the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah and the Department of Tourism for ensuring participation of the UT in the event.

Expressing optimism on the outcome of the ongoing OTM on tourism industry in J&K, the trade leaders hoped it to significantly boost tourist arrivals to the region.

The stakeholders also



thanked Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, Director Tourism Kashmir, Raja

Yaqoob for their support in facilitating this participation.

The trade leaders also welcomed Chief Minister's commitment to provide an

annual calendar of all tourism events and participations for Jammu and Kashmir Tourism, ensuring better planning and coordination besides constitution of a Tourism Advisory Board to enhance the industry's strategic direction.

The tourism industry leaders who met the Chief Minister and expressed their appreciation to him and the Department of Tourism for their continued efforts in promoting Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector were led by Nasir Shah, Chairman – IATO and comprised representatives of Travel Agents Society of Kashmir (TASK),

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# Oppn calls President’s speech ‘directionless’, NDA MPs say it presents vision for future

NEW DELHI: The Opposition on Friday dismissed President Droupadi Murmu's address to a joint sitting of Parliament as "directionless" and a "document of lies" even as ruling BJP and allies welcomed it saying it presents a vision for 'viksit Bharat'.

The Opposition said the President's address should provide a direction to the country but this was just a document of government propaganda. "This is a directionless speech, no new direction was shown to the nation. Old schemes of the government were repeated, so it appeared that the President was tired of speaking. There was nothing in the speech," Trinamool Congress' Lok Sabha member Saugata Roy told reporters outside Parliament.

Congress' Rajya Sabha member Randeep Singh Surjewala said the speech failed to provide any direction to the nation.

"The President's address should provide a direction to the country, but it was just a document of government propaganda. She mentioned Kumbh, but should the government's responsibility not be fixed? Did she give any vision on controlling price rise?" he told reporters outside Parliament.

"She did not mention that the poorest 50 per cent pay 64 per cent of the GST, and ten per cent richest people pay five per cent GST. She did not name China, which is occupying land in Ladakh. She did not talk about wealth inequality," Surjewala said.

Samajwadi Party chief and Lok Sabha member Akhilesh Yadav said the President should have spoken on how much money is being spent on the Maha Kumbh.

"The President should have given information about how much money has been spent on Kumbh, how much more assistance the central government is going to give. Central government is saying there will be trade worth Rs 2,00,000 crore... Has Kumbh been organised to do business?" he told reporters outside Parliament.

His party colleague and Rajya Sabha member Ram Gopal Yadav called the speech a "document of lies". "This is a document of lies. The real situation of the country is not reflected in the speech. Where do we stand in the Global Hunger Index? We are in the category of countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tanzania," he said.

CPI's P Sandosh Kumar said the speech is only another addition to "disparaging speeches delivered by the President of India continuously during these years".

"There was no vision, no plan for the future, simply repeating the claims made by the government of India," the Rajya Sabha MP said.

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Rajya Sabha member Manoj Jha suggested that the President should be able to express her own views rather than reading from a document prepared by the government.

"I would only say we should start a new tradition, the President should be able to express her own views, not just the rhetorical things the government has written.

The President knows how deep the pain of unemployment is, how low is communal harmony, how income inequality is affecting this country... Manipur is still burning," he said.

NDA ally Lok Janshakti Party leader and Union minister Chirag Paswan meanwhile welcomed the address.

"The President's address highlighted how over the last ten years, India has achieved new heights in the leadership of PM Narendra Modi.

The gap between rich and poor has been decreased through various schemes... All this was mentioned by the President in her speech," he said.

BJP's Brijmohan Agrawal said the speech presented the vision for 'Viksit Bharat'.

"The President's address talks about the achievements of the Modi government in 11 years. It talks about the schemes for the poor, farmers, youth, backward classes, SC, ST communities, and the vision for creating 'Viksit Bharat'," the Lok Sabha MP said.

Fellow BJP Lok Sabha member Sambit Patra also lauded the speech and slammed former Congress president Sonia Gandhi for referring to President Murmu as a "poor thing".

"It is a historic day, President Murmu has given a vision for the future of the country, the whole country heard her speech and appreciated it. Sadly, Sonia Gandhi ji, former president of the Congress, the kind of comment she made for the president is not right," he said.

"She said the President was tired, and called her 'poor thing'. We want to say she is not a 'poor thing'. We are the biggest democracy, the first citizen, a tribal woman, she can never be a 'poor thing', she is strong and empowered," he said.

Addressing both the Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Lok Sabha chamber, Murmu earlier said the nation was witnessing major decisions and policies being implemented at an extraordinary speed, with the highest priority given to the poor, the middle class, the youth, women, and farmers. She said the pace of work has tripled in the third term of her government which has worked with strong determination to lift the economy out of the state of "policy paralysis".



## Election Rules Row

### Supreme Court Orders EC To Preserve Video Clips Of Polling

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Election Commission of India to preserve video clips of the polling during the pendency of the pleas against the decision to increase the maximum number of voters per polling station from 1,200 to 1,500.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar passed the order the counsel for the Election Commission of India (ECI) sought time to respond to the PIL filed by one Indu Prakash Singh.

Singh has challenged the panel's communications in August 2024 for increasing the number of voters per polling stations in each constituency.

"The counsel appearing for respondent number 1 prays for further time to file affidavit. Let the affidavit be filed within three weeks from today. We deem it appropriate to direct



respondent no 1 to maintain the CCTV recordings as they were doing earlier," the bench said.

The top court on January 15 sought responses from the Centre and the poll panel on Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh's plea against the recent amendments, including no public access to CCTV, to the 1961 election rules.

Singh said the decision to increase the number of voters

Maharashtra, Bihar and Delhi.

Singh said elections were normally held for 11 hours and it took about 60 to 90 seconds to cast a vote, and therefore 660 to 490 persons could cast their vote in a day at one polling station with one EVM.

Considering the average voting percentage to be 65.70 per cent, it was perceivable that a polling station prepared to accept 1,000 electors saw around 650 turn up.

Singh's petition said there were booths where the elector turnout was in the range of 85-90 per cent.

"In such a situation, about 20 per cent of voters will either end up standing in the queue beyond the voting hours or due to long waiting times, will abandon exercising their right to vote. Neither is acceptable in a progressive republic or a democracy," it added.

## Complete man

### CJI Khanna lauds retiring SC judge Hrishikesh Roy for legal acumen

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna on Friday lauded retiring judge Justice Hrishikesh Roy for his "legal acumen, knowledge, reasonableness and described him as "a complete man".

While holding a ceremonial bench on the judge's last working day, the CJI said Justice Roy's balanced approach and sense of humour made things easy in court.

"He was a complete man. His sense of humour made things easy. His balanced approach in court or otherwise was extraordinary. That apart, his patience, calmness and demeanour had impact on all of us," the CJI shared.

He went on, "While talking to him, you are talking to a person who has knowledge and wisdom. He is an all rounder and it is very difficult to find a person like him. He is a remarkable person and we are bound to miss him." Attorney general R

Venkataramani said Justice Roy believed a "smile is a curve which can set many things straight".

He took initiatives for providing relief during Assam floods.

"You have an old-school



"You carried a rare charm which made the bar productive," said Venkataramani.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta echoed a similar sentiment saying Justice Roy's humour eased the tension in court.

Supreme Court Bar Association president and senior advocate Kapil Sibal praised Justice Roy's humane approach to law and revealed

like" nature with calmness and composure.

Justice Roy was part of several Constitution benches in significant cases including verdicts over Euthanasia guidelines, committee for the appointment of election commissioners and practice of Jallikattu.

He was born on February 1, 1960 and obtained his LLB degree from Campus Law Centre, Delhi University in 1982.

On September 23, 2019, Justice Roy took oath as a judge in the Supreme Court before which he had served as the chief justice of Kerala High Court being appointed on August 8, 2018.

Justice Roy was appointed an additional judge of Gauhati High Court on October 12, 2006 and became a permanent judge on July 15, 2008.

In his lawyering career, he was designated a senior on December 21, 2004 by the Gauhati High Court.

### Dhankhar Calls For Debate Over Disruption In Parliament

NEW DELHI: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday underscored the need for constructive debate and dialogue in Parliament, saying the era of disruption should end and make way for meaningful discussions.

His remarks came ahead of the Budget session of Parliament.

While addressing the 33rd Foundation Day of the National Commission for Women (NCW), he said what the country truly needs is an opposition



that is both constructive and cooperative.

"There will now be more debate, dialogue, discussion, deliberation, and not disturbance or disruption in this Parliament," the Rajya Sabha chairman said,

highlighting the importance of a cooperative opposition.

Reflecting on women's empowerment, he lauded the recent reservation for women in legislatures, calling it a landmark achievement.

"Now we have reservation for women to the extent of one-third," he said, adding the country is witnessing an affirmative ecosystem that supports women's aspirations.

However, he cautioned that with increased aspirations come greater challenges, requiring regulation of energy and direction.

The vice president stressed that India's progress

is incomplete without the active contribution of women.

"I have no doubt that without the contribution of half of humanity, neither the planet can be happy nor the nation can progress," he asserted.

On the role of the NCW, Dhankhar urged the Commission to focus on information dissemination and constructive persuasion rather than sensationalism.

"Strength is never in the exercise of power but in the realisation of limitations. Your limitations define your power," he said, advising the Commission to set a new trend where creating headlines through coercive mechanisms should be the last priority.

He also called on the media to exercise sensitivity, cautioning that it is easy for journalists to create sensational narratives.

Dhankhar praised Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for setting a record in budget presentations and serving as a beacon for aspiring women leaders.

"From development of women, we are marching into women-led development," he said, adding this concept is not new to India but deeply embedded in its civilisation.

The vice president acknowledged that subtle discrimination against women, especially in work places and politics, remains a significant challenge.

He urged the NCW to draft a national plan to address these issues, emphasising that men's inclination to dominate women must come to an end.

"This dominance is psychologically depressing for women, and we must create a system where fiscal rewards compensate them adequately," he said.

Stressing the need for authentic gender equality, Dhankhar remarked that policy-making requires a thought process shaped by experience.

He asserted that India's journey towards becoming a developed nation will be powered by its women.

"If India has to achieve developed status, which it will, then the engine has to be fuelled by our women, our girls," he said, adding India's rapid growth has made it the most aspirational nation in the world.

"When you are aspirational, 'ye dil maange' more," he said.

### Never talks about people’s issues: Priyanka hits back at PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his 'no foreign attempt to stoke fire' remark, saying he never talks about people's issues and does not address them.

Speaking with reporters ahead of the Budget session, Modi said it is perhaps the first time since 2014 that no attempt has been made from abroad to "stoke a fire" in India before the start of a Parliament session.

"He does not talk about people's issues, does not address them. We saw in the last session, he did not (allow) debate. So he will say such things," the Congress general secretary told reporters in Parliament premises.

In his remarks before the session, Modi took a swipe at opposition parties, saying there were people ready to do mischief before every session since 2014 and there was also no dearth of those who would fuel such attempts.

"Shayad 2014 se lekar ab tak, ye pehla Parliament ka satr hai, ki jiske ek-do din pehle koi videshi chingari



nahi pakdi hai, videsh mein se aag lagane ki koshish nahi hui hai (Perhaps since 2014, this is the first session of Parliament in which a day or two before the session, there has been no foreign attempt to stoke a fire from abroad)," Modi said before the start of the session.

### Cometh The Maha Kumbh, Cometh The Prayagrajis: Locals Provide Meals, Shelter To Pilgrims

PRAYAGRAJ: Residents of Prayagraj have thrown their doors open to the hundreds of stranded and hungry after an incontinent surge in number of pilgrims arriving for the Maha Kumbh sent the city infra groaning under its weight.

While the administration grapples with the crowd after the deadly stampede on Mauni Amavasya, the city's residents, businesses, and students have risen to the occasion, providing food, shelter, and transport help to the countless devotees arriving for a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam.

Dr Anjali Kesari, a local, summed up the sentiment: "In Allahabad, we don't see the Maha Kumbh pilgrims as outsiders, we are hosts and they



are our guests."

Speaking to PTI, she shared how her neighbourhood in Chowk, close to the railway station, banded together

to serve food to weary pilgrims.

"Yesterday alone, we distributed tea that took 80 litres of milk into its preparation along with snacks, while

others prepared meals like tehri and dal-chawal for the pilgrims," she said.

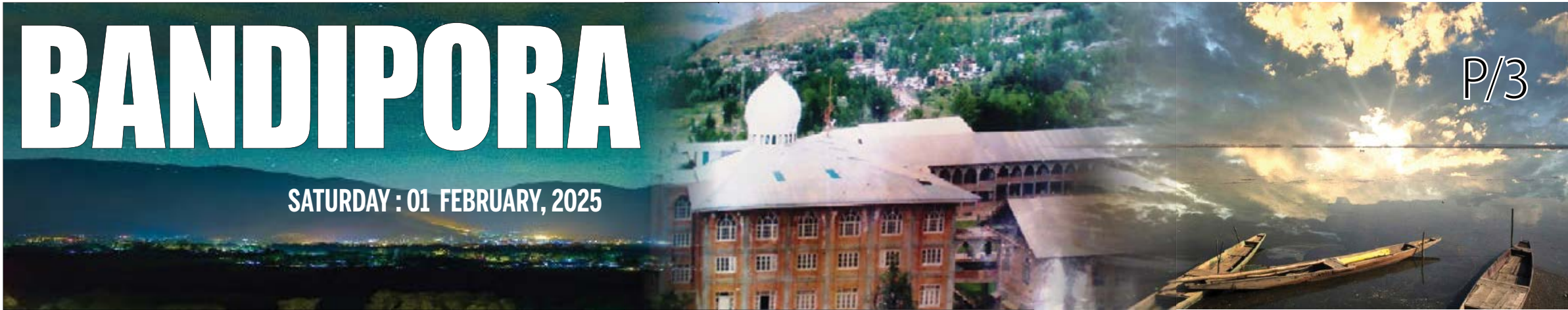
Many locals have cleared up spaces outside their homes for visitors to rest at night.

"For us, Kumbh is not just a religious fair; it is a confluence of humanity," Dr Kesari said. City hotels are not far behind in lending a pro bono hand to the weary. Alok Singh, who runs Hotel Vitthal in Civil Lines, has converted his 100-bed dormitory into a free rest stop for pilgrims. "After taking a holy dip, many devotees are exhausted when they return to Civil Lines and head towards the railway station. It's a part of Prayagraj's culture to help others, and this is our way of contributing," he said.

### 27 Bangladeshi nationals arrested for illegal stay in Kerala’s Kochi

KOCHI (KERALA): Twenty seven Bangladeshi nationals who were illegally staying and working in Kochi have been arrested, police said on Friday. They were arrested in a joint operation carried out by Ernakulam rural police and the Anti-Terrorism Squad in the North Paravur area in the Ernakulam district, police said.





## Bandipora Hospital Secures Fourth Position in J&K Hospital Rankings

**BANDIPORA:** District Hospital Bandipora has secured fourth position in JK Hospital Rankings in monthly ranking system. An official spokesperson of the hospital said the hospital has once again showcased its commitment to excellence by maintaining its place among the top-ranked District Hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir.

"As per the latest rankings released by the National Health Mission (NHM) J&K for December 2024, DH Bandipora secured the fourth position among District Hospitals across the Union Territory," spokesperson said.

He said this marks the third consecutive month that DH Bandipora has featured prominently in the rankings, reflecting its consistent performance in delivering quality healthcare services.

"The rankings, part of the JK eSahaj Hospital Management Information System, are based on key performance indicators such as registration of patients, conversion to Electronic Medical Records (EMR), registration of in-patient depart-



ment (IPD) cases, and patient feedback recorded in real-time on the JK eSahaj portal".

The hospital's medical staff and administration attribute this achievement to the hard work and dedication of its doctors, nurses, and support staff, as well as the integration of technology to streamline healthcare delivery.

Speaking on the occasion, the Medical Superintendent DH Bandipora, Dr Masarat Iqbal Wani expressed gratitude to the NHM and emphasized the hospital's unwavering focus on patient care.

"We are proud to maintain our position among the top District Hospitals in J&K. This achievement is a testament to the relentless efforts of our team and our commitment to providing quality healthcare services to the people of Bandipora," he said.

With District Hospital Bandipora's continued success in these rankings, the hospital remains a beacon of efficient and patient-friendly healthcare in the region, Spokesperson said in the statement

## CSIR-IIIM Unveils Institutional Calendar 2025



**JAMMU:** The CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM) on Friday unveiled its much-anticipated Calendar 2025 that showcases a year of remarkable achievements, ground-breaking research, and impactful societal initiatives. In a statement issued to Kashmir Con- venger, an official spokesperson said the calendar is a visual journey through 2024, highlighting the institute's contributions to research and development, skill development, entrepreneurship, and international collaborations, alongside its commitment to societal welfare.

The calendar was unveiled by Dr Zabeer Ahmed, Director CSIR-IIIM Jammu, who, in his address, gave a remarkable account of important Research and Development Milestones.

The Calendar unveiling was attended by Scientists, researchers, staff and students. Prominent among them were Er. Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist and Head Srinagar Branch, Vikram Singh, Sr. Controller of Administration, Ajay Kumar, Controller of Finance, Dilip Gehlot, Stores & Purchase Officer, Dr Manish Mohan Gore, Sr. Scientist CSIR-NIScPR, Dr Nasir Ul Rasheed, Sr. Scientist and Dr Kancherla Prasad, Senior Scientist.

Spokesperson said the calendar captures the institute's pioneering work in ethnopharmacology and the development of phytopharmaceutical drugs, showcased during

the International Conference on Ethnopharmacology.

He said event brought together global experts to explore the potential of traditional medicine in modern drug development. "The Calendar also highlights the commitment to societal welfare reflected in its numerous outreach programs, including skill development initiatives aimed at empowering local communities".

The calendar also commemorates the visits of several VIPs, including Vice President of India, Mr Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union Minister of S&T and Vice-President, CSIR, Dr Jitendra Singh and other scientific luminaries, underscoring the institute's national and international significance.

Dr Ahmed further said that Calendar 2025 serves as a visual narrative of the institute's accomplishments in 2024, capturing moments of scientific breakthroughs, societal impact, and collaborative excellence. "It stands as a testament to CSIR-IIIM's unwavering commitment to advancing science and technology for the betterment of society".

Dr Ahmed, in his address, said that IIIM Calendar 2025 is more than just a record of events; it is a celebration of the institute's journey towards excellence in science, technology, and societal impact.

## IICT Offers Unique Packaging Designs To Boost Sale Of Handmade Products

**SRINAGAR:** Stressing upon customized packaging as a major prerequisite to boost overseas exports of exquisite hand-made Kashmir products, the Indian Institute of Car-

come for artistic packaging to create a unique unboxing experience of the famed arts of Kashmir and boost its market value," he stated.

Director IICT called upon business



pet Technology (IICT), today urged the business stakeholders to adopt unique packaging designs created in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Srinagar, to boost sales.

Keeping in view the niche markets Kashmir crafts cater to, IICT & NIFT together have developed innovative packaging in GI registered crafts of papier mache, shawl, tweed, khat-amband and carpet.

In a statement issued here today, Director IICT, Zubair Ahmad, described packaging as an inseparable part of the famed Kashmir handicrafts, which facilitates its foray into international markets in a big way. "Time has

stakeholders associated with Kashmir Arts to carry out firsthand appraisal at its Nowshera campus and adopt various packaging prototypes developed, catering to the market needs. "Kani shawl costing upwards of 2.00 lakh deserves aesthetic packaging which works like an icing on the cake," he added, while stressing upon innovative and affordable packaging to compete in international markets.

He further stated that IICT has so far developed 36 box prototypes in 05 crafts with focus on different types of packaging material, list of vendors prototype dimensions and costing details.

## GMC Srinagar accords sendoff to MS SMHS, Dr. Tasneem Showkat

**SRINAGAR:** Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar bade farewell to Dr. Tasneem Shoukat, Medical Superintendent SMHS Hospital Srinagar, on her superannuation.

The farewell was attended by Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan, Principal/Dean GMC Srinagar; Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Administrator; Associated Hospitals, GMC, Prof. Sabiya Majed Head Deptt of Biochemistry; Prof. Dr. Iqbal Saleem HOD, General Surgery; Prof. Dr. Manzoor Latoo, HOD, Department of ENT; Prof. Dr. Rakesh Kaul HOD Medicine; Prof. Afroz Khan, Tahleela Asmat, Chief Accounts Officer; Prof. Dr. Saleem Ittoo, Deputy Registrar, Academics, Prof. Dr. Arshid Hussain, Department of Psychiatry, Prof. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Chalkoo, Dr. Muzafar Jan, Medical Superintendent, Lal Ded Hospital, Dr. Farah, Block Medical Officer, Hazratbal, casualty Medical Officers, Resident Medical Officers, Staff of administrative office and para medics.

Principal GMC Srinagar highlighted Dr. Tasneem's exceptional leadership and her contributions to the hospital's growth and development. "Dr. Tasneem has been a strict disciplinarian and her professional attitude in healthcare is a role model for others to adopt in healthcare settings", She said.

Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, highlighted Dr. Tasneem's tireless efforts to improve patient care and services at the hospital. "Dr. Tasneem has been a true leader, and her dedication to her work has been exemplary", he said.

Other HoDs also spoke about Dr. Tasneem's administrative skills, her ability to manage complex situations, commitment to providing quality patient care and her efforts to improve the hospital's infrastructure.

The participants wished Dr. Tasneem a happy and fulfilling retirement, appreciating her overall remarkable services.

## OTM Mumbai: Tourism stakeholders express satisfaction to CM, Tourism Deptt

**MUMBAI, JANUARY 31:** Jammu and Kashmir's travel and tourism industry has expressed the hope that the successful participation of J&K Government in the OTM will herald more tourist footfall to the UT even as they have thanked the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah and the Department of Tourism for ensuring participation of the UT in the event.

Expressing optimism on the outcome of the ongoing OTM on tourism industry in J&K, the trade leaders hoped it to significantly boost tourist arrivals to the region. The stakeholders also thanked Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, Director Tourism Kashmir, Raja Yaqoob for their support in facilitating this participation.

The trade leaders also welcomed Chief Minister's commitment to provide an annual calendar of all tourism events and participations for Jammu and Kashmir Tourism, ensuring better planning and coordination besides constitution of a Tourism Advisory Board to enhance the industry's strategic direction.

The tourism industry leaders who met the Chief Minister and expressed their appreciation to him and the Department

of Tourism for their continued efforts in promoting Jammu and Kashmir's tourism

The tourism fraternity leaders said they look forward to strengthened pro-



sector were led by Nasir Shah, Chairman - IATO and comprised representatives of Travel Agents Society of Kashmir (TASK), Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Alliance (JKTA), Pilgrimage and Leisure Tour Operators Forum (PILTOF), Association of Kashmir Tour Operators (AKTO), Travel Agents Association of India - J&K Chapter (TAAI JKC), Indian Association of Tour Operators - J&K Chapter (IATO JKC), Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India - J&K Chapter (ADTOI JKC).

motional efforts and enhanced tourism policies that will benefit the industry and contribute to the economic growth of Jammu and Kashmir.

On the sidelines of OTM, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism also organized a MICE Meet at Trident, BKC, Mumbai, to promote the region as a prime destination for business events. This initiative is expected to have a long-lasting impact on J&K's tourism growth by attracting corporate conferences and large-scale events.

## DC Bandipora Bids Farewell to Retiring Driver Manzoor Ahmad Reshi

**BANDIPORA:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Thursday bid a warm farewell to Manzoor Ahmad



Reshi, a dedicated driver who attained superannuation after serving the department for nearly three decades.

Reshi spent most of his career at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora, where he was known for his commitment and diligence.

To honor his long service, a farewell function was organized at the Mini Secretariat, attended by DC Bandipora, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Zaffar Husson Shawl, and other senior officers of the district.

During the event, officials felicitated Reshi with gifts and mementos as a token of appreciation for his years of dedicated service.

Speakers at the event recalled his contributions and extended their best wishes for his post-retirement life. Speakers hailed his honesty and dedication towards his duties and wished him for the future endeavours.

## Bharti Airtel Foundation Organizes Exposure Visit for Govt Teachers

**SRINAGAR:** Bharti Airtel Foundation, in collaboration with the Directorate of School Education Jammu, successfully concluded an exposure visit for government science teachers at the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM), Jammu, under the CSIR Jigyasa program.

A total of 81 science teachers from government schools in Jammu, Samba, and Rajouri districts participated in the initiative, which was conducted as part of the Quality Support Program by Bharti Airtel Foundation. The workshop aimed to provide teachers with hands-on training in cutting-edge scientific research and practical applications, enhancing their ability to engage students with real-world scientific methods.

Dr. Zabeer Ahmed, Director of CSIR-IIIM Jammu, addressed the participants, emphasizing the significance of such initiatives in promoting scientific awareness and addressing societal challenges. Mr. Anil Bhat, Regional Head of Bharti Airtel Foundation, highlighted the foundation's continued efforts to support schools across Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh in collaboration with the education department.

Dr. Abdul Rahim, Chief Scientist and Head of RMBD & IST at CSIR-IIIM, elaborated on the Skill India Initiative, which focuses on enhancing the teaching skills of educators to improve classroom learning. The technical sessions were led by Dr. Asha Chaubey, Senior Principal Scientist and Head of the Fermentation and Microbial Biotechnology Department, who also serves as the Nodal Scientist for the Jigyasa program.

The workshop included interactive technical lectures and practical sessions, where teachers conducted basic science experiments aligned with school curricula. The exposure visit served as a bridge between scientific research and classroom teaching, fostering a deeper connection between educators and the scientific community.

This initiative marks a significant step toward empowering teachers with advanced scientific knowledge, ultimately benefiting students and improving the overall quality of science education in government schools.

## No presence of white deer in Gulmarg: Wildlife Deptt

**SRINAGAR:** A viral video on social media claiming to have spotted a rare white deer in north Kashmir's Gulmarg has been debunked as fake by the wildlife officials, saying that the video has not been captured in the region.

Wildlife Warden North Kashmir, Intisar Suhail stated that the species shown in the video is not found anywhere in Jammu and Kashmir—or even in the Indian subcontinent.

"This is a fake video. It has been taken from the internet and is originally from a foreign country," Sohail clarified. "I traced the original source, and it was first posted on Instagram from outside India. People are spreading misinformation by falsely attributing it to Kashmir."

The viral clip, which has garnered widespread attention, was initially shared with claims that a rare albino deer had been sighted in the snow-clad forests of Gulmarg. However, experts have dismissed this, explaining that while albinism can occur in various species, no such deer exists in Kashmir.

"We do have native deer species like Hangul (Kashmir stag) and Musk deer, but none in white coloration. Albinism is a genetic condition that can affect animals, but this particular video does not depict any species found in our region," the wildlife warden said.

He said the individual, who originally shared the misleading post, has 'apologized', but that the video continues to circulate online, urging people to verify information before spreading unverified claims on social media.



# A Life Devoted to Education and Excellence: Celebrating the Legacy of Prof. Mussaraf H. Shah

By Mr. Nayeem Parray and Dr. Sajad Ahmad Mir

A new chapter begins for a man whose commitment to education, leadership, and service has changed both institutions and lives as the curtains gently close on an incredible academic career. A mainstay of higher education, Prof. Mussaraf Hussain Shah says goodbye to his official position but leaves behind a lasting legacy that will keep the halls of learning bright.

### An Intellectual Luminary and Multifaceted Scholar

Born on January 12, 1965, Prof. Mussaraf H. Shah has been a beacon of knowledge, earning prestigious academic credentials in multiple disciplines. Holding an M.Sc. in Chemistry, M.A. degrees in English and Sociology, and a B.Ed., his profound knowledge and interdisciplinary approach have enriched both academia and administration. His ability to seamlessly integrate various fields of study has made him an influential thought leader in the educational landscape.

### The Guiding Light in Academia

Prof. Shah's tenure as Principal of multiple esteemed colleges, including Govt. Degree College Poonch, Surankote, and Darhal, showcases his exceptional administrative acumen. Under his leadership, these institutions flourished academically and administratively, setting new benchmarks in quality education and institutional development.

As the Head of the Postgraduate Department of Chemistry at PG College Rajouri, he not only nurtured scientific temper among students but also spearheaded numerous research initiatives. His critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and rapid decision-making skills established him as a leader par excellence.

### Transforming Institutions: A Visionary Administrator

A distinguished hallmark of Prof. Shah's career is his instrumental role in enhancing institutional quality. As Coordinator and Chairman of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) across various colleges, he was pivotal in securing high NAAC accreditation grades. His efforts led to Govt. Degree College Poonch achieving an 'A' grade, a testament to his commitment to academic excellence.

Moreover, his membership in the Divisional Level NAAC Committee for Jammu division colleges positioned him as a key contributor to shaping higher education policies in Jammu & Kashmir.

### A Champion of Student Welfare and Community Engagement

Beyond the walls of academia, Prof. Shah's service to students and society has been exemplary. Serving as Warden of Boys Hostel at GDC Poonch for seven years, he ensured a nurturing environment for students. As an NSS Programme Officer, he instilled values of community service, national integration, and social responsibility among the youth.

His presidency of the Pir Panjal Foundation for Peace and Communal Harmony underscores his deep-rooted commitment to societal well-being. Through this organization, he worked tirelessly to foster unity, peace, and national integration.

### A Champion of Quality and Accreditation

One of the most notable contributions of Prof. Shah has been his commitment to quality enhancement in education. As the Chairman of IQAC (Internal Quality Assurance Cell) in multiple institutions, he spearheaded accreditation cycles that significantly improved the NAAC grades of the colleges he served. His strategic vision ensured that Government Degree College Poonch attained an 'A' grade, setting a benchmark for academic

academic discussions and policy-making initiatives. His papers on topics like climate change, sustainable tourism, and global peace have received wide acclaim, highlighting his commitment to addressing contemporary global challenges.

### Voice in National and International Forums

and educational transformation.

### An Advocate for Peace and Social Harmony

Education extends beyond classrooms, and Prof. Shah has been a relentless advocate for peace and social cohesion. As the President of the Pir Panjal Foundation for Peace and Communal Harmony, he has worked tirelessly to promote unity, dialogue, and mutual understanding among diverse communities. His association with international organizations, including the International Society for Development in Japan, speaks volumes about his efforts toward fostering cross-cultural exchange and intellectual cooperation.

### Mentorship and Humanitarian Contributions

A true educator does not merely impart knowledge but shapes lives. Prof. Shah's mentorship has empowered generations of students and faculty members, instilling in them a spirit of curiosity, discipline, and perseverance. His tenure as an NSS Programme Officer and his involvement in numerous social service initiatives reflect his unwavering commitment to holistic education. Whether leading environmental awareness campaigns or mentoring young minds in research and academic pursuits, he has left an indelible mark on the educational ecosystem.

### A Recognized Leader: Awards and Accolades

Prof. Shah's illustrious career is adorned with numerous commendations. He has been the recipient of multiple awards, including Master Karam Chand Best Teacher Award, Leading Educationist Award by Shri Krishna University Chhatarpur, Global Teaching Excellence Award by Kites Kraft Production, and Commendation Certificates from various academic and administrative bodies for his exceptional contributions.

These accolades reflect his indomitable spirit, commitment to education, and impact on generations of students and educators.

### Shaping the Future: His Enduring Legacy

As Prof. Mussaraf H. Shah steps into a new chapter of life, his legacy will continue to inspire the academic fraternity. His tenure has been marked by resilience, dedication, and an unrelenting pursuit of excellence. The countless students he mentored, the institutions he transformed, and the societal causes he championed will forever bear the imprint of his unwavering commitment.

His journey serves as a guiding light for educators, reminding us that teaching is not merely a profession but a calling, one that shapes futures and builds nations.

### A Heartfelt Salute

On behalf of colleagues, students, and the entire academic community, we extend our deepest gratitude to Prof. Mussaraf H. Shah. As he steps into a well-earned retirement, we wish him health, happiness, and continued success in all his future endeavours.

His superannuation is not an end but a new beginning, a moment to reflect, celebrate, and honor a legacy that will shine brightly for generations to come.

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and administrative excellence.

### Pioneering Research and Global Engagement

Beyond his administrative roles, Prof. Shah has been a prolific researcher and an active participant in intellectual discourse at national and international levels. His presentations at numerous global conferences, including those on environmental sustainability, communal harmony, and education, have enriched

Prof. Shah's intellectual contributions extend far beyond classroom teaching. He has been an active participant in numerous national and international seminars, symposia, and conferences. His research presentations on topics ranging from climate change to skill-based education reflect a scholar deeply engaged in contemporary academic discourse.

His participation in international research conferences in Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Japan established him as a global thought leader, advocating for sustainable development

## Smoking cessation and quality of Life

MOHAMMAD HANIEF

Smoking affects everything from the appearance of your skin and nails to how your tissues, organs and even your DNA work. The effects of smoking on your body start the moment you light up a cigarette. Thousands of chemicals released from burning tobacco start their damaging journey before you've even taken a puff.

The heat from burning the cigarette releases nicotine and creates tar (tobacco residue). As you bring the cigarette to your lips, the tar stains your nails. The smoke dries out and inflames your skin, deepening wrinkles. Inhaling smoke through your nose damages nerve endings. Over time, this reduces your sense of smell.

When you take a puff from the cigarette, it goes through a filter. This mostly keeps you from breathing in large particles, but tar, nicotine and other chemicals still get through. The tar stains your teeth and coats your gums and tongue. It damages your tooth enamel, puts you at risk for tooth decay and gum disease, and reduces your ability to taste foods you love.

Your liver processes nicotine and you pee it out within a few hours of smoking a cigarette. Your body misses the buzz and craves more, encouraging you to have another one. If you don't, you experience symptoms of withdrawal, like anxiety, depression, restlessness, anger and insomnia. Your body will develop a tolerance to nicotine and eventually need more and more to make you feel good, leading to nicotine dependence.



Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory has been identified as having the 6th highest prevalence of tobacco use in the country, with over 20 percent of the population engaging in tobacco consumption, according to officials.

The prevalence of smoking tobacco in the region stands at 20.8%, ranking it sixth in the country, following Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram while the relevance of smokeless tobacco in Jammu and Kashmir is the lowest in the country at 4.3%, just after Himachal Pradesh.

According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2 data, 35.2% of men, 5.1% of women, and 20.8% of all adults in Jammu and Kashmir smoke tobacco. It adds that 6.8% of men, 1.5% of women, and 4.3% of all adults currently use

smokeless tobacco. Overall, 39.7% of men, 6.2% of women, and 23.7% of all adults either smoke tobacco or use smokeless tobacco.

The government has implemented numerous measures to reduce tobacco consumption. Over the past four years, thousands of challans have been issued and substantial fines collected from violators for smoking in public places in the Kashmir division. These efforts have resulted in hundreds of people quitting smoking, with thousands receiving counselling and pharmacotherapy sessions.

Various awareness programmes and initiatives have already been launched in Jammu and Kashmir to educate the public about the hazards of tobacco use, and officials have been instructed to carry out regular enforcement drives for the

implementation of COTPA-2003.

Official data reveals that smokers and tobacco users are 2.5 times more likely to develop tuberculosis (TB) as tobacco use raises the risk of TB, increases recurrence, and impairs treatment.

The government of Jammu and Kashmir has already imposed a complete ban on the sale of loose cigarettes, loose bidis, and loose tobacco. All educational institutions and tourist destinations have been declared tobacco-free zones.

The available media reports reveals that among both males and females, the prevalence of cigarette smoking is higher in urban areas but the prevalence of all other smoking products is higher in rural areas. The prevalence of each of the smokeless tobacco product is higher in rural than urban areas, however, gutkha is almost equally prevalent in both urban and rural areas.

On an average a daily cigarette smoker in India smokes 6.1 cigarette sticks per day, and a daily bidi smoker smokes 11.5 bidi sticks per day. One-fourth of daily cigarette smokers smoke more than 10 cigarettes per day, and more than half of the daily bidi smokers smoke more than 10 bidis per day.

Tobacco use is a major risk factor for many chronic diseases, including cancer, lung disease, cardiovascular disease and stroke. It is one of the major causes of death and disease in India and accounts for nearly 1.35 million deaths every year. India is also the second largest consumer and producer of tobacco.

Tobacco is recognised as the leading cause

of preventable deaths worldwide, killing over seven million people globally and more than one million in India annually. Lung cancer has emerged as the second most common cancer, and in recent decades, Kashmir has seen a rise in cases of lung and breast cancers.

Hospital-based data from the Kashmir valley reveals a higher incidence of lung cancer among males, directly correlated to the duration and frequency of smoking. While quitting smoking reduces the risk of developing cancer, the risk does not disappear entirely.

Half of the current smokers believed they could quit if they wanted to, and around 40 percent had quit smoking in the past year, citing various reasons for quitting as it is crucial to address tobacco use among adolescents and enhance awareness of its dangers, given the increasing prevalence and widespread exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

There are many ways through which one can quit smoking. The first one is preparing for the day when you will quit. It is not easy to quit a habit abruptly, so set a date to give yourself time to prepare mentally.

Thus, if anyone is a slave to cigarettes, it is essential for them to understand that it is never too late to stop smoking. With the help and a good action plan, anyone can quit it for good. Moreover, the benefits will be evident within a few days of quitting.

(The author can be mailed at [m.hanief@gmail.com](mailto:m.hanief@gmail.com))



# CS Atal Dulloo reviews functioning of FCS&CA, Metrology Departments

Directs to ensure protection of consumer rights

**JAMMU:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high level meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, to review functioning of the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) and the Legal Metrology Department (LMD).

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA, Zubair Ahmed, Controller, Legal Metrology Department J&K, Anuradha Gupta and other senior officers.

Commending the efforts of both the departments, the Chief Secretary emphasised the need for stringent monitoring to prevent functioning of illegally operating dispensing units. He also directed for creation of a comprehensive database and implementation of capacity building programs for the officers and officials to further strengthen consumer protection measures across the UT.

He emphasised on the concerned to carry out regular inspection of all the business establishments dispensing consumer goods. He directed for protecting the consumer interests in every circumstances so that quality goods and services are provided to them at reasonable rates.

Dulloo also asked for making their services more accessible and easily available to public.



He enjoined upon the FCS&CA Department to provide timely food grains to public residing in far off areas. He reviewed the ration distribution and availability during winter months and directed to ensure that each ration card holder in these villages get ration as per his/her entitlement.

Zubair Ahmed, apprised the Chief Secretary of the department's key activities including current coverage under the Public Distribution System (PDS), ongoing reforms and efforts to enhance system credibility.

He provided an update on crucial focus areas such as winter stocking of essential commodities, procurement of paddy during the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) and other physical and financial achievements.

Controller, Legal Metrology Department, briefed the meeting on department's objectives and operations. She informed that all services of the department are now available online through the J&K Single Window System and are covered under the J&K Public Services Guarantee Act, 2011.

Notably, the department has introduced an auto-calculation feature for fee assessment on its portal, along with an auto-renewal facility for licenses, making the system more user-friendly.

Highlighting consumer outreach efforts, the Controller stated that the department has conducted 269 service camps in far-flung areas during the current financial year.

The LMD ranks third in the number of online applications received and disposed of, with an average processing time of 11 days. In addition to service delivery, the department actively promotes consumer awareness through camps and social media initiatives.

To safeguard consumer interests, the department regularly conducts special enforcement drives. Recently, it launched campaigns against non-standard helmets and unauthorized petrol pumps in Kashmir Valley.

## Jatin Kishore assumes charge as DC Ganderbal



**GANDERBAL:** In a formal handover ceremony held today in the office chamber of the Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore took the charge as the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, succeeding Shyambir.

Jatin Kishore, who formerly served as the Additional Secretary in the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat holding additional charge of the post of Director Information took the charge in presence of several senior officers of the district administration.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Gulzar Ahmad, GM DIC, Bilal Mukhtar and Chief Planning Officer, Shah Nawaz Ahmad Khan were present on the occasion.

The Deputy Commissioner was accorded a warm welcome by the officers present. The DC expressed his gratitude to the gathering of officers and officials present on the occasion.

## Doda admin hosts Lal Draman Winter Festival-2025

**DODA:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harvinder Singh today chaired a meeting here in the Mini Meeting Hall DC Office Complex, to review the arrangements for the Lal Draman Winter Festival, scheduled to be held on February 8 -2025 (Saturday).

The festival is being organized by the District Administration in collaboration with Tejas Ek Pahal Foundation (NGO), the Tourism Department, and the Indian Army.

The meeting was attended by officers from civil and police administration, functionaries of R&B, PHE and Food Department, representatives from Tejas Ek Pahal Foundation (NGO) and other concerned officers.

A range of activities has been planned for the festival, including singing competitions, cultural programs, departmental stalls, sports events, traditional Daku dance performances, local art exhibitions and food stalls featuring regional cuisine.

To ensure the smooth execution of the festival, the DC assigned specific responsibilities to different departments including setting up of departmental stalls at the venue, provision of security and traffic management by Police and army.

The Forest Department was asked to make arrangements for conducting a plantation drive, besides collaborating with the Tourism Department and RDD to manage sanitation, waste disposal, cleaning of Amrit Sarovar and developing scenic viewpoints.

The arrangements for provisioning drinking water, organizing sports events and restoration of the Lal Draman road, deployment of buses for transporting volunteers were entrusted to Jal Shakti, District Youth Services and Sports, R&B and Motor Vehicle Departments, respectively.

## Deputy Commissioner Poonch reviews Security, community welfare measures in Border areas

**POONCH:** Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal today chaired a District Level Standing Committee (DLSC) meeting today at the DC Office Complex, focusing on border security and improving community welfare near the Line of Control (LoC).

The meeting addressed critical security concerns and reviewed the progress of essential measures, including bunker construction. Updates from Army officials highlighted ongoing efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region.

The Deputy Commissioner urged law enforcement agencies, including the Police and BSF to intensify action against drug trafficking and other social issues, stressing the importance of inter-agency collaboration.

He also called for reliable water and electricity supplies and encouraged departments to organise veterinary, medical camps and Civics action programmes in border areas.

Furthermore, the Deputy Commissioner asked the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to explore the feasibility of a new alternate bridge for Poonch city.

The meeting was attended by ADCs, Additional SP, ACR, CPO, ACD, CMO, Tehsildars, and representatives from the Indian Army, BSF, Police, and intelligence agencies.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner chaired a meeting of District Level Committee on the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) - a flagship scheme providing necessary support and resources to local fishers and fostering economic growth.

At the outset, the Fisheries Development Officer presented a detailed overview of the cases registered under the PMMSY for consideration.

Following an in-depth discussion, the Deputy Commissioner approved the four applications of eligible beneficiaries, marking a positive advancement towards local fisheries development and sustainability efforts.

The meeting was attended by PO ICDS, ACD, CAO, HOD Zoology GDC Poonch, Fisheries Development Officer, AD Fisheries besides other concerned officers.

## Police Seize Four Vehicles for Illegal Mineral Transportation in Awantipora

Srinagar Jan 31 : Continuing its crackdown on illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, police have seized four vehicles in the Pampore area of Awantipora.

A police team from Police Station Pampore, led by SHO Pampore, seized four tippers—JK13-7651, JK01AV-6488, JK13B-2087, and JK03B-9066—for their involvement in illegal mineral transportation.

Accordingly, a case has been registered under FIR No. 11/2025 under relevant sections of the law, and an investigation has been initiated.

Authorities have warned that individuals involved in illegal mining activities will be dealt with as per the law.(KINS)

## District Magistrate Jammu directs biomedical waste management audit across district

**JAMMU:** District Magistrate Jammu, Sachin Kumar Vaishya has called for a detailed report on all government and private health facilities in the district on their current waste disposal practices, including any shortcomings in complying with biomedical waste protocols.

The directive was issued during a District Level Monitoring Committee meeting chaired by the DM to review the implementation of Bio Medical Waste Management and Handling Rules, with the goal of improving biomedical waste management throughout the district.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Harbaksh Singh has been tasked to ensure the operational status of bio-medical waste handling, disposal and processing facilities across public and private health facilities. The entire exercise is to be conducted under the supervision of Additional District Development Commissioner, Sher Singh.

Furthermore, the District Magistrate underscored the necessity for all health facilities to be thoroughly informed about the imperative of strict compliance with biomedical waste management and disposal regulations.

Facilities are also instructed to implement robust tracking and recording mechanisms for waste processing and transfer, utilising appropriate software solutions.

The District Magistrate stated, "It is our collective responsibility to ensure that waste disposal aligns with prescribed norms, thereby safeguarding the health and quality of life of our district's citizens."

The meeting witnessed the participation of Executive Engineer PHE Rajesh Sharma, Divisional Officer SPCB, Health Officer JMC Dr. Vinod Sharma, HoD Medicine Government Medical College Jammu Dr Vijay Kundal, District Health Officer Dr Samina Nazir, Nodal Officer Bio Medical Waste Management Dr Jyoti Bhau among other concerned officers.

## NHM releases ranking of Public Health facilities on JK eSahaj for Dec 2024

**Srinagar:** National Health Mission J&K today releases ranking of Public Health facilities on Hospital Management Information System (JK eSahaj) for the month of December 2024.

In the category of New GMCs of Associated Hospitals of Govt. Medical Colleges the first rank has been clinched by Govt Medical College, Kathua followed by Govt Medical College, Rajouri, Govt. Medical College Udhampur, Govt Medical College Doda and Govt. Medical College Baramulla.

In the category of District Hospitals first rank has been clinched by DH Shopian, followed by DH Ganderbal, DH Kishtwar, DH Bandipora



and DH Samba.

In the category of Community Health Centres (CHCs), first rank has been clinched by CHC

Pakherpora, Budgam, followed by CHC Marh Jammu, CHC Banihal Ramban, CHC Surankote, Poonch and CHC Billawar, Kathua.

Hospital Ranking has been assigned for different categories of facilities including Associated Hospitals of Govt. Medical Colleges, District Hospitals and CHCs.

The ranking has been done on the basis of registration, conversion of EMR (Electronic Medical Record), registration of IPD patients and Patient feedback uploaded on the portal of JK e Sahaj for the month of December 2024, on real time basis.

## District admin Ganderbal bids affectionate farewell to outgoing DC

**GANDERBAL:** The District administration Ganderbal today organized a farewell to honor and bid adieu to the outgoing Deputy Commissioner (DC), Shyambir, for his dedicated and exemplary service to the district.

The event, held in the lawns of the DC Office, showcased deep respect and appreciation for DC's significant contributions during his tenure in the district.

On the occasion officers commended Shambir's tireless efforts in advancing the developmental agenda of Ganderbal and praised his unwavering commitment, dynamic leadership, and innovative approach that

has left an indelible mark on the progress of the district. His proactive approach



to addressing public grievances and fostering teamwork among departments earned him widespread respect and admiration. In his farewell address, the DC expressed his gratitude to

the district officers and the people of Ganderbal for their support and cooperation. "It has been a privilege to serve the people of Ganderbal. I am deeply humbled by the affection and encouragement I have received during my time here," he said.

The event concluded with the presentation of mementos and a vote of thanks, wishing Shyambir success in his future endeavors. Among others, the ceremony was attended by SSP Ganderbal, Ragav S, Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Gulzar Ahmad, SDM Kangan, CPO and other senior officers and officials from district administration.

## District admin Shopian bids affectionate farewell to Shahid Saleem Dar

**Shopian:** The District administration, Shopian today accorded a warm and affectionate farewell to Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, the outgoing Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Shopian, upon his transfer.

SSP Anayat Ali; ADDC, Dr.Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz and other officers on the occasion expressed gratitude and appreciation to him for his leadership in ushering the positive change in district and extended best wishes to him for future.

As the DC, Shahid Saleem led district towards the path of development & prosperity while also achieving several administrative milestones. During a farewell meet, officers highlighted his efforts which made a positive impact on the lives of the people in the district and increased efficiency in district offices. Shahid Saleem has been instrumental in taking various initiatives and programs in Shopian during his short stint of five months as DC Shopian, including promoting socio-economic development, addressing the issue of drug menace, Free Civil services & NEET coaching, engaging youth in sports and competitive initiatives besides adopting innovative approach in the administration.

The farewell ceremony also was attended by other Officers & officials of District administration and police.

## 11 vehicles, 1 LNTs, 1 JCB seized in Pampore, Pulwama

Bilal Habib

**PAMPORE:** The Geology and Mining Department has seized 11 vehicles, one heavy machines excavators and one JCB used in illegal mining and transportation of raw materials from different areas of Pampore Tehsil and other parts of south Kashmir's



Pulwama district during the raids in the last 24 hours.

A team of officials from the Geology and Mining Department Pulwama under the supervision of by District Mineral Officer

Pulwama Er Mohammad Manzoor laid a major crackdown at the Pampore, Lassipora, Panjran and Lajoora

During the raids 11 Tippers, Dumpers, one heavy machines excavators and one JCB were found engaged in illegal mining and transportation of raw materials, officials said.

District Mineral Officer Pulwama Er Mohammad Manzoor told Kashmir Convener that they launched a drive in Pampore, Chandhara, Lassipora, Panjran, Lajoora and other parts of the district.

During the past 24 hours we seized 11 tippers, Dumpers, one heavy machinery and a JCB," he said, adding in the past months they have seized a number of vehicles and realised a huge fine.

He said that they will act tough against illegal miners. "Only mining through legal process will be allowed, illegal mining will not be allowed," he said, adding they raid whenever they receive reports about illegal mining.

He further said that all of his team has been put on alert to monitor illegal mining in Pampore, Awantipora, Tral and other areas of the Pulwama district.

He said that all the illegal mining cases would be dealt with under the rules and all the things against the violators would be done by a fast-track system.

"The operation against the illegal mining and transporting is going on in different areas of the district," he said.

## One day awareness programme on Biotechnology Park-Kathua held at GGM Science College Jammu

**JAMMU:** The Department of Biotechnology, GGM Science College Jammu, in collaboration with J&K Science Technology and Innovation Council Udhampur, organised 'One day soft activity on Biotechnology Park-Kathua: Awareness and its potential utilisation' here today.

The Program aimed at highlighting the park's role in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and scientific research in Biotechnology. The highly anticipated event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of more than 100 students.

The program started with the welcome address by Head Department of Biotechnology Prof Kiran Bala.

The host College Principal Dr. Romesh Kumar Gupta- the Chief Guest spoke about the career prospects in biotechnology research, industry, and academia.

District Coordinator JKSTIC- DST Udhampur Shruti Khanna emphasized the importance of Biotechnology Park which intends to create research opportunities with incubation centers providing support to the Agri entrepreneurs,



scientists, scholars and students to connect with the outside industrial houses.

Head Department of Biotechnology, PSPS Govt. PG College for Women Gandhi Nagar Dr. Rahul Sharma, first speaker of the event, elaborated on the role of Biotechnology Park Kathua in biotechnology research, industrial growth, and entrepreneurship. He also discussed the Government schemes and funding opportunities for Biotech startups.

Associate Professor SMVDU Dr. Parvez Singh Slathia delivered a keynote speech on the importance of herbal extraction, analytical labs, fermentation and plant tissue facilities in Biotech Park. He discussed the significance of cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets and navigating the challenges associated with building innovative ventures. The One-Day Awareness

Programme on Biotechnology Park, Kathua, was a resounding success. The event effectively promoted the importance of Biotechnology in economic development and innovation in Jammu & Kashmir.

All the members of organizing committee Prof. Gourav Gupta, Prof. Kirti Sharma and Dr. Richa Sharma actively participated in the event and other faculty members Dr. Vandana Khajuria, Prof. Kamal Kishore, Dr. Ashiq Hussain, Dr. Pankaj Gupta, Dr. Nisha Slathia, Dr. Neha Sharma, Dr. Pankaj Mansotra, Dr. Arti Heer, Dr. Mateen, Dr. Arjun Rathore, Dr. Ram, Dr. Amit Bali and Prof. Sunita Kumari were also present during the activity.

The proceedings of the function were carried out by Dr. Nancy Gupta and concluded with a vote of thanks, by Dr. Neha Mahajan Assistant Professor Department of Biotechnology.



# Stout And Tender: Symphonies Of Poetic Realities, Paradoxes, And The Human Condition



Shabeer Ahmad Lone

4. The collection’s paradoxical nature is most striking when it explores the tension between personal desire and societal imposition. In *Once Upon a Time*, Raina contrasts the unwavering pursuit of ideologies—whether left-wing or right-wing—with the human tendency to resist such impositions through personal will and soul. The depiction of the “Left” as the “reasoning fool” and the “Right” as the “focused Ninja” critiques political extremism, painting it as narrow and blind to deeper currents of humanity. This critique finds resonance in *Democracy*, where Raina explores the systemic failures of political systems that perpetuate division and violence, failing to serve the people’s best interests. Badri Raina’s poetry grapples with the contradictions of human existence—ideological rigidity versus personal freedom, oppression versus resistance. Once Upon a Time critiques political extremism, drawing parallels with Orwell and Arendt’s analysis of totalitarianism. *Democracy* and *The Beating of Drums* expose systems that divide and oppress, resonating with Marx and Fanon’s critiques of power.

Raina finds hope amidst disillusionment, as in *Paradise Lost*, while *Onion* symbolizes deprivation and resilience, echoing Neruda and Brecht. *The Farmers Are Back* highlights ongoing resistance despite systemic injustice. Poems *The Fire* and the *Hurricane* critique ideological extremes, aligning with Yeats’ *The Second Coming*. Raina’s work underscores the fragile balance between survival, hope, and human spirit, echoing Whitman’s inclusivity and Rumi’s universalism.

5\*. Raina’s exploration of moral and ethical dilemmas often intertwines with the complex relationship between purity and impurity, questioning the societal forces that shape these concepts. In his *Onions* series, Raina critiques the commodification of essential goods, notably in *Onion*, where the price hike becomes a poignant metaphor for social inequity. By drawing attention to the struggles of the marginalized in the face of rising costs, Raina exposes the inherent violence within a system where basic necessities, such as food, are controlled by the elite. The *Onion* series, much like *A Hint of Spring*, invokes the sharp contrast between the mundane and the political, with the onion—an everyday food for the poor—serving as a symbol of both survival and resistance. The absurdity of the situation echoes *Democracy*, where governance fails to live up to its promises, and *The Beating of Drums*, a critique of the hollow rhetoric that perpetuates social disparities.

Badri Raina’s poetry, particularly in his *Onions* series, critiques the commodification of essentials, using the onion as a symbol of social inequality and survival amidst systemic violence. Poems like *Onion* and *Onion 2* expose the exploitation inherent in political systems, echoing Marx’s and Orwell’s critiques of capitalist and authoritarian control. Yet, in works like *A World Gone Past Me* and *The Peace That Passeth Understanding*, Raina introduces a fragile hope, suggesting that resistance, even in adversity, is possible, affirming the resilience of the human spirit against oppression, much like Gandhi and Fanon’s emphasis on individual agency in confronting injustice.

6\*. Raina’s collection poignantly navigates the paradox between personal desire and societal imposition, exploring political extremism, as seen in *Once Upon a Time* and *Fascism*, where rigid ideologies stifle the complexities of human experience. His critique of political systems in *Democracy* and *A Hint of Spring* underscores the cyclical nature of hope amidst disillusionment, portraying resilience in the face of systemic failure. Through poems like *The Beating of Drums* and *The Winged Horse*, Raina highlights the enduring human spirit and the potential for transcendence despite societal constraints. *Hope in Times of Digital Wonder* adds a layer of optimism, suggesting technology can bridge the gaps of alienation, while the collection overall champions the human ability to resist oppression and maintain hope, urging readers to reflect on the complexities of life with both awareness and optimism.

7\*. Raina’s poetry intertwines human frailty with resilience, blending political critique and personal reflection. Through works like *Ray of Hope* and *Hope* is an Uphill Task, he depicts hope as defiance against oppression, while critiquing political systems in *Democracy* and *Fascism*. His poems expose systemic injustices, such as in *The Farmers Are Back* and *Begging*, and reflect on cultural heritage in *Mauj Kasheer*. Despite political turmoil, Raina offers faith in humanity’s potential for renewal in poems like *A Hint of Spring*, presenting timeless meditations on the human spirit’s endurance amidst contradictions.

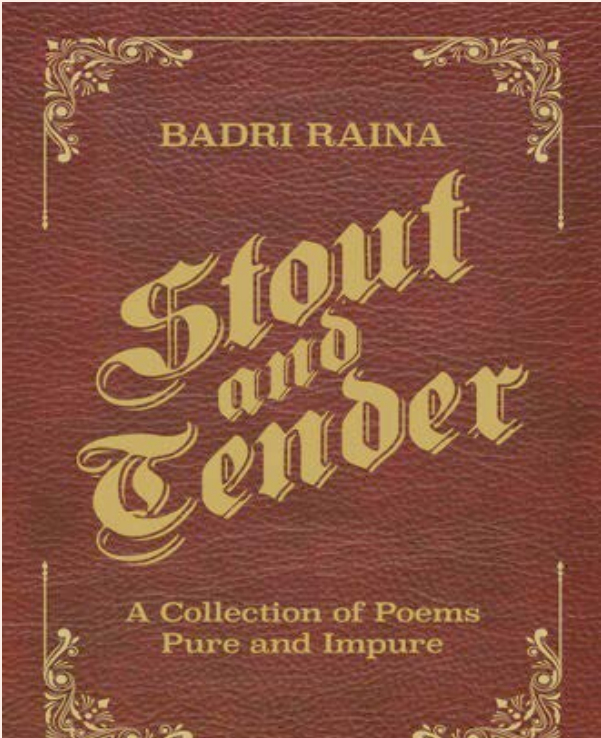
8\*. Raina’s poetry explores the contradictions of the human experience—hope and despair, self-interest and collective good—challenging political systems, morality, and societal norms. Through works like *The Changing Course of Blood* and *Divine Conundrum*, he critiques idealism in the face of political reality, while *The Food Growers* and *My Child* expose the commodification of life. His poems, such as *Corona* and the *Marigolds* and *Skinning the Skinner*, reveal societal apathy, urging readers to confront these tensions and their role in shaping a more just world. Raina’s verse is a call to action, blending reflection with a vision for freedom beyond society’s constraints.

9\*. Raina’s poetic masterpiece intricately explores the paradoxes of existence—between purity and impurity, tradition and modernity, strength and vulnerability, defiance and compassion, realism and idealism, resilience amid despair, and the local and the universal—intertwining them with urgent socio-political and philosophical dilemmas. His works, such as *Colder Than the Winter* and *A Hint of Spring*, vividly contrast the harsh-

ness of human life with the hope for renewal. Through *Good Samaritans* and *Begging*, he critiques societal indifference, while poem like *Asifa My Child* poignantly address collective grief and the moral structures perpetuating injustice. Raina’s sharp political commentary, exemplified in *Democracy* and *The Safest Citizen in India of Today*, exposes the fragility of political ideals. Works like *The Changing Course of Blood* and *Frozen in Birth* probe the intersections of identity, tradition, and inheritance, while *Paradise Lost* and *Skinning the Skinner* highlight the costs of modernity. Raina masterfully weaves irony with a yearning for transformation, as in *The Conundrum of Colours* and *The Contraries of Modern Life*, inviting reflection on resilience, loss, and hope in the face of societal fractures. His poetry traverses both regional and global contexts, offering profound insights into loss, identity, and resistance, underscoring the universal human struggle for justice and redemption. Through the delicate balance of personal anguish and collective memory, Raina eloquently explores the complexities of life, urging readers toward a critical and empathetic engagement with the world’s injustices.

## PART-II

10\*. The stylistic brilliance of *Stout and Tender* lies in its ability to balance intellectual rigor with emotional depth, characterized by its clarity of expression and profound thoughts. Raina’s poems seamlessly intertwine sharp, analytical insights with raw emotional resonance, creating a unique rhythm that mirrors the contradictions of the human experience. Through precise language and evocative imagery, he invites readers into a world of layered meanings, where each poem serves as both an intellectual exploration and an emotional journey. This dynamic interplay makes *Stout and Tender* a compelling work that resonates on both the mind and the heart, offering timeless reflections on the complexities of life. Poems like *Colder Than the Winter* and *A Hint of Spring* juxtapose harsh realities with fragile optimism, while *Divine Conundrum* and *Deepavali-2018* explore existential struggles. Through vivid imagery, Raina critiques societal apathy, trauma, and injustice, urging readers to confront modern contradictions and timeless human challenges. With clarity and layered meaning, his work serves as



both a reflection and a call for change.

12\*One of the striking aspects of Raina’s poetry is his exploration of morality as a lived, dynamic reality fraught with contradictions. Poems like *The Human Condition*, *Good Samaritans*, and *Faith* is *A Loving Thing* delve into the complexities of human action and the blurred lines between right and wrong, urging readers to look beyond superficial judgments, as seen in *The Conundrum of Colours*. Raina’s work challenges simplistic answers, confronting uncomfortable truths in poems like *Skinning the Skinner* and *Truth* is a *Truant Bird*. Yet, amidst these critiques, there is a thread of optimism, exemplified in *A Way of Being*, *Hope in Times of Digital Wonder*, and *The Peace That Passeth Understanding*, where the transformative power of self-awareness and collective action shines through. Raina’s poetry invites readers into a conversation on morality that requires constant self-examination and growth, offering a rare opportunity to reflect on personal responsibility and envision a world striving for universal welfare.

13\*Poetic symphonies embody the contradictions of existence—fear and courage, despair and hope, self-interest and collective good—challenging both personal and societal assumptions. Poems like *The Changing Course of Blood*, *Divine Conundrum*, and *The Beating of Drums* explore moral and political tensions, while *The Food Growers* and *My Child* expose systemic inequities. *A Hint of Spring* and *Corona* and the *Marigolds* highlight fragile hope amid adversity. *Democracy* and *Truth* is a *Truant Bird* question justice and truth, while *Gandhi: A Poem* and *Remembering Raj Begum* honor resilience, moral compass and homage. Blending critique with empathy, Raina’s work is both a mirror and a challenge, urging deep reflection on life’s paradoxes.

14\*Raina’s poetic masterpiece harmonizes paradoxes—purity and impurity, tradition and modernity, resilience amid despair—while engaging with urgent realities and timeless dilemmas across socio-political, philosophical, and existential crises. His incisive critique and empathetic reflection

traverse landscapes of human suffering and hope, exposing social hierarchies, political contradictions, moral dogmas, and cultural dissonance. Poems like *Colder Than the Winter* and *A Hint of Spring* contrast life’s harshness with renewal, while *Divine Conundrum* and *The Beating of Drums* probe existential struggles. *Democracy* and *The Safest Citizen in India of Today* reveal political fragility, while *Paradise Lost* and *Skinning the Skinner* expose modernity’s moral costs. With irony and compassion, *Gandhi: A Poem* revisits nonviolence, *Corona* and the *Marigolds* critiques global crises, and *Freedom*, *Frenzy*, and *George Floyd: A Second Crucifixion* confront systemic violence. Bridging local and global, Ashai



Bagh Bridge (For Maroof Shah) and *Lal Ded* root universal truths in regional legacies. Weaving memory, loss, and justice, Raina’s poetry illuminates the chaos and beauty of existence, forging a transformative poetic vision.

15\*What makes this collection particularly compelling is its ability to merge the personal with the universal. Raina’s poetry spans human experiences, from brutal murder of childhood innocence in *Asifa -My Child* to profound reflections on life and death in *The Beating of Drums*. His works explore societal critique in *Fascism* and *Smart Cities for Smart Men*, while navigating paradoxes in *Divine Conundrum* and *The Changing Course of Blood*. He reflects on love and relationships in *Faith* is *A Loving Thing* and *The Peace That Passeth Understanding*, and addresses moral complexities in *Good Samaritans* and *Impius Piety*. Political reflections in *Democracy* and *Farmers* and the *Sangh* challenge modern ideologies. Raina’s revisitation of *Gandhi in Gandhi: A Poem* emphasizes moral clarity, while poems like *Retrieving The Lost Paradise* and *Corona* and the *Marigolds* call for introspection and collective action. His work transcends boundaries, capturing the shared essence of the human condition with both complexity and beauty.

16\*. What makes *Stout and Tender* particularly compelling is its inclusivity—its ability to speak to diverse audiences while remaining deeply rooted in Raina’s personal and cultural experiences. The poems offer a critique of societal and political systems while highlighting the transformative power of resistance. Through paradoxical language, Raina explores the contradictions of existence and renewal, urging reflection on human frailty and resilience. Works like *Fascism*, *The Changing Course of Blood*, and *Democracy* challenge political ideologies, while poems such as *Faith* is *A Loving Thing* and *A Ray of Hope* remind us of the enduring power of hope and belief. His poetry serves as both a reflection of the world and a call to action, urging introspection and collective change for a more just and equitable future.

17\*In a profound, thought-provoking closing by a reflective Epilogue Prof Badri Raina beautifully enappases the profound isolation of human existence, framing loneliness not merely as an emotional state but as an existential crisis. The opening lines, “To be lonely / Is to have no one left / With whom to share memories,” immediately establish the thematic core—loneliness as an existential void, where memory, which is often a bridge between past and present, becomes inert without a witness. This sentiment resonates deeply with Gabriel García Márquez’s exploration of memory’s integral role in identity and connection, where its absence leads to a form of existential death. In Raina’s epilogue, the void left by a loved one transcends personal grief, highlighting the devastating consequences of such loss on one’s very sense of self.

The imagery of being “left a mangled husk” after abandonment serves as a stark and powerful depiction of grief, transforming emotional devastation into a metaphor for existential disintegration. This image echoes the spiritual fragmentation found in T.S. Eliot’s *The Hollow Men*, where the hollowed-out individuals struggle with a loss of vitality and meaning. The transition from “nights” as a “waking nightmare” to “day” as “strangled dusk” in Raina’s work deepens this existential collapse, blurring the boundaries between time and psychological states, much like the fragmented worlds of Eliot’s characters. Here, time itself becomes distorted, and the rhythms of life become subject to the all-encompassing presence of grief. This portrayal of grief aligns with Nietzsche’s existential writings, where suffering in the absence of a transcendent purpose leads to a profound paralysis of the human spirit. The epilogue speaks to the paradox of existence: the love that brings life meaning simultaneously exposes one to the inevitable suffering of loss. Memories, once treasured for their ability to connect the past to the present, become burdensome when borne alone, shifting from a source of comfort to an anchor of solitude.

Raina’s poems echo existentialist themes, such as Jean-Paul Sartre’s emphasis on freedom and Albert Camus’s advocacy for defiance against absurdity. His celebration of the human spirit’s capacity to create meaning amidst despair resonates

with Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*. The critique of imperialism, capitalism, and environmental degradation places Raina’s work within a postcolonial framework, resonating with thinkers like Edward Said and Arundhati Roy. His invocation of utopian visions critiques the erasure of indigenous cultures and traditions, aligning with global decolonial scholarship. In an era marked by climate change, digital alienation, and geopolitical unrest, Raina’s poems serve as a call to reimagine human relationships, communities, and responsibilities. His reflections on old age, memory, and technology highlight pressing demographic challenges, such as aging populations and the ethical use of digital media. Raina’s themes parallel global literary traditions, from the mystical poetry of Rumi to the romanticism of Wordsworth and the modernism of Eliot. His invocation of human resilience aligns with Kashmiri Sufi poetry’s emphasis on love, compassion, resilience and transcendence, as seen in the works of Nund Rishi and Lalla Ded.

Badri Raina’s poems transcend temporal and cultural boundaries, offering profound insights into the human condition. They critique the flaws of modernity while celebrating the redemptive power of imagination, love, and memory. Through lyrical simplicity and philosophical depth, Raina’s verses invite readers to confront their inner contradictions and seek grace amidst the chaos of existence. By weaving together existentialism, postcolonial critique, and mystical thought, his work stands as a testament to poetry’s transformative power. These poems remind us that, in a fractured world, the essence of humanity lies in our capacity to dream, connect, and endure.

In this deeply introspective meditation, Raina navigates life’s contradictions with both critical insight and compassionate tenderness. His exploration of grief and loss, mirrored through powerful metaphors and philosophical references, reveals the complexity of human existence—one where love’s capacity to create meaning is always counterbalanced by the inevitable pain of separation. The epilogue’s emotional resonance and intellectual depth transcend personal experience, embracing the universal fragility of the human condition, and it is this duality of love and loss, life and death, that defines Raina’s poetic vision. Badri Raina’s epilogue transcends its brevity, becoming a monumental contribution to the universal dialogue on love, loss, and meaning. It challenges and inspires, urging readers to confront their own solitude and reevaluate the transformative power of human connection. Resonating across traditions and periods, from Rumi’s mystical humanism to Camus’ existential defiance, the epilogue speaks to the timeless quest for authenticity and purpose. With its piercing emotional honesty, philosophical depth, and the courage to embrace life’s contradictions, Raina’s epilogue is a rare and enduring masterpiece that not only reflects the complexities of existence but also affirms the redemptive potential of love and memory in an often fragmented world.

In “*Stout and Tender*”, Badri Raina crafts a poetic symphonies and realities through lived truths that transcends the boundaries of language, culture, and time, leaving an indelible mark on the literary, socio-political, philosophical landscape. This collection is a call to engage critically and compassionately with the complexities of existence, urging readers to confront uncomfortable truths, question entrenched paradigms, and embrace the dualities that define the human condition. By drawing from global traditions and regional specificities, Raina’s work becomes a timeless beacon of enlightenment, inspiring dialogue across cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts. The collection is not merely a book of poetry but a profound engagement with life itself—a celebration of resilience, a critique of power, and an affirmation of humanity’s enduring capacity for transformation. In navigating the dialectics of strength and vulnerability, tradition and modernity, despair and hope, Raina presents not only a poetic vision but a call to action—to engage with the world critically yet compassionately. As readers traverse the depths of Raina’s verses, they encounter a work that is as enriching as it is analytical, as substantive as it is tender, and as compelling as it is timeless. In its pages, readers will find not only a reflection of their own struggles and aspirations but also a timeless guide to navigating the intricate paradoxes of existence.

Prof. Badri Raina’s profound grasp of language and his rare ability to distill the essence of human experiences into poetic form make this collection a timeless piece of literature that transcends the boundaries of time and space. *Stout and Tender* stands as a literary achievement of rare brilliance, destined to resonate across generations as a testament to the transformative potential of art. It is must-read for any one seeking to engage with the complexities of human spirit, the contradictions to society, and the transformative potential of art. It is symphony of insightful paradoxes, timeless resonances for contemporary realities, a beacon of enlightenment, and a celebration of the enduring human quest for truth, justice, love, identity, amid existential dilemmas of modern life. It remains a touchstone for critical inquiry and transformative thought and deserves a place among the most brilliant collections of socially and politically engaged poetry. This collection is a call for action, urging global audiences to envision a more just, inclusive, and humane world. Scholarly attention to Raina’s work should include critical comparisons across cultures, tradition and geographical boundaries for its literary merit and transformative reflection to illuminate the human condition. For certain readers the overt intellectualism/complex imagery/symbolism/grasp of language may come across as overly cerebral. This collection calls out to the heart and mind of the reader. Readers who listen closely, and think deeply and appreciate poetry that challenges, provokes and invites transformative contemplation will find “*Stout and Tender*” Poems Pure and Impure a rewarding, enriching and deeply transformative experience.

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# Mitchell Marsh out of Champions Trophy with back injury

Mitchell Marsh has been ruled out of the Champions Trophy due to a back injury and is unlikely to play again this season, which could also leave his IPL stint with Lucknow Super Giants in doubt.

Marsh has endured a difficult season and lost his Test place to Beau Webster for the final match against India at the SCG, having made 73 runs in seven innings and performing a limited role with the ball during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. His fitness was a regular topic of conversation during that five-Test series.

He played a lone BBL game on January 7 after the Test series against India but then rested from the last three matches of the BBL season to mentally and physically refresh ahead of Champions Trophy. But his back remained a serious issue and the selectors have ruled him out of the tournament. A CA statement described the issue as "lower back pain and dysfunction" but did not reveal specifics.

"Mitchell Marsh has been ruled out of the upcoming ICC Men's Champion's Trophy with ongoing lower back pain and dysfunction," the statement said. "The National Selection Panel and Australian men's medical team ruled Marsh out of the tournament with the injury which has not responded sufficiently to rehabilitation.

"His lower back pain flared in recent weeks leading the NSP to make the longer term decision for Marsh to complete a more extended period of rehabilitation. Marsh will now undergo a

period of further rest and rehabilitation as part of his return to play plan. The NSP will meet to decide on a replacement for Marsh in due course."

The absence of Marsh, who is Australia's T20I captain and has stood in for Pat Cummins in 22 innings.

Australia have a lot of batting cover in the squad already, including spare wicket-keeper Alex Carey, and could choose another allrounder to replace Marsh. Will Sutherland played ODI cricket last year and would have

to lead the ODI side, will force a rejig to plans for the top-order. Jake Fraser-McGurk could be a potential replacement despite struggling against Pakistan earlier this season and having a lean run in the BBL up until the final match. But his explosive power at the top makes him a like-for-like replacement for Marsh at No.3, though he is yet to face 50 balls or more in List A cricket and has passed 50 just twice

been on the tour of the UK in September had he not suffered a back injury. Webster has not played ODI cricket but could be called upon if needed, while Cooper Connolly is also a spin-bowling allrounder although Australia have four batters who can bowl spin in the squad already. Cameron Green remains unavailable as he continues his rehab from back surgery in October.

Cummins also remains a doubt for the tournament due to an ankle injury he carried through the Test series against India, so with Marsh out of contention Australia may need another captain which would bring Steven Smith, currently in charge of the Test team in Sri Lanka, Travis Head and Josh Inglis into contention. Head has captained the T20I but has not led the ODI side. Inglis captained both in the recent home summer as Australia have half an eye on their future leadership options despite Cummins looking set to push through to the 2027 ODI World Cup.

Marsh was a key part of Australia's 2023 ODI World Cup triumph where he scored centuries against Pakistan and Bangladesh. Since being used consistently in the top order from March 2023 he has averaged 44.54 in ODIs with a strike-rate of 109.13.

A year ago, Marsh was named the Allan Border Medalist following his successful comeback to Test cricket alongside his consistent limited-overs returns.

Champions Trophy squads can be freely amended until February 11 after which approval is required from the technical committee.

Australia play two ODIs in Sri Lanka on February 12 and 14 in preparation for the tournament.

Legspinner Tanveer Sangha will fly to Galle to join Australia's Test and ODI squads as a development player, but is not in contention for selection. Left-arm quick Spencer Johnson is doing the same for the ODIs, with the pair also a chance to travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy.



**He played a lone BBL game on January 7 after the Test series against India** but then rested from the last three matches of the BBL season to mentally and physically refresh ahead of Champions Trophy. But his back remained a serious issue and the selectors have ruled him out of the tournament. A CA statement described the issue as "lower back pain and dysfunction" but did not reveal specifics.

## No captain's event or photoshoot before Champions Trophy

There will be no official ICC captain's meet or photoshoot ahead of Champions Trophy 2025. The event has traditionally taken place in the host country of an ICC tournament, but it will not be part of the build-up to the Champions Trophy in Pakistan, the first ICC tournament in the country since 1996.

There was no opening ceremony in the build-up to the most recent Champions Trophy - in the United Kingdom in 2017 - though there was a captain's event and official photoshoot. The PCB said neither the ICC nor the cricket board had ever announced an opening ceremony this time. However, the PCB will host an event in Lahore on February 16, three days out from the first game, to mark the start of the tournament.

A PCB official told ESPNcricinfo the event would be "supported by the ICC" and expected ICC officials present in Lahore at the time would be in attendance.

The PCB said the absence of a captain's press conference and photoshoot was down to logistical concerns. With the tournament being held across four different venues in two countries, and with scheduling clashes for several sides in the build-up to the tournament, the PCB said teams were slated to arrive in Pakistan for the Champions Trophy close to the start of the tournament. Australia do not get to Pakistan until February 19, the day of the opening match.

Incidentally, the ICC did not organise a captains event ahead of the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup, which was played across the Caribbean and the USA. With teams playing warm-up matches in several countries, the ICC instead opted to do the official launch via a lighting projection show that featured all 20 captains beamed onto New York City's Rockefeller Center building.

The development resolves the question of India captain Rohit Sharma's potential presence in Pakistan. Had there been a formal captain's press conference or photoshoot, it would have required Rohit to be present.

Until last week, the BCCI told ESPNcricinfo the issue of Rohit travelling to Pakistan had "not yet been discussed" and was "not on the agenda". As the Indian government had not given permission for their cricket team to travel to Pakistan for the tournament, it was unclear whether they would have done so for Rohit for any captains' event.



# Khyber Cement Ka Zarra Zarra Dil Se Bana Hai

