

Maa Kamakhya Temple The Tantric Epicenter of India's Shakti Tradition



The roots of Tantra in Assam are deep and ancient. Scholars argue that Tantra either originated in or spread early to this northeastern region. Modern scholarship, including the works of D.C. Sircar and Mircea Eliade, acknowledge Assam — and especially Kamarupa — as the quintessential Tantric land.

POONAM SHARMA

Perched atop the mist-kissed Nilachal Hills, overlooking the mighty Brahmaputra River in Guwahati, Assam, the awe-inspiring Maa Kamakhya Temple stands as an ancient and enigmatic seat of the Divine Feminine. Revered as one of the 51 Shakti Peethas, Kamakhya is far more than a place of ritual worship—it is a powerful vortex of tantric energy, mysticism, history, and spiritual awakening.

With legends deeply intertwined with the story of Sati's self-immolation and Lord Shiva's grief-stricken dance across the cosmos, the temple is a timeless testimony

to India's esoteric spiritual traditions.

A Divine Origin Rooted in the Feminine

In the Hindu Sanatan mythology when Goddess Sati immolated herself in protest against her father Daksha's insult to Lord Shiva, a grief-consumed Shiva carried her charred body across the universe. In order to save the cosmos from destruction, Lord Vishnu used his Sudarshan Chakra to dismember her body. Wherever a part of her body fell, a Shakti Peetha was formed. In Kamarupa (present-day Assam), it is believed that Sati's yoni (reproductive organ) fell — symbolizing the creative power of the feminine. This spot came to be

venerated as Kamakhya.

The temple's core deity, Devi Kamakhya, represents not only the womb of creation but also the tantric embodiment of Shakti — raw, sensual, and untamed. She is not shown in anthropomorphic form but worshipped in the form of a stone yoni kept moist year-round by an underground spring, symbolizing fertility and life itself.

A Living Seat of Tantra

Kamakhya is perhaps the most prominent center of Tantra in India — a tradition that is ancient, far from being limited to black magic or occult practices as some popular accounts suggest, Tantra in its original form is a highly sophisticated spiritual science

aiming at the unification of the individual with cosmic consciousness by channeling both male (Shiva) and female (Shakti) energies.

This tantric essence permeates every brick of the Kamakhya temple. Not just a structure of devotion, it is a living laboratory of esoteric rituals, symbolic practices, and left-hand tantric rites (Vamachara). The temple's association with yoni worship, blood symbolism, and secretive sadhanas has earned it fame — and at times infamy — among the global spiritual community. Still, for those who understand Tantra, Kamakhya represents not darkness, but the light of primal wisdom.

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The Annual Ambubachi Mela: Celebrating the Goddess's Menstruation

One of the most distinctive and profound events associated with Kamakhya is the Ambubachi Mela, held annually in the month of Aahar (June-July). This festival commemorates the goddess's symbolic menstruation — a celebration rarely found in other global religious traditions.

During these four days, the sanctum is closed as it is believed the goddess is undergoing her menstrual cycle. No worship or agricultural activity takes place, and the temple turns into a site of powerful spiritual energy. On the reopening day, thousands of devotees — including aghoris, tantrics, ascetics, and curious travelers — converge at the temple to receive the 'Angodak' and 'Angabastra' (water and cloth stained with symbolic menstrual fluid of the goddess) believed to be sacred and immensely potent.

Through this festival, Kamakhya boldly affirms menstruation as divine, overturning the patriarchal stigmas often associated with it. It is a place where womanhood, in its most biological and cosmic form, is celebrated with reverence and joy.

Architectural and Cultural Grandeur

Reconstructed in 1565 AD by Koch King Naranarayan after being destroyed by earlier invasions, the Kamakhya temple is an architectural amalgamation of Hindu temple design and local Assamese styles. The shikhara resembles a beehive, adorned with sculptural reliefs of gods, goddesses, and mythical beings, while its inner sanctum remains minimalistic — directing all energy to the yoni stone.

Beyond its spiritual draw, Kamakhya is a cultural epicenter. Marriages, naming ceremonies, and other auspicious functions are performed here regularly. Outside, a vibrant bazaar sells flowers, incense, tantric literature, red cloth, sacrificial offerings, and other ritualistic items. The surrounding temple complex houses smaller shrines to the Dasa Mahavidyas — the ten tantric goddesses representing various aspects of Shakti, further highlighting its comprehensive Tantric framework.

The Spread of Tantra and Kamakhya's Central Role

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The garbhagriha of the Kamakhya temple. The adhithana (base) and the bada (sides) of the Kamarupa-period stone temple, to which the brick shikhara and the angashikharas were added during the Koch-period.

— as the quintessential Tantric land.

Eliade referred to Assam as the "Tantric country par excellence." The area's indigenous populations like the Kiratas practiced nature-worship and fertility rites. The phallic megaliths scattered across Assam are suggestive of pre-Vedic fertility worship, which Tantra later absorbed and elevated into sacred philosophy. Kalika Purana, the seminal tantric text describing rituals at Kamakhya, speaks extensively of the yoni worship and symbolic rituals involving union of male and female forces.

Dr. P.C. Choudhuri also linked the phallic worship of ancient Austric tribes to the tantric philosophy that evolved in Kamakhya. The Yogini Tantra, another critical text, refers to the presence of "a million lingas" in Kamakhya — a powerful metaphor for the sacred unity of masculine and feminine energies.

Syncretism of Kamakhya

Before the arrival of any influence, the region of Pragjyotishpur (ancient Assam) was home to the Kiratas — non-Aryan tribes who performed rituals honoring the goddess through tribal customs and offerings. The Kamakhya site likely existed in some form of a sacred natural shrine — perhaps a symbolic mound or stone worshipped as the womb of the Earth.

The process of Aryanisation, often initiated by rulers like Narakasura, led to the Sanskritization of these tribal rites. Naraka is believed to have introduced Shakti worship and rechristened the land from Pragjyotishpur to Kamarupa, formalizing what would become one of Hinduism's most sacred centers.

Kamakhya's rise as the principal goddess of this land was a result of integrating tribal deities into a broader Hindu framework. This cultural and religious syncretism allowed Tantrism in Assam to

become a unique blend — combining Vedic ritualism, tribal fertility cults, and mystic yogic practices.

Beyond the Stigma: Reclaiming Tantra's Legacy

Tantra, as practiced in Kamakhya, has long been misunderstood — associated with black magic, animal sacrifice, and taboo-breaking behavior. While it's true that certain left-hand rituals involve transgressive practices, these are symbolic, and meant to transcend duality, not indulge in hedonism or violence.

Kamakhya, in this light, is not merely a "temple of blood and fire," as orientalist narratives once suggested. It is a temple of liberation — where death and rebirth, blood and divinity, desire and detachment merge in harmony. The daily rituals, sacrificial customs (like animal offerings), and esoteric rites performed by sadhakas are not remnants of barbarism but echoes of a civilization deeply attuned to the cycles of nature and the human psyche.

Today, scholars, pilgrims, and seekers of all backgrounds come to Kamakhya in search of healing, empowerment, and spiritual awakening. Whether it's a tantric practitioner meditating on kundalini energy or a devotee praying for fertility, Kamakhya Temple continues to offer a sacred space where Shakti is alive, pulsating, and all-encompassing.

Conclusion: Kamakhya as a Symbol of Feminine Power and Tantric Wisdom

In an age where much of mainstream religion still hesitates to fully embrace the feminine divine, Kamakhya Temple stands defiant and glorious — proclaiming that the origin of all creation lies within the female body, and that this truth must be honored, not shamed.

The temple is more than a site of worship; it is a spiritual university, a tantric sanctuary, and a cultural heart of Assam. It bridges myth and reality, tribal and Vedic, sexuality and sanctity — into one seamless spiritual tapestry. From the mystical whispers of ancient yoginis to the loud chants of devotees in the Ambubachi Mela, Kamakhya resonates with the eternal message of Tantra: that the divine resides not beyond us, but within the very cycles of life, death, and rebirth.

In the sacred stone of the yoni at Kamakhya, the eternal pulse of Shakti continues to beat — raw, mysterious, and sublime.

(The Author is Managing Editor Global Governance News)

Historic Trade Pact signed; India, UK lay roadmap to 2035

- Trade Pact to drive jobs, innovation under India-UK Vision 2035
- Trade. Tech. Defence. Climate. India & UK go all in

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu



for critical minerals and promoting digital inclusion through a proposed Connectivity Innovation Centre.

Defence cooperation received a significant boost with the announcement of a 10-year Defence Industrial Roadmap aimed at strengthening military collaboration, co-development of advanced capabilities, and joint training initiatives. The two leaders agreed to expand interoperability between their armed forces and enhance maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. India is also expected to become a logistics hub for UK defence operations in the Indian Ocean, reaffirming both countries' shared interest in maintaining regional stability.

The Vision 2035 document includes a comprehensive agenda on climate and clean energy. It outlines joint efforts to mobilise climate finance, accelerate the energy transition, and foster innovation in carbon capture, hydrogen, and civil nuclear energy. A new Offshore Wind Taskforce and a Carbon Credit Trading Scheme are among the major initiatives announced. The partnership aims to position both nations as global leaders in sustainable development, with enhanced collaboration in international platforms such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

Education continues to remain a bedrock of

In a significant step towards deepening their strategic partnership, India and the United Kingdom on Wednesday signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official visit to London. The agreement, hailed as a "landmark moment" in bilateral ties, coincided with the launch of the India-UK Vision 2035, a forward-looking roadmap aimed at redefining cooperation across trade, technology, defence, climate action, and education.

In a statement issued by the PIB, the Vision 2035 document, endorsed by Prime Minister Modi and his British counterpart Keir Starmer, signals a renewed commitment to mutual growth and prosperity in a rapidly evolving global landscape. The framework lays out clear goals and milestones to shape a secure, sustainable, and inclusive future, while underlining both countries' intention to strengthen high-level political engagement and institutional coordination.

The trade deal marks the culmination of years of negotiation and is expected to unlock significant economic opportunities for both nations. Alongside CETA, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to concluding a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) and moving forward with a Double Taxation Avoidance Convention. The new economic framework is designed to boost two-way trade in goods and services, promote regulatory alignment, and attract investments in key sectors such as renewable energy, financial services, life sciences, and defence manufacturing.

As part of the agreement, the two countries will also establish enhanced institutional mechanisms, including a refreshed Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) and strengthened dialogues on economic and financial policy. The collaboration aims to support long-term, resilient growth, foster innovation, and deepen ties between the Indian and UK business communities.

In the realm of technology and innovation, the UK and India have committed to greater cooperation on critical and emerging technologies. This includes joint research in artificial intelligence, semiconductors, advanced telecommunications, biotechnology, and clean energy. A new UK-India Joint Centre for AI will be established to facilitate real-world applications, while the two nations will also collaborate on building secure supply chains

- KEY HIGHLIGHTS**
- India and UK sign major free trade pact (CETA).
 - Vision 2035 launched to guide future ties.
 - Trade, tech, defence, climate, and education prioritized.
 - Joint AI centre and tech innovation boosted
 - 10-year defence roadmap unveiled
 - Big push for green energy and climate finance
 - UK universities to open campuses in India
 - India to host UK military logistics in Indian Ocean
 - Call for UN, WTO, IMF reforms
 - Annual reviews to track progress

PM Calls on His Majesty King Charles III at Sandringham Estate

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Jammu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a courtesy call on His Majesty King Charles III at Sandringham Estate, the King's summer residence, on 24 July 2025.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Modi expressed his happiness at His Majesty's recovery and his return to royal duties. The leaders engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on health and sustainable living, focusing on the promotion of Ayurveda and Yoga, and exploring ways to share their benefits with

people worldwide.

In a statement issued by the PIB, bilateral relations were also a key topic. Both leaders welcomed the recent signing of the historic India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), agreeing it would inject fresh momentum into the partnership between the two nations. Prime Minister Modi briefed His Majesty on India's strides in renewable energy and sustainable development, and they explored opportunities for joint action on climate change and sustainability.

The conversation also touched upon collaboration within the

Commonwealth framework, underscoring shared values and mutual goals.

In a symbolic gesture of environmental commitment, Prime Minister Modi thanked King Charles III for joining the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" (Plant for Mother) green campaign and presented him with a sapling to be planted at Sandringham Estate during the forthcoming autumn planting season.

Concluding the meeting, Prime Minister Modi extended an invitation to His Majesty for a State Visit to India, expressing gratitude for the warm hospitality extended during the visit.

Modi, Starmer meet industry leaders to boost trade

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Rt Hon. Sir Keir Starmer, met today with prominent business leaders from India and the UK, following the signing of the landmark India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

The high-level interaction brought together leading industry figures from both countries, representing key sectors such as healthcare, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, automobiles, energy,

manufacturing, telecommunications, technology, information technology, logistics, textiles, and financial services. These industries are major contributors to employment generation and inclusive economic development in both nations.

In a statement issued by the PIB, the two Prime Ministers welcomed the significant growth in bilateral trade and investment in recent years and called upon business leaders to capitalise on the transformative opportunities presented by the CETA. They underlined the agreement's potential to strengthen trade, investment, and innovation

linkages and reaffirmed their shared commitment to driving sustainable economic growth through enhanced cooperation.

During the interaction, the leaders also visited a special exhibition showcasing flagship products and technological innovations from both India and the UK. On display were high-quality engineering goods, gems and jewellery, consumer products, and cutting-edge solutions reflecting the breadth of industrial and technological excellence on both sides.

Business leaders lauded the signing of the agreement, describing it as a watershed moment in India-UK economic relations.

Dhankhar resigns as VP, citing health reasons

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Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, 74, resigned from his post citing health reasons on Monday (July 21, 2025).

Dhankhar had been elected as India's 14th Vice-President in August 2022, and has two years left in his term.

"To prioritise health care and abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as the Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution," the resignation letter addressed to President Droupadi Murmu, which was posted on the Vice-President's official X account, said. He had called on President Murmu in the evening.

Dhankhar had suffered a cardiac event in March but was said to have recovered and had been participating in his engagements since. The rest of the letter expressed his "deep gratitude" to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Council



of Ministers as well as the "warmth, trust and affection" that he had received from MPs.

The move has come as a surprise to many leaders, as Mr. Dhankhar had presided over Rajya Sabha proceedings on the first half of the first day of the

Monsoon Session of Parliament on Monday, which included an important intervention in the Opposition-sponsored motion for removal of High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma. He didn't return for the post-lunch Session but spoke to MPs and floor leaders till evening.

PM wishes good health to Dhankhar



The Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished Jagdeep Dhankhar good health. Modi stated that Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji has got many opportunities to serve our country in various capacities, including as the Vice President of India.

The Prime Minister posted on X: "Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji has got many opportunities to serve our country in various capacities, including as the Vice President of India. Wishing him good health."

New secure platform developed by DoT to prevent telecom-related frauds



THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has developed a secure online Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP) to facilitate information sharing among stakeholders for the prevention of cybercrime and financial frauds.

While cybercrime matters fall under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), DoT plays a key role in preventing misuse of telecom resources in cyber frauds. The MHA has established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) and launched the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) to empower citizens to report cybercrimes. In 2024, NCRP received over 19 lakh complaints, reporting losses exceeding 22,811 crore.

DoT and Telecom Service Providers have implemented measures to identify and block international spoofed calls that mimic Indian mobile numbers and have developed an AI and Big Data

analytics tool, ASTR, to detect SIM cards obtained using fake documents.

The Department actively promotes awareness on telecom fraud prevention through initiatives like the Sanchar Saathi app and the Sanchar Mitra volunteer program, involving university students who conduct outreach and education campaigns.

The newly launched DIP has onboarded around 620 organizations, including central and state security agencies, banks, GSTN, and telecom providers, enhancing coordinated action against telecom misuse.

Additionally, DoT has introduced the Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI), a risk-based metric that classifies mobile numbers according to their association with financial fraud risk. This tool assists banks, NBFCs, and UPI providers in prioritizing protective measures for high-risk numbers.

This information was provided by Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development, Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha today.

SAIL emerges as largest steel supplier to landmark Zojila Tunnel Project

Powers Zojila tunnel with over 31,000 tonnes of steel, reinforcing its role in nation building

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), the country's largest steelmaker and a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking, has become the single largest steel supplier to the prestigious Zojila Tunnel project. Set to be India's longest road tunnel and Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel upon completion, the Zojila Tunnel is a strategic infrastructure milestone.

SAIL has supplied over 31,000 tonnes of high-quality steel products—including TMT rebars, structural steel, and plates—cementing its position as a key partner in this ambitious Himalayan engineering feat. The company's consistent steel deliveries as the project advances toward its scheduled 2027 completion highlight its unwavering commitment to nation-building.

Located at a challenging altitude of 11,578 feet, the tunnel will span more than 30 kilometers beneath the Himalayan terrain, providing all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Leh via Dras and Kargil. This vital infrastructure link forms part of the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh National Highway and will significantly enhance both civilian and military mobility in the strategically sensitive



region.

Beyond its strategic importance, the Zojila Tunnel represents a major economic opportunity for the region. SAIL's involvement in this project adds to its distinguished legacy of supporting India's flagship infrastructure endeavors, including the Chenab Railway Bridge, Atal Tunnel, Bandra-Worli Sea Link, and the Dhola Sadiya and Bogibeel bridges.

With mega-projects like Zojila placing their trust in the strength and reliability of SAIL's steel, the company continues to play a pivotal role in shaping India's infrastructure and future growth.

Monsoon Session Begins

‘Let Parliament reflect people’s aspirations’: PM

- Urges MPs to speak in ‘One Voice for India’
- Highlights Op Sindoor, Digital India as signs of rising power

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday addressed the media ahead of the commencement of the Monsoon Session 2025 in the Parliament premises, laying out a wide-ranging vision of national pride, development, security, and unity. He described the session as a “celebration of India’s victories,” while calling for all Members of Parliament to speak in one voice on matters of national interest.

Welcoming all lawmakers to the session, the Prime Minister drew a symbolic parallel between the onset of monsoon and the spirit of renewal. “The monsoon symbolizes innovation and renewal,” he said, noting that the current weather conditions were favourable and would prove beneficial for agriculture. He highlighted that water reservoir levels had tripled compared to the average of the past decade, which, he added, would greatly benefit the economy and households alike.

Terming the session a “moment of great pride,” PM Modi referred to the historic unfurling of the Indian tricolour at the International Space Station for the first

time, an event he said had ignited a fresh wave of enthusiasm for science and technology across the country. He lauded the role of both Houses of Parliament and the Indian people in celebrating this milestone, calling it a source of national inspiration for future space exploration.

The Prime Minister also praised the armed forces for the successful execution of Operation Sindoor, which he described as a “100 percent success” operation conducted in just 22 minutes, targeting high-value enemy assets. He announced that the operation, initially disclosed at a public gathering in Bihar, demonstrated India’s growing military prowess and self-reliance in defence manufacturing. International admiration, he noted, is growing for India’s “Made in India” military hardware.

PM Modi asserted that the geographical reach of Naxalism and Maoism has been shrinking rapidly, and credited the country’s security forces for this success. “Hundreds of districts have been liberated from the grip of Naxal violence,” he said. The once-troubled ‘Red Corridor,’ he added, is now evolving into ‘Green Growth Zones,’ symbolizing India’s development triumph over decades of armed insurgency.

He emphasised that this transformation represents the victory of the Indian Constitution over guns and violence, and



that the Monsoon Session should reflect this journey through meaningful, united discourse in Parliament.

Highlighting economic progress, the Prime Minister recalled that in 2014, India was part of the “Fragile Five” economies. “Today, we are knocking at the doors of becoming the world’s third-largest economy,” he said. He credited this transformation to high growth, low inflation, and the upliftment of 25 crore people out of poverty—achievements recognized globally.

He pointed to Digital India and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as global benchmarks, noting that India now leads the world in real-time digital transactions.

On the social security front, PM Modi cited ILO data stating that over 90 crore Indians are now covered under various schemes. He also welcomed the WHO’s declaration of India being free from trachoma, a significant public health milestone.

Referring to the Pahalgam terror attack earlier this year, in which 26 people were killed, the Prime Minister expressed pride in the bipartisan effort by Indian parliamentarians who travelled abroad to expose Pakistan’s role in sponsoring terrorism. “This unified diplomatic campaign created a positive international perception,” he said, thanking MPs and parties for putting the nation above politics.

The Prime Minister called on all parties and Members of Parliament to channel the spirit of unity throughout the session. “There may be differences in party interests, but on matters of national interest, our hearts must beat as one,” he said.

He concluded by stating that the Monsoon Session will bring several important bills aimed at accelerating national development, empowering citizens, and advancing India’s progress. Extending his best wishes for high-quality debate and collective action, he reiterated the government’s commitment to working with all stakeholders in the service of the nation.

New Cooperative Policy 2025 sets targets for inclusive economic growth

- Amit Shah unveils Policy to make India a global cooperative powerhouse

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, unveiled the National Cooperative Policy – 2025 at a ceremony in New Delhi, calling it a historic and transformative step toward fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of ‘Sahkar Se Samridhi’ — prosperity through cooperation.

The unveiling event was attended by Union Minister of State for Cooperation Krishan Pal Gurjar, Cooperation Secretary Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, former Union Minister and Chair of the Drafting Committee Suresh Prabhu, and several other dignitaries.

Addressing the gathering, Shah described the new policy as visionary, practical, and outcome-oriented, noting that it marks a new era for India’s cooperative movement. “There was a time when people said ‘cooperation has no future’. Today, I say — the future belongs to cooperation,” he declared.

Shah noted that the National Cooperative Policy – 2025 is the result of extensive consultations with over 750 stakeholders, including cooperative leaders, academics, ministries, and financial institutions such as the RBI and NABARD. A 40-member committee, headed by Shri Suresh Prabhu, led the drafting process, holding 17 meetings and regional workshops to prepare what Shri Shah called a “comprehensive and



inclusive” policy framework.

The Minister emphasized that the cooperative sector, once declared obsolete by critics, has now re-emerged as a central pillar of the country’s development agenda. “The Modi government is committed to making India the world’s third-largest economy by 2027, but this growth must be inclusive—powered by the 1.4 billion citizens of the country. The cooperative model is the only model that makes this kind of people-driven development possible,” Shah said.

Highlighting the core focus areas of the new policy, he stressed that villages, agriculture, rural women, Dalits, and tribals would be at the heart of all cooperative initiatives. A major goal of the policy is to establish at least one cooperative society in every village — including Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), dairy, fisheries, or multipurpose cooperatives — and to ensure these societies are professional, technology-enabled,

transparent, and self-reliant.

The Minister announced that the policy aims to triple the contribution of the cooperative sector to India’s GDP by 2034, bring 50 crore citizens into active participation, and increase the number of cooperative societies by 30 percent from the current 8.3 lakh. “This is an ambitious goal, but we have made detailed preparations to achieve it,” he added.

The policy also lays out a strategy to expand cooperatives into non-traditional sectors such as tourism, taxi services, insurance, and green energy. Shah specifically mentioned the launch of the ‘Sahkar Taxi’ initiative by the end of the year, where all profits will directly benefit the drivers, as an example of how cooperative models can empower the grassroots.

One of the flagship components of the policy is the development of five Model Cooperative Villages in every tehsil, in collaboration with NABARD and state cooperative banks. Women’s participation will be emphasized through White Revolution 2.0, which aims to strengthen dairy cooperatives and rural livelihoods.

To ensure effective implementation, Shah said that 83 intervention points have been identified, with work already completed on 58 of them, and multiple dedicated committees in place. He added that a monitoring mechanism would oversee progress, supported by cluster-based governance models. A provision for legal review every 10 years has also been introduced to keep the policy updated and responsive.

The policy also seeks to improve

transparency and operational efficiency through widespread computerization of cooperative societies. “Each cooperative unit must be empowered — not just institutionally, but technologically — to ensure transparency, financial stability, and member trust,” Shah noted.

He emphasized the importance of aligning scheduled cooperative banks with commercial banks in terms of treatment and regulatory support, adding that National Cooperative Exports Limited has been established to facilitate global market access for cooperatives. Efforts are also underway to set up Tribhuvan Sahkari University to provide skilled manpower for the sector.

Highlighting the government’s progress, Shah said that work is nearly complete on setting up 45,000 new PACS, with many already engaged in running Jan Aushadhi Kendras, fuel outlets, and LPG distribution, as well as implementing major government schemes like ‘Har Ghar Nal Se Jal’ and PM Surya Ghar Yojana.

“The goal of this policy is not just economic,” he said. “It is about enhancing self-respect, dignity, and participation of every individual in the economy. This is a member-centric policy, and the welfare of every cooperative member is its foundation.”

Shah concluded by reiterating that the new policy sets the stage for the cooperative sector to become a future-ready, self-reliant engine of growth as India approaches its centenary of independence in 2047. “With this roadmap, we are building not only a strong cooperative structure but also laying the foundation for a more inclusive, empowered, and self-reliant India.”

Nominations for Padma awards 2026 open till July 31

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

Tominations/recommendations for the Padma Awards 2026, to be announced on the occasion of Republic Day 2026, commenced on 15th March 2025. The last date for submission of nominations is 31st July 2025.

Nominations/recommendations will be accepted only through the online Rashtriya Puraskar Portal at <https://awards.gov.in>.

“The Padma Awards—Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri—are among the highest civilian honours in the country. Instituted in 1954, these awards are announced annually on Republic Day. They aim to recognize ‘work of distinction’ and honour individuals for their distinguished and exceptional achievements or service in various fields such as Art, Literature and Education, Sports, Medicine, Social Work, Science and Engineering, Public Affairs, Civil Service, Trade and Industry,



among others,” the statement issued by PIB stated.

All individuals, irrespective of race, occupation, position, or gender, are eligible for these awards. However,

government servants, including those working in PSUs, are not eligible, except for Doctors and Scientists.

As part of the Government’s vision to make these awards truly the “People’s

Padma”, all citizens are encouraged to participate by submitting nominations/recommendations, including self-nominations. Special efforts should be made to identify and recommend unsung heroes—individuals, especially from women, weaker sections, SCs, STs, divyang persons, and others doing selfless service to society, whose excellence deserves national recognition.

Each nomination must include complete details as specified in the format available on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal, including a citation (maximum 800 words) in narrative form, clearly highlighting the nominee’s distinguished and exceptional achievements/service in their respective field.

Further details are available under the ‘Awards and Medals’ section on the Ministry of Home Affairs website (<https://mha.gov.in>) and on the Padma Awards Portal (<https://padmaawards.gov.in>). For statutes and rules related to the awards, please refer to: <https://padmaawards.gov.in/AboutAwards.aspx>.

Scientists decode the solar blasts behind Ladakh’s May 2024 light show

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

Astronomers have decoded the remarkable story behind a rare and powerful solar storm that lit up Ladakh’s skies with northern lights in May 2024. The event was triggered by an extraordinary sequence of six interacting Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs)—the most intense solar activity witnessed in over two decades.

CMEs are vast eruptions of magnetized plasma from the Sun’s corona. When directed toward Earth, these solar outbursts can trigger geomagnetic storms capable of disrupting satellite operations, communication systems, and power grids. The great storm that began on May 10, 2024, was unlike anything seen in recent memory, resulting from a rare cascade of six CMEs—each tied to solar flares and filament eruptions from a highly complex and interacting active region on the Sun.

Understanding the thermodynamic evolution of CMEs as they travel from the Sun to Earth has long been a challenge, due to limited observational data both near the Sun and in Earth’s vicinity. To bridge this gap, a team led by Dr. Wageesh Mishra, faculty at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), used data from NASA and ESA space missions alongside ground-based observations from the Indian Astronomical Observatory in Hanle, Ladakh.

Using these datasets, the team developed a detailed model to investigate how the rare chain of six CMEs interacted and evolved thermally during their journey across the solar system.

“We used wide-field coronagraphic data and an analytical framework called the Flux Rope Internal State (FRIS) model to track the thermodynamic evolution of these CMEs and their interactions,” said Soumyaranjan Khuntia, lead author of the study and a doctoral scholar at IIA.

Surprisingly, the researchers discovered that these solar clouds not only transported heat but altered their thermal behavior

mid-flight. Initially, the CMEs released heat but later transitioned into a state where they absorbed and retained it, stabilizing to a near-constant temperature as they expanded.

Closer to Earth, using data from NASA’s Wind spacecraft, the team made an even more astonishing discovery. The final CME carried “double flux ropes”—two intertwined magnetic structures resembling tangled magnetic braids. These exhibited compressed magnetic fields and unusual thermal behavior, including differing heating and cooling dynamics between electrons and ions.

“Our analysis shows that interactions between CMEs cause significant thermal restructuring,” Khuntia explained. “By the time they reached Earth, electrons were found to be in a heat-releasing state, while ions displayed a complex mix of heating and cooling—with heating being dominant overall.”

Dr. Mishra emphasised the significance of the study: “This is the first time, both in India and globally, that the continuous thermodynamic evolution of multiple interacting CMEs has been captured over such vast interplanetary distances.”

Co-author Anjali Agarwal, also a doctoral researcher at IIA, added: “Our work marks a crucial step in identifying the thermal signatures of CMEs and their substructures, with the goal of using these as early indicators of severe geomagnetic disturbances.”

The research, published in the prestigious journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, offers valuable insights that can significantly enhance space weather forecasting, especially in predicting the impact of complex CME events on Earth’s magnetosphere.

Dr. Mishra’s team plans to integrate observations from India’s Aditya-L1 solar mission, including data from the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) and the Aditya Solar Wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX). These instruments are expected to enable a full Sun-to-Earth tracking of CMEs, advancing our ability to forecast space weather with greater accuracy.

Nationwide Financial Inclusion saturation campaign records significant progress

Over 43,000 camps held; nearly 1.4 lakh new Jan Dhan accounts opened

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu



The Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, has reported significant early progress under the Nationwide Financial Inclusion Saturation Campaign, launched on 1st July 2025. The three-month drive, running until 30th September 2025, aims to ensure universal coverage of key financial schemes across all Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the country.

In a statement issued here today by PIB, it is stated that in the first two weeks of the campaign, a total of 43,447 outreach camps have been organized across districts nationwide, facilitating enrolments under flagship schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and the Atal Pension Yojana (APY). Progress reports have already been compiled from 31,305 camps.

These camps have seen active participation from citizens and local institutions, driving forward the government’s mission of last-mile financial empowerment and inclusive socio-economic development.

In addition to enrolments, the campaign has emphasized financial literacy, with camps conducting awareness sessions on digital fraud prevention, accessing unclaimed deposits, and the use of grievance redressal mechanisms.

The initiative continues to be implemented in both rural and urban areas, with active camps reported from states like Chhattisgarh (Balod GP) and Assam (Karbi Anglong), demonstrating a broad-based commitment to financial inclusion.

This campaign reflects the government’s ongoing efforts to reach underserved populations and integrate them into the formal banking system. Through schemes like PMJDY, PMJJBY, PMSBY, and APY, the Government of India is working to bridge the financial gap and promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth.

The campaign is expected to cover approximately 2.7 lakh GPs and ULBs by its conclusion in September.

Key Highlights:
New PMJDY accounts opened: **1,39,291**
KYC re-verification completed for inactive accounts: **PMJDY: 96,383**
Other savings accounts: **1,01,778**
Nomination details updated: **PMJDY accounts: 66,494**
Other accounts: **63,489**
New enrolments under social security schemes: **PMJJBY: 1,83,225**
PMSBY: 2,88,714
APY: 67,668
Claims settled under PMJJBY and PMSBY: **1,665**

PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana to roll out from Aug 1

Massive job creation push with Rs 99,446 Cr outlay targeting over 3.5 Cr jobs

THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

The Union Government's new employment-linked incentive scheme, cleared earlier by the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will come into effect from 1st August 2025 under PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY). The scheme aims to significantly boost job creation in line with the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

With a total outlay of Rs 99,446 crore, PM-VBRY targets the generation of over 3.5 crore new jobs in a two-year period, including 1.92 crore first-time entrants to the workforce. The scheme will cover employment generated between 1st August 2025 and 31st July 2027.

Dual-Focus Incentive Structure: Support for Employees and Employers

PM-VBRY comprises two components:

Part A: Incentive to First-Time Employees

First-time employees registered with the EPFO, earning up to Rs 1 lakh per month, will receive an EPF-linked incentive of up



to Rs 15,000 in two installments—after six months and one year of continued employment. The second installment will be contingent upon the completion of a financial literacy programme. A portion of the incentive will be deposited in a savings instrument to encourage financial prudence.

Part B: Incentive for Employers Creating

New Jobs

Employers in all sectors, with a focus on manufacturing, will receive incentives of up to Rs 3,000 per month per new employee for two years. For manufacturing sector employers, this incentive will extend into the third and fourth years. The scheme applies to EPFO-registered establishments

that add at least two new employees (if they have fewer than 50 workers) or five new employees (for those with 50 or more).

Payments to employees under Part A will be processed via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) using the Aadhaar Bridge Payment System (ABPS). Employer incentives under Part B will be credited directly into PAN-linked bank accounts.

Wage-Based Incentive Slabs for Employers

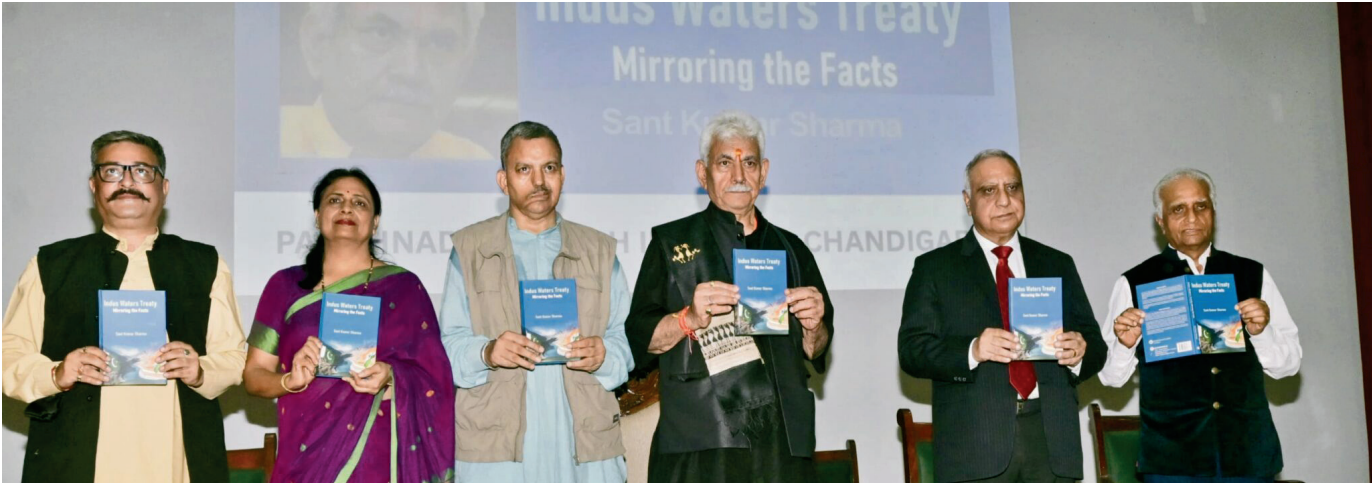
EPF Wage of New Employee Incentive per Month	
Up to Rs 10,000	Up to Rs 1,000
Rs 10,001 to Rs 20,000	Rs 2,000
Rs 20,001 to Rs 1,00,000	Rs 3,000

Employees with wages below Rs 10,000 will receive proportional benefits.

Termination of IWT a befitting response to Pak: LG Sinha

Says historic mistake corrected after decades
Blood & water can't flow together

IWT withdrawal unlocks J&K's Hydropower & Irrigation Potential



THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

Describing the termination of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan as a "new beginning," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha recently said the move will allow India to fully harness the hydropower and irrigation potential of the Union Territory.

Speaking at an event in Jammu, Sinha called the Centre's decision a fitting response to Pakistan in the wake of continued terror activities and said it will lead to the development of critical infrastructure, including power plants and reservoirs.

"India's water will now flow within India and remain in India," Sinha stated. "With

the termination of the IWT, we now have full control over the Jhelum and Chenab rivers."

He said the diversion of river waters to new areas with proper infrastructure will help irrigate barren lands in Jammu and energise infrastructure development across the region.

The announcement follows the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives. In response, the government held the treaty in abeyance, with Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil asserting that "not even a drop of water from the Indus River will be allowed to flow to Pakistan."

Sinha also invoked a 1960 parliamentary debate, referring to statements from senior leaders who had described the IWT as a "historical mistake—unfair and one-sided"—that had long hampered Jammu

and Kashmir's infrastructure growth.

"India has made it clear: blood and water cannot flow together, terror and talks cannot go together, and terror and trade cannot coexist," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to building new reservoirs and maximizing the usage of the river waters for domestic benefit. "This move will have far-reaching consequences as Pakistan is heavily dependent on the Indus river system," he added.

Paying tribute to civilians killed in the Pahalgam terror attack, Sinha reiterated his government's resolve to ensure justice for the victims. He assured that families would receive jobs, financial assistance, and that properties encroached upon by terrorists would be vacated.

ECI appoints RO for Vice-Presidential Election 2025



THE CHANCELLOR DESK
Jammu

The Election Commission of India, empowered under Article 324 of the Constitution, is mandated to conduct elections to the office of the Vice President of India. These elections are governed by the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952, and the rules framed under it—namely, the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules, 1974.

As per Section 3 of the 1952 Act, the Election Commission, in consultation with the Central Government, appoints a Returning Officer (RO) for the election, with the office located in New Delhi. One or more Assistant Returning Officers may also be appointed. By established convention, the Secretary General of either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha is appointed as Returning Officer on a rotational basis. In the last Vice-Presidential election, the Secretary General of the Lok Sabha served in this capacity.

In keeping with this rotation, the Election Commission, after consultation with the Ministry of Law and Justice and with the consent of the Hon'ble Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, has appointed the Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha as the Returning Officer for the forthcoming Vice-Presidential Election, 2025.

Additionally, Ms. Garima Jain, Joint Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, and Shri Vijay Kumar, Director, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, have been appointed as Assistant Returning Officers for the conduct of the election. The requisite Gazette notification is being issued separately.

Somnath Bira: The Forgotten Patriot from Rainawari

Dr. Madhulika Singh



Somnath Koul Bira

- **Born:** Rainawari, Srinagar
- **Education:** Postgraduate in History, Lahore University
- **Research Thesis:** "Kashmir in the Eyes of Foreign Travellers"
- **Affiliation:** National Conference, close associate of Sheikh Abdullah
- **Role in 1947:** Founding volunteer of Peace Brigade (Bachau Fauj)
- **Area Assigned:** Doda-Bhaderwah sector
- **Last Seen:** Near Reghi Nallah
- **Status:** Missing in action; body never recovered

member of National conference with a progressive outlook responded promptly to the call and took up the responsibility of preparing some sort of civil resistance as first line of defence of the valley. Somnath Bira along with some other volunteers of National Conference played a pioneering role in the formation of Peace Brigade units. Though woefully lacking military training or war tactics, Somnath Bira and his volunteer team acted promptly to guard against the Kabali attack. Referring to the reports of a possible incursion in Srinagar, Bira mobilised his co-workers and played a lead role in the organisation of a volunteer's corps to maintain peace and safeguard the motherland from the impending tribal attack. The response was overwhelming. Within no time, peace brigade, initially known by the name Bachau Fauj (Protection Force) or Salamati Fauj was organized. Marching and sloganeering with revolutionary fervour, Somnath Bira and his associates moved down the lanes and streets, bolstering the confidence of the people of Srinagar. Taking inspiration from Bira, a number of young men in the Peace Brigade started offering guard duties on bridges, bazaars, telephone and telegraph exchanges. They also acted as guides for the army and along with the jawans, they patrolled the streets of Srinagar and sought to defend the main points of entry in the city. However, the reports of rapid advance

of the mercurial raiders and the continuous migration of the refugees with their woeful stories of the atrocities committed on the non-Muslims and their brutal killings created communal tensions in the surrounding regions of the valley. Around this time, the peace brigade was bifurcated into different units and assigned the task of holding charge of different areas to combat the communal tensions and to stall the march of raiders, in case an invasion occurs. One such peace Brigade in which Somnath Bira was also a leading member, was assigned the charge of Doda-Bhaderwah area to calm down the communal tensions that had erupted there. However, after successfully accomplishing their duty, when the Brigade members were returning back to Srinagar, Bira was found missing. It is believed that he was shot dead by the hostile forces near a place called Reghi Nallah, somewhere between Doda and Bhaderwah. The exact location where his body fell remained unknown even to his group members and unfortunately, the body of this young and passionate martyr could never be recovered. The life of this young intellectual was silenced while performing his patriotic duties in the service of the nation.

(The author is Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Jammu)



Turtuk Decoded

Jammu And Kashmir State has the distinction of being blessed with varied topography, vegetation, climate, culture and people. The frontier areas of the state had importance for the strategic reasons for the rulers of the state and when the state acceded to India in the backdrop of the partition of India, it assumed political prominence for different reasons.

The imperial British overlords and the communal forces, which enjoyed their patronage, were hell bent to destabilize the state. It suited them to maintain their foothold and stranglehold over the Northern Frontier.

Dogra rulers who defined the geographical and political boundaries of Jammu and Kashmir in terms of viable administrative purpose kept a keen eye on the ethnic tribes that inhabited Gilgit and Baltistan. Their culture, tradition and way of life needed to be understood in order to govern the people.

Turtuk Unveiled written by Dr. Kavita Suri is a well measured move and welcome addition to the archival and research material available on the tribes of Turtuk, a part of Baltistan. It is pertinent to mention that the British paid significant attention to Gilgit as far as the strategic value is concerned. Gilgit was in the centre stage of the intrigues to destabilize the defense of India so that advantage is given to Pakistan in the Himalayas. In this process of destabilization Baltistan was affected automatically as the region is in the geographical proximity of Gilgit.

People of this area have been suffering but it goes to their credit that they have retained their smile in spite of the inhospitable terrain. Dr. Kavita Suri's book "Turtuk Unveiled" should be seen in this backdrop as it places Turtuk in proper perspective.

The book has been divided into 12 chapters acknowledgements, foreword, Introduction, references and Index. Author has utilized her skill as the professional journalist and photographer

to give the vivid and pictorial description of Turtuk besides the well researched text. The book reveals the professional competence of Dr. Kavita Suri in terms of presenting the text photographs. Her vast experience as the reputed journalist associated with various newspapers of substance and credibility like the Statesman and the academic proficiency as an academician has added value to the book.

The Book has presented a unique issue regarding the unique place Turtuk. Introduction to the text on the jacket of the book explains the crisis the people of Turtuk face and sets the tone for the reader

as to why this book should be read about the place called Turtuk in the Ladakh region of the Jammu and Kashmir state. It reads: "Turtuk, small place nestled at the farthest end of Nubra valley in Ladakh has a unique history. It was part of Baltistan, had remained with Pakistan for a long time and then was reunited with India. Turtuk Unveiled which is first literary work of its kind on Indian side of Baltistan, throws light on Indian side of Baltistan, throws light on the history of the region which is dominated by the Balti tribal's"

Explaining the locale of the place, she writes, “Situated amid the mighty Himalayas and Karakorum mountain

Dr. Mahesh Kaul

Book:
Turtuk Unveiled
Author:
Dr.Kavita Suri
Publisher:
Shubhi Publications
Year:
2010
Price:
Rs. 1790

Shah, his eldest son Muhammad Shah was made the king. Thus Baltistan came under the Dogras.”(pp 48)

Elaborating further she says, “Turtuk has an interesting history. From 1947-48 onwards till 1947, it was part of Pakistan and many villagers living in these areas were working with Pakistani army mostly posted in the northern area of Gilgit-Baltistan. Thang Top and Trig heights in the area are still under pak occupation and are overlooking Turtuk Valley. Just down below, Thang village on Indian side is thickly populated and so is Franoo village on the other side in Pak-occupied Kashmir.

mechanism to develop this area.

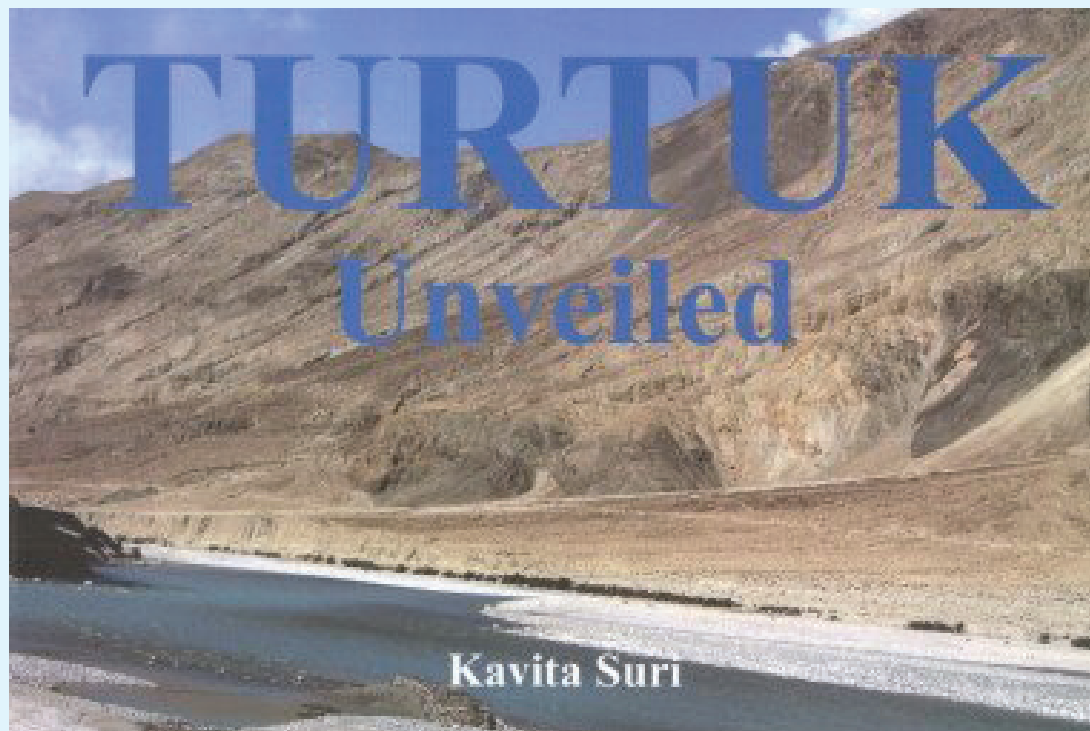
Book deals in detail with the traditions, culture and way of life of the Baltis. The major problem being faced by the Baltis is the land ownership that has led to their identity crisis. Giving vent to the woes of the people she writes," Since 39 years, Ghulam Mohammed has been trying to get the revenue papers made of his land and home in Turtuk. But all his efforts have been wasted. He is among the 5000 Baltis of this region who do not have any land records. There are absolutely no revenue records here unlike the other parts of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. (pp 74-77)

Explaining this issue, Dr. Suri writes, “As Turtuk was part of Chorbat block of Skardu district of Baltistan from 1948 to 1971, all the land records and related papers were kept in the office of land revenue records at the tehsil headquarter of Skardu only and were maintained by the Pakistan administration. But when the Line of Control was redrawn after Operation Turtuk, the land records were left in Skardu resulting which the villagers became landless landowners of their own lands. Presently, though hundreds of acres of land is being cultivated or owned by the Baltis in the villages of Turtuk, Tyakshi, Chalunka, thanag and Bogdang but they are landless legally.” (pp 74-77)

The author has documented the pioneering role played by the Indian army in terms of Operation Sadbhawana leading to social transformation and capacity building besides infrastructural development. *Turtuk Unveiled* by Dr.Kavita Suri is a must read for researchers, policy makers and the social scientists.

The cost of the book is quite exorbitant, it should be revised to suit the common reader. Publisher should take care of the typographical mistakes that have crept in.

*(The Author is Editorial
Director, The Chancellor)*



range in northern Pakistan and Ladakh, Baltistan or Baltiyal (Land of Baltis or Homeland of Baltis as is popularly known in Balti language) is the historic junction of the Buddhist and Islamic Worlds.”(pp 40)

Balti is the prominent tribe of this area. It was during the expedition and conquest of General Zorawar Singh that this region became the frontline of the defense of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Giving the historical background and writing about the conquest, Dr. Kavita Suri writes, "By the summer of 1840, General Zorawar Singh had conquered the whole of Baltistan. In addition to Skardu. In place of Ahmed

In 1971, India launched an operation to liberate Turtuk and reunited it with Ladakh.”(pp 66). Turtuk remained under Pakistani occupation till 1971 and it was during the Bangladesh liberation war that this area came under the ambit of theatre of war, leading to the reunification of this area with India.

People of Turtuk have witnessed the administration of both Pakistan and India. It who has shaped their perception in terms of identity and at present it has lead to identity crisis. The book deals at various aspects of this issue and can act as a guide for the policy makers to devise





The CHANCELLOR

Editorial

Greater Sanskrit India

Sanskrit civilizational moorings have defined the national destiny of India. The national consciousness of India exists beyond the geographical domains and can be gauged from the cultural undercurrents that have travelled far and wide. Be that South-East Asia or the Central Asian regions; Indian expression has gained currency in terms of acceptance that Indian aesthetics has gained among the people of various denominations. History of India is replete with examples of the outreach based on spiritual values guided by the Dharmic considerations. It is not without reason that the Himalayas have been upheld as the sentinel of the Indic Knowledge System. Himalayas have acted as the natural bulwark to inject virility in the national objective prevalent from the centuries to safeguard the Dharmic eco-system. Various exponents of the Indic philosophy and innovations have originated in the Himalayan states ranging from the regions of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh extending up to the North-Eastern region in the Brahmaputra valley besides the regions that have been made fertile by the Indus and other river systems originating in the Himalayas. The cultural and civilizational fertility nurtured the Indic Knowledge System and its richness flowed down to many regions even towards Nepal and its Terai belt. This can be substantiated by the Tantric ecosystem that exists even today. It is not surprising that the “Kubjika Tantra” much valued in Nepal has its roots in the Shaiva Darshan of Kashmir. This issue of *The Chancellor* upholds its commitment as defined in its inaugural issue that this fortnightly will uphold and preserve the Sanskrit and Tantric civilizational values as enshrined in the annals of the Himalayan place consciousness. Keeping that tradition alive and enabling the contemporary generation to get sensitised about its rich liberating inheritance and spiritual legacy. This issue presents the cover story on Mata Kamakhya who is termed as the epitome of the Tantric worship and ritual system. The aim is to send a message that India is defined from Kashmir to Kamroop (Assam) by a formidable Tantric (Agamic) Knowledge System that reinforces the overall Indic philosophies. We hope the readers will be enriched by this issue of *The Chancellor* that has a mission to sensitise the larger readership with the nuances of Greater India. Greater India is not confined to the geographical boundaries only but encompasses the areas of the Sanskrit civilizational influence beyond the defined limits. Not only that, we have a reason to embrace the people of Tibet who are in exile. The reason is that the credit to Sanskritised Buddhism goes to the Kashmirian scholars like Kumarajiva who enabled the widening of the Tantric eco-system of the Kashmir Shaiv Darshan. Though initially the things were different, the Trika Shaiva Tantra adepts like Somananda in his all-time great treatise “Shiva Drishti” set a new template for the Trika Shaiva Parampara of Kashmir. Himalayas will always remain witness to the Tantric moorings that make this ecosystem important for the Indian identity. That is why safety, human rights and the Dharmic considerations of the Tibetans and their spiritual leader, Dalai Lama concern us. Greater India is a civilizational sphere of influence governing India's destiny. The national resolve has to safeguard the Greater India that has been subverted over the centuries by various forces and reaffirm the national pledge to restore Sanskrit Bharat.

Challenges to Jammu's Heritage



Dr. Mahesh Kaul

Every district of Jammu has something to offer in terms of heritage and makes it an integral whole to devise marketing strategies. In such destinations where multiplicity of heritage resources is available, it becomes a vibrant heritage tourism space that can be utilized in innovations in terms of market segmentation. What makes it more inclusive is the dispersion of population in a balanced way, making it a cultural mosaic as people of different religious denominations are shaping the cultural landscape of the region. Each segment enriching the imagination and giving ample scope to give tourists a delight to relish.

Review of literature suggests that various districts of Jammu region have something unique to offer in terms of cuisine, dress, folklore, monuments and other variants of heritage. Kishtwar was founded by the descendants of Bengali rajas and as such it went in its historical journey to add various dialects and has strong influence of Kashmiri language. Nagseni has the potential of addressing the need of justification of the Buddhist circuit in terms of its Sanskritised philosophy of Nagasena.

Poonch and Rajouri have historical role in the evolution of Jammu kingdom of the ancient times and giving it the complete shape of kingdom by fortifying the frontier in the Shivaliks. It was through these areas that link with Kashmir was predominant in terms of socio-political intent and shaped the consciousness of the people. It has also documented history of how Mughals influenced these places

in terms of administration and led to development of the cultural space that led to the evolution of heritage.

Udhampur belt has in its vicinity various temples and structures that drag the attention towards the ancient capital of Jammu popularly known as Babbapura or Babore. Kishenpur, Manwal belt has been declared as the culturally rich belt and it has unearthed many excavations by active involvement of the ASI. Study of documents related to Jammu's antiquity suggests that Jammu has a varied topography that adds to its evolution, climate and landscape has played a vital role in shaping its cultural destiny. Basohli paintings have acquired international brand name but not many know that this art belongs to the place known as Basohli of the Kathua district of Jammu region.

In terms of intangible heritage this art form needs immense attention to sensitise the locals about the living heritage and establish interpretation centers. Bafliyaz is associated with Alexander the Great and thus has the potential to be marketed as the destination in heritage tourism that caters to the niche segment. Behram Gali in Poonch are examples that leaves a marketer surprised and enables him to innovate in terms of marketing strategies.

ICCROM has sponsored many sensitization programmes that lead to resource building and team work by involving specialists in such situations as are merging in Jammu. Conflict in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has given Jammu region an opportunity to be the leader of the change and define the heritage paradigm as Kashmir tourism was mainly based on scenic beauty and natural landscape that witnessed a downslide due to the armed conflict that made it the part of the travel advisories.

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Moreover, It also gives the state government a breathing space by treating Jammu as the launching pad of the state's tourism economy till Kashmir returns to normalcy. At least it will save the image of the state as the acclaimed tourist destination. Jammu is easy to market as it has already been established as the top most pilgrimage destination as nearly one crore tourist on average visit the cave shrine of Shree Mata Vaishno Devi. The easy method is to target a sizeable chunk of these visitors and divert them toward the heritage destination.

But the problem lies in the reality of infrastructural deficit to reach these destination then the lack of involvement of the heritage tourism professionals. It is a paradoxical situation that nearly a crore of tourists visit the region having religious moorings having affiliation with culture but it has not been converted as an asset in terms of heritage tourism. That too, when the region has plenty

of heritage assets to prolong the stay of the tourists. Policy paralysis and lack of idiom and semantics to address this issue is the cause that is making an opportunity of immense value to go waste. Review of literature suggests from various examples that once this potential is tapped then it changes the complexion of the destination as it has multiplier effect not only in terms of economy but the development of infrastructure that shapes the personality of the destination. Locals should understand that infrastructural development not only benefits the tourists but the local stakeholders and host population. As it is used by them throughout the year, tourist may enjoy the facilities for few days but the ultimate beneficiary is the host population whose living standard gets changed.

Review of literature suggests that Jammu is a fit case for the heritage tourism and international guidelines framed by the organizations like UNESCO,

ICCROM, ICOMOS can be implemented to bring to the centre stage to first identify and then document the heritage assets for the preservation. Once it has been realized then product development and devising of market strategies becomes imperative to give it the desired status in the market.

It deserves to be a niche segment and it is not impossible if stakeholders are sanitized and made to realize the importance of the shared heritage that nature and man has develop over the years and centuries. It will help to develop the infrastructure to cater to the demands of the hosts and tourists. Arrival of Shree Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrims is a boon as a sizeable chunk can be diverted to heritage sites once they have been included in the marketing strategies by upholding the conservation guidelines. It will enhance the overall development of the region.

Moreover, heritage assets of Jammu region have international appeal in terms of the Buddhist

circuit and rich cultural history. There is an ample scope to explore the heritage avenues that cater to the development of the heritage as product. The devastation and vandalism that is reducing the heritage to rubble is an opportunity to devise mechanism to arrive at the strategies that will ensure the incorporation of the conservation guidelines developed by the international organizations to address such situations.

Heritage tourism and heritage itself has been left in the lurch in this part of the state and it needs the vigorous interaction of the agencies at the state level to ask the central government to devise a package for the region that takes care of the issues related to product development and marketing of heritage and then place it in the heritage tourism orbit.

*(The author is Editorial Director,
The Chancellor)*



Wisdom in Wrinkles: The Power & Peace of Growing Old

S.K.Khushu

Old age is an inevitable chapter of life, one that brings with it a wealth of experiences, wisdom, and introspection. Yet, it is often accompanied by concerns about declining health, dependence, and the ultimate truth—death. While these thoughts may be unsettling, they also provide an opportunity to reevaluate our perspective on life, aging, and the true essence of existence.

What is Old Age?

Old age is not merely a physical state marked by graying hair or slower steps. It is a phase where life invites us to reflect on our journey, embrace our achievements, and reconcile with our shortcomings. It is the season to reap the rewards of a life well-lived, not one to be overshadowed by fear or regret.

However, for many, old age becomes a source of anxiety. Concerns about health, dependence

on others, financial stability, or the prospect of being forgotten often cloud this beautiful phase of life. The subconscious fear of approaching death adds to this unease, making it challenging to live fully and joyfully.

Understanding Death: A Natural Transition

Death is not an adversary to be feared but a natural transition, an inevitable part of the cycle of life. It does not follow a calendar and can occur at any age. Recognizing this universal truth can help us approach it with acceptance rather than dread.

Philosophically and spiritually, we believe that the soul is immortal and our physical body is but a temporary vessel, akin to garments that wear out and are replaced. Death, in this sense, is not an end but an elevation—a journey to a higher plane of existence. This understanding can bring solace and perspective, allowing us to live our days with greater peace and purpose.

Breaking the Chains of Fear and Dependence

The fear of old age often stems

from a sense of dependence—on family, friends, or financial security. While these are important, they need not define our happiness. The key lies in building a robust relationship with ourselves.

Self-Reliance and Inner Strength: Make yourself your best friend, advisor, and confidant. By nurturing your inner self, you become less reliant on external sources of happiness.

(This is most important)

Daily Joys: Engage in activities that bring you joy—reading, gardening, painting, or simply spending time in nature. These simple pleasures can uplift your spirit and keep you connected to life's beauty.

Meditation and Exercise: A healthy mind and body are vital for a fulfilling life. Regular meditation fosters mental peace, while exercise ensures physical well-being, allowing you to age gracefully.

Celebrating Old Age

Old age is not a burden; it is a celebration of life's journey. Surround yourself with positivity, cherish the relationships you've built, and share your wisdom with

the younger generation. These actions not only enrich your life but also leave a lasting legacy.

Redefining Success in Old Age

Success in old age is not measured by financial status or social recognition but by the ability to live joyfully and meaningfully. When you cultivate gratitude, embrace simplicity, and find contentment within, you discover the true essence of happiness.

Conclusion

Old age and death are not adversaries but companions on life's journeys. By shifting our perspective, fostering self-reliance, and embracing the beauty of this phase, we can transform fear into fulfillment. Life, at every stage, is a gift. Let us celebrate it, live it fully, and accept its transitions with grace and wisdom.

This mindset will ensure that we not only endure old age but thrive in it, leaving a legacy of positivity and strength for generations to come.

(The author is retired government official)





J&K's Changing Climate Leaves Its Mark on Skin

Heat, Humidity, and Your Skin: A Climate Crisis You Can Feel

Jammu and Kashmir, once celebrated for its cool summers and clear air, is now feeling the heat—quite literally. The region is experiencing a shift in its climatic rhythm: hotter summers, longer spells of humidity, and erratic rainfall are reshaping not just the landscape but also how our skin responds to the environment. As a dermatologist practicing in the heart of this transformation, I've seen firsthand how climate change has evolved from an abstract environmental concern into a visible skin health crisis. Increasingly, patients are presenting with unusual rashes, persistent infections, and chronic flare-ups—all pointing to a direct link between a warming world and our body's largest organ.

From Crisp Comfort to Constant Itch

In June 2025, Srinagar recorded its hottest June day in over 20 years, while Jammu experienced relentless heatwaves that stretched across weeks. The signature cool breeze that once defined summer in the valley is now overshadowed by stifling humidity. This heat-humidity combination has triggered an uptick in skin complaints, ranging from minor irritations to recurring infections. Cases that were once rare or seasonal have now become a year-round challenge.

What Happens to Skin in Heat and Humidity?

Our skin acts as a dynamic shield, guarding us from ultraviolet rays, pollutants, allergens, and microbes. But high heat and humidity weaken this defense. Sweat clogs pores, moisture fosters fungal growth, and increased sun exposure leads to deeper skin damage due to ozone thinning. This has led to a surge in: Prickly heat (miliaria) Adult-onset acne Seborrheic dermatitis Skin chafing and irritation Where once these conditions peaked only during the monsoon, they now persist well into early spring and late autumn, affecting people across both Jammu and Kashmir.

The fungal Wave: No Longer a Monsoon Issue

Fungal skin infections, especially dermatophytosis (tinea or ringworm), are thriving in the changing climate. Conditions commonly seen now include:

Tinea corporis (on the body)
Tinea cruris (groin)
Tinea pedis (feet)
Candidiasis in skin folds
What was once a monsoon nuisance has become a perennial problem due to:
Extended sweating periods
Wearing tight, synthetic clothing
Poor ventilation in homes
Rampant misuse of over-the-counter steroid creams
Children, daily wage laborers, and soldiers stationed in humid conditions are particularly affected, often facing recurring, itchy infections that resist conventional treatment.
Warm Weather Fuels Bacterial Outbreaks
Increased temperatures and moisture also create ideal conditions for bacterial skin infections:
Folliculitis (infected hair follicles)
Impetigo (common among



children)
Furuncles (boils)
Cellulitis, especially in people with diabetes
Even small skin breaks—caused by scratching, insect bites, or friction—are now more likely to turn into painful infections. Outdoor workers, farmers, and construction laborers are particularly at risk.
Blister Beetles and Paederus Dermatitis
An unusual skin condition on the rise in both urban and rural areas is Paederus dermatitis, caused by the Paederus beetle. This insect releases a chemical toxin called pederin when crushed against the skin, leading to:
A burning or stinging sensation
Linear red rashes with blisters
Lesions that mimic burns or herpes
Increased sightings of these beetles, especially in agricultural zones and military camps, are linked to warmer nights and artificial lighting, which attracts

Dr. Ennakshee Sharma



especially during dry seasons when pollen levels peak.
Cutaneous Leishmaniasis: No Longer a Distant Threat
Once confined to the arid zones of Rajasthan and parts of Pakistan, cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) is now being reported in the districts of Rajouri, Kupwara, and parts of Jammu.
Caused by a parasite and transmitted by sandflies, CL begins as a small painless bump but can develop into a non-healing ulcer, sometimes leaving permanent scars.
Contributing factors to its spread in J&K include:
Warmer winters
Deforestation
Changes in soil and human settlement
Unfortunately, many patients delay treatment, mistaking the lesion for a boil or insect bite. Early diagnosis and intervention

to:
Oxidative skin stress
Premature aging
Exacerbation of pigmentation disorders like melasma
Meanwhile, the lengthening of pollen seasons—thanks to warmer springs and late blooming cycles—has led to a spike in airborne contact dermatitis, especially in those already prone to allergies.
Skin Survival in a Changing Climate: A Dermatologist's Toolkit
Prevent and Protect
Avoid direct contact with allergens like Parthenium
Use light, breathable cotton clothing
Keep skin folds dry with antifungal powders
Use Skin-Smart Products
Choose soap-free, pH-balanced cleansers
Opt for gel-based moisturizers and non-comedogenic sunscreen

Recognize Red Flags
Blistering rashes may indicate Paederus exposure
Non-healing ulcers could signal cutaneous leishmaniasis
Avoid repeated use of steroid-antifungal combination creams—they often worsen fungal infections

Protect Vulnerable Groups
Keep children indoors during hot, beetle-active nights
Promote glove use during gardening or farming
Teach adolescents proper skincare for humid weather to avoid acne flare-ups

Final Thoughts: The Skin as Our First Climate Witness
Jammu and Kashmir's skin health narrative is changing—rashes that linger, fungal infections that persist, allergic reactions from common weeds, and insect-induced dermatitis are becoming part of everyday dermatological practice. But this isn't a story of helplessness. With greater awareness, climate-sensitive healthcare policies, and stronger patient education, we can protect our communities. Much like climate-resilient crops and smart farming methods, we now need climate-smart dermatology. Your skin is the frontline of climate change. Let's begin treating it with the urgency it deserves.

(The Author is MD Dermatology and Assistant Professor in ASCOMS

India's Renewable Revolution Expands to J&K

ANUJA KHUSHU

India's commitment to renewable energy has become a cornerstone of its growth strategy, aiming to balance rapid economic development with environmental sustainability. Among the many states and regions contributing to this green revolution, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) stands out due to its unique geography, vast natural resources, and emerging renewable energy projects. The region is steadily evolving into a key player in India's green energy journey, with solar, hydropower, and green hydrogen projects gaining momentum.

Solar energy is at the forefront of India's renewable agenda, and Jammu and Kashmir is making significant advances in this sector. Despite being known for its mountainous terrain and cold climate, J&K benefits from high solar irradiation, especially in areas like Ladakh, which experience clear skies for most of the year. This natural advantage positions the region well for harnessing solar power effectively.

As of mid-2025, over 6,100 government buildings across J&K have installed rooftop solar systems under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, generating around 22.5 MW of clean energy. The program targets solarizing 22,494 government buildings, which would bring the total capacity to approximately 245 MW. This initiative not only promotes clean energy but also reduces electricity bills for government establishments, setting a precedent for wider community adoption.

Beyond government buildings, the Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JaKEDA) is actively encouraging private and commercial rooftop solar installations. Thousands of households and businesses are exploring solar options, supported by subsidies and technical guidance. The drive for distributed solar energy aligns with India's broader goal of achieving 500 GW of renewable capacity by 2030.



Harnessing Hydropower: J&K's Untapped Energy Treasure:

Hydropower has long been a natural strength for Jammu and Kashmir, thanks to its numerous rivers and streams fed by the Himalayas. The region's estimated hydropower potential stands at around 18,000 MW, but as of early 2025, only about 3,540 MW (roughly 24% of the potential) has been tapped. This shortfall reflects both the challenges of infrastructure development in rugged terrain and the complex political and environmental considerations.

Current installed hydropower capacity in J&K includes roughly 2,250 MW under central sector projects, 1,197 MW under state sector projects, and nearly 93 MW from Independent Power Producers. Efforts are underway to accelerate the development of major hydroelectric projects such as Pakal Dul (1,000 MW), Rattle-II (850 MW), Kiru (624 MW), and Kwar (540 MW). These projects are expected to collectively add more than 3,000 MW to the regional grid by 2027.

The increased hydropower capacity will play a dual role — meeting the growing electricity demand within J&K and positioning the Union Territory as a net exporter of clean energy to the national grid. Additionally, these projects have the potential to create local jobs and stimulate infrastructure development, further contributing to economic growth.

Green Hydrogen: The Emerging Frontier:

Green hydrogen, produced by

splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using renewable energy, is gaining attention worldwide as a clean fuel with vast potential across industries and transportation. Jammu and Kashmir, with its ample solar and hydropower resources, is uniquely positioned to explore green hydrogen production as part of its energy diversification strategy.

Institutions like IIT Jammu have started research into green hydrogen feasibility, while local policymakers are increasingly aware of the opportunities this clean fuel presents. Green hydrogen can help decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors such as heavy industry and long-distance transport and could provide energy storage solutions to complement intermittent renewable sources like solar and wind.

While large-scale green hydrogen projects in J&K are still in the early stages, the foundational work being done now signals promising prospects for the region to become a hub for this emerging clean energy technology in the years ahead.

Policy Initiatives and Infrastructure Development:

The Jammu and Kashmir government is proactively promoting renewable energy through policy support and infrastructure upgrades. The adoption of smart meters, expansion of electricity transmission and distribution networks, and consumer awareness campaigns are key elements of this effort. Between

2020-21 and 2023-24, electricity consumption in J&K rose significantly, underscoring the need for reliable, affordable, and clean power supply.

Government schemes and subsidies are enabling citizens and businesses to invest in rooftop solar and energy-efficient appliances, while partnerships with private firms are boosting renewable capacity. These initiatives also align with India's national climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, emphasizing renewable energy's role in reducing carbon emissions.

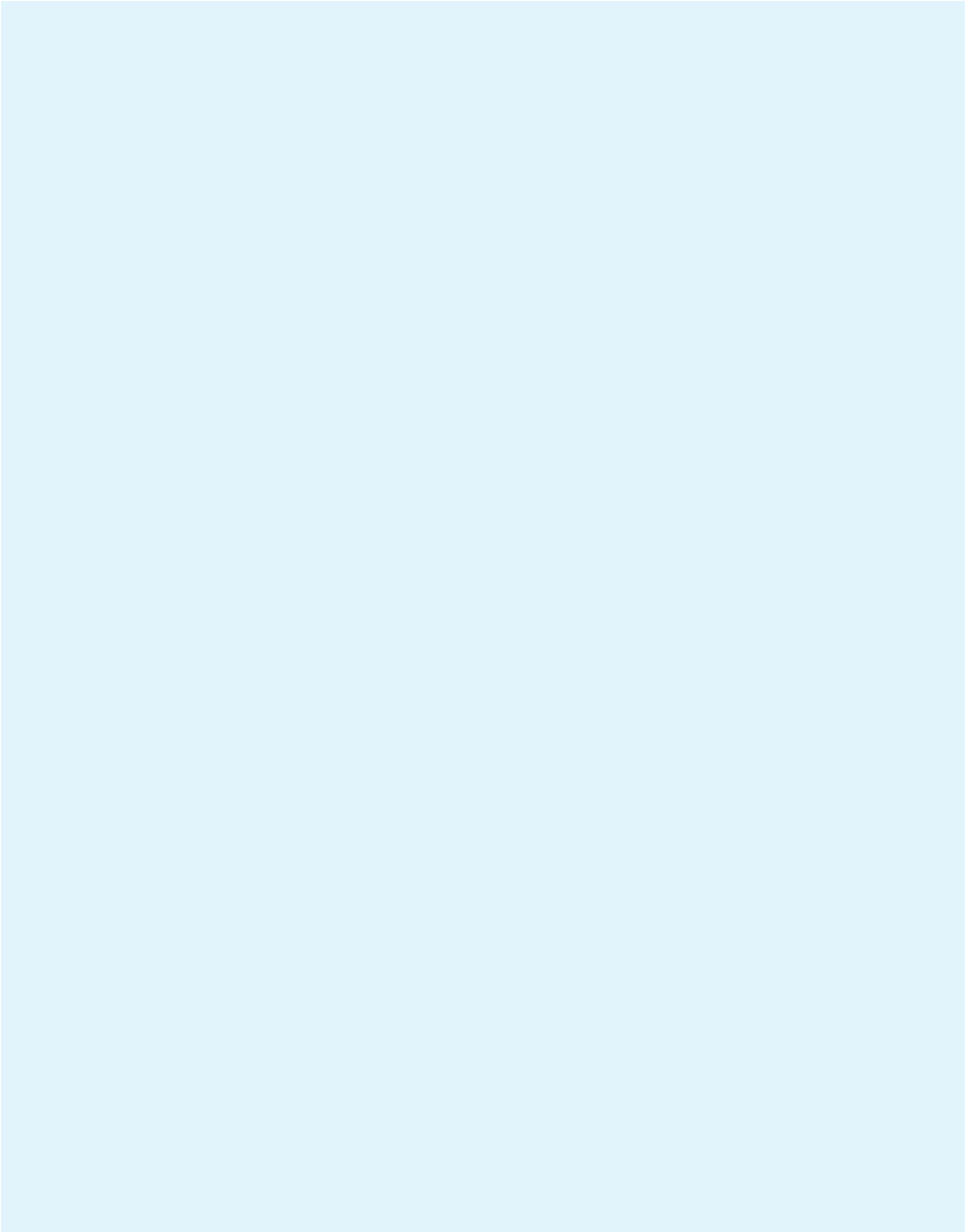
Despite its potential, Jammu and Kashmir faces several challenges in scaling up renewable energy. The difficult mountainous terrain increases costs and complicates logistics for installing infrastructure. Seasonal weather variations, such as heavy snowfall and landslides, can affect construction and maintenance.

Environmental and social concerns also require careful management, particularly with large hydropower projects that impact river ecosystems and local communities. Political sensitivities and regional security issues add complexity to project implementation.

Addressing these challenges will require continued government support, robust public-private partnerships, and inclusive planning involving local stakeholders. Investments in grid modernization and energy storage technologies will also be critical to handle variability and ensure stable power supply.

J&K's renewable energy journey is both a regional development priority and a vital contribution to India's national green energy goals. By harnessing its abundant solar and hydropower resources, and by preparing for future green hydrogen opportunities, the Union Territory is carving out a strategic niche in the country's clean energy landscape.

This transition promises multiple benefits: cleaner air and environment, economic growth through new industries and jobs, greater energy security, and support for India's commitment to becoming a net-zero carbon emitter by 2070.





Prof Tito Ganju joins DBU as Emeritus Professor, Advisory Board Member 1



THE CHANCELLOR DESK Jammu

Tito Ganju has been appointed as Professor of Emeritus and inducted into the Academic Advisory Board of Desh Bhagat University, a NAAC A+ and 12B accredited institution established in 1972. The university confirmed the appointment in a statement released on Monday. The Academic Advisory Board, according to the university, consists of individuals from academia, research, industry, public service, and social sectors, and is tasked with providing strategic guidance to the institution's academic and research ecosystem. Prof. Ganju has been associated with higher

education and public discourse for over three decades. He is known for his work in intellectual history, policy thought, and cultural studies. His previous roles include teaching, institutional mentorship, and involvement in academic policy frameworks. Desh Bhagat University stated that the advisory board plays a key role in curriculum planning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and institutional development. With the addition of Prof. Ganju, the board is expected to expand its capacity in fostering research-oriented and socially engaged academic models. Prof. Ganju's appointment was acknowledged by several of his peers as a move that brings both academic experience and independent thinking into institutional planning processes.

Dogri play *Chanchlo* holds up a mirror to society's class divide

THE CHANCELLOR DESK Jammu

Chanchlo is the Dogri adaptation of the acclaimed play Sakubai, originally written by renowned playwright and director Nadira Zaheer Babbar. Adapted into Dogri by Dr. Juhie Mohan, Chanchlo brings the story closer to the cultural ethos and linguistic flavor of Jammu and its surrounding region. Set against the backdrop of urban Jammu, Chanchlo tells the story of a woman from a remote village who migrates to the city in search of livelihood. But Chanchlo is more than just one woman's journey—it embodies the collective struggles, aspirations, and untold stories of countless unorganized, working-class women who leave their homes and families behind to become domestic workers in unfamiliar urban households.

With humor, insight, sharp wit, and a deep sense of irony, Chanchlo offers a poignant reflection of her lived experiences. It sheds light on the challenges, resilience, and quiet strength of women from her social class. The play not only portrays the hardships they endure but also the dreams they carry and the dignity with which they live. More than a personal narrative, Chanchlo is a powerful social commentary—a mirror held up to our hypocrisies, biases, and class prejudices. It compels the audience to ask difficult questions: Do we truly recognize the dignity of labor? Do we respect the very hands that build and sustain our households? By bringing Chanchlo to the Dogri stage, Rangyug – Theatre for Self-Realization and Social Change—further its commitment to using theatre as a medium for social reflection, regional identity, and the empowerment of marginalised voices.



Jammu cartoonist wins first prize in National Competition on anti-addiction theme

THE CHANCELLOR DESK Jammu

Renowned cartoonist Manoj Chopra, a proud son of the soil from Jammu, has brought immense recognition to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir by securing the first prize in the National Level Cartoon Competition organized by Cartoon Watch, India's only monthly cartoon magazine, in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Chhattisgarh. This year's competition was themed "Drinking/Smoking is not a matter of pride," with a focus on raising awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse. Manoj Chopra's

powerful and thought-provoking entry stood out for its bold message against addiction and its creative portrayal of healthier life choices. His work was widely appreciated for its originality, artistic depth, and strong social relevance. The competition received entries from talented artists across the country. However, it was Manoj Chopra's cartoon that captured the attention of the distinguished jury panel, earning him the top honor. Manoj Chopra is a household name in the world of editorial cartooning. His work has appeared in leading national and regional publications, often marked by a blend of sharp wit, visual clarity, and compelling social commentary. Over the years, he has emerged as a significant voice in Indian

cartooning. It is worth mentioning that Manoj Chopra has been the recipient of numerous national and international awards and scholarships. He has been awarded the Junior Fellowship by the Department of Culture, Government of India, and the prestigious Lalit Kala Akademi Scholarship. With a prolific career spanning decades, he has more than 25,000 cartoons published to his credit. This remarkable achievement is not only a testament to Manoj Chopra's talent and dedication but also a matter of great pride for the people of Jammu & Kashmir. His success once again reaffirms the creative excellence and artistic heritage of the region, and serves as an inspiration for aspiring artists throughout the Union Territory.

Integrating Community Development and Tourism

Dr. Mahesh Kaul

Tourism is shaping the economy of the societies and countries that have made it an inherent part of their economies. It has given economic stability and helped to devise the infrastructure to support tourism. Not only that. By placing tourism within the policy framework of national development it has given thrust to the allied industries and spheres that are part and parcel of the tourism industry be it hotels, transport, airways or railways. These initiatives have opened new vistas and have led the policy makers and professionals to think in more sensitive terms to incorporate subtle and nuanced elements of the refined human mind in the broader framework of the comprehensive tourism policy.

The outcome has been the involvement of the local communities and ethnic people in this broader framework, the world over. It has made people understand the significance of the local communities and their participation in tourism in terms of its global reach as it helps them to showcase the indigenous culture and folk tradition. Not only that; the traditional artisans who have been carrying forward the legacy of their communities get the boost and motivate them to expand their horizons.

Community involvement is key to sustainable development as it is the local communities and societies that are the key stakeholders in tourism. That is why World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the global body that defines the policy contours of tourism keeping in view the market and other global trends with the focus on the ability of tourism to empower people and provide them with skills to achieve change in their local communities.

Over the years there has been considerable shift in tourism thinking of the people when they conceive their thought process in terms of selecting the destinations



for their visitations. Many factors shape their perception and itinerary regarding the destinations they want to visit. Gone are the days of mass tourism and the flock mentality among the tourists. Global connectivity and the advent of information technology has brought the destination knowledge to the doorsteps of tourists. It has revolutionized the tourism sector, making the tourists updated with the basic elements of the destination. It helps in many ways in shaping the tourism product and marks the acceptance of the concept of co-creation in the tourism business. Where both the service provider and the consumer play the role of value addition.

It has helped the tourists to identify their choice of destinations and places they want to visit, leading to the segmentation of the tourism products in terms of their interests and motivations. These motivations range from religious to cultural, ethnic to folk, adventure to wildlife. New vistas have been opened in the ever increasing canvas of the tourism industry by these developments.

The displacement of people for their livelihood and social fault lines present world over in various societies have scattered the people into the lands far away from their homelands. It has developed a sense of sensitivity of the people towards their native culture and tradition. Various studies and data bases have established that farther a person is from his native place, greater sense of yearning he/she has for his/her cultural moorings. It infuses a sense of preserving the rituals and traditions. They lose no opportunity to identify

themselves with their native place. This pull factor calls them back to their native or ethnic locale. They want to witness the originality of the aesthetic environment from which they evolved as individuals. This mindset has shaped a new trend in the tourism sector prompting the tourists to visit their native place and experience the essence of their identity.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) has kept this in mind and given shape to this inherent human tendency making the community development a trend, world over.

The ethnic skills of the host populations are important for inviting the tourist gaze. It not only attracts the local inhabitants and diaspora towards the destinations but generates the economic avenues. It leads to encouragement of local artisans and folk artists who add value to the destination area. Sensitization at the community level is the biggest strategy in tourism development.

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir has a great scope for the community involvement and hence community development in the tourism sector to enhance its multiplier effect. The Jhiri Mela organized every year in Jammu is an example worth emulating. It has acquired national recognition and can be a benchmark in devising the policies giving boost to such fairs. Every year various communities in Jammu region organize congregations at one centralized place. Another point worth consideration is that most of these local fairs locally known as Mails have their origin in villages and are organized there. It can be easily concluded that

rural tourism and community development are inter related and reinforce each other.

The policy makers that include tourism authorities, Ministry of Tourism & Culture and various other agencies should focus on capacity building and knitting together the local artisans, village entrepreneurs into their policy making ambits to infuse sustainability in the community development schemes in terms of tourism development and entrepreneurship.

Another factor that is worth consideration is the state of heritage. As far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned the less said the better. Lack of involvement and concern of the stakeholders and their insensitivity has led to the vandalisation of heritage in the entire state. No doubt there has been some activity and ripple effects in terms of heritage activism with a thrust on conservation and preservation but the lack of expertise that is required, has only spoiled the apple cart.

Now this challenge has multiplied, the reason being the fury of the flood that has posed a serious challenge to the state.

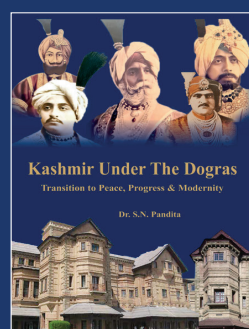
It will take its toll in terms of both life and assets. For the larger part we are all responsible for this disaster as we have been violating the ecological balance and taking it for granted. Various heritage monuments also submerged and collapsed as they were already in dilapidated state. There is an urgent need to devise a task force composed of national and international experts that should include professionals of repute. The immediate step, once the water levels stabilize and come down, should be to make an inventory and document the damages to these assets. So that our posterity is not deprived of this rich legacy. If these elements are kept in mind then community development, tourism, culture and heritage will be subjected to one worthwhile comprehensive strategy to make tourism sustainable, responsible and accountable.

(The author is Editorial Director, The Chancellor)

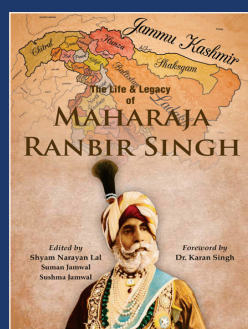
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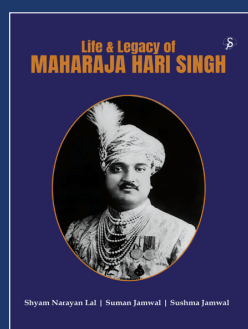
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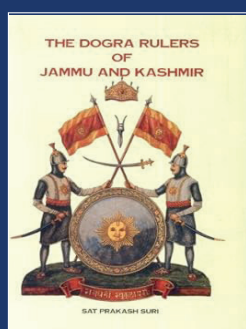
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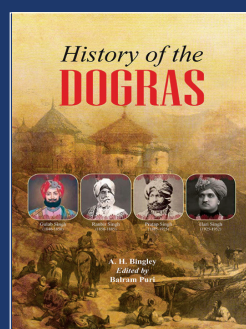
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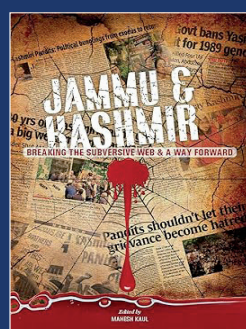
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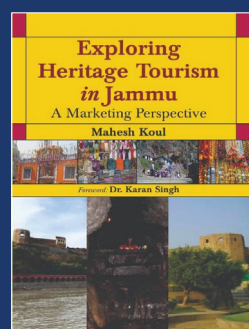
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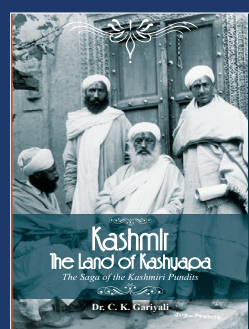
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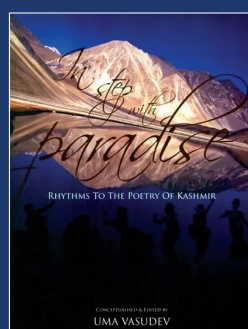
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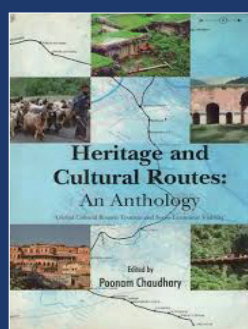
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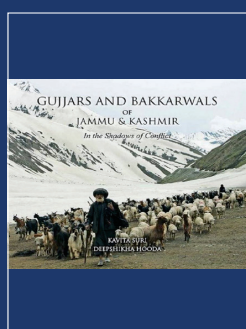
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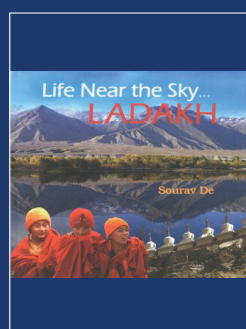
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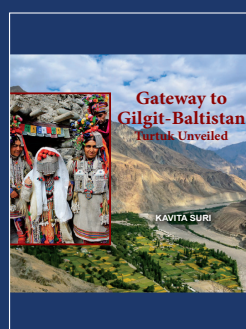
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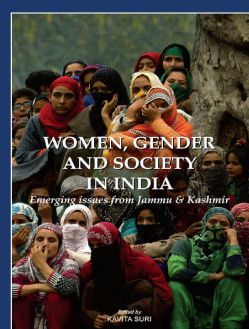
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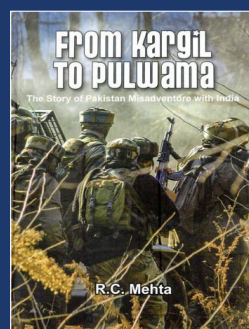
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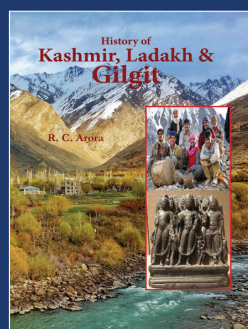
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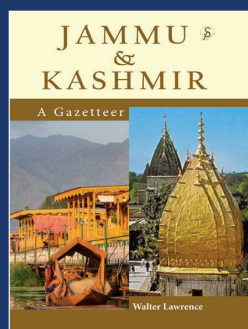
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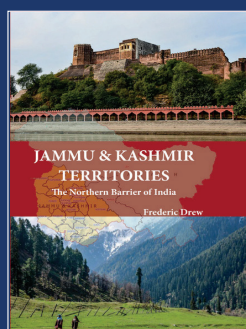
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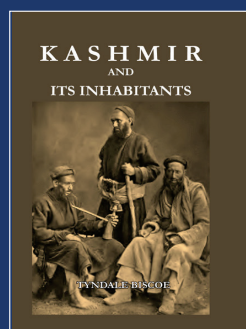
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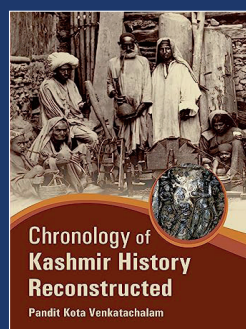
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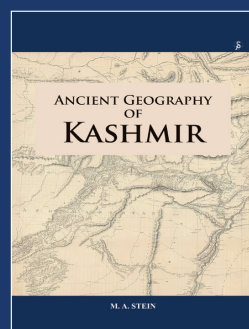
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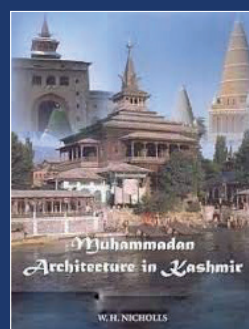
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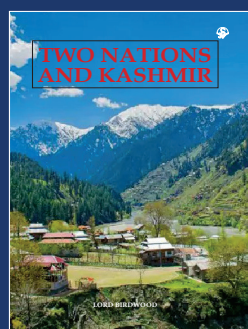
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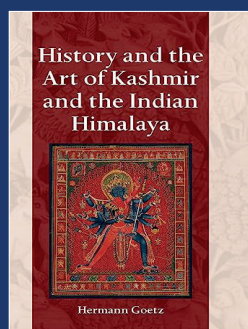
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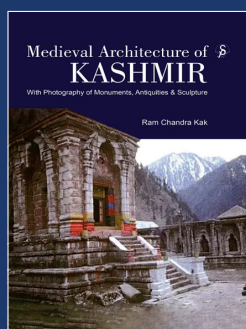
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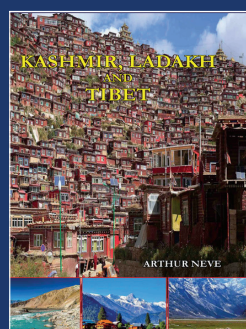
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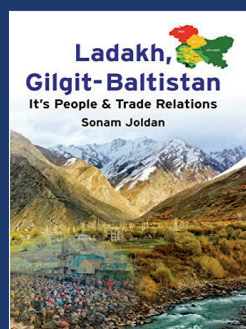
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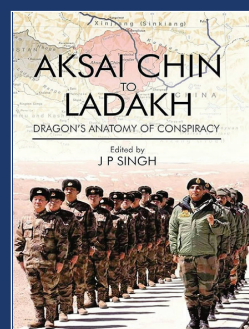
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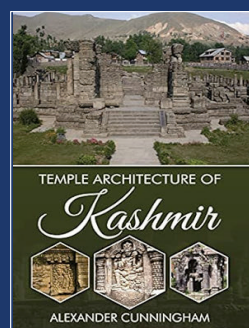
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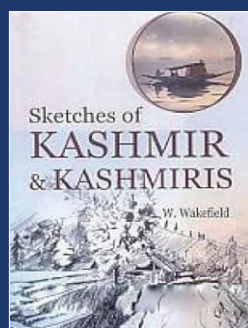
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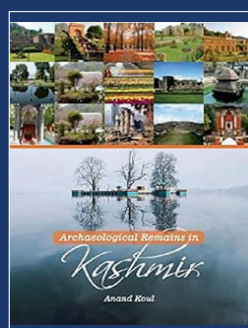
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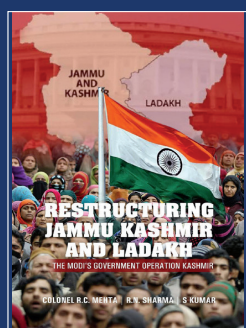
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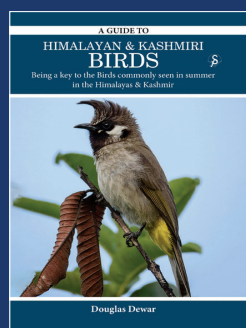
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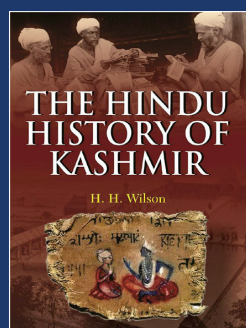
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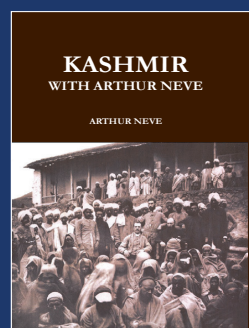
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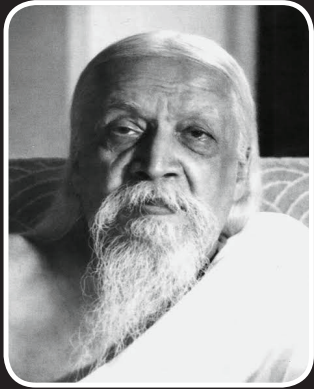
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Sri Aurobindo's Savitri: A Whole Universe in Verse

(Inter-reading of Savitri and other Works of Sri Aurobindo)



A Workshop
15th -18th September 2025

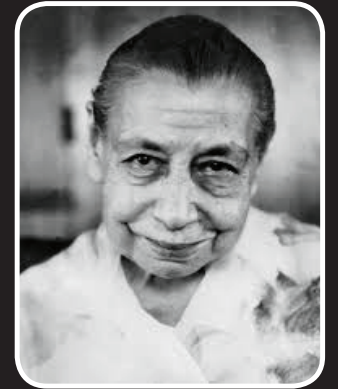
CALL FOR REGISTRATION

20th July 2025: Submission of Abstract, Title of the paper & Form

25th July 2025: Confirmations will be sent

20th August 2025: Submission of the full paper

Attendance in all the sessions of the workshop is mandatory.



Format of the Workshop

Dedicated Talks on *Savitri*
Paper presentations by selected scholars
Panel Discussions
Meditations on *Savitri*

Registration Details

- Registration Fee (Non-refundable):
For students & PhD research scholars. **Rs. 500**
For Assistant Professors and other Academicians: **Rs. 1000**
- Publication fee: if your paper is selected: **Rs. 1500**
(you will be informed about it after the workshop is over)

Registration fee to be paid once the paper is accepted

Travel, Lodging and Boarding Details

- 3 tier AC train fare will be given by the Organizers.
(All other travel expenses are to be borne by the participant)
- Organizers will arrange for the stay of the participants
- Non-AC Rooms will be shared between 2 or 3 participants
- Food arrangements will be made by the organizers at the venue



Venue of the event and stay

Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR)
39, Vanniar Street, Puducherry 605001
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/pi1t7qgxxKiAnwLz6>

Convenors

Dr. V. Ananda Reddy (Director, SACAR)
Prof. N. Chandramouli (HOD History, PU)

Coordinator

Dr. Shruti Bidwaikar (Trustee, SACAR)
9994190403, sacarevents@gmail.com

← Link for the registration form

Last date to fill the form along with the abstract: 20th July

Eligibility for paper presentation:

Academicians and PhD Scholars, who have worked or are working on any of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* or any other works of Sri Aurobindo

Only to attend: MA in any subject

Specifications about the paper

Research paper should be between 2500-3000 words submitted with 1.5 spacing with font Times New Roman size 12, Documentation - MLA style 8th Edition

Themes for the papers on *Savitri*. The Scholars can add other themes from *Savitri*

- The present human condition
- The Divine Play
- A complete system of Integral Yoga
- The future of humanity
- The Divine Mother
- The power of Love
- The struggle between Light and Darkness
- The evolution of consciousness
- *Savitri* as the spiritual autobiography of Sri Aurobindo
- The Divine descent
- *Savitri* in the context of world literature

All the papers should be original and written for the purpose of this workshop.

Any help from AI will not be accepted - neither for abstract nor for paper.

All papers and abstracts will be run through plagiarism software and AI detection tool

All scholars will be required to present their papers for 20min during the workshop

A Certificate of Presentation or Participation will be awarded jointly by SACAR and Pondicherry University

20 best papers will be published in a dedicated volume after the workshop gets over
The right to select the papers lies with the editors.

Any lobbying or pleading with the editors will lead to disqualification of the paper

