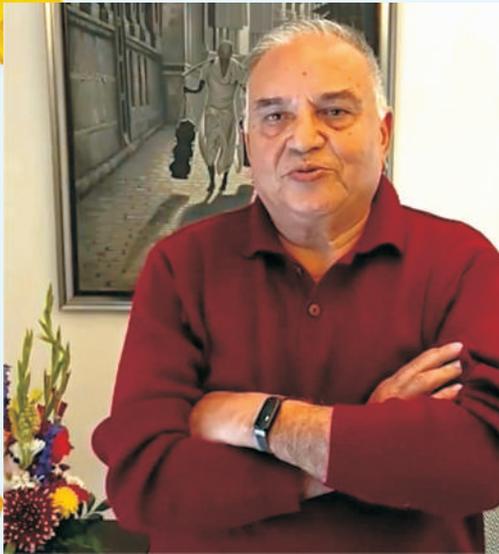




From the President's Desk



Our primary mission remains clear: we must continue to expand our fold and strengthen our bonds. I especially urge our younger generation to step forward and take active roles—you are the torchbearers who will carry our rich legacy forward with pride and innovation.

Lastly, as we welcome the New Year, **Aap sabhi ko Nauroz Mubarak**. May the coming year bring health, prosperity, harmony, and happiness to every household in our biradari.

See you all on 8th March Nauroz Dinner.

Maj Gen R.N. Masaldan
President

Namaskar Biradari

My heartfelt compliments go to the editorial team for their dedication and tireless effort in bringing out the second edition of our newsletter right on schedule. Our team's commitment to maintaining both quality and consistency is truly commendable. A newsletter is more than just a compilation of reports; it is a reflection of our collective spirit & aspirations.

We have had an incredibly productive and eventful quarter. I am proud to say that the new Executive Committee has truly hit the ground running, working with full "Josh" and a clear sense of purpose. The enthusiasm, teamwork, and sense of responsibility displayed by every member have been inspiring. While the detailed account of our recent initiatives and accomplishments is comprehensively covered in the Secretary's report, I can confidently say that the momentum and positive energy driving these efforts are strong and visible.

However, a community is only as strong as the participation and engagement of its members. As we move forward in this term, I warmly invite each one of you to contribute your ideas, your time, and your passion, **So as a community we can be proud of our achievers.**

Community Achievers

Rajiv Chandra CMD of Biocell Medicare received award in January 26, for his outstanding contribution & achievement in the field of Diagnostic & Medical Device industry in India. Bringing latest innovative medical technologies and healthcare for Better Patient care.



President was Runners up at the Vave National TT Tournament. He received Rs 25,000 prize money & qualified for the Malaysia International Tournament.

Secretary's Report

KPA Annual Report 2025–2026

During 2025–2026, KPA undertook significant organizational, and community initiatives.

Institutional Strengthening: A formal Secretariat was established to streamline paperwork, regulatory filings, membership records, and member communication. The 2002 Memorandum and Rules were reviewed and updated, with approval from the EC and GBM. The KPA website (kpadelhi.org) and official email IDs for office bearers were restored. Pending functional subcommittees formed. Communication improved through WhatsApp broadcast statutory compliances were completed. A Delhi-NCR Chapter was created, SOPs for new member enrollment were introduced, anasts and bulk emails. Elections successfully conducted in October, forming the new EC Committee (2025–2027).

Meetings & Governance: Two General Body Meetings were held (March & August 2025), along with multiple EC and office-bearer meetings. The newly elected EC met in

November to prepare the 2026 action plan.

Events: Major community events included: Nauroz Dinner (13.04.25) with 300+ attendees, Winter Lunch (7.12.25) with 150+ attendees. A talk on Kashmir Shaivism by Raj Nehru, Cricket Match with enthusiastic participation. **The next Nauroz Dinner is scheduled for 8 March 2026.**

Awards: Lifetime Achievement Awards (2025–2026) were conferred on **Justice Sanjay Kishen Kaul and Asha Katju.**

The 2026–2027 award to the following will be presented at the upcoming Nauroz Dinner to **POONAM DAR & AJAY K BAKAYA.**

Membership & Sponsorship: Fifteen new members enrolled during the year. Generous sponsorships were received for IT development, Secretariat expenses, events, and community functions, reflecting strong member support. Overall, 2025–2026 was a year of structural reform, improved governance, active engagement, and strengthened community participation for KPA.



POONAM DAR comes from an educated family, with roots in the Kaul and Dar traditions. She completed her M.A. in Psychology from BHU, reflecting her strong academic foundation. Ms. Dar faced profound personal hardships that reshaped her life. Her husband Mr. Jeevan Dar expired in 2004 and only son in

2013, Guided by the spiritual teachings of Jagadguru Kripalu Ji Maharaj, she transformed her grief into strength and purpose. From 2005 onward, she began actively arranging marriages and preparing Panchangs, gradually becoming a trusted support system for many families. In 2016, demonstrating remarkable courage & compassion to secure a future for her daughter-in-law she got her married to her son's friend. Till date she has arranged more 200 marriages. Ms. Dar stands as a symbol of resilience, faith, and unwavering determination - having turned life's deepest sorrows into a journey of strength, service, and inner peace.



AJAY K. BAKAYA, Chairman of Sarovar Hotels and Director of Louvre Hotels India, is a respected leader in India's hospitality sector. He has transformed Sarovar Hotels from modest beginnings into a network of nearly 140 hotels across 85 destinations in India, Nepal, and Africa, strengthening its presence in

the mid-market segment. An alumnus of Cornell-ESSEC, France, and the Oberoi School of Learning and Development, Ajay brings international experience from assignments across India, Australia, Africa, France, and Scotland. He is married to Vasudha Bakaya and has two accomplished children—Aabha Bakaya, a journalist, and Abhay Bakaya, Chief Business Officer at Starwood Hotels. A dedicated cyclist who completed the 1,000 km Tour of Nilgiris, Ajay embodies discipline and perseverance. Guided by his belief in *sincerity and hard work*, he continues to inspire the hospitality industry.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Heritage of a Traditional Kashmiri Pandit Wedding

A traditional Kashmiri Pandit wedding was not merely a ceremony but a carefully woven tapestry of rituals, hospitality, & community participation. Ceremonies were conducted separately by the bride's & groom's families, including *Badion ki Dawat*, *Mehendi*, and *Devgun*, each guided by their respective Guruji.

Badion ki Dawat was a warm family gathering rather than a religious ritual. Relatives assembled to prepare *baris* together, reinforcing bonds through shared work and laughter. The *Mehendi* ceremony, held at least two days before the wedding, brought together local and visiting relatives. When the *Baraat* arrived from another city, the bride's family hosted the *Aamad ki Dawat*, arranging accommodation, meals, and every detail of hospitality. From *Aamad ki Dawat* to *Rukhsati ki Dawat*, there were traditionally 4 continuous days of thoughtfully planned meals.

The bride's family usually provided several meals over two or three days, including *Amaal ki Dawat*, *Baraat Ki Dawat*, *Posh Puja* breakfast, *Garasun*, and *Rukhsati ki Dawat*. The groom's side managed its own additional needs, often bringing their own cooks. For *Devgun*, vegetarian food such as *puri*, *sabzi*, and *meethi dahi* was sent to the groom's household.

Devgun was performed separately for bride & groom. The groom's *Janeu Sanskar*, sometimes alongside younger brothers or cousins, was essential before the marriage rites. In the bride's home, younger brothers, if any, performed their *Janeu* & *Devgun*, marking continuity of lineage.

On the eve of the *Baraat*, Guruji brought the groom's *Janam Patrika* and *Sungzaru* before the bride's family and was honored with sweets, yoghurt, and silver utensils as gifts of respect.

At the appointed *mahurat*, the *Baraat* arrived amid garlands and *gulab jal* sprinkled from a silver *Gulaab Paash*. A decorated red silk umbrella was held over the groom. The fathers exchanged a *jaiphala* in a silver box and a symbolic silver coin, signifying the joining of two lineages.

During *Dwaar Puja*, the groom stood upon the *vegu (rangoli)*. The bride's mother removed his *sehra*, performed aarti with seven *atta* diyas known as *Ratan Sangari*, and offered *mishri*. Nowadays the custom of exchanging *Varmala* is in vogue. After the *Dwarpuja* the couple were taken to place where they sit depending on the

mahurat, with dinner being served before or after the *lagna*. Traditionally, only the *biradari* attended the formal wedding meals, served by family members, while other guests were welcomed separately with refreshments.

After the wedding, the groom remained at the bride's home. The couple was first fed *meetha bhaat* and yoghurt by the mother, then fed each other, symbolizing shared partnership.

The following morning, relatives gathered for *Posh Puja*, sung in Sanskrit in *Raag Bhairavi*. Covered with a *dupatta (Pamur)*, the couple was showered with flowers and blessings. The bride then wore jewellery gifted by her parents, and *nazar utarna* rituals were performed using water, *mishri*, and *isband*. Coins and traditional baked offerings were distributed to the poor, and a pair of white pigeons released, symbolizing harmony.

The bride departed for her *sasural*, where similar rituals welcomed her. That evening, her brother escorted the couple back to her parental home for *Garasun Ki Dawat*, where her trousseau and gifts were formally presented. These customs were never conceived as dowry but as dignified, community regulated exchanges within the *biradari*. Rooted in affection rather than demand.



By

Rajlakshmi Raina

d/o Justice Shiv Nath Katju &
Annapoorna (Shivpuri) Katju.

Wife of AVM Vishnu Murti Raina

Phoolon Ka Gehna

Indian weddings are not just about the bride and groom—they are a celebration of families coming together. Filled with colour, rituals, and emotions, these weddings often feel like joyful mini-festivals, where every ceremony carries a deeper meaning.

Among the many pre-wedding rituals, special attention is given to preparing the bride for her new journey. Ancient Hindu beliefs speak of *Solah Shringar*, the sixteen traditional adornments of a bride said to have been blessed by Goddess Soundarya Lakshmi. These adornments symbolise beauty, grace, and the transition into married life, which is why flowers and henna hold such importance in wedding customs.



In Kashmiri weddings, this tradition takes a graceful form in the ceremony known as *Phoolon Ka Gehna*, meaning “jewellery made of flowers.” Held one or two days before the wedding, the groom’s family sends beautifully crafted floral ornaments to the bride’s home.

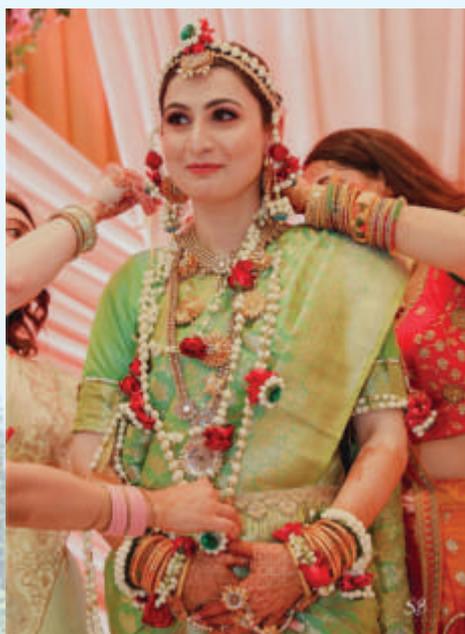
Phoolon Ka Gehna represents the bride’s first *shringar*, her initial ceremonial adornment as before she transitions into married life. The use of fresh flowers signifies natural purity, fragrance, and the blossoming of a new beginning. More importantly, it is a warm gesture of acceptance, symbolically welcoming the bride into the groom’s extended family.

The floral set typically includes a *maang tikka*, necklaces, earrings, bangles, and sometimes even flower-crafted versions of the traditional Kashmiri *Dejhoor*. Accompanied by a *Sanzaroo*, a vanity case comprising cosmetics, mirror, *sindoor*, and betel leaf. The ceremony beautifully blends spirituality, tradition, and feminine grace.

In essence, *Phoolon Ka Gehna* is not just adornment, but a celebration of beauty, belonging, and sacred transition.

By Alka Kaul

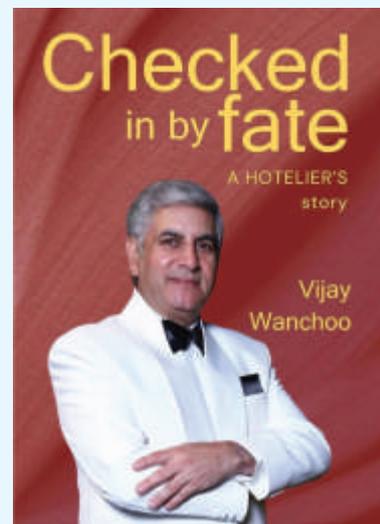
wife of Jaideep Kaul



Avni Kaul daughter of Alka & Jaideep Kaul being bedecked with flowers at her phoolon ka gehna by the groom Ankush Kunzru’s family on 25.12.2021

Some lives are carefully planned Others are quietly guided by fate

Checked in by Fate: A Hotelier’s Story, Vijay Wanchoo recounts a journey he never intended to take — yet one that ultimately defined him. Growing up in Central Delhi, shaped by modest beginnings and strong family values. Hospitality was not a childhood ambition. It was an unexpected doorway, opened through chance.



From his first days as an apprentice steward with the ITDC to his formative training in the kitchens of The Oberoi Hotels, Wanchoo’s path was marked by long hours, demanding mentors, quiet disappointments, and small but meaningful triumphs. The heat of the kitchen, the discipline of service, and unspoken codes of excellence became his classroom. What began as circumstance slowly transformed into conviction.

His journey through iconic institutions such as The Imperial and ITC Hotels is not told as a catalogue of achievements, but as a deeply human story - of self-doubt and resilience, of mentors who shaped him, of moments that tested his resolve, and of a profession that gradually became his calling.

Rising to Senior Executive Vice President and General Manager The Imperial, New Delhi, Wanchoo reflects not merely on success, but on purpose. His memoir captures the evolution of an industry alongside the evolution of a man who discovered dignity in service, leadership in humility, and pride in perseverance.

Checked in by Fate is a meditation on destiny — on how life sometimes leads us where we never planned to go, only to reveal who we were meant to become.

**By
Vijay Wanchoo**

REFLECTIONS FROM INDIAN SCRIPTURES: THE MYSTIQUE OF KASHMIR (Part 1)

Based on the Nilamata Puraa, 6th–8th century CE

Prelude

Kashmir has long stood at the crossroads of myth and memory; a land where legend, spirituality, and history intertwine. Its valleys exude serenity, yet beneath that calm lies a deep reservoir of sacred lore and philosophical reflection. Among the earliest texts illuminating this heritage is the Nilamata Purana, which preserves invaluable traditions about Kashmir's origins, rulers, geography, and spiritual stature.

The narrative opens with a question that intrigued even ancient minds. King Janamejaya, great-grandson of Arjuna, once asked the sage Vaisampayana why the ruler of Kashmir had not participated in the great war described in the Mahabharata. Mighty kings from many regions had joined either the Pandavas or the Kauravas, so what was the reason for Kashmir's absence?

After the war, the Pandavas ruled the Kuru kingdom. Following Pariksit, Janamejaya inherited the throne. In conversation with Vaisampayana, disciple of Vyasa, he raised his long-standing doubt: why had neither side sought the support of Kashmir, a kingdom renowned for prestige and power?

The sage replied that there was indeed a reason.

During the era of the Mahabharata, Kashmir's king bore enmity toward Vasudeva, ruler of another realm. When Vasudeva's son Madhava attended a svayamvara, the Kashmiri king seized the opportunity to confront his rival. He marched with his army to disrupt the ceremony, but Vasudeva advanced in response. In the ensuing battle, the king of Kashmir was slain.

The news plunged Kashmir into turmoil. The widowed queen, pregnant with the heir, was overcome with grief, and governance faltered. Despite past hostility, Vasudeva deeply admired Kashmir. Its beauty and sanctity had fascinated him. Disturbed by the suffering he resolved to restore order. Traveling to Kashmir, he proclaimed that the queen would rule with full sovereign authority and her child would succeed her. Coronation followed, & stability returned. In time, she gave birth to a son named Gonanda.

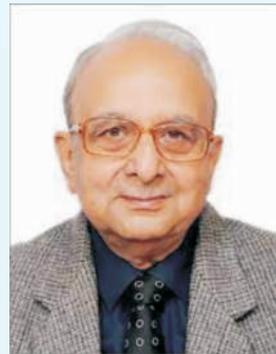
Vaisampayana then clarified the original question: the great war occurred when Gonanda was still a child. With the kingdom under regency and the heir an infant, neither the Kauravas nor the Pandavas could realistically seek Kashmir's alliance. Thus, its absence from the battlefield was not indifference but circumstance.

Janamejaya, satisfied yet curious, asked why Vasudeva had shown such reverence for a former rival's land. The sage answered poetically. Kashmir, he said, had emerged from the waters of a vast primordial lake amid the splendour of the Himalayas. Its terraced rice fields, orchards laden with fruit, and the sacred river Vitasta (Jhelum) endowed it with rare charm. Beyond natural beauty, it was a seat of learning and spirituality—home to sages, temples, and scholars versed in the Vedas.

Thus, the narrative reveals more than political explanation; it unveils Kashmir as a land of divine allure and intellectual radiance. In the ancient imagination, its mystique lay not merely in power, but in beauty and wisdom.

By Dr Ratan Kaul

He has launched Youtube channels with videos regarding exploration of ancient Indian history and Heritage (including Kashmir), listed under "Ratan Kaul's creations" on youtube. View episode relating to ancient history of Kashmir (Origin of Kashmir & Satisar Lake)-link



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm0PnItEXeQ&list=PLXt1ruv5ZcqJqxoCFRs>

[T-7KwqURPqeQWe&index=22.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm0PnItEXeQ&list=PLXt1ruv5ZcqJqxoCFRs)

Author of novels "Wings of Freedom" and "The Full Circle" as well as a poetry Book "The Morning Glory" Available on Amazon, Flipkart & others.

His website is ratankaulauthor.com

Upcoming Events

April 2026 KPA Talk Series at IIC Delhi - Talk by Mr Arun Singh IFS Former Ambassdor USA, Israel & France. Pls look out for dates and topic.

Inviting pictures for 'Nature Photography' competition. Birds, flowers, sceneries whatever is your forte.

*Well Attended
KPA Lunch on 7.12.25*

