

**HIGH COURT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND LADAKH  
JAMMU & KASHMIR JUDICIAL ACADEMY**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Srinagar, 30 November 2024:**

Hon'ble Mr Justice Hrishikesh Roy, Judge, Supreme Court of India today inaugurated Two Days North Zone-I Regional Conference on "Court Dockets: Explosion & Exclusion" at SKICC, Srinagar in presence of Hon'ble Mr Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, Judge Supreme Court of India, Hon'ble Mr Justice Rajesh Bindal, Judge Supreme Court of India, Hon'ble Mr Justice N Kotishwar Singh, Judge Supreme Court of India, Hon'ble Mr Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Hon'ble Mr Justice Anirudhha Bose Director, National Judicial Academy, Bhopal and Former Judge, Supreme Court of India, and Hon'ble Ms. Justice Sindhu Sharma, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Chairperson, Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy).

The Zonal Conference is being hosted by the Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy under the aegis of National Judicial Academy Bhopal. Besides, the nominated Judges and Judicial Officers of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Judges and Judicial officers nominated by the High Courts of Punjab & Haryana, Delhi, Allahabad, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are participating in the scheduled conference.

Justice G. Raghuram, Former Director, National Judicial Academy, Justice Geeta Mittal, Former Chief Justice High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Justice Trilok Singh Chauhan, Acting Chief Justice High Court of Himachal Pradesh and Justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari, Acting Chief Justice, High Court of Uttarakhand also graced the inaugural session of the North Zone-I Regional Conference.

The inaugural session of the conference was also attended by Justice Atul Sreedharan, Justice Rajesh Oswal, Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Justice Puneet Gupta, Justice Javed Iqbal Wani, Justice Mohammad Akram Chowdhary, Justice Rahul Bharti,

Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal Justice Rajesh Shekhri and Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani.

Senior Addl. Advocate General, Deputy Solicitor General of India, Senior Advocates, officers from Civil and Police administration, Mr. Shahzad Azeem Registrar General and other officers of High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Mr. M.K. Sharma, Principal Secretary to Hon'ble the Chief Justice, Judicial Officers, Law Students, faculty members & young girls from Preesha Children Home, Harwan also participated in the inaugural session.

In his inaugural address, Justice Hrishikesh Roy, Judge, Supreme Court of India emphasised that docket explosion has been preventing the delivery of quality judgments as well as timely justice and the grim situation can be felt in the matters involving personal liberty of individuals. He stressed that Docket Explosion is a significant concern in developing country like India, which is the world's largest democracy, with millions of court cases pending at different levels of the legal system. He further added that to combat this threat, some measures are required to be adopted, and suggested that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is an effective tool in the administration of justice.

Justice Anirudhha Bose Director, National Judicial Academy, Bhopal in his introductory speech emphasised that the litigation pending in courts is one of the most widely debated issues of judicial reform. He expressed concern that the people are not approaching the courts as they feel that the courts take a lot of time to decide the cases and expressed hope that this North Zone Conference will provide valuable insights as to how we can address the explosion of court dockets while also combating exclusion and ensuring equal access to justice for all.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, Chief Justice High Court of J&K and Ladakh, in his welcome address underscored the two very pressing issues that have been central to our ongoing dialogue about the administration of justice. He said that on the one hand, we face an **explosion** in the volume of cases, with courts overwhelmed by an ever-growing backlog and on the other hand, we see the issue of **exclusion**, where many marginalized groups are unable to access justice effectively, creating a profound challenge for equity and fairness in the legal system. He stated

that these challenges are not isolated to one region, nor to one jurisdiction; they resonate across our nation and beyond. The pressure of rising caseloads not only affects the timely delivery of justice but also impacts the quality and integrity of the judicial process. He further stated that this conference aims to discuss practical solutions to streamline court processes, improve efficiency, and ensure that our legal system is accessible and inclusive to all citizens, regardless of their background or economic status.

Justice Sindhu Sharma, Chairperson, Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy proposed the formal vote of thanks on the occasion.

On the inaugural day of the conference, three technical sessions were held. The first technical session was chaired by Justice Rajesh Bindal, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was the resource person of the session. Justice Kulkarni stated that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms have become indispensable for timely and effective justice delivery. He highlighted various strategies for strengthening court-annexed ADR, leveraging Online Dispute Resolution, and fostering collaboration. Justice Kulkarni added that although the amendments along with judicial decisions in recent years have put India on the right path, we need to incentivise the use of ODR as a default dispute resolution tool.

Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice Atul Sreedharan were the resource persons in the second technical session. Justice Dhulia in his deliberations emphasized that access to justice has to be seen from the perspective of society. Justice Dhulia while referring to Justice Sayid Mahmud stated that access to justice also depends upon the personality of an individual judge. Justice Atul Sreedharan through the power-point presentation discussed the causes and consequences of docket explosion and exclusion. He commended the working style and independence of Judicial Officers of the twin UTs of J&K and Ladakh and also commended the role of the High Court in ensuring the independence of the judges of District judiciary. Justice Sreedharan in his unique style suggested that there is a need for devising effective court management strategies and leveraging technology for improving the quality and quantity of the justice-delivery processes by

reducing the risk of errors, increasing the speed of decision-making, and improving the transparency and accountability of stakeholders.

The third technical session was chaired by Justice N. Kotiswar Singh. Justice Gita Mittal and Justice G. Raghuram, were the resource persons of this session. Justice Gita Mittal in her power-point presentation highlighted that the media has an essential role to play in the process of justice by highlighting various issues concerning the society and access to justice. At the same time, she also highlighted the negative impact of trial by media, as it starts its own investigation even before the trial starts. Justice Raghuram delved over the judiciary's relationship with traditional and social media in an era dominated by digital platforms. He stressed that there is a need to balance between freedom of media and judicial integrity. He provided insights into navigating the complexities of media in the justice delivery system.

Mrs. Sonia Gupta, Director J&K Judicial Academy conducted the proceedings of the inaugural session and coordinated all the technical sessions on the first day of the conference.

All the sessions remained very interactive during which all the participants actively participated and shared their experiences, difficulties and also discussed various aspects of the subject topics. They also raised a number of queries which were answered satisfactorily by the resource persons.

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