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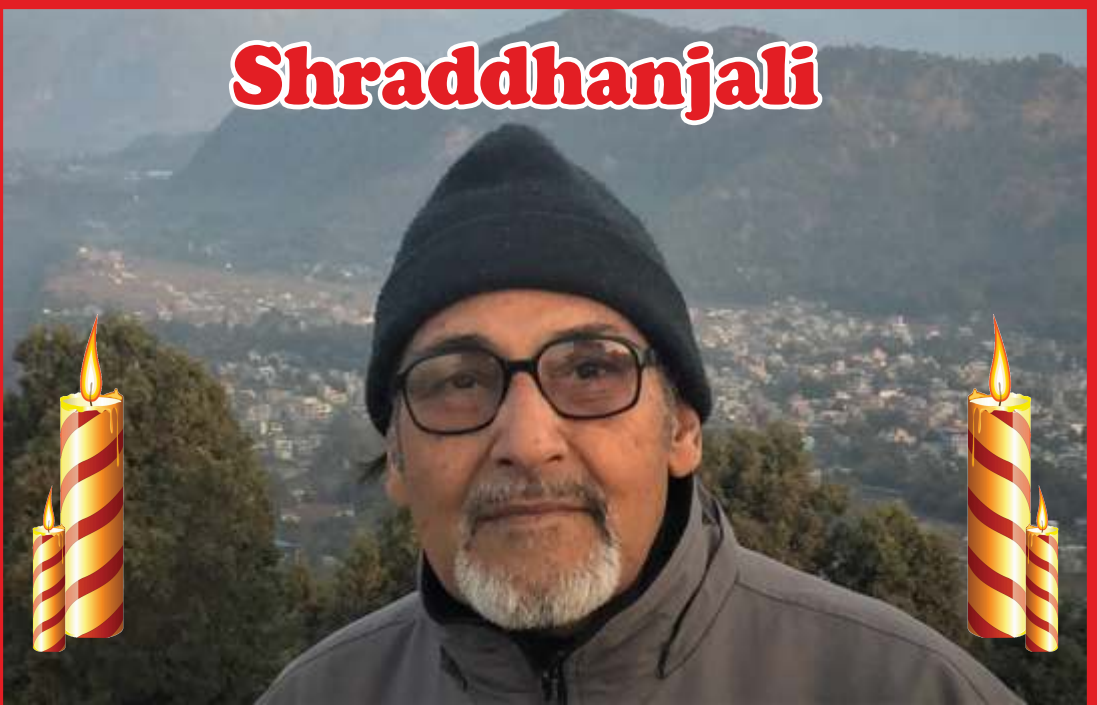
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November 2020



Special Issue on
**Temples and Shrines of Kashmir
Vandalised and Encroached**

Shraddhanjali



Karmayogi Sh. Surender Kachru

(27.07.1938 - 30.10.2019)

One year has passed since you left us for your heavenly abode, but our hearts still can't accept that you are not present in the physical form with us anymore. We'll always remember your caring heart, charming smile and immense benevolence. You were our strength, guiding us through good and bad times, a loving husband, a doting father & grandfather. We were blessed to have been mentored by your wisdom and the good morals you imbibed in us. Every single person who came in contact with you always remembers you for your helpful, gentle and warm demeanour as well as your kindness towards one and all.

During the past one year, there has not been a single day that we didn't miss you. It's not easy for us to move on and the pain of losing you has been immeasurable. Though you are not present here with us, your memory lives forever in our hearts. We know you are watching us from heaven and blessing us all. We miss you!

May Lord Shiva grant eternal peace to your soul, to live happily in his divine paradise!

OM SHANTI, SHANTI, SHANTI

In everlasting memory:

Sheela Kachroo (Wife)

Dr. Sidharth & Dr. Poonam Kachroo (Son and Daughter-in-Law)

Ayushman & Neetu Kachru (Son and Daughter-in-Law)

Durga & Jawahar Bazaz (Sister and Brother-in-Law)

Siddhanth, Arush, Punav & Sheen (Grandchildren)

Kachru & Razdan Parivars

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

This Month's Cover Page depicts destroyed and dilapidated Temples & Shrines of Kashmir.
Photo Credits : Sh. Chander M Bhat

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From the

Editor-in-Chief



Hindu Symbols Under Threat In Kashmir

Dear Readers,

Kashmiri Hindus are the aborigines of Kashmir and have a well-recorded and documented history of over 5000 years of Sanskrit Hindu Civilisation. During all these centuries, Hindus of the Valley have nurtured Kashmir through their strenuous efforts which have contributed immensely to the larger Hindu ethos of the Indian sub-continent. The contribution was not only limited to religion or theology but to aesthetics and music, among others. Hence, over a period of time, Kashmir was not only the geographical habitat for the Hindus of Kashmir, but also a civilizational bedrock where innumerable luminaries spread the light through many millennia. There is no place in Kashmir which is not a Tirtha, mentions the famed Historian Pt. Kalhan, when he says, *Chakrabit vijayash aadi keeshava ishaana bhuushitee,!*

Tila ansh api na yatra asti prithvyah tirthah bahishkritah !! (RT, 1, Sh 38)

(Where there resides Disc yielding Vishnu and Ishan Shiva, there is not a space even equivalent to sesame seed which is not a Tirtha)

From the above verse we can amply make out how our ancestors venerated the land of Kashmir and constructed various shrines, temples, ashrams and tirthas to propitiate the Goddess Kashmira as they believed their physical and spiritual existence was connected to Kashmir. In line with their thought process, they wrote peans in praise of Mother Kashmir in litany of works like, Nilmat Puran, Bringesh Samhita, Rajtarangani, etc.

History is testimony to the fact that when invasions took place, various centres of glorious Kashmir were reduced to rubble by the iconoclasts like Sikander Butshikan; a process that has continued till now. The Muslim Sultans felt it was their religious duty to remove these symbols. Hence the grand architectural marvels like Martand, Avantiswamin, Vangat, Parihsapora, Pattan, etc were reduced to rubble and even now their remains speak about their grandeur. However, this mindset of destruction and grabbing which started under Sultans has continued unabated till now and the same is cloaked in the name of *Kashmiriyat*, which is nothing but a misnomer for communal agenda.

Post-1947, when the democratic governments took the reins in their hands, the persecuted Hindus of valley expected that things would slowly get stabilized. But contrary to their belief, the so-called secular governments in the state started state-sponsored land-grabbing of temple lands and endowments. Thousands of hectares of land of famed temples were taken over from Hindu Managements and transferred to Muslim Trusts. In

most cases the take-over was so ruthless and brazen that no one was informed, nor was any compensation given, leave alone taking the permission of the temple trusts or managing committees. The aim was to slowly and systematically remove the Hindu place-consciousness from valley and force the minority Hindus to leave valley. All this happened under the so-called democratic secular dispensations.

After the genocide of

Communal league in valley under their systematic plan have forced minority Hindus out of Kashmir and now their plan is to remove the religious symbols of Hindus and deprive them of their roots.



Photo Courtesy : Sh. Chander M Bhat

Kashmiri Hindus in 1990, and post their exodus, the status of these temples and shrines is much worse and alarming. The village temples are reduced to non-existent entities, as in many places these symbols are removed as if no such thing existed before. The reports coming are that houses, shopping complexes and graveyards are constructed over these places. Revenue records are fudged and, in some cases, changed in favour of encroachers. Those who are trying to retrieve their places of worship are threatened and subjected to physical harm.

Over the years, various Kashmiri Hindu organisation have filed legal cases against such encroachments of their temples, shrines, sacred springs, ashrams, cremation places, etc., but so far, no judicial remedy has come their way. The detailed account of district wise destruction of Temples and Shrines is undertaken by Dr. Rattan Lal Bhat in his book, “Hindu Shrines of Kashmir”. The author has collected all the revenue records and details where encroachments have been done. In other detailed work Col. Tej K Tikoo in his book, “Kashmir: Its Aborigines and Their Exodus”, also shares the list of vandalised temples. However, the state apathy and silence are costing further damage to these places and no timely action has been taken to prevent destruction which has emboldened the communal enterprise to carry out the vandalization and land grab with impunity.

Communal league in valley under their

systematic plan have forced minority Hindus out of Kashmir and now their plan is to remove the religious symbols of Hindus and deprive them of their roots. These regressive forces are working overtime to prevent return of Kashmiri Hindus to the valley and remove all that remains of Hindu civilisation in valley. The larger issue is that there is a silent connivance of bureaucratic, political and civil society in preventing Hindus to reclaim their lost symbols. The state apparatus is completely under the control of such elements who do not want the return of Hindus of Kashmir and are hand in glove with those separatist elements who are vandalising, grabbing and destroying Hindu temples and shrines.

The way forward is to pass a legislation or bill such as 'Temple and Shrine Bill' to prevent further damage and encroachments to such places of worship. Unless administration does not ensure the protection under law of these Hindu symbols and make effort for retrieving the encroachments, till then, the safe return of Hindus to valley will remain a pipe dream.

Special Issue of Naad

This special issue of Naad is an eyewitness account from various writers on encroachments and destruction of various temples of Kashmir. The attempt is to wake up the community and the administration to prevent further destruction of their heritage and ensure proper law to ensure the safety of these institutions.

भनील गैर गणक



Our Exodus Leads to Loss of Our Religious Heritage

*"Sheikh ne masjid banayi, mismar butkhana kiya:
Pehle kuchh soorat to thee, ab khaas veerana kiya."*

-Daya Shankar Nasim

(The Sheikh made a mosque after demolishing a temple; earlier there was an image to concentrate upon, now there is a ruin to wander on.)

Vandalising and destroying of Kashmiri Pandit religious places came naturally to the radical Islamists whose ancestors had done the same ever since their arrival, first in India and later in Kashmir. Most of the temple lands and their other religious assets in Kashmir belonged to some known entities, namely, Dharmarth Trust, Bajrang Dev Baba Dharma Das Koul Mandir (popularly called Bab Dharam Das), Ganesh Mandir, Durga Nag Mandir and Hari Parbat. In addition to these institutions, some local committees formed by Kashmiri Pandits also managed some temple properties, estimated to be nearly 500 in number. During Dogra rule, when Dharmarth Trust was set up by Maharaja Ranbir Singh, he had incorporated into its by-laws which stipulated that selling of any temple land would amount to killing of 100 cows. This had the desired effect and temple lands and other assets remained untouched by the unscrupulous elements. Immediately after exodus, a large number of Pandits' religious shrines were targeted. These places were attacked by frenzied mobs bent upon wanton destruction of centuries-old structures of great magnificence and heritage.

With the departure of Pandits from the Valley, a deathly silence fell on a large number of religious places, where sizeable congregations used to assemble on auspicious

days. Some of these places were closed down; others, like the famous Sharika Temple at Hari Parbat, were covered by a worn out tarpaulin to appease the majority community. Places of Hindu social organisations, used mainly for socio-cultural activities, were burnt down or bombed. Rocket attacks were also carried out to destroy or damage the Kheer Bhavani temple at Tullamula and Ganesh Temple at Ganpathyar in Srinagar. Both attacks were off the target, causing little damage.

Cremation grounds and some holy springs, along with their adjacent lands, were appropriated by unscrupulous elements. The cremation ground at Sopore and Sadhu Ganga Temple at Kandi in Kupwara district were encroached upon. The sprawling cremation grounds at villages Sagam and Fatehpura have been appropriated by the Wakf board. The famous temple at Mattan lost 33 kanals of its land to similar illegal occupation.

In many cases, the process of illegally occupying the lands of the Hindu religious sites started much before the actual exodus. Biased government, working under the dictates of the Islamists and prodded on by its Islamised bureaucracy, itself became a usurper of Hindu religious sites on one pretext or the other. The cremation ground at Sopore was taken over to construct a bridge over it. The land belonging to Durga Nag Trust in Srinagar too was taken over by the Wakf

board. Subsequently, a shopping complex, named Suleiman Complex was constructed on it. Vide its order, SRO-702 dated December 31, 1984, the entire temple and its land was transferred by the State Government to the Wakf board. In the same manner, Public Health Engineering Department of the State constructed a tank over the holy spring of Guddar (Godawri) in Kulgam. Near the same place at Manzhgam, a primary school has been constructed on the temple land. A proposal had also been floated to convert the holy spring and the temple complex at Manghoma, near Pulwama, into a water supply scheme.

According to a statement made by the Home Minister of India in Parliament on March 12, 1993, 38 temples/shrines were demolished, damaged and desecrated in Kashmir between 1989 through 1991. The above figures presented a conservative estimate by the government for obvious reasons. The actual number was much larger and stood at approximately 68, as the state government never collected the data from remote areas and deliberately played down the issue in the same manner in which it hid the exodus of Pandits. The factual data was collected from Pandit refugees who were witness to such destruction. Centuries old idols, like the rare Sahstri-Netra Shivling in Silgam Temple, on the road to Pahalgam, have been destroyed. Similarly, the Hanuman Temple near Hari Parbat was also completely destroyed. Sanctum sanctorum of many temples were defiled by smearing idols with filth.

The trend of destruction of temples continued much after the exodus. Two decades after the insurgency broke out in Kashmir, the number of temples destroyed stood at approximately 60. Lieutenant General (Retd) SK Sinha, former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir writes, "What happened a couple of years earlier in Jammu and Kashmir was, if anything, more reprehensible. Some 60 functional Hindu temples were destroyed, but the secular brigade and the secular media suffer from collective amnesia about it and the ethnic cleansing of Kashmir Valley because of which Pandits are now living as refugees in camps." Of late there have been reports emanating from the Valley which point to a new trend as far as the temple properties are concerned. It is believed that some unscrupulous elements, working in

connivance with land mafia have started selling off temple properties in Kashmir. Even the management of these temples is illegally constituted.

Property of big temples like the Ramji Temple in Srinagar, which is worth crores of rupees, is being sold or leased out allegedly on the management's instructions. Similar stories concerning other temples have also been reported. Newspapers also reported that Vaital Bhairva shrine at Motiyar, Rainawari, Srinagar, has been ransacked and its Dharamshala occupied by relatives of the local MLA. It is even reported that Jammu and Kashmir Dharmarth Trust has sold the land of Pratepeshwar Temple, Kohnikon and Barbarshah. The Prayag Temple at Shadipora, Srinagar, too, witnessed plunder and later encroachment.

There were nearly 46 temples on the left and right banks of River Jhelum, which held great reverence for Pandits in the Valley. Most of these were gutted/ looted at the time of exodus. As late as March 2010, the State's Revenue Minister, Raman Bhalla admitted in the State Assembly that 170 temples had been 'damaged' in 'militancy related' violence. The same figures were quoted by Jitender Singh, Minister of State for Home Affairs in the Union Government while speaking in the Rajya Sabha on August 22, 2012. However, Kashmiri Pandits refute these figures and put the same at 550. The minister also admitted that 113 kanals of temple land was grabbed in Shopian alone. After the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, a large number of temples were left without any *Pujari*/caretaker. As ground situation improved, many *Pujaris* came from outside the state and filled-in this vacuum. Over a period of time, with the assistance of unscrupulous elements in the state administration, they became *Mahants* controlling these temples and their properties. In due course these *Mahants*, in connivance with the local mafia started selling these lands with fictitious records and other papers.

Tariq Bhatt writes, "Seventy per cent of its properties have been compromised, encroached upon, leased or sold after 1990 by non-Kashmiri mahants in connivance with land sharks.

- Col. Tej K. Tikoo

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General Secretary's Column

Registration of Bonafide Migrants for The Purpose of Issuance of Domicile Certificate

For our social, economic and political justice, we should be counted correctly. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has given us a chance through Government Order No. 52-JK (DMRRR) Dated: 16-05-2020 to be enumerated in numbers accurately.

AIKS team continues to guide the community, to register those migrants, not registered as migrants by the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrant) Jammu in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

AIKS website AIKS.org is updated time to time for the benefit of the bonafide persons who are not registered with the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrant) Jammu, (maybe registered somewhere else or left out of registration).

For the convenience of the community members, the list of the valid documents required for the registration is given here under.

- I. Copy of the Permanent Resident Certificate of the applicant or his parents or grandparents issued by a competent authority.
- II. Copy of the Electoral Roll for the year 1951, showing the name of the applicant or his parents/grandparents.
- III. Copy of the Electoral Roll for the year 1988, showing the name of the applicant or his parents/grandparents.
- IV. Proof of working in an autonomous body or any entity fully or partially owned by the government of Jammu & Kashmir

before or after migration on 01-11-1989.

- V. Proof of owning or possessing immovable property in any part of Jammu & Kashmir on or before 14th May 1944.
- VI. Proof of registration as a migrant of Jammu & Kashmir with any competent authority.
- VII. Proof of having any documentation which would have made the person eligible to obtain PRC of J & K before 06-08-2019.

Pertinent to mention here that the opportunity of registration for the purpose of obtaining domicile certificate shall be open only for a period of one year, from the issuance of the Order 52-JK (DMRRR) of 2020.

The President AIKS Reconstituted AIKS Executive

For the smooth working of the AIKS, the President AIKS reconstituted his executive committee. More youngsters were added to the team, to give them a proper space in the organisation to develop 2nd line of leadership.

AIKS Holds a Webinar

“Changing Dynamics of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory (JKUT) in view of recent government orders/initiatives and our Resettlement/Rehabilitation in Kashmir” This was the topic of the webinar held by AIKS. In the well attended webinar, the panelists, S/Sh. KN Pandita, Ravinder Raina, VP ASKPC, Sr Advocate PN Goja, Vidya Bhushan Savarkar Dhar, ICKF Canada, Kamal Hak, KMWA Noida, Bharat Kachroo, GS Samporan Kashmir, Ashutosh Taploo, Utpal Koul GKPD, Dr Sanjay Dhar, KPA

Mumbai, AK Raina, VPAIKS, Ajay Bharti, ex MLC and AK Wattal KPS Ambala spoke about the subject in length according to their perspectives. The first session was moderated by the President AIKS Col. (Retd) Tej K Tikoo. The moderator of the second session was GS AIKS MK Pajan who also conducted question answer session. The panelist's opinion was summed up by VP AIKS Vijay Kashkari and presented vote of thanks. The Secretary AIKS was on command for technical support.

AIKS Writes to Delimitation Commission

All India Kashmiri Samaj, took up an issue of paramount importance to the displaced Kashmiri Pandit community; their political empowerment with the Chairman Delimitation Commission. The Chairman was apprised that the uprooted Kashmiri Hindus have not only lost their homes and usual habitat, but have also lost our political voice.

The Commission and his team was requested to look into the demand of the displaced community as they were involved in carrying out the delimitation exercise in the JKUT.

Quoting from the letter, "Government has issued instructions for reservation of seats for several disadvantaged sections of the society in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. These include Gujjars, Bakerwals, Paharis, other nomadic tribes, etc. It may be pointed out that in the existing circumstances; Kashmiri Pandits are no less disadvantaged than these groups mentioned above. We have lost our homes, our economic status, our habitat, our political and social voice, and in fact, we are on the brink of losing our distinct ethnic identity. Under the circumstances, it is requested that the Delimitation Commission treat us as severely disadvantaged section of the society and provide reservation in Assembly and Parliament"

AIKS Condoloes the Demise of Prof Chaman Lal Sapru

All India Kashmir Samaj expresses its deep

regret on the sad demise of Prof Chaman Lal Sapru at Faridabad on 17 November 2020.

Prof Sapru was a well-known member of the community who, over the years, played an active role in the community's myriad activities in NCR, particularly in NOIDA, where he was associated with KMWA, NOIDA, for the past many years. His contribution in strengthening KMWA, NOIDA, was significant.

Prof Sapru was an active figure in the field of Hindi literature, who devoted great effort in popularizing Hindi among various groups. For this task, he was honoured with awards and citations by many well-known organizations.

Prof CL Sapru devoted a better part of his life to Sri Rama Krishna Mission, of which he was an inseparable part in Kashmir. He was part of all its initiatives in Kashmir, even after our exodus from the valley. He continued to contribute to the mission right till the end of his life.

With his razor-sharp memory, authority on Hindi and association with significant events over many decades, Prof Chaman Lal Sapru was a mine of information on issues connected with Kashmir and our community. In his passing away we have lost a true community icon.

All India Kashmiri Samaj pays its heartfelt and rich tributes to Prof Sapru and prays for Sadgati to the departed soul. We also convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Extension Granted for RK Puram Premises.

We are pleased to report that after prolonged follow up, we have been granted extension for the office accommodation from the Directorate of Estates, Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India permitting us retention of the accommodation at 244, Sector 3, RK Puram till 24th May 2024 duly approved by Cabinet Committee on Accommodation (CCA).

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Senior Bureaucrats Misleading Manoj Sinha on KPs Situation : APMCC on LG's Interview

All Parties Migrants Coordination Committee (APMCC) has taken a strong exception to the recent interview of Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha with AajTak, where he gave totally incorrect and misleading data about Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) rehabilitation, accommodation, employment etc and has asked the LG to either take his words back or take strong action against those senior bureaucrats who have misled him about the real situation.

In a statement Vinod Pandit Chairman, Advocate Arun Kandoo, Gen Sect. and Senior Journalist and National Spokesperson APMCC King C Bharati has said that it was unfortunate that some senior bureaucrats have fed completely incorrect, wrong and misleading data to LG about the KPs and have expressed deep resentment over what they called insult of Kashmiri Pandits by the Lieutenant Governor.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has stated that around 62,000/- KP families have been displaced since 1989-90.

Now Hon'ble LG has stated that everything was honky dory with the community and connected PMs Employment Package announced in 2008 by the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh as return and rehabilitation process as also attributed it to the current government announced in 2015 which is totally incorrect and misleading.

APMCC added some points. The then Central Government led by PM Dr. Manmohan Singh announced an employment Package in 2008 for KPs. Some senior Bureaucrats have misled LG Saab and he stated in an interview that Package was announced in 2015 by BJP Govt.

Even after 12 years since its announcement, only approx 4000 youths have been appointed and State Govt has added The SRO 412 which is draconian and exploitative in Nature. The employees can't get transferred outside valley

and can't leave valley under any circumstances.

Presently there are at least 4000 employees serving here in valley. The Government had promised to provide accommodation along with the jobs, as this Package was termed as Return and Rehabilitation Package for honorable Return of Kashmiri Pandits. The following places were chosen and Transit Camps were set in.

1. Vessu Camp Kulgam district
2. Mattan Transit Camp in district Anantnag
3. Hawl Transit Camp in district Pulwama.
4. Sheikhpura Transit camp in district Budgam
5. Natnussa Transit Camp in district Kupwara
6. Veerwan Transit camp, Baramulla.

The Vessu Transit camp has accommodated only 310 families that too in Prefab huts where rats are ruling the roost. There are 176 Prefab quarters only till date. The work on concrete Towers is going on snail's pace, as promised of 32 Towers having 16 flats each, only 12 have got completed and 20 Towers are still pending. The work for these had started way back in 2015. Similarly Mattan Transit camp has accommodated 97 families where six families share single Quarter, To share a single wash room and single Kitchen, The families are suffering from past 10 years, There are 6 gas cylinders in single kitchen. There are only 3 Towers comprising 18 flats only. The problem has got worse due to Covid now. The social distance can't be followed. God forbid if anybody gets infected with virus, it will endanger whole complex. Similarly Sheikhpura has accommodated 266 families, Veerwan Baramulla 151 families, (Prefab huts made till date 129 only) Hawal Pulwama 110 families (Prefab huts made till date 65 only). The total families accommodated till date are only 1055 families and rest are living on rentals since past so many years.

Government always speaks in volumes about the rehabilitation but on ground the situation is altogether different. The volatile valley where incidents of Pakistan sponsored Terrorist activities by targeting miniscule KP's

is always in news. Recently KP Sarpanch Ajay Pandita was killed by Terrorists. The Government always overlooks such brutal and barbaric incidents.

Now it is a high time that Government should understand the pain of PM Package Employees and make an honest effort to mitigate their sufferings.

Flats incomplete since December 2015

The Government has envisioned 32 Concrete Towers, 32 X 16 (512 Flats) to be made on war footing basis.

This project was handed over to executing Agency "JKPCC" in December 2015, even after so many years, nothing substantial has been done. Out of 32 Towers, only 3 Towers are ready. 4 Towers are 90% Complete & 6 Towers, only 50% to 60% work has been completed. i.e. out of 32 Towers, only 13 Towers are under construction right now, for remaining 19 Towers neither any land is available nor any plan is there.

The work on Transit accommodations should be completed on priority and employees provided the accommodation.

Land Identification and availability

The state officials are only giving power point presentations but no real work is visible on ground. Let us provide you few details.

Also in Jammu, In Jagti Township there are only 4224, 1BHK flats, In Muthi 128, Purkhoo 256, Buta Nagar 256, TRT Nagrota 384 flats. The total 1BHK flats made by successive Govt till date are only 5248 only and that too have been completed way back in 2011.

More than 4 Lakh KP's have made their own houses by selling all their assets in Valley.

We request your good self to intervene in the matter and frame a proper committee to look up these issues at an earliest."

**Issued by :
King C Bharati**

Sr. Journalist & National Spokesperson APMCC

Lands identified.	Present status
1. Zewan Srinagar... 93 Kanals.	Land still not handed over to R&R for tendering /start of work.
2. Khoji Bagh Baramulla... 51 Kanals	-do-
3. Mattan Anantnag... 35 Kanals.	-do-
4. Barsoo Pulwama... 50 Kanals	-do-
5. Marhama Sangam Anantnag. 14 Kanals	Tendering started in May 2019 and tender opened on 8.6.2019, No construction has started yet.
6. Wandhama Ganderbal... 30 Kanals	(Hon'ble PM Modi Jee inaugurated this site from SKICC Srinagar through Video conferencing. This land has not been handed over to Relief and Rehabilitation Deptt. Yet and no work has started yet.
7. Odina Bandipora... 75 kanals	Due to delay tactics by local administration, Locals have brought stay from court to this project.

Mehbooba Mufti Sayeed Drops Shield, Divulges Extra-Territorial Loyalty

The extremely outrageous, deceitful, seditious and provocative statements of PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti 'Sayeed' are equal parts condemnable and eye-opening for people of Jammu and Kashmir. Every word spoken in the statement reflects a mindset borne out of caste hierarchy and xenophobia that is foreign to the local culture. This reveals a sinister attempt to ensure retention of grip over socio-political and religious institutions and narratives which threaten to push the UT back to medieval times.

It is very sad and unfortunate that even after centuries of landing in the valley these so-called custodians of faith is at war with local sensitivities and aspirations. It is the same mindset that was responsible for harassment of widely admired patron saint of Kashmir; The Revered NundRishi also known as Sehajanand and Sheikh-ul-Alam for preaching and practicing equality. He was even arrested and imprisoned. Double standards in preaching and practice have been hall mark of the politics of Ms. Mehbooba Mufti 'Sayeed' and her party. It was the same party and its leadership that persued "healing Touch" for terrorists and

Heating Touch for local peace loving citizens of Jammu and Kashmir.

Statement of a person who has remained a parliamentarian and also been Chief Minister of the state swearing by the Constitution of the country disrespecting National flag is bad both, in law and ethics. It also is an indicator of the realisation of rejection of the divisive politics and hate, discrimination and violence. Hence temptation to become leader of separatists, anti-India and pro-Pakistan elements. This is typical example of what has come to be known as “Politics of Convenience, not Conviction.”

The statement is strongly condemned. The effort of Ms. Mehbooba Mufti Sayeed to push back Jammu and Kashmir into darkness and an era of Death and Destruction is also denounced. The peace-loving people of UT of Jammu and Kashmir in unison reject these overtures.

- Girdhari Lal Raina
Spokesperson BJP J&K.

KP Helping Hands Solemnized a Samoohik Yagnopavit Ceremony

Despite the challenges/havoc created by covid-19, the conflict trodden Kashmir valley has seen recently an attempt to revamp the socio religious life of Kashmiri Pandits residing in the valley by the KP's Helping hands trust Anantnag. In this

regard KP's helping hands team in a first of its kind solemnized a Samoohik Yagnopavit ceremony at Shri Rama Krishna Mahasamalen Ashram Nagdandi from 17 Oct 2020 to 19 Oct 2020.

The representative's of KP's Helping hands trust who solemnized this great function are S/sh. Ashish Ganjoo, Dr. Rahul Dev (Dhar), Amit Bhat, Bharat Raina, Sunny Raina, Sunil Bhat, Dr. Ramesh Razdan, Sandeep Bhat, Rahul Pandita, Rohit Pandita, Dr. Susheel Watal Ji, Opinder Ji, Utpal Koul ji, Ajay ji, Anil Raina ji, etc.

KP's Helping hands team also assured our community of every possible help and support in its welfare and such events, programs will be continued with a positive after effect in future too and aims at a concerted endeavor in order to work for the betterment of our community.

KP's Helping Hand expressed their immense gratification to the Sri Rama Krishna Mahasamalen Ashram Nagdandi for providing the accommodation to organize the event and thankful to Sanjeevani Sharada Kendra team for their support. It also thanked the district administration and others for making the event possible.

- KP Helping Hands



Kashmiri Pandit Cricket League Concludes, Sai Defeats Saffron in Finals

Jagti. Safran Cricket Club's (Sarthak Khoda – Founder and President) in association with Sandeep Kisroo from 3M Home Water Solutions, Deepansh Electro Ventures, Trikuta Nagar Jammu has organized the first edition of KPCL – Kashmiri Pandits Cricket League Colored Uniform T – 20 Championship at KC Sports Club Akhnoor Road Jammu from 28th September 2020 to 08th October 2020.

The cricket Tournament is first of its kind in the state so far and has the core initiative of connecting with the community youth. Twelve Kashmiri Pandit Teams across the country had participated in the tournament. The tournament had 18 Leagues, Two Semi-Finals and the Final Match was played between Sai Cricket Club and Safran Cricket Club. Sai Cricket Club – Jagti clinched the trophy by winning the final match. Sai Cricket Club who batted first scored a total of 148/7 in the stipulated 20 overs where in Saffron Cricket Club succumbed to 91 all out. Chander Mohan Was adjudged as the Man of the Match who scored 78 Runs of 59 Ball's. The winning team Sai Cricket Club – Jagti was presented a cheque of 25,000/- with a winning trophy which shall be rotating year on year basis.

Chief Guests Sh. K K Khosa – incumbent President Kashmiri Pandit Sabha – Jammu and Sh. Ashender Koul – Incumbent Selector JKCA and former BCCI Member graced the occasion and enjoyed the match between the two best teams of the tournament.

Mrs. Sugeeta Kisroo – Director Deepansh Electro Venture – (3M Home Water Solutions), Sr Balveer Singh of S&S Telecom, Mr. Deepak Khanna – Director Deepak Woman's Development Society Sh. Pankaj Bhawani – President Martand KP Brigade Charitable Trust, Mr. Aditya Tickoo – Director Aditya Pharmaceuticals, Sh. Jai Mantoo – Director Jai Raj Studios, Sh. Rahul Koul President BJYM KDD District President, Sh. Kanwal Peshin of Athrot, Sh. Anil Koul Chingari, Sh. R C Dhar and Sh. Satish Khoda were the guest of honors.

Rohan Koul from Saffron Cricket Club was adjudged as the Man of the Series and Best Batsman of the tournament, Surinder Raina from Shiva Bhagwati Vanquisher was adjudged

as the best bowler of the tournament followed by Sanchit Dass being adjudged as the Best Fielder of the tournament. All were awarded with Mementos, Cash Awards, 3M Mugs and appreciation and blessings from all.

The runner up team of the tournament was Safran Cricket got 10,000/- who won as a cash award and a runner up trophy.

From Jagti by Sunil Raina

40th Day of Agitation/Sit-in which is Being Held in Jagti Camp Jammu

The 40th agitation was started on 2nd Oct 2020 at Jagti Camp by the Displaced Kashmiris under the leadership of Shri Shadi Lal Pandita, President, Jagti Tenement Committee/ Soan Kashmir Front.

Talking to media person's Pandita lambasted on the present government for ignoring the Real Nationalists who have sacrificed their everything to uphold the national flag.



Highlights of The demands put by the Jagti Tenement committee.

1. The KP exodus should be investigated by the retired supreme court judges.
2. To form a Committee for the assessment of losses to the Kashmiri Pandit Orchards/Farmers and other Business losses, to pay them Compensation.
3. Declare a Permanent Rehabilitation policy for the Kashmiri Pandits living in Jammu and elsewhere in India. Construction of 4 Townships in Kashmir valley with Political empowerment.
4. Free our land from the illegal encroachments and all distress sales be declared as null and

void and be handed over to the actual owners.

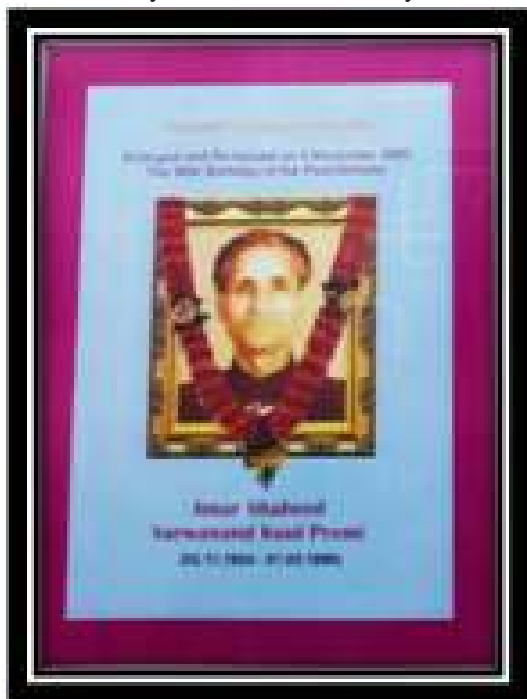
5. Enhancement of cash assistance upto 25000/- .
6. Employment to the educated youth of our community at least one member of each family and the preference be given to those deserving families who don't have any government services in their family.
7. Compensation to the needy Over aged youths of our community.

Pandita, who is leading the ongoing agitation, said that the government has various Rehabilitation policies for those who have been associated with the anti-National activities and took arms and waged war against the Indian Nation. In contrast, the government is not bothered about those who have sacrificed their lives and leftover properties worth crores for the sake of national interest.

From Jagti by Sunil Raina

96th Birth Anniversary of Amar Shaheed Sarwanand Koul Premi

November 2nd is being observed as birth anniversary of the Amarshaheed Sarwanand Kaul Premi. To mark the day a Soviner dedicated to the memory of Shri Premi edited by Shri M. K.



Raina, editor Praagash was released. The Soviner contains many articles and essays on the life and works of late poet in Kashmiri. A unique feature of the Special edition of Praagash is that it has transcendental the language barrier, therefore articles published are in English, Hindi and Urdu & Kashmiri, Nagri & Nastalik.

A webinar Shradhanjali Sabha was also organised in which many speakers highlighted the role, works & contribution of the Late Premi. An on line multilingual mushaira was also conducted in which many prominent kashmiri, Urdu & Hindi poets participated, prominent among them are Dr. Agnishekhar, Sh P. N. Shad, Sh Ashok Gowher, Sh J. K. Kaul Bezan, Dr. Gauri Shankar Raina. Sh Rajinder Premi put up a vote of thanks.

On this occasion the family also shared that printing and publishing of many of Premi's new manuscripts currently under way. Prominent among them will be his collection of Kashmiri & Urdu short stories, ParmarthaShatak in Hindi, Lalleshwari in Urdu and Mirza Kak in Hindi.

The family also took the opportunity to thank all the colleagues and counterparts of Premi, his well-wishers, friends and readers. They also thanked the contributors and the Editor, Publisher Shri M K Raina and the entire team of Praagash for this Special Gift on Shri Premi's birthday.

- Report by Rajinder Premi

Helpline Humanity Organises Prize Distribution at Mata Saraswati Pustakaalya

Helpline Humanity organised prize distribution function on 26.10.2020 at Mata Saraswati Pustakaalya, a digital Library cum book bank at Jagti Nagrota Jammu. The program began with welcome address by Sh. Omesh Raina, Vice President of HH who welcomed Chief Guest Sh TK Bhat(KAS), Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (M) and all other participants. Sh. Rakesh Pandita gave brief description about activities of Helpline Humanity and its future objectives. Sh. TK Bhat congratulates Team Helpline Humanity for organising such activities for students community and also gave health tips to the students and encourage them to work hard for cracking civil services and other competitive exams to become role model for the



society. Sh. Rajneesh Kapoor (Deputy Director planning), who was Guest of honour on the occasion also congratulated all students who excel in academics.

In academic field :-

12 class students namely Kasak Bhat, Akansha, Bahul Raina, Shinali Raina, Arun Pandita, Simriti Raina, Mehak Raina and in 10th class, Divya Bhat, Nitin Bhat (90% above marks scorer) were felicitated by chief Guest.

In online

Junior debate competition, Sanjana Tickoo, Shiren Bhan, Bhavika Bhat (1st, 2nd, 3rd Prize)

In senior debate, Netra Hakhu, Ojasvi Raina, Yashika (1st, 2nd, 3rd Prize)

In Junior online Painting, Samaksh Matto, Deepshika, Saumil koul (1st, 2nd, 3rd Prize)

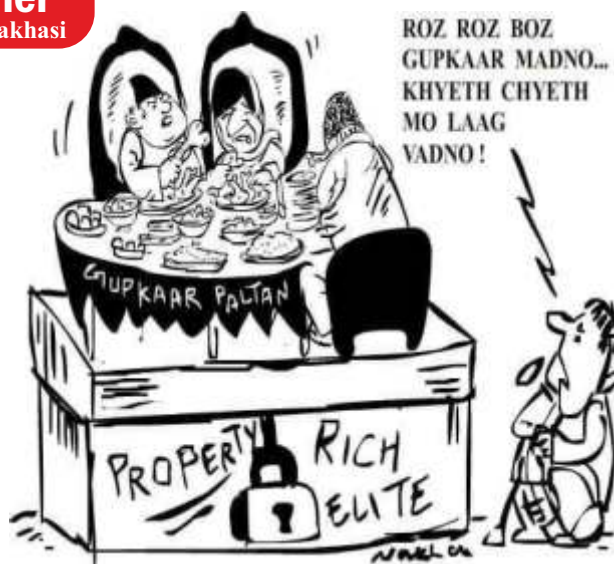
In senior painting competition, Kamar Arjit Mishra, Chiyanka Sharma, Santoshi Raina (1st, 2nd, 3rd Prize)

They all were given certificate with cash prize by Chief Guest.

The stage was managed by Shri Jitendra Jotshi (Renowned Artist). Those who were present were Ashwani ji, Ramesh ji besides volunteers of Helpline Humanity.

Cartoon Corner

- Anil Nakhasi





Temples of Kashmir



Photo Courtesy : Sh. Chander M Bhat

Temple desecration, destruction and grabbing or encroaching upon the real estate attached with these temples, did not start in 1989-90, it in-fact, started right in 1947, immediately after the rule of Maharaja ended and the AWAMI RAJ took over, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, popularly known as SHER-E-KASHMIR. It seems, he was a man with a mission, to establish an Islamic hegemony with the State of J&K, and in the hindsight, when I recall, some of his earliest actions as the chief executive- then called as, Chief Administrator, of J&K State appointed by Maharaja himself, on 27 October 1947, it becomes crystal clear that he was a bigot of heart.

Not many KPs would be aware that half of the area of Food control Dept, Shaheed Ganj, was a lush green orchard of almond, cherry, apple, plum and couple of walnut trees, quite

healthy and being looked after by professional MALIS for generations. It was an Oxygen generating-sort of-unit in that part of thickly populated area of Srinagar. I remember, in my childhood that is in the years 1946, 1947, 1948, tugging the Pallu of my mother's Shawl, we used to go to this nearby BADAM-VAERI, for picnic, first thing with the advent of spring. Routine used to be like this, pack up your Samavar, some Telvour, Katlam, etc, the women folk of the mohalla, alongwith children, would walk across to Shivala Temple, do a little Pooja and enter this, our own local "Badam-Vaer" across the lane on the South-western side of the temple. Kashmiri Pandit families would make the bulk of the picnickers, but Muslim families too used to be around. It is different, that the Muslim kids, would invariably snatch small toys, kites, balloons from our hands, but by a large the days would end on a peaceful note. One

would be back home in the evening, quite refreshed. This lush green expanse, with mighty fruit trees, in full blossom with multicolored flowering buds in early spring, used to give it a heavenly look, but it had a very big disadvantage and that was its name. It was known as DHARMARTH BAGH- an eye sore to the bigot, who by now had replaced His Highness. It was, probably, his first ever proclamation as an Administrator to dispossess the Dharmarth of this properly, and take it over, of course, without any compensation, and make it a part of SHALI STORE. Spring of 1948, saw our picnic, restricted to Shivala Mandir only, you got so cramped there, that from next year your spring Sojourns – day long picnic would be act a distant, but original BADAM VAER Hari Parbat.

Many decades later, in a tete-a-tete with late Harji lal, he disclosed that a senior revenue official, who was a Kashmiri Muslim, had raised objections and protested on this illegal and sinful action of his leader, but the Sheikh had asked him to Shut up. This revenue officer, had vainly pleaded that the entire land, where the SHALI STORE, was built, belonged to Dharmarth and Maharaja had denoted as much land required to build these stores and the office complex, as requisitioned by his advisors, and it was not only sinful and criminal, but unethical too, to dispossess Dharmarth of this land, which in any case, was being used as a picnic spot by Hindus and Muslims alike. The tall leader had to take it over as it belonged to Dharmarth Kafir.

Post'53, there was a LUL, didn't hear any major encroachments on temple lands, or destruction of any Hindu Shrines/temples. It was during the tenure of Bakshi Gulam Mohammed that new residential colonies, for Govt. employees were carved out of agricultural lands (mostly vegetable farms) adjacent to the Srinagar city, and one such colony was Bal-Garden/Narsing Garh. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed was worldly wise and when he was

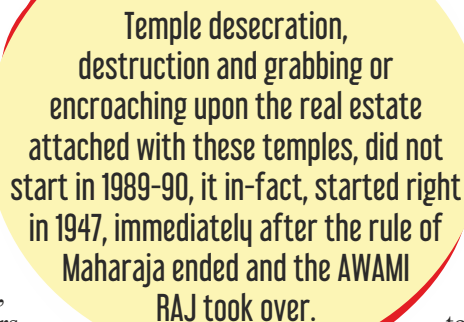
shown that almost 1/3rd of the proposed Narsing Garh along was owned by TUSHKRAZA BHAIRAVA he coolly contacted some influential KPs, successfully sold them the idea of a modern colony which will be 'mostly inhabited by KPs only', and it is said, that he, even allotted a couple of plots to a well known Kashmiri Pandit advocate, who had threatened to go to court and get an injunction against the establishment of a residential colony on a temple land. Everybody, seemed to be happy, some Kashmiri Pandits, as always, got some crumbs, TUSHAKRAZA BHAIRAV or whatever was left of it, got a concrete boundary wall, a gate, a double storey make shift structure for devotees. 'No encroachment, no desecration, no nothing.'

But something gigantic was happening somewhere else. Wonder, if the younger lot amongst us, has heard about Noor Bagh? It was the cremation ground for down town Kashmiri

Pandits; say those living downstream, Zainkadal, Chhatabal, etc. This Noor Bagh cremation ground was, at least, of the size of IDD Gah. It was horizon that you could see from one end.

The process of squeezing out KPs from these areas had already started, and look after of this vast area was almost impossible. Good Muslims, including, traditional KAVUJ, who used to be the caretakers of the cremation grounds were being

brain washed, but true to their profession & ancestry, none of them got radicalized. The real estate, attached to these cremation grounds, weather at Karan Nagar, or Noor Bagh, or Rainawari, was worth crores, even in those days i.e. in 70's. Encroachments, with Govt looking the other way, had started and there was no way, how the encroachers could be evicted. Let me be courageous and frank to admit, that these encroachers found some quislings amongst us, got their signatures on fraudulent 'stamp papers' and probably, gave them peanuts and overnight, became masters of these vast tracks of holy lands. Some Senior Kashmiri Pandits leaders did try to evict them, but then



Temple desecration, destruction and grabbing or encroaching upon the real estate attached with these temples, did not start in 1989-90, it in-fact, started right in 1947, immediately after the rule of Maharaja ended and the AWAMI RAJ took over.

beat a hasty retreat, when they found some Big names of our own community involved in these fake deeds.

Bhutkeshwar Bhairav Temple:

This Bhairav temple is situated at the confluence of Doodh Ganga and Vitasta at Chhatabal. It had vast area of land with 3/4 mighty Chinar Trees, besides the mandatory mulberry tree adorning it. Some Hanjis (Boatmen), who used to tie their boats to the poles or trees of the temple, would also make use of these lawns for sun-bathing 'and drying' their paddy crops, it was fine. Soon the regular local devotees discovered that the boundary wall of the Bhairav temple was breached at several places, and it was probably in 70's. The breaches became thorough fares and all attempts to rebuild the boundary walls, were resisted by Muslims of the area, on the plea that, it makes easier for them to cross over from one mohalla to another, through this 'short-cut'. It

details with me; however, my friend confided that, something very ugly had happened in the Bhairav Temple area that very morning. Muslims in large numbers, some of them armed with lathis had attacked the handful of KP devotees and warned them, not to visit the temple again. He also added that, a posse of policemen from the local THANA was posted in the temple area to ensure that peace is maintained. I asked him, if we could visit the temple right then, he was reluctant, but then I insisted that if he didn't want to come he at least, give me the directions to the temple, as I didn't know, how to reach there. He agreed, we reached the Bhairav Temple, in a few minutes, after criss-crossing some lanes. It was a delight to be in the vast temple area, with mighty-Chinars in full bloom and flowing water of Vitasta adding a musical charm to the divine atmosphere. There was a group of Muslims,



Photo Courtesy : Sh. Chander M Bhat

didn't matter to them, that they were trespassing.

Incidentally, grabbing of temple lands, or laying claim on such real estate gained momentum, soon after Sheikh Abdullah led National Conference staged a comeback, courtesy Indra Gandhi and scored a huge victory in 1977 Assembly elections. It is interesting to share an incident, to which I am an eye witness. It was probably in 1979, could have been July/August and I had gone to see a friend of mine, who lived in Chhatabal. There was a commotion when I reached there, all KPs huddled up in small groups, were in hush contact with each other. No one was willing to share the

some standing and some sitting on reed-mats (VAGUV), already there and to our shock, one of the policemen came running towards us, asking us to leave or else, it would be a law and order problem. My friend obeyed the orders and left, not me, and the same policemen pointed towards an elderly Muslim whom he called Haji Sahib, coming towards us and now in a stern voice asked me to leave. By now this Haji was very much, in our hearing distance. He stopped the policemen and extended his hand to me for a customary shake-hand. I, hesitatingly, shook hands with this 'stranger'. He called me by my name, I still couldn't place him, he then added

comrade as a prefix to my name, I was relieved a bit, but he was still a stranger. He was an old comrade of DNC days and we were meeting after over 20 years, he had now grown a beard that was pepper and salt to look at, and had performed Hajj too. He invited me to his home nearby, for a cup of tea, introduced me to his family and then the two of us talked for a while—just the two of us, and this is what he said, “Why did, these Kashmiri Pandits go to Sheikh Sahab for solving this Bhairava problem? You had all the revenue records, you could have won this case legally”, and added, “Yes, it could have taken time, but these KHOFTAN FAQEER (that is how NC goons were known as) would not have been able to take possession of even a portion of land. Now, the whole Bhairav Temple is gone - I predict”. And that is, what happened.

Soon thereafter, we were shocked to see, some blasting of Shankracharya foothills, taking place on its western slopes, just adjacent to sacred Durga Nag Mandir. Blasting continued unabated and construction activity too started simultaneously. Pandit Harji lal, and an old revenue encyclopedia, dug out the relevant

does it make any difference?” Harji lal was stunned, his response was “Yes it does.....” and before he could complete the reply, Sheikh Sahab, laughingly told him, “Both are institutions of same God”. Harji lal was not the one, to lump it, he roared, “Sheikh Sahab, let us strike a bargain, now that Dharam Arth and Auqaf are the same, you make me the President of Auqaf for one term, I will myself transfer this priceless and sacred piece of real estate to Auqaf and may be transfer a worthless piece of a water body in back waters of Dal Lake, since usurped by Auqaf back to Dharam Arth. Thus, the argument ended. We now have a sprawling Auqaf complex on prime Durga Nag Land; come up much before our exodus.

Taking a cue, Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain, than a minister and a close associate of Mufti Mohd Syed, both as a Congressman and then as a PDP colleague, took possession of acres of priceless land, some of it marshy, adjacent to famous Burn Hall School and just across the Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium, Sonawar illegally. The land belongs to Durga Nag Trust. He coolly built a modern car sales and service,

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documents and SANADS (Royal Declarations), Gazette Notifications showing this particular area was the property of Durga Nag Temple Trust and no construction could take place over there for a specific number of years, ending 2026 (Probably). He sought an appointment with Sheikh Sahab, now the Chief Minister, they knew each other well. Sheikh Sahab called him, he went carrying, a 'truck load' of documents alongwith.

Pandit Harji lal was pleasantly surprised, when he was received by Sheikh Sahab, smilingly. High tea was served immediately, but Pandit Ji had a mission, instead of going in for the delicious kabab, he started rummaging through the documents, Sheikh Sahab stopped him, and asked him “I am not taking away this land for myself, so far it belonged to Dharam Arth Trust, and now onwards it belongs to Auqaf

showroom, as per the layout design provided by Maruti-Suzuki, whose dealership was given to him, you know why? Some Kashmiri Pandits did go to Court, even obtained a stay order against any further construction, but who bothers? He hired top most advocates, mostly KPs, to defend him and results are there for all to see. He too, took care of some KP protestors by offering their 'TRESH GLASS TE TANG', to our misfortune.

However, these take-overs of temple properties were by and large, peaceful, or maybe one odd casualty in a remote village, that went unreported. This peaceful, temple-grabbing activity did not last long. We were shown a demonstration of how deeply the traditional ASTAN PARAST Muslim majority of Kashmir was radicalised, in the autumn of 1986. ●

(Contd.....)



Radicalised Milieu Endangering Temples & Shrines of Kashmir

Temples and Shrines are very important part of our individual and collective life. They are much more than mere places for prayer and worship. Besides being sanctified as the house of the presiding deity, they are believed to be places where Ishwara dwells.

These temples and Shrines have been and continue to be ritual, religious and spiritual spaces. These were very active centres where our civilizational ethos including arts, crafts, collective celebrations, social and religious traditions and economy evolved and flourished. In other words, the temple was the nucleus of not only religious and spiritual acts, but also social, cultural and economic activity in the neighbourhood. These temples and shrines being the nerve centre of our life; they became prime targets of invaders. Sikandar- the Iconoclast is just one name that brings back memories of horror and wanton destruction of temples in Kashmir instantly.

Unfortunately targeting of temples and Shrines continued in post 1947 era Kashmir after a small breathing period of around 150 years of Sikh-Dogra rule. In fact, after 1947 under

so-called modern Democratic governance set-up usurping of property and other assets belonging to these temples and shrines took a refined but amenably caustic route.

So called popular government headed by Sheikh Abdullah from day one of taking charge set in motion a process of marginalising and excluding religious minorities representing historical continuity of civilizational Kashmir like Kashmiri Hindus also known as Pandits. This was part of grand design of what has now been termed as Three-nation-theory to distort real identity of Kashmir and create its fake identity as a separate country closer to west Asia than rest of India.

Illegally Legal Stealing

Temples and Shrines were seen as visible symbols of impediment besides having an eye on their vast immovable property. Revenue Department was used to erase/modify the records in a manner that would make seizing easy and legal. Jammu and Kashmir Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, 1950 Act 17 of 1950 and The Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian



Crematorium Ground Property at Sopore Grabbed by the Government without Consent and Compensation

Reforms Act 1972 later replaced by J&K agrarian Reforms Act 1976 were enacted to make this process further easy and speedy.

This so called progressive land reform marketed as land to tiller did not apply to land belonging to places of worship including Gumpas of Ladakh; such places of worship, waqafs or Dharamshalas, as are recorded in the revenue records or 3 [notified by the Government from time to time or donated for purposes of wakaf by any person professing Islam or used as a wakaf property] {Chapter II Section 4 2a, b(ii)}. Yet while implementation on ground no regard was paid to it. Land belonging to Sanatan Dharam Sabha Sopore known as Wazir Bagh Sopore and lands of Ganpatyar temple Srinagar in Harwan area are just two examples as struggle to recover lands in both these cases is still going on. This phenomenon, however, is not limited to these two cases only.

Administrative Grabbing

Encouraged and in many cases prompted by the political bosses administration used forceful grabbing also to erase records of immovable property belonging to Temples and Shrines in Kashmir. This process paced after 1989-90 forceful eviction of the entire minority Hindu Community.

Most common methodology used was to identify land belonging to these temples and shrines and acquire or in much case grab them for construction of government offices or bridges etc. In cases where land was acquired no consent was taken from the legal owners or the Committees representing the management. Cremation grounds also were not spared.

In 1951, the Food Control Department of Jammu and Kashmir State encroached upon and occupied the Bathing Ghat and other premises of Bhairava temple of Chattabal. They started using the place for distributing rations. The temple was desecrated.

In Sopore for example Land at a prime location belonging to cremation ground was taken away by government in early Nineties soon after mass exodus of the community. Sanatan Dharam Sabha managing the religious

affairs of community in the town was not even informed leave alone taking consent from them. The community came to know about it only after construction of Bridge started. They protested, moved from pillar to post but of no avail. A meagre compensation of around seven lakhs was offered at a time when average rate per Kanal in town was above 25 lakhs. Sabha refused to take the petty amount and are fighting till date for justice. Cremation ground in Wanpoh has a similar story. A Police station has been constructed grabbing around 13 Kanals of land out of more than 21 kanals owned by the community.

Tourism Department has grabbed around 3 kanals of land belonging to temple in Tangmarg.

The Department has constructed huts on it and is earning lot of revenue while minority Hindu Community is fighting for restoration of land.

Protection Act Violations

Pained and scared by the large scale grabbing of left behind immovable properties the Displaced Community tried hard to urge the authorities to prevent this open loot.

Examples of revenue officers in league with land mafia encouraging this grabbing were brought to the notice of powers that be. It was after huge and consistent effort that the Jammu and Kashmir Migrant Immovable Property (Preservation, Protection and Restraint on Distress Sales) Act, 1997 was promulgated in 1997. This significant legal mechanism received the assent of the Governor on 30th May, 1997 and was published in the Government Gazette dated 2nd June, 1997. Role of Late P.L. Handoo, the then Revenue Minister was remarkable in its enactment.

Section 4 of the Act provided that –

1) Within 30 days from the commencement of this Act, the District Magistrate shall take over the possession of immovable property, belonging to Migrants, falling within his territorial jurisdiction and shall, on the expiry of said period of 30 days, be deemed to have the custody of such immovable property.

2) The District Magistrate shall take all such

steps as may be necessary for preservation and protection of such property: Provided that possession of such property shall not be handed over to one save with the express consent of the migrant in writing. Section 5 of the Act empowered competent authority to “use such force as is necessary for taking possession of such property and may for this purpose after giving reasonable warning and facility to any women not appearing in public to withdraw, remove or break open any lock, bolt or any door or do any other act necessary for eviction of unauthorised occupants who refuses or fails on demand to surrender possession thereof to the competent authority”.

Despite the legal authority and directives from higher ups in Government the officials failed to comply and remove the encroachments from migrants left over land and other property in Kashmir Valley. Further grabbing and encroachments also could not be prevented.

Vichar Nag Desecrated

Vichar Nag is an important un-protected heritage site rich in biodiversity and scores of natural springs. Vichar Nag owes its fame to an ancient Shiva temple that finds its mention in the Kalhan's Raj Tarangini also. The temple complex has as many as three springs whose waters came out in the shape of a small rivulet, joining the other one at 'Mukhta Pukhri'.

This Vichar Nag was seat of discussions and deliberations (hence the name, Vichar) on all important issues. It was in this temple that discussing and finalising Panchang used to take place. The tradition continued till 1990. On

Chaitra Amavasya, that is the last day of Kashmiri calendar, a festival was celebrated at this place. On this day, devotees used to take a bath in the holy spring and there after performed puja in the Shiva Temple known as 'Vichar Saheb'. It is also said Jagat Guru Shankaracharya also visited this temple for discussion.

Even this temple complex has not been spared. With the empathy of the state government to preserve the site, the place steadily fell into a state of disrepair damaging not only the temple site but threatening the entire area. The effluents of the drain composing household waste are gushing into the temple site turned it into a huge swamp emanating an unbearable reek. All the temple structures drowned in the muck and the place once a centre of attraction and sanctity has turned into a garbage den. Some portion of the land has been converted into Grave yard. Individuals have also encroached upon the temple land.

As noted earlier Vicharnag is not the only one place where the land has been encroached and revenue authorities failed to restore the same by complying the directives up higher ups but this problem is common everywhere in Valley. It needs to be underlined that different departments of the government have also been encroachers and grabbers of Land belonging to Displaced Community. Vichar Nag, Soomyaar Temple, Chattabal Temple land, land at Solina, Mandir Bagh, Dalgate are some of glaring examples of land grabbing in City of Srinagar. Same is the story across valley. Devsar,



Wanpoh, Gulmarg, Sopore, Sogam, Handwara, Baramulla are other prominent places where large scale encroachment has taken place. This is the list of community property only. Land and immovable property belonging to individuals is exhaustive.

Similarly Bohra Mandir Trust, Chattabal has been fighting for breach of tenancy agreement and encroachment in Ram Mandir by the tenant. The Trust had rented out a portion to Lotus Public School building. But the tenant has been turned the school building into a godown and junk is dumped into it, thus violating the spirit of rent agreement. Authorities have failed to provide justice.

Government departments like PDD, PHE, school education Health and family welfare have been in forefront in encroaching temple and community land of minority community in Kashmir to either install a Transformer, or a water pump or construct a building or laydown pipes etc.

The Temples and Shrines Management Committees are fighting to best of their ability to get the encroachment cleared but the success

rate is negligible. This experience is the reason for the community to demand constitutional and legal mechanism to ensure protection of symbols of its civilizational identity.

Community Initiative

While community is constantly reminding authorities on the requirement constitutionally guaranteed legal mechanism for protection of religious places more so because of the continuous absence of devotees from the surroundings, it is not sitting idle. Individual as well as collective initiatives have gained momentum over past decade to ensure repair, preservation protection and retrieving of these civilizational symbols of great value.

The effort needs to be strengthened further in whatever way possible. The most significant challenge on this front is involvement of younger generation that was born and brought up outside Kashmir and have almost no physical and emotional connect with these places of importance. But where there is a will there is a way.

Writer is Former Member of Legislative Council of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Letter to the editor

**Dear Sunil Raina Rajanaka Ji,
Editor-in-Chief**

Thanks Editor-in-Chief and The President for producing such a colourful edition with rich content. Now our friends will be forced to read and turn all the pages of NAAD. Keep it up and going and growing. CONGRATULATIONS to the team.

**Yours Sincerely
Prof BB Dhar**

**Dear Sunil Raina Rajanaka Ji,
Editor-in-Chief**

It is for the first time to observe a Kashmiri Pandit Community magazine having such a beautiful and impressive layout, full of information and knowledge contributed by well known personalities and having a professional presentation with inspiring finesse.

It must have been a great labour and mindful of service that got such a lovely result before all of us. We might have to change our opinion regarding our community magazines seeing this awful and praiseworthy effort. God bless the planners.

For almost last half a decade, I had developed a lukewarm opinion about the community organs seeing their content and presentation; it is obvious now to change the opinion.

It might also lead me to contribute, in future, to such a noble creation by AIKS.....

Great.....! Greetings.....!!

**Yours Sincerely
Ashwani Kumar Chrungoo**



Kashmir Temples & Shrines: Looming Existential Crisis

The landscape of Kashmir, dotted with magnificent Hindu religious places that bear eloquent testimony to thousands of years of the spiritual heritage, creates an idyllic spiritual ambience for the devotees. Kashmiri Pandit's (KP) physical and spiritual existence remains inextricably linked to these temples and shrines that define his faith's landmarks and symbols. Apart from being inalienable Spiritual Centres of the KP Community, shrines and temples have immense heritage value.

Historically, Hindu temples and their other worship places in the Valley have been subjected to desecration and plunder ever since the advent of Islam there. Tohfatu'l – Ahbab, a biography of Shamsu'd-Din Muhammad Araki, vividly narrates with pride how Araki and his Sufi band unleashed a mass conversion drive of KPs by the sword of Islam and how he vandalised places of their worship. Destruction of Hindu temples/shrines and converting them into *Ibadatgahs* (places of Islamic worship) were sacred religious duties. Ironically, in free India too, especially during the last four decades, burning down Hindu religious vestiges and usurping their assets in the Valley remains a 'sacred' loot. Most conservative estimates peg the worth of Hindu spiritual assets in the Valley at Rs. 30,000 Cr; Srinagar is home to assets worth Rs. 7,000 Cr. For Islamists and real-estate Czars, such a proposition offers a mouth-watering opportunity, either as a perverted

religious obligation or a business transaction. Hence a mad race to gain control of these assets.

The Recent Past:

Not delving too deep into history, the recent onslaught on KP temples started in 1986. Exposing this dangerous politico-communal game-plan of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Praveen Donthi writes, "After the locks of the Babri Masjid were opened, riots broke out in some parts of the country. While Kashmir was largely undisturbed, violence did break out in one district: Anantnag, Sayeed's stronghold. Here, several temples were desecrated and houses of Pandits were attacked. During my reporting, I heard allegations that Sayeed himself had organised the violence. Yousuf Jameel, a senior Kashmiri journalist, who covered the riots, told me that Congress was behind it because they had problems with G.M. Shah and wanted to get rid of him. I was told by Ghulam Hassan Mir, one of G. M. Shah's defectors in 1984, which "Mufti Sahib was behind it (riots)". As if on cue, this vandalism continues unabated till this date.

Present Status

A visit to various temples/ shrines/sacred springs or even *Shamshan-Bhoomis* in the Valley leaves one stunned at the brazen encroachments of their assets, either through intimidation in an environment of conflict or fraudulent sales. Land mafia, militants and their

sympathisers, politicians, sadhus, bureaucrats, police hierarchy, revenue officials, Hindu religious bodies and many a black sheep within the KP community are integral to this nexus. A walk on erstwhile Hari Parbat parikrama bears testimony to wholesale encroachment of the temple property. Three full-fledged townships have come upon the land around the seat of Sharika, Kashmir's presiding deity. Encroachers of iconic *Saptrishi Asthapan* straight facedly retort 'where else could we go?'. The connivance of the revenue officials, administration, and the militant-backed land mafia is evident. Otherwise, how could commercial buildings have come up on the land annotated *Ahl-e-Hanood* (land belonging to KP) in revenue records?

After 'purging' Kashmir of KPs and wresting their properties, grabbing their temple assets was a natural progression for the militant-backed land mafia. The current armed uprising has gifted Kashmir a lawless society wherein administration, complicit or at best indifferent, allowed trampling of these relics of KP civilisation. Politicians and the powerful in the state administration resorted to numerous

Whenever questioned, encroachers are quick to flaunt fraudulent sale deeds to claim ownership

Response of the community

Having sold their assets in Kashmir, the community exhibited callous indifference to this brazen vandalism and sale of the temple assets. This debate has degenerated into casual discussions in cosy drawing-rooms. The 'self-imposed' leadership of the community dabbles more in international politics than taking up these issues.

Some years back, a couple of young KPs driven by an urge to make a quick buck, took up restoration work of a few temples in Srinagar and its vicinity. A KP MLC funded this effort from his CDF. Since their commitment was greed-driven, cracks developed in this unholy partnership and soon this effort fell apart. Currently, an NRI KP has undertaken to reconstruct/restore some temples in the Valley. There are strong rumours that his team is involved in the sale of the assets they undertook to preserve.

Angered, a team of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) filed a Public Interest Litigation

Destruction of Hindu temples/shrines and converting them into Ibadatgahs (places of Islamic worship) were sacred religious duties. Ironically, in free India too, especially during the last four decades, burning down Hindu religious vestiges and usurping their assets in the Valley remains a 'sacred' loot.

Benami transactions to construct big commercial complexes on this land.

For pecuniary windfalls, even some fraudulent sadhus turned wheeler-dealers in this reprehensible barter of temple property. Land belonging to Srinagar's famous Baba DharmDas Mandir was sold/leased by 'Mahant' Gopal Das, the temple's caretaker. A little known organisation called *Sadhu Dharmasthan Surakshini Samiti* authorised this deal. Many more mahants/sadhus turned thugs for the very greed they are supposed to have renounced. It is common knowledge that many among them impersonated different 'visages' to sell temple properties at different places. Either on the pretext of them belonging to the Hindu faith or as a payback for their token assistance during *Amarnath Yatra*, shockingly, even some top Hindu bureaucrats patronised these thugs.

(PIL) in Supreme Court, in 2007, against the unabated sale of temple assets in the Valley. However, SC advised them to move J&K High Court for the purpose. Hearing a case of illegal sale of Baba Dharam Das Temple land, Justice Sunil Hali, in his interim order, directed Kashmir Administration to take various measures to protect these KP assets. Firstly, the administration was to ensure that revenue authorities did not issue any Farads of temple lands to anyone. Secondly, it was to take custody of properties of which no transfer was affected and, lastly, to ensure the protection of properties by demarcating and fencing their land.

Needless to mention that vested interests and communal bias in the administration stalled compliance of the court directions. While adjudicating on a contempt petition filed by these KPs, Justice Muzaffar Hussain Attar

passed severe strictures against Divisional Commissioner Kashmir for his failure to file status report about 27 temples located in Srinagar. Taking cognisance of the lackadaisical attitude of the administration, Justice Attar reminded the Divisional Commissioner of his constitutional obligation to uphold secular credentials. Even the report submitted after that indictment was wishy-washy. Notwithstanding the tardy pace of court proceedings, litigants appear committed to their cause. Now, the non-migrant team led by Sanjay Tickoo is contemplating to file a contempt petition again.

Role of Temple Committees/Samitis

Sadly, KPs who manage to take control of shrines treat them as their private fiefdom. Invariably, these people enjoy the support of prominent Hindu outfits. Often, cliques within the working committees take questionable financial and administrative decisions ratified post facto during sham AGMs. Constitutions of most *Sanasthas* are cunningly tweaked to perpetuate hold of a few or to oust those who dare question. Managements ignore repeated requests from the members to post information regarding Annual Balance Sheets, executive decisions taken, proceedings of AGMs, etc., on shrine/temple websites. Such stubbornness has led to many a legal battle; managements spend lakhs to fight courts battles. How can funds raised from the public be squandered by those who profess to dedicate themselves to social work? These dubious people have the backing of organisations aiming to gain control of all Hindu religious assets in the Valley by placing their 'own' at the helm. Some even suggest that this is part of an incomprehensible grandiose strategy to augment Hindu presence in the Valley. It can't get weirder than that.

Role of Trusts

Dharmarth Trust manages many prominent temples and shrines in the Valley. Of late, this Trust has assumed the role of a property dealer. There are a series of allegations against it of having alienated vast chunks of land belonging to Hindu Shrines for considerations that bear no legal or spiritual sanction. Allegations abound that 100 kanals of land belonging to Jawala Ji Asthapan, Khrew, has been handed over to the locals by Dharmarth Trust for reasons not even

remotely connected to any religious and social activity of the Trust. Similarly, lands belonging to Ram Chander Ji Temple, at Sathoo Barbarshah, and Partap Ishwar Temple at Khonakhan, Srinagar, have been transferred illegally. Politically powerful patrons of this Trust have usurped these religious assets with impunity.

For long, Durga Nag Trust has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. All efforts to set things right have failed, and now we have a situation where lessees and employees enjoy field day while warring Trust factions are mute onlookers. No one seems to be in control there. We need to realise that it is impossible to conjure up the 'noble' souls who mercilessly squandered Trust's assets and to hold them to account. Concerned KPs must demand wide publicity of Sh. J.L. Tiku's Enquiry Report on financial bungs by the Trustees and the managers of Durga Nag Trust. Trustees and managers have swindled crores. Unfortunately, this report is gathering dust in the KP Sabha, Jammu.

Looking Ahead

KPs need to realise their numbers don't count. They will always be taken for royal rides by all political parties. In such a scenario appealing to the administration or to the parties in power to protect their civilisational and religious heritage is to bark up the wrong tree. When Kailash Vidhya Dham, a sprawling Ashram, at Chinore, Jammu, was usurped by a thug in saffron robes, hardly any KP showed concern. Today, Prof. Mam, who spent most of his lifetime earnings to construct the Ashram, is not even allowed entry into its premises. Those KPs who have joined political outfits are there for their interests and not to address the community's concerns. Even KPs who rose to the top in bureaucratic and police hierarchy hardly exhibited any gumption to look after community's legitimate interests in the Valley.

Unless KPs imbibe the spirit of community-pride and reassert their claim to their place of birth forcefully, nothing is likely to be achieved. Just abusing one's tormentors during TV debates is a sign of weakness. Practically, much more needs to be done on the ground. Otherwise, all this is a talk in thin air. ●



Those Who Stayed Back

This opinion piece addresses the fate of the “forgotten Pandits” who did not flee the valley when terrorists and militants were violently ravaging the lands with executions, mass murders and rapes. The author describes their plight and acknowledges their singular role in ensuring continuity of the 5,000 year old Pandit culture and ethos in Kashmir.

Every Kashmiri Pandit (KP) growing up in Kashmir, whether now or earlier, has always faced a riddle. There is an inexplicable mystery about why those Pandits who leave for a better life outside of the valley very rarely look back to know about the welfare or invest in the well being of those who stayed back. Growing up in Kashmir during 50's and 60's, I heard the same concern over and over again: when will the eminent KP's who surround the PM in New Delhi ever help their brethren in the valley suffering a life of second class citizenship with a bleak future?

The distance from Delhi to Srinagar by air is around 600 kilometers and by road is a bit above 800 kilometers. Yet from the perspective of KP's living at the two ends, they may as well be living in two different worlds. The degree of disconnect appear to be immune to the size of the population of KP's in the valley or to the intensity of their plight. But one has to wonder if such a communication gap existed when over a lakh of KP's were living in the valley, why should it be a surprise that such a gulf has grown



even further once the population of those who stayed back has been reduced to under 4,000 souls

After the 1989-1990 forced exodus of KP's, at least 10% of the population – between thirty and forty thousand – stayed back in the valley. Not much was heard of these people (exceptions being prominent political or business families) and KP's outside of the valley mostly ignored them. Many displaced KP's who arrived in Jammu showed little sympathy for those who chose to stay back in the valley and it was common to hear that those who did not leave

Today, The “non-migrant” KP's are truly the torch bearers of our ancient culture, religion and customs in its indigenous embodiment in the land of our ancestors. They are our past and, if you think about it carefully, they are also our future.



would probably end up converting to Islam. While the number of KP's kept trickling out of the valley after the initial deluge, no effort was made to comprehend the psyche or plight of those who had stayed put.

The Centre asked the IB to conduct a head count of the community around the time when the Governor's Rule ended in 2006. The Security Agency counted about 18,000 KP's living in the valley then.

A rude awakening came in March 1997 when 7 KP's were killed in Sangrampura. Not long after in June 1997, a public transport bus was stopped on the Gool-Ramban road and three KP passengers were singled out and killed. In January 1998, 23 KP's were murdered in the hamlet of Wandhama. Another wipeout took place in Naadimarg in March 2003 when 24 men, women and children fell to terrorist guns. The list is long and painful. The KP community outside of the valley denounced these killings and raised a lot of hue and cry, but barring a few, no one actually visited the valley to check out the fate and plight of those who were still there.

My first visit to the valley after these events was the most humbling experience in my life that is seared in my memory for ever. Even though the government had shifted the few odd remaining KP families from remote hamlets to closest district headquarters, these unfortunate souls were living in utter fear, felt isolated, and showed physical and mental strain resulting

from insecurity, loss of contact with relatives and friends, loss of income and jobs, and fear of losing revenue records and title to their lands. In that bleak period, nearly 150 families, including some in the Srinagar district were living in impoverished conditions, eating their meals at the nearest Mosque or Gurdwara langers.

This was a time when the land mafia took its roots in Kashmir and started grabbing most of neglected lands, including unattended temple properties. To make the matters worse many valley temples were managed by Trusts which had become dysfunctional since 1990. Trustees had fled from Kashmir and some were busy selling off Trust lands under the belief that a return to the valley was highly improbable or the deal being offered by land mafia was too good to pass up. In desperation, the valley KP's began to establish new temple boards in order to maintain upkeep of some temples and sought legal intervention to block the transfer and sale of temple affiliated lands to various third parties.

We undertook, with the help of a dedicated group of valley KP's, a community wide census in the valley that was completed in June 2010. The results indicated the population of KP's to be around 4,000, with 20% living in the Srinagar district, 24% living in Anantnag district, 21% living in Pulwama district, with the rest scattered in the remaining 7 districts in the valley. The census gave us a picture of gender distribution, employment situation, marriages

conducted, births noted, and deaths recorded in the valley in previous two decades (1990-2010).

The PM's employment package for KP's was announced during PM's visit to the State in April 2008. The employment directive is now called the "Rules of 2009". The KP employment scheme was implemented through SRO 412 issued in December 2009. Surprisingly, the State Government ruled that PM's employment package only applied to "migrant KP's" and did not extend to unemployed valley based KP's. Implementation of SRO 412 has been less than perfect for displaced KP's, but it was and is meaningless to valley based KP's. Repeated efforts to request non-valley KP leaders to raise the demand of extending SRO 412 to valley based KP's (who are also mostly displaced from their true homes) has mostly fallen on deaf ears.

To the credit of valley based KP leadership who tried in every way possible to get the State Government to acknowledge their needs, the State Government finally extended the "Rules of 2009" to valley based KP's in 2017 by approving SRO 425 in October 2017, after an eight year delay. But as soon as SRO 425 was issued, the valley based Sikh community blocked its implementation in the State Court. After considerable use of legal resources, the State High Court gave a judgment in favor of KP's in March 2019. However, the State had not

implemented the judgment until it was reorganized in August 2019 and remains unimplemented today. The present effort of valley "non-migrant" KP's is to secure at least 500 jobs under "Grade 4" recruitment drive by the UT Government that will provide for 16, 847 new hires in the UT during 2020-2021.

Chances are that most non-valley based folks know nothing about the trials and travails of the 800 odd families of KP's that call Kashmir valley their home today. They are landowners tending orchards, shopkeepers, teachers in public and private schools, various government departments, hospital employees, and a few are working as real estate agents. Some work for Dharmarth and Batra Trusts, and yet others work at Yatri Niwas group of hotels catering to religious tourism. They were mostly unknown until one of them, a Sarpanch named Shri Ajay Pandita, was killed by terrorists on 8 June 2020.

The "non-migrant" KP's have survived in spite of being ignored by the rest and while their future looks bleak, they have shown persistence and resilience of the highest standards. Today, they are truly the torch bearers of our ancient culture, religion and customs in its indigenous embodiment in the land of our ancestors. They are our past and, if you think about it carefully, they are also our future. ●

Clouds up in the sky,
Where the birds fly
Is the quietest place
Where I could find solace.

I wish I could live in the clouds,
Where there is no fights and no cheering crowds.
I could live amidst the shining stars!
I could heal all my scars.

The memories I could relive.
Real fantasy it would be,
If in the clouds I could live.
I could enjoy living free.

But alas! humans have poked their nose!
I can see them in aeroplane, as it goes.
That noise interrupts me talking with the birds,
I cannot hear even a single word.

The Quietest Place



- Diya Bhat

Well at last the aeroplane is gone.
Nd I am in the party of a bird born.
And again I can live in the quietest place,
Where I find solace.



Brutalized Shrines and Temples Wailing Echoes from Kashmir

The God's own land Dev Bhoomi Kashmir, the abode of Lord Shiva and his cosmic spouse, the Goddess Parvati is famed all over the country for its antiquated Hindu religious -Spiritual grandeur, richness of its hoary past and the divine radiance. The innumerable sacred Hindu pilgrimage places, hallowed shrines, holy temples and other venerated places of worship are the prized heritage possessions of Kashmir. They are intrinsic to our socio-religious matrix as they constitute the historical markers and reminders of the glorious Hindu past of Kashmir. However, painfully enough, the year 1990 marked the most tragic and agonizing phase of the ravages and sacrilege acts committed on our age old holy shrines, ever seen before in the living memory in any part of the civilized world. The motivated and planned religious furry against the religious places was purely driven by fanaticism and radicalized mind set. The hillock shrine of the Hari Parbat, Srinagar is the most horrible tell tale case of barbarity done to the holiest of the holy shrine of Kashmir.

The Bhimsen Ganesha, popularly known as Ganishun, the first temple on the circumambulatory route of the Hari Parbat was the first to become the target of the radicalized onslaught, when it was completely burned down post 1990. It has subsequently been re-built. The most scared Mahakali temple ahead of the Ganesh temple situated in the upland area of the Devi Angan, no longer exists now. It was blasted to pieces after the gunpowder put in was ignited. The statuette of the Goddess Mahakali



along with the entire temple structure was in the process splintered into fragments to the extent that no trace of its earlier existence can be seen now. In the sanctified area of the Devi Angan, there was another hallowed place of worship known by the name of Saptrishi, which had the holy boulder and the scared chinari tree known as Paran Boin in it. It is the place, where the Saptrishis are said to have prayed to bless the residents of the reclaimed present day Srinagar city, after Satisar was drained off by Kashyap Rishi. It has presently been denuded of

its religious ambience as its entire area has illegally been grabbed and a private residential house has come up there. Amber Kouloun Mandir is the next sacred spot, which became the target of religious outrage. The temple along with its adjacent two storied Dharamshala were vandalized and put on fire. The idols present in it were also pulled down and broken into pieces. The temple has been rebuilt now but it's Dharamshala continues to be visible in its burned state. The temple land at the basement level, towards the Warris Khanun chah (now converted into Badam Warri) has been encroached upon and converted into a graveyard. A two storied house, commonly known as Gosain Building stood before the above temple prior to the year 1990. It had a vast courtyard of about two kanals. In its place, a concrete building has now come up. Near the Hari / Siddhi Laxmi shrine and opposite the Gosain building existed a two storied high Dharamshala on the 6 Marlas of land. It was owned by the Shri Pokhribal Shrine management. It does not exist now as it has been raised to the ground by none other than the state government itself during the road widening. The Shrine management was neither informed prior to its dismantling nor any compensation has been given for the building bulldozed and the land acquired by it.

In the close vicinity of the Gosain building towards its left side foreground, there was an open space, measuring about 1 Kanal. It had an old chinar tree in it, reverentially called as the Bhajan Boin. In the collective community memory, the area and the chinar tree were associated with the legendary community icon Shri Kashyap Bandhu and the acknowledged social reformer Shri Chamba Nath. They used to organize the congregational community meets during the social reform movement launched by them on every Sunday which Kashyap Bandhu had renamed as Sharika-waar. The assembled audience would engage themselves in the singing of the bhajans during the organised meets at this very

place. It has unlawfully been grabbed by the state Government and converted into a public park without having paid any compensation to the shrine management. The holy hillock land in the Devi Angan towards the entry gate of the Sangeen Darwaza had a three storied house of Shri Roshan Lal Zutshi on three kanals of leased land of the shrine prior to our exodus. In its place, today stands a private institution by the name of Greenland school. The school owner has excavated a large portion of the hillock ridge on the old traditional Parikrama from the Chakrishwar side. An FIR against it was logged at the Nowhatta Police station, as it constitutes a breach of law under the provisions of Ecology and Environment preservation act of the state but agonizingly enough neither any action was taken nor the land grabbed was restored back to the shrine. The excavated land of the Hillock side has been added to the school Playground.

It is with excruciating pain to state that the entire traditional Parikrama of the Hari Parbat right from the Lord Ganesh's temple at Baachi Baron to the exit spot near the erstwhile Gosain building has been encroached upon. In its place, innumerable unauthorized houses have come up on the shrine land. Shamefully enough, the government, which is supposed to protect and safeguard the religious shrines of the minorities, has looked aside and has failed to dismantle the illegal constructions. It is also distressing to state that the old entry gate leading to the Chakrishwar from the Sangeen Darwaza near the BSNL building has been pulled down by the Srinagar municipality sometime back. The gate had sentimental association with the community as its top arch carried an eulogizing couplet in the Nastaliq written by the famous saint Swami



Photo Courtesy by Sh. Chander M Bhat

“

The motivated and planned religious furry against the religious places was purely driven by fanaticism and radicalized mind set.”

Krishan kar. Next on the Parikrama comes the Vamadev Shrine, which before our exodus existed adjacent to the Amber koulén Mandir. It had an open space of about one and a half kanals of land. The said shrine post exodus stands completely vandalized as no trace of it can be seen now. It has been reduced to a mere open space and has become a dumping ground for the garbage and household refuse. The other scared shrine of Pokhribal also did not escape the planned desecration. It's sacred pond, the Amrit Kund was defiled and its sanctity dishonored as rubble, stones and mud was put into it in a bid to fill it up. The Murtis enshrined there were also defaced and broken. The two Dharamshala's situated in the shrine complex were ransacked and damaged. The store items ranging from the costly Hawan utensils of the brass alloy, floor furnishing, beddings, water pump and the generator were stolen. In the initial phase of militancy, even the Dharamshala's were occupied by the local residents. They were forced to vacate only after the BSF had moved in the shrine. It is presently guarded by the CRPF. The shrine along with the Dharamshala's has now been renovated by the Samaj Sewak Sanasthas. It is also pertinent to inform that the community has about 36 kanals of land lying adjacent to the Pokhribal shrine on the upland near the small Sikh settlement. The prime land worth crores of rupees belongs to the Durganath Trust management. An ancient cremation ground spread on about 4 kanals of land also exists near it. The Shri Pokhribal shrine has also about 14 kanals of water way area in the Dal Lake extending from the Sikh Mohalla, Pokhribal to the Bahraar area. In the year 2017-18, the same has been taken over by the Lake's and Waterways Development Authority Srinagar. But sadly enough, the shrine management has not been compensated so far

and the sale deed done with the Pokhribal management continues to be dishonored though the local residents were compensated. The Pokhribal shrine was heavily damaged during the devastating floods in the recent past. But prejudicially enough, no aid was given to the shrine even though all others were compensated.

Hanuman Mandir was the last sacred temple on the Parikrama passage. It was also burned and leveled to the ground and presently nothing of the erstwhile temple structure can be seen now. The said temple had about 66 kanals of land on its name located on the adjacent highland area. An erstwhile terrorist turned broker of Sumbal Sonwari is said to have sold most of its land, where a residential colony has come up. A case regarding the same was lodged but without any remedial effect. It is also reported that the documents pertaining to the said land have been removed from the revenue records. The Shiv temple at the entry passage from Hawal side near the BSNL building has also been demolished. The uncovered Shiv-ling lying in the open stands enclosed by tin sheets now. Painfully enough it is congested with refuge and litter thrown by the surrounding residents. The inside of the Hari Parbat shrine complex before our exodus had about 23 Kashmiri Pandit houses. They were constructed on the plots allotted and leased out to them by the shrine management. Almost all of them have been demolished by the new owners and new residential houses have come up at their places. It is baffling to comprehend as to how a sale deed can be done for the temple land which had been leased out. The outer rim of the Devi Angan before our forced displacement had about 8 structures, where the devotees would perform the ritualistic Pooja for the Tehar (yellow colored rice) offering. All of them have been completely destroyed leaving no trace of their earlier existence. Lastly, the shameless intolerance displayed by the state government can be evidenced by the fact that the plaques regarding the renaming of the Hari Parbat as Kohi Maran have been installed by the Archaeological department of the state government both at the base of the Chakrishwar staircase and at the Ram koulén Mandir. ●

(To be continued).....



Rainawari Temple Which Was Guttled Down

Vaital Bhairava temple complex stands no more. The Mulberry tree which was believed to be the symbolic manifestation of deity Bhairava lies fallen on the ground from the time it was burnt and uprooted by the terrorists.

Vaital Bhairava Mandir at Motiyar, Rainawari was not only a Bhairava temple for the inhabitants of Rainawari. It was a vibrant center for social, cultural activities and playfield for youth from mid-1954 till Pakistan-trained terrorists hounded out the Kashmiri Hindu minorities from the valley in 1989-90. The temple structure and complex were set on fire and the symbols of deities were vandalized. Its location on the bank of the water canal and its surrounding was enchanting. The panoramic overview of Shankaracharya temple hillock, above the cluster of treetops of willows planted on long strips of the islands on either side of the waterways was bewitching. Varieties of bird species both migratory and non-

migratory had their nestling among the dense trees which was audible in the stillness of mornings and evenings with their notes and twittering. Late C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, pioneer of modern education in Kashmir, would often make it a point to sit on the Vaital Bhairava ghat to enjoy the view while being in the company of late Master Samsar Chand Kaul, an ornithologist. The Temple enclave site housed Dramatic stage, Dharamshala, Hawanshala, Women welfare centre and a room apartment for late Swami Kartik Anand with a spacious space for religious socio festivities. It provided an open ground for the youth to play sports. Kashmiri Pandit worked selflessly for decades to establish a vibrant cultural and religious

center commonly called Vaital Bhairava Kala Mandir. The Kala mandir became popular in Rainawari after it staged its first Krishen Janam in the early 1954.

The staging of drama shows for weeks together was managed, maintained and handled by local gifted actors with missionary zeal. Every evening people including Muslims from neighbouring localities and Sikhs from Kathi Darwaza thronged the premises to witness the shows after paying paltry money as entry tickets. The stage artists were not trained in any institute based in the country but they were all imbued with an inborn aptitude for creative art. None of these actors, stage artists, musicians, make-up men, stage curtain boys, prompters, script and dialogue writers or electricians were paid nor did they ever demand any charges for their performance. It was not only Hindu religious drama of Krishna Janam that was staged but also historical dramas like Raja Harichandra, Habba Khatoon and social dramas like Aulad and Satrath were displayed in series from the day of starting from the birthday of Lord Krishna, the Janamashtami.

After the culmination of each stage show, the actors and artists were entertained with Mugal Chai and Tailvor by the committee of the temple. It was a fortnight of festivity for the inhabitants of all the Mohalla before the fall of autumn in Kashmir. The ticket money collected from each show was donated to the account of the Vaital Bhairava Mandir Committee for which open elections were held under the auspices of the noble and dignified personality of the area annually. The Kala Mandir had the privilege of visiting two State Cabinet Ministers, Late Shri Shyam Lal Saraf and late Harbajan Singh of late G.M Bakshi, former PM of Jammu and Kashmir as guests to watch the drama show in 1956-57. It was astonishing for Ministers to note all female characters in the dramas were played by Male members of the Kala Mandir. Hosting of yearly dramatic shows by artists was consecutively programmed in successive years uninterrupted.

Followers living within the range of the deity had tremendous belief in Vaital Bhairava in protecting them from the wicked and resting the weary. Two birthdays of Vaital Bhairava were celebrated. One was in spring and the second one



in winter as Vaital-Sehestame. Its observance was by offering cooked yellow rice with a mix of cooked sheep liver and potatoes or cooked cheese – potatoes or cooked dry fish and submitting before the trunk of huge Mulberry tree pasted with thick Sindoor (Vermilion) pasted around the trunk of the tree, superimposed with girdled colourful threads as the sanctified deity of Vaital Bhairava. Later, the offered plate of mixed yellow rice and spicy gravy was distributed among the devotees. Handful of the mix was put in the palms of the gathered people outside the temple. An essential part of the offering was to shoot up pieces of the lung of a sheep to the kites hovering over the conical top of the temple. The darting down of the kites diagonally, criss crossing among themselves to catch the mutton piece in the air in their paws was an eye-catching phenomenon. Their accuracy, speed and prying gaze was like a fighter bomber. Every temple visitor would consider it one's obligatory duty to get a forehead marked with a vermilion dot from erudite Pandit Ji the officiating priest.

In December of Kashmir some devotees from Rainawari, wrapped in woolen blankets and Pheran, braving the chilly winds splashing their faces on Vaital-Sehestama would pay a visit to Budh Vaital by ferrying across the waterways in open rowing boats. Buddha Vaital was away from the shores of Rainawari in the middle of backwaters between lake and Budh Mandir, yarbal, Kralyar. Short trip was made to pay obeisance at the altar. It was in dilapidated condition. Since the accessibility to this temple was limited to occasional visits only by ferry boats, it could not be maintained. It remained neglected and in dilapidated condition resulting in the encroachment of a portion of its land by a boatman anchored around the shrine. Another Vaital site was also situated on an island along the waterway to Nehru Park from Rainawari, just opposite to Mattoo and Nakhasi family houses. This Vaital Bhairava was locally called as Charri (Sparrow) Vaital, because of its small shape and shelter.

Solemnization of Nav Durga Puja in Chaitra and Sharad with all sanctity and religious fervor within the Vaital Bhairava complex was regular religious feature conducted by Late Swami Kartik Anand (Kandaswami originally from District Salem Tamilnadu). Swami Ji came to Vaital Bhairava Temple in 1954-55 and became permanent indweller of the temple till he was forced to leave in Jan 1990. Both of these ceremonies were special days of fasting, praying and chanting of hymns of Goddess for the Hindus of the vicinity. Followers subscribed for the festival and Hawan in cash and kind as per their wish and capacity to the Swamiji during these nine days of Navratri. Swami Ji had his dedicated disciples, who were

benefited by Swami Ji's kindness. In the morning and evening, the sanctum sanctorum was crowded by the believers. The loud chanting of mantra echoed around in the area as if it was transmitted from heaven. And on the last day of the Puja, the lovers from far and wide were served Prashad after Hawan was over. Vaital Bhairava was virtually a transit ashram for many saints and seers of acclaim from other parts of the country. Usually, groups of Sadhus halted in the complex during Amarnath pilgrimage.

For the upkeep of the temple and maintenance of its other complex, the monthly collection from door to door was the only means for fundraising. In preceding years, the Temple committee felt shrinkage in its fund collection, as a good number of the families were reluctant to pay monthly contributions due to their paucity of money at their disposal. To overcome financial crunch, the temple committee proposed schemes of renting out crockery, cutlery and kitchen articles to marriage parties during the season to generate resources. Another viable plan was to open a tailoring centre for stitching day to day clothes for ladies and gents for sale at a small scale. For creating the funds required for these projects, the committee members approached some individuals for an



extra amount to make up the minimum money for the start of the plans. Within three months, the committee was in a position to start both of their plans and canvassed among the residents in Rainawari about the availability of marriage items on rent. The Vaital Bhairava Committee got a good response from the marriage families, out of which the committee earned money enough to purchase six good quality tailoring machines for stitching of clothes from Khadi

cloth. But the whole self employment-generating program got shattered due to the eruption of terrorism in the valley.

The Divine Life Society was holding a weekly session of learning of the Bhagavat Geeta on Sundays in one of the complexes of Vaital Bhairava. These Divine classes were conducted by late Sh. GovindaJoo Kissu, a scholarly person. Our elderly persons, parents with aptitude for divine pursuit and bent for grasping the Hindu philosophy were eager attendants in it. Occasionally, erudite Vedantic preachers were to address the society members from time to time. Besides this all activities, the other interesting feature was the rush of people on the Vaital yarbal, irrespective of age and gender on Sunday. Women from the nearby houses, with packs of their clothes for washing were to engage a good portion of the steps on the canal ghat near the water level. The younger group was embroiled in their own swimming in

the canal or in some yogic exercise tips given by Swami Ji. Women among themselves were getting absorbed in gossip for long hours.

That Vaital Bhairava temple complex stands no more. The Mulberry tree which was believed to be the symbolic manifestation of deity Bhairava lies fallen on the ground from the time it was burnt and uprooted by the terrorists. The stone idols were destroyed and dumped into the adjoining canal. The waterway that ran by the side of the temple is filled now to pave way for public traffic. The marriage party articles stored in the complex and the tailoring machines were looted by anti-social elements. Even the wooden beams and timber stored for an erection of a new shed for Hawanshala were robbed.

It is not now as it hath been of yore;

Turn wheresoever's I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

- William Wordsworth

Often, I think to myself in Solitude
My thoughts meandering over myriads of faces
Changing with vicissitudes from abode to abode
Sometimes set in a physical habitation
And sometimes surrounded in mental dwellings
Carrying with them different meanings
Symbolizing extreme emotions
Sometimes making one experience utter joyousness in one's life
And sometimes making one endure stark pain surrounded
by bleak darkness from which there is no hope
It's true, 'one creates Heaven or Hell in one's mind here on earth'.

Why is it me who has these mixed passions or are they Universal?
Is falling into depths of hopelessness a Cardinal sin like Satan's who fell
into depths of Hell from the heights of Glory given by God!
And then rising like Phoenix on the wings of Icarus into the glorious light of
Lord never to fall into darkness of night ever.
Does one always fluctuate between these two sentiments?
Not realizing which state of mind his individual instincts lead him to,
Or is it his surrounding situation which is more responsible for his emotions

I still wonder which state of mind rules me the most
The blissful serenity or the morbid negativity.
Sometimes I am wonderous and I think aloud
And babble to myself the cause of this paradoxical set of feelings
I turn to my inner self for soul searching and in vain find no true answer.
Sometimes I wonder in Solitude!

A PEN-NY WORTH OF THOUGHTS



- Shailaja Wanchoo



Jagan Nath Bhairava of Village Achan



Photo Courtesy : Sh. Chander M Bhat

*Achyan Cham Chyani maaymato
Har jaay te saran chus chyani tsaymato
Tatya lol ikequnya zandwar wathi
Katya rozi krardilmea by woymato
Mai gachi ACHAN wuniachanachi joymato*

The worship of the village guardian deities “Raza Sahib” is most ancient form of the Indian religion. This worship of the village Deity, or Raza Sahib, as it is called in Kashmiri, forms an important part of the conglomerate of religious beliefs, customs, and ceremonies which are generally classed together under the term Hinduism. In almost every village the Raza Sahib is periodically worshipped and

propitiated. Shiva and Vishnu may be more dignified beings, but the village deity is regarded as a more present help in trouble, and is more intimately concerned with the happiness and prosperity of the villagers.

The origin of this form of Hinduism is lost in antiquity but it is certain that it represents a pre Aryan cult of the Dravidian people, more or less modified in various parts of North India by Brahmanical influence; and some details of the ceremonies seem to point back to a tokenistic stage of religion. The normal function of the Raza Sahib is the guardianship of the village, but many of them are believed to have other powers, especially in relation to disease and calamity.

Achan village has probably derived its name from Sanskrit word Akhan meaning immortal. It may have been that village contained unending capability or harvest and unending Santosh to the people living there in.

The village deities and their worship are widely different from the popular Hindu deities, Siva and Vishnu, and the worship that centres in the great Hindu temples.

Shiva and Vishnu represent forces of nature: Shiva symbolizes the power of destruction and the idea of life through death, Vishnu the power of preservation and the idea of salvation. Both these Gods and the system of religion connected with them are the outcome of philosophic reflection on the universe as a whole. But the village deities, on the other hand, have no relation to the Universe. They are related, not to great world forces, but to such simple facts as cholera, cattle disease etc.

The village deities are almost universally worshipped with annual sacrifices and in Kashmir the same practice continued. The sacrifice of lamb, in Kashmiri "Raza Kath" was offered to the village deity or Raza Sahib when the wish made by a villager especially the Pandits was fulfilled. The lamb so sacrificed was then cooked without any spices and distributed amongst the villagers. When the lamb is sacrificed the blood of the lamb is collected in an earthen pot called "Tok" in Kashmiri and the blood is added to flour to make a paste and this paste is applied to the lid of the pot in which the dish is prepared. All the parts of the lamb are prepared including the legs etc. The member who has performed the sacrifice retains big chunk of the dish.

There is a temple of Jagan Nath Bairav at Village Achan, one of the brothers of AasthBairav. The detail of the eight Bairav with place of residence is as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| a) Shri Jagan Nath | Village Achan |
| b) Shri Nandkisher | Village Sumbal |
| c) Shri Ganganand | Village Mattan |
| d) Shri Kakvishal | Village Pargachu |
| e) Shri Jeevan Nath | Village Ladhoo |
| f) Shri Mongleshwar | Village Sirnoo |
| g) Shri Omkar Nath | Village Drussu |
| h) Shri Neilkanth | Village Murran |

Bhairava of village Achan, Shri Jagan Nath is the eldest one and that of village Murran Shri Neilkanth is the youngest one. Shri Keshev Nath was the grandfather of the Ashtha Bhairava. Raza Sahib of Achan and Sirnoo were vegetarian and rest were non-vegetarian.

Village Achan is in Pulwama and is 12 km away from the district headquarter. Achan

village has probably derived its name from Sanskrit word Akhan meaning immortal. It may have been that village contained unending capability or harvest and unending Santosh to the people living there in. This Akhan must have stood to what it is currently known by the name Achan. Village has its own history to explain. Its topographical situation give it the distinction of getting maximum period of sunshine during the day and thereby larger amount of solar energy to ignite life in this village or magical coincidence with other adjoining villages.

There were some 30 Kashmiri Pandit families living in Achan. 28 families have migrated to other parts of India during mass exodus. Two families have held back despite all odds against them.

There is a temple dedicated to Shri Jagan Nath Bhairava situated in this village. Shri Jagannath is a village deity. This temple was looked after by Swami Jagannath Sewa Dal. The families staying back at Achan worked tirelessly and constructed a boundary wall around 5 kanal area of temple land. The families were assisted by State Government. The shrine place is famous for offerings of sacrifice of healthy sheep to the presiding deity of village and sacrificial ceremony was called RAZA KATH in local language. Even Shri Jagan Nath Bhairava is said to be a vegetarian yet the offering made by the people to express gratitude towards his divine help was heartily being accepted by him. People from adjoining villages would also make offering this way to show faith in the solidarity provided by the village deity.

There was a temple and two dharamshalas in the walled area of the shrine besides a fresh water spring near the temple. Unfortunately both the temple and dharamshalas were burnt during Chari Sharif skirmishes. The construction of temple dates back to year 1946-47. It is said that an idol of the period of King Richen Shah was excavated from the sight while construction work was carried out in respect of the temple and the idol was handed over by the local Kashmiri Pandits to State Govt. authorities and the same is now pleasant treasure of Srinagar museum.

The Bhairava Asthapan attracted many people to seek path of meditation and one Swami Kak practiced saadhana over here and after finding the path of celibacy he opted to shift to Kokernag. ●



Alliance's U-Turn on DDC Election

The angst expressed by the originators of Gupkar Declaration I and II need to thin out and become perceptual. Leaders long in seats of power tend to become an institution by default for good or mundane whatever. The Gupkar Gang, as their detractors would like to call them, belong to that specie of humanity.

Reconsidering the blunder of boycotting Panchayat elections previously, the opposition parties have changed the course of their

democracy and especially for Kashmir where democracy and secularism have received a strong setback owing to militancy. Participation in the DDC elections would pave the way for further political interaction in the Union Territory and possibly the chances may open up for the restoration of the historical State of Jammu&Kashmir. Though one cannot predict whether the special status will be restored, nevertheless, the State will certainly work in a much improved political environment. It is



approach to the ongoing political scenario in Kashmir. This we presume is a healthy sign because what can be achieved through the normal democratic process cannot be achieved through unleashing of violence.

We consider it a good move by the Gupkar Alliance to jump into the mainstream and strengthen the democratic process. This also means that the militants will be forced to re-assess their line of action and come to a table for talks.

We consider it a healthy sign for the Indian

likely to reduce corruption that has so venomously crept into the vitals of society.

When will the State be restored its previous status is not easy to predict but one thing is clear that the administration, development, law and order situation and security etc. all these areas will get a new facelift. In particular, tourism will attain new dimensions if we take the plans and programmes of the government into consideration.

However, the incumbent civilian

government in the restored State will have to cut its cloth according to its size. Delivery will be the key and final proof of its performance. The days of dynastic and arbitrary rule are gone forever and can never return. Those used to the general look of the State Exchequer will find their perfidy coming to naught.

If these ideals are what the Gupkar Alliance intends to pursue, its policy will certainly receive accolades. But the question is will the elected civilian government have the courage to take on the militants and their threats and intimidation though of course, the security forces will cow them down everywhere and every time. The local leadership has a great responsibility of steering the ship of the state through disturbed waters. Fortunately for them, the central government is forthcoming with funds and plans that bring about a revolution in the economic life of the state.

The element of self-abnegation, expected of politicians seldom gets back benched. Ultimately, the connection between them and the demos they represent shrinks to a small coterie whose members tend to turn aggressive, worshippers of personality cult and finally goons and cronies with invidious influence in the power structure.

Kashmir Valley leaders are usually obsessed with local partisan politics and a narrow prism to look at the far-reaching consequences of being an entity of the world's largest secular democracy. How amusing that Kashmir's most popular leader Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah understood the benefits of a secular democracy for a region in which the Muslims formed as big a minority as to pass for almost an overwhelming group in the sense of adult franchise arrangement. But on the other hand, he erroneously concluded that his popularity, power knob and ego would remain secured and intact only if he pandered guardedly to premier community support in narrow parameters. It meant he was trying to have the best of both the worlds without making conspicuous sacrifices

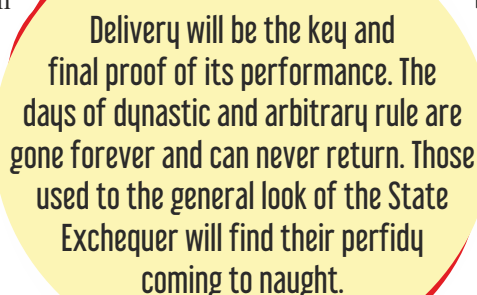
for the advantages he was seeking. The undisclosed agenda of 1952 Nehru-Sheikh Accord became the catalyst to the sordid narrative of August 1953.

Thereafter, the gradual downslide of State – Centre relations emerged as a new gamut on J&K political platform. In the beginning, Kashmir valley masses did not make out the real cause of the Sheikh's simmering estrangement with New Delhi in the early 1950s although sporadic incidents of limited civilian dissatisfaction could be felt. Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad, who succeeded the Sheikh in 1953 A.D, entreated himself to the masses of people in the valley and could also handle New Delhi with requisite dexterity. He proved himself to be the man of the masses and his unforgettable contribution towards the development of J&K, subscribing to nationalist politics and abiding secularist ideology.

But alas! The Kamarajing of Bakhshi proved such a Himalayan blunder as makes Kashmir bleed ever since. The truth is that India lost Kashmir the day when the Bakhshi was removed more by caprice than by essential political pragmatism and statesmanship.

A big fissure developed in the state-centre relationship. No chief minister, thereafter, nor even Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, could restore the crucial and expanded link because he posed as an icon of the Leftists bereft of the quality of mass leadership which was the domain of his predecessor. With Leftists playing the very unimpressive class and sectarian role in the country, they influenced Nehru who ousted some more popular contemporary regional leaders in whom he felt the potential of upstaging their popularity. The Bakhshi was trapped.

The second stint of the Sheikh, 1975 to 1982, contrived through gross manipulation of democratic procedure was a different story. His fake secularism had vanished altogether; he got bogged with international Islamic politics; he



Delivery will be the key and final proof of its performance. The days of dynastic and arbitrary rule are gone forever and can never return. Those used to the general look of the State Exchequer will find their perfidy coming to naught.

The dynastic rule in Kashmir focused on its primary objective of retaining power and self-aggrandizement and the camp followers leaving no stone unturned to promote its narrow-minded objective by means fair or foul.

established liaison with the Saudis through Pakistani conduits and brushed aside local issues essentially of development, of streamlining relations with New Delhi and of reforming the ideological assault led by *Jamaat-i-Islami* of Kashmir. He could not control the aggressive rather militant cadres of Plebiscite Front from indulging in hooliganism and public disorder just because in his physical absence from the scene owing to incarceration his bigoted lieutenant Mirza Afzal Baig left no stone unturned to cement the link between *Jamaat-i-Islami* and the Plebiscite Front essentially based in Pulwama district of South Kashmir and Sopor town in North Kashmir at whose hinterland borders touched with PoK via Kupwara.

After the Sheikh's demise in 1982, National Conference remained the premier mainstream political party in Kashmir with Farooq Abdullah, the second son of the Sheikh at the driver's seat. I will not go into the details of the sordid role of Farooq and his party in deliberately overlooking or underestimating the dangers of parochial politics in a sensitive border state torn by internal conflicts or political myopia and looming external threats. Although Farooq did not overtly socialize with the *Jamaat-i-Islami* of Kashmir, yet he knew them and declined to cut them to their size. To alley their misconception about him, he regularized thousands of *darsgahs* meaning exclusive *Jamaat* seminaries and absorbed thousands of their teachers into government school education department without realizing how effective they would be in polarizing Kashmirian society vertically and subverting the social fabric and administrative functionality. Most of the bureaucrats who rose to senior administrative positions were in one way or the other the products of these seminaries that had done successful brainwashing experiments on them.

The situation became alarming for Farooq and his party when the political wing of the *Jamaat-i-Islami* known as Muslim United Front (MUF) actively participated in the assembly elections in 1986 and stunned the NC by leading in some constituencies in Srinagar especially the

Magarmal Bagh. How NC goons under instructions from party echelons misbehaved and manhandled the winning MUF candidates and intimidated the returning officers as well, were attributed by the politically conscious Kashmiri Muslim voters as the underhand game of New Delhi in which it showed reluctance to popularize Kashmir political play game. This was the alienation point for them which did not look back any more. Therefore, after the MUF episode, Kashmir politics went through a sea change. ISI of Pakistan had won the first round. Farooq became fully conscious that his political survival had to be more reliant on support from the local influential *Jammat* rather than New Delhi.

It was sheer political shortsightedness of New Delhi (Congress) to have allowed the critical situation in Kashmir drift to a dangerous course. But Congress had from very early days of Kashmir's accession to India begun to feel that its interests were safe in the Kashmir proxy (the Sheikh dynasty). That ultimately proved the fundamental cause of exasperation for the valley-based populace and continues till date.

The dynastic rule in Kashmir focused on its primary objective of retaining power and self-aggrandizement and the camp followers leaving no stone unturned to promote its narrow-minded objective by means fair or foul. The bureaucracy understood how much Kashmir politics has got personalized spread out their fangs and hence the general loot in which the politicians, ministers and other beneficiaries flourished day and night. Their arrogance rose to the level that they refused submitting utilization certificates for the huge funds sanctioned by the centre under various central schemes and there was no action for dereliction of duty. Highly controversial laws that sullied rights and interests of the general public were enacted like the Roshni Act which benefitted a small group of feudal lords but ignored the rights of the common man. Corruption became rampant much more during the tenure of Farooq's son. That is what usually happens under the dynastic rule. ●



Kashmir Has Changed

Since the abrogation of Article 370 the Union Territory has witnessed multiple changes. Apart from initiating development, the centre, in its latest decision, has amended land laws enabling people from outside the state to purchase non-agricultural land within municipal limits. It has also permitted contract farming and enabled setting up of Industrial councils. The erstwhile leaders, who dominated Kashmir politics, have viewed this decision as an affront to their power and control. They have been further disillusioned because they were neither consulted nor taken into confidence, implying the centre considers them as having lived their prime. In their opinion, this is the first step in changing demography of the region. Omar Abdullah criticized this decision, stating, 'J and K has been put up for sale and left bereft of any basic protections.' He also expressed fears of demographic changes. He was speaking on behalf of the Gupkar Declaration.

'The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' was announced by Farooq Abdullah on 15 Oct. Major valley political leaders met at his residence after the release of Mehbooba Mufti and decided to oppose the centre as one entity. Omar Abdullah also sought to induct members from Kargil into the alliance. The alliance currently comprises of the NC, PDP, CPI, CPM, People's Conference and other small insignificant regional parties. Farooq announced that they will work together to restore the special status of J and K, which was revoked in Aug last year.

In order to register their protest senior political leaders passed comments which caused

further embarrassment to their already diminishing status. Mehbooba Mufti commented that she would not contest elections nor unfurl the tricolour till the constitutional changes enforced last year was rolled back and the Kashmir flag reinstated. In all the time she was the Chief Minister, there is no record of her unfurling the Kashmir Flag. Her sudden love for the flag emerged after the status was revoked. In anger, members of her party from Jammu resigned and the national flag unfurled from her party office in Jammu.

Farooq stated in a TV interview that Kashmiris 'do not feel or want to be Indian' and they would rather prefer to be ruled by China. He also mentioned that Kashmiris support the Chinese in the current ongoing border crisis. Post strong criticism, the NC sought to offset national anger by stating that he had been misquoted.

Kashmiri politicians in the last year have been side lined. They have lost their voice and ability to influence local public. They are currently clutching at straws hoping to regain some semblance of political authority and power which they exercised in earlier days. Hence, these comments must be viewed as a cry for attention, an attempt to force the centre to involve them in some manner in future discussions, a mistake the centre is unlikely to commit. Kashmir has witnessed long bouts of central rule. However, never have Kashmiri politicians been made to feel so helpless, incapable and isolated as at the current time.

The Hurriyat had always considered itself as there representative of the masses and even demanded that it be a party to tripartite talks

involving India and Pakistan. It always had an anti-India and pro-Pakistan bias and was funded by Pakistan through the hawala network. Thus, its collection of overground workers and gangsters dominated the region and enforced Hurriyat's diktat. It was also in league with local political parties.

In recent times, the Hurriyat has been made redundant, funding stopped, many members behind bars and those free have had their movements curtailed. The withdrawal of their personal security has also impacted their freedom. Its power to enforce violence and strikes has immensely receded. Its paid overground workers are now underground. Terrorism has been largely curbed across the state.

Thus, with no political activity and a powerless Hurriyat, the valley has witnessed a year of relative peace and some levels of development. Local elections have given power of development to the population, which was

India would stage a false flag operation on Kashmir has found no takers. Pakistan has realised that it is to their benefit to accept reality, which they cannot do easily, after feeding its population a different narrative for seventy years.

The BJP has emerged as a major force in the Union Territory. Realising this, terrorists have begun targeting its members. Its membership has risen from 4.5 to 7 Lakhs, of which 2.5 Lakhs are in the valley itself. They currently have 14 Municipal Councils and 63 block development chairpersons. In addition, in Kashmir alone they have 1266 panches and Sarpanchs. They will now be a major challenge to traditional valley political parties.

The government has, over the past year, issued over four and a half lakh domicile certificates including to 3.7 lakh permanent residents, who were denied benefits because of article 35A. It has implemented central reservations and seventh pay commission salaries, which had not been accepted by earlier

The common man has realised that during the rule by valley political parties he was exploited for personal gains of local politicians, while being denied benefits accruing from central schemes.

denied to them earlier. Scales of violence support to terrorism and protests have reduced. Infiltration is down to a trickle forcing Pak to drop arms and ammunition by drones and push narcoterrorism as an alternative.

During the same period, the common man has realised that during the rule by valley political parties he was exploited for personal gains of local politicians, while being denied benefits accruing from central schemes. He is aware of palatial residences of politicians constructed by diverting development funds meant for his benefit. Hence, he would prefer direct central rule than a reversion of manipulative politics.

Pakistan has been left high and dry. It is only screaming in empty desolate halls. The strong message that J&K is no longer on the discussion table has caused internal panic. Imran crying in every international forum that

state governments. None of these can now be rolled back. The delineation exercise currently underway would provide a true representation in running of the UT. Things can only move forward, never in reverse.

It is in this environment that recently released political leaders now find themselves in. They no longer possess the power they once had. Their masks have been removed. If the PDP and NC leaders assume that they would gain sympathy for their incarceration, then they are living in a fool's paradise.

The only logical way forward is that instead of continuing to be stumbling blocks for development of the UT, valley based political parties must look to join hands for its betterment. They must now seek to push the region forward, rather than reverse. The transition is well on its way, with no turning back. It would be best if they join the bandwagon, rather than attempting to challenge it. ●



The Terrorist, The Teacher, A Child and Her Father : **Kafir-Phobia, A Silent Crime**

On Friday, 14 October, 2020, Abdoulakh Anzarov, 19, a Chechen refugee, beheaded geography teacher, Samuel Paty, in broad daylight on his way home from work in Corflans Sainte Honorine. His crime: offending the Prophet. Paty taught French children about Charlie Hebdo and showed a

They include freedom of thought, of conscience, to speak, to believe or not believe. It is the reverse for the killer of Samuel Paty. His beliefs discriminated against those deemed 'non-believers'. His conscience, thought and actions were bound by a singular obsession. He was possessed by something nobody can measure,



Painting by Pankaj Raina

cartoon. This was nothing unusual, a standard lesson of national curriculum on the principles of liberty. The statue of liberty, a gift of France to America, is a symbol of freedom, which is at the heart of secular democratic principles. These principles are shared by many western nations.

the tiniest of all things, an idea. It is the charge of insulting a man, not even a God, that which to many, who have since filled the streets in support of the crime, warrants death for blasphemy.

In France, blasphemy has not been a crime

since 1818. It was removed as part of the Reformation, where the Church and State were separated, and it was briefly restored in late 18th CE, only to be again, demolished. This law did not matter to the terrorist, nor to many others in his networks. According to media reports, 14 people were arrested. He accused the President, Macron for being a leader of Hell Hounds, praised Allah, and posted the victim's head on social media.

The response of Macron called the assassination an attack on “the values of the Republic, its light, and the possibility to make all children, no matter what their religion...to make them free citizens”. He called that battle, an “existential one.” He further claimed that Islam was in crisis around the world. This point is from an expert report on the rise of radicalisation in France: “As Salafism essentially appears when Muslims go through religious and temporal crises, many scholars and believers have tried to use this path to revitalise Islam.” (Adraouni, M. 2014. Radical Milieus and Salafis Movements in France: Ideologies, Practices, Relationships with Society and Political Visions).

court for their role in a terror attack upon and around the magazine's offices. It took the lives of 17 people over the span of three days in January 2015. Whilst three of the killers were shot, the remaining offenders were considered “not little helpers”, according to anti-terror prosecutor, Jean-Francis Ricard. They were instrumental to the financing, arrangements, materials, and the logistics of the attack.

A number of actors demonstrated the systemic nature of the beheading of Samuel Paty, and the soft parameters, distinguishing extremist from moderate, or “mainstream Islam”. The first case is a child, who had not left the room to avoid offence. She reported the cartoon to her father, Brahim Chnina, and accused the teacher of displaying 'pornography'. Chnina complained to the police, demanding action against Paty, upon which Paty filed for defamation. When a You Tube video, made by Chnina, named the school and teacher, demanding the Muslim community 'mobilise', communal tensions escalated. This was followed by dissemination of incitement material by a Mosque run by a known Islamist,

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On 29 October, in another attack in Notre Dame Church in Nice, three people were slaughtered, one virtually beheaded from the throat, as the attacker shouted Allah-u-Akhbar repeatedly, even after two sets of sedation. On the 3rd of November, near a synagogue in Vienna, five were killed and fifteen injured when another Islamist, linked to IS, attacked citizens out in the restaurant district, enjoying a last evening prior to a Covid lockdown. The attacks came in the wake of a reprint by Charlie Hebdo of the satirical cartoons that pictured, in nothing short of irony, a prophet that no Muslim could possibly recognise as Mohammed, as there can be no images to cross-reference. A Pakistani later hacked two people outside the former office.

The reprints were an assertion of sovereignty. In September, 14 people were in

anti-Semitic, and pro Palestine activist, Abdel hakim Sefrioui. He put a fatwa on Paty on social media to the 2500, Grand Mosque of Pantin followers. Anzarov communicated with Chnina on WhatsApp, after he had heard of the incident from 100 km away. Alzarov paid students hundreds of Euros to identify Paty at the school, which enabled the attack. Since then ten school children have been arrested for alleged death threats, pro-terrorist comments, and for supporting the beheading. Reports state their families are not however, 'radicalised'.

Safrioui was well known to the French authorities. He had been arrested at various protests he organised, being a founder, with his wife, of the Collect if Sheikh Yassine, set up after 2004 to promote their political agenda in France. He has organised Islamophobia and Pro-Palestine protests, and demonstrations against

the burka ban. He participates in a movement, with other groups of France that demote the authority of the Republic, applying Salafist doctrine to wear down the enemies of Islam, such as the 'west'. Given the post-colonial status with Algeria and France, retributions are, which we have seen in a multitude of Muslims comments under articles, accordingly justified against its citizens. The French movements integrate, in a transnational manner, Salafist movements from Africa, the Middle East and Europe and see "Iraq, Palestine, Iraq and Kashmir as lands for jihad, where fellow believers have to suffer from American, French, British or Israeli domination suppressing Islam" (Adraoui, M. 2014. EUI MWP 2014/13). Commenting on this in Wall Street Journal, the current status quo, for Macron, is not "Obamas Middle East". Walter Russel Mead, noting the re-centering of radicalisation from the UAE to Turkey, said "What we are looking at is the rise

quell any fear of offending Muslims. That time has, it seems just passed.

Other reports attribute mistrust of Muslims to concern over increased terror attacks, a factor rarely cited in analyses of alleged generalised Islamophobia, nor are hate crimes evidenced to substantiate correlation between alleged crimes against Muslims to bias against their ethnicity or religion. To say so negates any other form of domestic crime citizens face to capture anything under the rubric of hate crime. Soon after the wave of attacks in Europe, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) published a series of positive messaging stories about Muslims in the community, which here make up 3%. Included within those, were a few anecdotal claims to have experienced racism, or religious persecution. One account suggested that a man drove his car deliberately into the fence of a mosque due to anti-Muslim sentiment. He had

This annihilation of a civilizational continuity was organised under the watchful eyes of all those who spent their lives pursuing minority politics and making political fortune out of the same. People, who claim to be the protectors of the Constitution of India, were its worst abusers particularly in Jammu & Kashmir.

of a new transregional alignment. Think of it as the Axis of Abraham, liking Mr Macron's France with Greece, Cyprus, Israel and the UAE".

Islamist movements in France have driven through their activism a perception of France as persecuting Muslims. In the media, concern over potential hate crimes is combined with a criticism of "Far Right Extremists" who, many arguments state, are reactively organising in response to rising dichotomy between Islamist and French values. Cases such as Brenton Tarrant, who published a Manifesto uncannily consistent to the media 'Crusades' narrative, and Anders Breivik, are routinely made examples of, as to the suspected outcomes of failing to address the persecution of Muslims. However, the Global Terror Database does not substantiate a claim that either there is a significant rise of Right Wing 'terror' sufficient to outweigh the risks of Islamist groups in Europe, nor outside America in the west, and certainly not proportionate to any attempt to dispel discourse on Islamist radicalisation or terrorism in order to

yelled at persons present, although the exact terms were not reported. Police disagreed with the assessment of hate crime, saying that the driver was heavily intoxicated and driving dangerously apart from the collision with mosque property.

A further news article, from "counter terrorism expert" and wife of Labor Senator Peter Kahlil, Lydia Kahlil, states that there is a "threat closer to home", as in Australia, for which no evidence is provided. When asked to provide it on Twitter, Kahlil gave an ICRS report discussing incarceration and rehabilitation of convicted terrorists such as recidivism, not a mention of Islamophobia was made. Later the article was removed from the ABC Facebook page after comments questioning the veracity of the claims. Still available on Twitter, the article was updated with a new title, removing the 'closer to home' threat, which anyway remained in the snippet. Generalised claims continued regarding the 'reciprocal relationship' between 'Islamophobia' and 'terrorism' and referred to a

book by Tahir Abbas claiming terror attacks fuel Islamophobia which fuels terror attacks. It is unclear from the article, aside from alleged 'expert opinion', how Islamophobia is related to the activities of terrorists, particularly those in Islamic States where stiff penalties for non-compliance with Islamic law, such as blasphemy, or for criticising the government exist. To claim a link for the most prevalent attacks, in non western countries, which kill many more Muslims than not, could relate to the sentiments of the west, leave more questions than answers.

According to Adraoui (ibid), French Islamist practices aim to turn Democracy in on itself, meaning that it will apply the law, such as anti-discrimination policies, or use Democratic freedom, such as protests, freedom to speak against the Republic, to stomp on the image of its elected leader, to burn its flag, just to advance the centering of Islamic, or are they Islamist agendas?

No such case for reprisal against Islamophobia can be made of the attack on Paty, which was motivated purely by the actions of a community, inspired no less, by a man renowned for protesting Islamophobia. That it had not occurred to him, that indeed the actions he took would make the French hate Muslims, belies concern for his wider community. The Church and Synagogue attacks which followed require further investigation as to likely anti-Christian and anti-Semitic motives, even so, the concept of Islamist discrimination or persecution of non-believers on the basis of their faith has received no media attention. The debate is a one way critique of responses to terrorism being uniformly hateful toward those who practice the "same religion" as the attackers, whilst denying that there is a link at all to Islam. Therefore, by the logic of non-affiliation to Islamist terror, "all Muslims" are default excluded. To make a bridge where there was none, demanded a series of defamatory reports that Macron did not say Islamist, but Islamic. And that this, by extension was a Muslim crackdown, not, as he reported, against the radicalised enemies of a people, including Muslims, that he is duty bound to protect.

Kahlil claims from her observation of social media comments that 'far right' and

'Islamists' are battling one another, however after engaging very closely with all articles of ABC and SBS since Paty's beheading, those commenting against the beheading very rarely made offensive comments against Islam, aside from 'religion of peace'. Whilst self declared Muslims, not 'Islamists' as Kahlil defines them, repeatedly attempted to distance each terror attack, France, Vienna, Kabul and Mozambique from 'Islam' and 'Muslims', despite considerable threats of further terrorism, violence and openly justification for the beheading.

The Islamophobia Registry in Australia is accessible online to anyone, the data from which is updated after 'verification', however it is not clear whether any evidence need be provided and the report states that 202 reports were discarded, and a "large chunk were deliberate fake reporting by Islamophobes". The cases in 2016-17 were 349, of which 150 were online, and others ranged from insults to death threats by mostly "white males". In France there were 676 in 2019, reported by the French 'Collective against Islamophobia'. The CAIF has been implicated in the attack on Samuel Paty and an investigation probing the role of anti-Islamophobia activists and terror actors is pending.

In contrast to the accounts of both registries, moderate voices from within the community, who stand against Islamist extremism, are attacked within their own communities. For example Imam Hassen Chalghoumi, who called Paty "a martyr for freedom of expression", requires police protection after receiving thousands of death threats. That's the total of one year of both France and Australia's Islamophobia cases. Can it be considered Islamophobia when it is other Muslims, or Islamist perpetrators? In 2015, Islamic State wanted Chalghoumi executed. Safrioui has worked across social media platforms to have the Imam dismissed from his position and has been arrested on many occasions. Is that also Islam-phobia or Republic-phobia or both?

Chalghoumi denies any substantive victimisation that fuels the complex of indignation and anti Republic sentiment among radical extremists. He praised the Republic. It is this paradigm of Islam versus Islamism within

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France that demonstrates the necessity, as Macron has done, to distinguish genuine moderates from radicalised sects, not only to protect all, but especially Muslims targeted for "being too close to the Republic" as Adroui puts it.

Speaking on the matter of Islamic separatism in France, Macron was misquoted and his comments widely misappropriated to accuse the President of stigmatising Muslims. Accusations have included that he has distributed blame across the entire Muslim world by his use of the term Islamist to describe the killers. In one example, the Financial Times replaced the term Islamist with Islamic, a misinterpretation repeatedly syndicated, which has inflamed some sectors of the Muslim world to march in the hundreds of thousands, burning French flags, standing on images of Macron, desecrating effigies, boycotting French products and with Heads of State inciting their people to hate him, including to justify the death of millions of French people. In Bangladesh, a Hindu village was razed to the ground by a gang of beheading sympathisers over one person who made a pro Macron comment. In this case, not only did the entire community get blamed for the actions of one, exercising freedom, they lost everything they had in a purely Hindu-phobic motivated attack.

The Financial Times retracted the misquoted report and published the next day, on the 5th of November, a corrective written by Macron. This clarified his position, that 263 people had been assassinated by terrorists in France since 2015 and it was his responsibility to follow every avenue necessary to stem the ongoing risk to all members of his society. Nevertheless, Bashare, of the Collective against Islamophobia in France declared that "France is an oppressive state that has gradually adopted the discourse of the far right... They don't know

how to deal with the heinous terrorist crimes, so they declare innocent Muslims as 'Islamists' just to be able to say they are doing something." However, this is not what Macron stated in his speech, and it was further clarified repeatedly.

It is this type of wilful dismissal of the differentiation between speaking of legitimate terror acts and of persons affiliated with a wider umbrella called Islam, which contributes to communal disharmony and shuts down freedom to speak about terrorism, further contributing to the need for investigations that are alleged to unfairly target the Muslim community, by obfuscating whilst at the same time leveraging difference. It is this type of scatological thought about identity that indeed points to a genuine existential crisis.

It is not, according to this analysis due to any form of oppression against Muslims that the terror attacks have taken place in Europe. If there is any accountability for the conflation of terms, in a manner that the proponents of Islam find offensive, it is due to the statements of groups like the CAIF who smear all Muslims by placing words in the mouth of Macron. In doing so, they determine the limits of language and freedom according to laws, such as blasphemy, that do not exist in secular states or by the smokescreen attempts to charge common peoples of the west, for simply uttering the word Islamist, with a future crime of Far Right terrorism, that in contrast to the tens of thousands of documented Islamist attacks remain statistically insignificant. The crime against Paty, like those of Nice, Vienna, Mozambique and Kabul, has nothing to do with contempt for Islam. The one common denominator is the terror that shall not be named: Kafir-phobia. And that truly does include everyone, Muslims alike, except for Islamists. ●



- Dr. G L Bhan



Kashmir Issue

Role of the Media

My observations are based on a personal journey of interaction with the media over the last three decades directly from the time Hindus in Kashmir were forced to leave their homeland, the valley of Kashmir. This exodus, as we know, was engineered and then implemented during the 1980s, culminating in a mass exodus at the end of 1989.

Born and brought up in Kashmir, I witnessed first-hand the events there following India's independence until mid-seventies. I am also an indirect witness to the holocaust heaped upon the Hindus of Kashmir, holocaust that affected my own family, my near and distant relatives, my neighbours and my friends. I met these exiled people - the 'internally displaced people' as they are called, but in reality, refugees in their own country - when I visited them in their shelters, tattered tent-settlements scattered over various parts of Jammu province, and heard their harrowing accounts. They were distraught, but also felt forlorn and neglected, surprised that no members of the media had visited them; they asked me why it was so. I had no answer.

I heard many accounts of the atrocities that had been committed upon what was, and is, an

innocent religious minority, of torture, murders, and rapes.

From then on, over the coming years, I avidly read and listened to the media, looking for anyone giving a report on what had been done to the Hindus of Kashmir: a hapless and helpless community had been uprooted from their homes on religious-ethnic grounds on a scale amounting to genocide. For a long time, there was to be none of that reporting, none in the print media, none in the broadcast media, not in India (during the nineties and much later), nor in the international media. Instead there were reports upon reports of one narrative, a completely false narrative.

The perpetrators of this genocide had meticulously prepared not only for the genocide, they had also crafted a false narrative for the media and for the politicians, a narrative that stated that what was happening in Kashmir was an uprising by the people of Kashmir against the despotic and unlawful rule by India, and that 'some Kashmir Hindus had 'migrated' out of the Valley of their own accord, apparently on the say-so of the then Governor Jagmohan.

Within months, organisations had sprung up here in the United Kingdom purportedly

The perpetrators of this genocide had meticulously prepared not only for the genocide, they had also crafted a false narrative for the media and for the politicians, a narrative that stated that what was happening in Kashmir was an uprising by the people of Kashmir against the despotic and unlawful rule by India



3. 'The current unrest in Kashmir is a popular uprising against Indian rule'. The fact of an armed insurrection financed and armed by Pakistan was projected as a lie.
4. 'Hindus left Kashmir voluntarily; nobody forced them to leave'.

working for 'Peace in Kashmir', for 'Human Rights for Kashmiris', etc., etc. Noticeably in all their narratives there was no mention of their victims, those who they had deprived of basic human rights, human dignity and in many cases life itself.

There was no mention of the fact that Pakistan had invaded Kashmir in 1947, and illegally occupied a large part of the state of Jammu & Kashmir ever since. As I was to find out later, vast sums of money were invested in influencing politicians and the media personnel. Political activists and NGOs had been positioned in various western countries to peddle this false narrative.

Despite the state of Jammu & Kashmir having lawfully acceded to the Indian nation, in accordance with the British Parliament's Independence of India Act, the media here in the U.K. and the anti-India groups were referring to the Kashmir issue as the 'unfinished businesses of the Partition of India. What was this 'unfinished business'? I wondered. I later came to know that around the time of Partition there had been a tacit understanding, between some within the British Establishment and those seeking the creation of Pakistan that the state of Kashmir would be dished out to Pakistan.

I refer to a few elements of this false narrative that was to prevail for many years:

1. 'Accession of the state of Jammu & Kashmir never took place'.
I was amazed to find that several discussion programmes were held in the media on this subject, including one on the BBC.
2. 'Pakistan never invaded Kashmir. It was in reality a local rebellion staged by Kashmiris against the rule of the Hindu Maharaja of Kashmir'.

5. The media, on cue from these propagandists, started referring to those seeking the breakup of the sovereign state of India as 'separatists'; some channels parroting the reports of terrorists killed as 'martyrs'.
6. The Jihad inspired terrorists, who had committed, and were committing, torture, abduction, rape and mass-murder were similarly mentioned as freedom fighters, a few channels even when reporting the death of terrorists, referred to them having been 'martyred'.

Of the many instances of my interaction with the media in this country, I want to cite just one.

In the year 2001, BBC broadcast a programme - 'Hard-Talk' on the Kashmir issue. This is a programme where a senior journalist interviews just one person, to find more about the issue in question:

Always a one-to-one interview. On this occasion the person interviewed, an individual originating from Pakistan occupied Kashmir, had been given a full hour to state his point of view. Presenting this false narrative, he dwelt extensively on the alleged human rights abuses carried out by the security personnel in Kashmir, and the allegation that Kashmir was being colonised by India. He never mentioned terrorism, and when I pointed out to him the reality of the situation, he denied it flatly. In his opinion the forced exodus of Kashmiri Hindus never happened. As far as his account went, the Kashmiri Hindus didn't seem to matter, indeed exist.

This caused concern among those of us who saw it. Pointing out to the BBC that this was a grossly unfair description of the real situation in Kashmir, we demanded a right of reply. Reluctantly this was granted. A second Hard-

Talk interview took place in February 2002. I went for that interview and was surprised to find the same person who had been interviewed on the previous occasion already sat in the studio. This must have been that exceptional occasion where more than one person was invited at the same time to attend 'Hard-Talk'. This person, aggressive, grossly impolite, often shouting, hogged the interview. He was treated with kid gloves. I felt he got the fullest opportunity, twice over, to broadcast his monstrous allegations. I just about managed to get in sideways with my fact-based response.

I, and others who watched this programme, felt that BBC had treated our side unfairly. Many who watched that fiasco wrote to the BBC to complain, but nothing was done to undo the damage.

Truth cannot be suppressed forever; ultimately it comes out – Satyamaiva Jayatai. Pakistan's role as the perpetrator of Jihadi terrorism is now too well established, furthermore accepted by the world politicians; it is no longer a matter of debate.

General Observations

Over the years around the world, certain genocides have singularly exercised the minds of many politicians and Human Rights bodies, but the same people have chosen, and choose, to remain mute and inactive when it comes to other genocides. Worse still, there are some who even deny that a particular genocide has taken place, as in the case of Kashmir.

In a democratic state, media is considered to be the fourth estate. In its reporting on events and issues, it has to be truthful, and in its analysis, interpretations and conclusions, it must be fair and unbiased. It has long been assumed that journalists are guided by a code of ethics and conduct; this is open to question. Freedom of expression is considered sacrosanct. In practice, however, it is being subtly and cleverly curtailed and/or manipulated.

The business of media is in a flux - I would say in a sorry state of affairs. News is now intermixed with propaganda, often subtle, but at times blatant, wherein facts are distorted; journalists are at times guilty of selective reporting, non-reporting and of misinterpretation. We now have the added problem of

social media being flooded with fake news.

Add to this the role of political activists, posing as experts or as NGOs. Their aim is to promote a false narrative that suits their political objectives, in order to tilt public and political opinion in their favour. They operate locally, nationally and internationally, are well provided for financially by their sponsors and, like the terrorists, they can be faceless, accountable to none.

Some journalists work from their armchairs – writing reports based on hearsay or on the reports of others; some are gullible, pandering to the line dished out by others, the establishment or the anti-establishment, but a few are undoubtedly venal.

Are all journalists bad? No, I hasten to add. There are many excellent journalists as well. You have to find out who they are; you come to know them... eventually.

Recent developments have further altered the scenario. The advent of social media has given us direct and instant access to different sources of news, which is a positive development, but we are also bombarded with fake news.

People are becoming politically more mature, increasingly aware of the nefarious role played by certain sections of the media. Where reports are contradictory, an astute observer is able to sift through these and come to own conclusions.

I conclude with two comments.

First : The media failed the Hindus of Kashmir in their hour of greatest need. Through writing fair and balanced reports, the journalists would have highlighted the travails of these internally displaced Hindus and helped reduce their misery and destitution.

Second: Within the general public, currently there prevails a loss of confidence and trust in the media; this needs to be urgently addressed by the media.

Where we feel the media is committing errors of omission or commission, we must call it to account. We must react, when necessary: if we see a biased report or a report that is not fact-based, we must question its veracity and, where necessary, demand a right to reply. ●



GOUT

An Ancient Disease



Gout is a systemic disease that results from deposition of monosodium urate crystals in the joints and other tissues, secondary to increase in the level of serum uric.



Gout is a disease which has been known since time immemorial. Its prevalence has increased substantially over recent years and the possible reasons for this could be changes in diet, life style, obesity etc. Gout is a systemic disease that results from deposition of monosodium urate crystals in the joints and other tissues, secondary to increase in the level of serum uric. Urate is the ionized form of uric acid present in the body. Uric acid is mainly produced in liver as a result of the breakdown of a chemical called purine which occurs naturally in the body. It is also found in certain purine rich foods. Uric acid is eliminated from the body mainly by kidneys in urine. Serum uric acid

(SUA) level increases when there is decreased excretion of uric acid by kidneys or there is an overproduction of uric acid. A balance is normally maintained between production and excretion, and that determines the level of SUA. It is the decreased excretion by kidneys that is responsible for gout in most of the patients (90 %), whereas increased production of uric acid is the cause in only 10% of patients. When SUA level rises above the normal threshold, urate crystals are deposited in inner lining of the joint - synovial membrane and articular cartilage, tendons and bursae (sacs of fluid) around joints. The urate crystals initiate an inflammation in these tissues which then leads to chronic

synovitis (inflammation of synovium), bony erosions and cartilage damage. These deposits may at times increase in size and form small lumps called tophi. These urate crystals can also get deposited in kidneys and result in formation of kidney stones and in severe cases can also result in impairment of kidney function.

Excretion of urate by kidneys may be reduced due to some genetic disorders. Certain drugs such as anti TB drug- pyrazinamide, diuretic- thiazides, niacin etc. increase urate reabsorption by kidneys, thus increase the SUA level. Over-production of uric acid can occur due to an inborn genetic problem with certain enzymes involved in purine metabolism. It is also seen in several acquired disorders where

when there is destruction of cells in body as happens in malignant tumors, multiple myeloma, leukemia or when a patient is on chemotherapy. Secondary gout also occurs in chronic renal failure and use of drugs like diuretics etc.

Clinical presentation :

Gout commonly occurs in men in third and fourth decade. Ninety percent of women, who develop gout, do so after menopause. Family history is positive in around 30-40% of patients. It is usually mono-articular i.e. one joint is affected and metatarso- phalangeal joint i.e. proximal joint of the big toe is the most often involved. Occasionally other joints like ankle,



there is accelerated cellular turnover that is usually seen in malignancies, hematological and inflammatory diseases. Increased uric acid production may also result from chemotherapy and tissue damage. Again, increased body weight and obesity can also increase the production of uric acid thus increasing the risk of hyperuricemia.

Two types of gout are Primary and Secondary

In majority (95 %) of patients it is primary in nature as there is no obvious cause. In secondary gout SUA increases secondary to some disease

knee, elbow etc. can be involved. It can also affect bursa (small sac of fluid) over the point of the elbow and the bursa over back of heel and heel chord. It usually presents with a sudden attack of excruciating pain with marked swelling and redness over the joint, increased temperature of the affected joint and the patient may be unable to walk. Attacks usually begin at night. Skin over the joint is reddish, tight and shiny. At times the inflammation is so gross that it may resemble acute infective process like cellulitis or septic arthritis. The mild attacks usually resolve spontaneously within couple of

days and severe attacks subside in a week or so, however there is repetition of acute attacks in untreated cases.

In a chronic stage patient presents with persistent pain in the joint. There occur repeated attacks of acute gout. Urate crystals are deposited in the joint leading to its inflammation and damage. These deposits may at times increase in size and form small lumps called tophi. Tophi can also be seen on point of elbow or under the skin of ear lobe. It has been reported that about 30% of patients develop chronic gout within 5 years or so. It is also a fact that many people have asymptomatic hyperuricemia- high SUA, there are no symptoms or signs and high SUA level is accidentally discovered when a lab test is done. Some of these patients develop gout while majority of these hyperuricemia patients never develop gout. It has also been observed that hyperuricemia and gout are highly associated with other problems like hypertension, kidney disease, and cardiovascular disease

Common precipitating factors of acute gout: The acute attacks of gout are usually provoked by high alcohol intake particularly of beer, red meat/sea food and soft drinks. In addition trauma, surgery, concurrent medical or surgical illness, dehydration, certain drugs like diuretics- thiazide, Niacin, anti-tuberculosis drugs etc. can also precipitate gout.

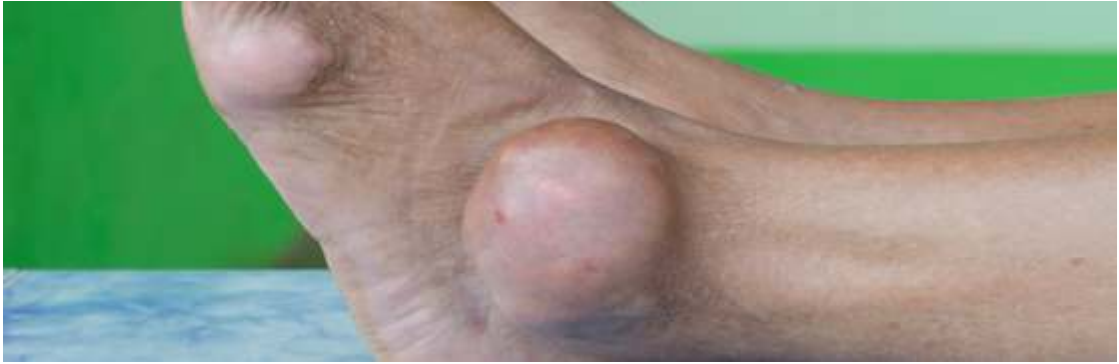
What about the risk factors: Various factors that may increase the risk of gout include:

- i) Positive family history of gout (in 30-40%) of patients increases the chances of having gout. There are some genetic factors that increase the risk of getting hyperuricemia and gout.
- ii) Alcohol intake certainly increases the chances of having gout. Alcohol increases SUA levels because it reduces the excretion of urates via the kidneys and also boosts the production of urate.
- iii) Intake of purine rich foods especially of animal origin definitely increase the risk of having acute and recurrent gout
- iv) Being overweight also increases the risk of developing gout and losing weight does lower the risk of gout.
- v) Patients with renal impairment certainly are at a higher risk.

- vi) Use of certain medications as discussed earlier also increases the risk of gout.
- vii) Hypertension and cardiovascular diseases is known as a risk factor for hyperuricemia and gout. Increased systemic blood pressure results in reduced glomerular filtration rate leading to decreased glomerular blood flow and decreased excretion of uric acid.
- viii) Diabetes mellitus is also a significant risk factor for hyperuricemia and gout as production of uric acid increases and at the same time there is also a reduction of its excretion by kidneys.

Lab diagnosis: SUA level is increased above the normal and the level above 6.8 mg/dL is considered hyperuricemia. Increased level of SUA is a characteristic feature of gout, but just having increase SUA does not make the diagnosis of gout, unless it is noted during a gouty attack. Occasionally SUA may be normal during acute gout. It is a fact that many people with hyperuricemia do not develop gout and have asymptomatic hyperuricemia. An increase in level of SUA as such is a weak marker for gout, diagnosis and the disease might still be diagnosed even with normal serum levels. Repeated estimation of SUA over a period of few weeks is useful when gout is suspected. Synovial fluid examination shows the presence of slender needle shaped urate crystals when examined under polarized microscope. Identification of urate crystals is the gold standard of the diagnosis of gout and this can be done when there is reasonable doubt in diagnosis of gout. X-rays are usually normal in early stages. They provide some helpful clues in late cases. Other imaging modalities like CT scan and MRI provide useful information but are not normally required.

Managing gout: The main goal of the management in acute gouty arthritis is to give pain relief, reduce the inflammation of the affected joint and prevent flares. Rest and elevation of the affected limb helps in reducing pain and swelling. Applying a splint gives rest to the affected part. Topical ice application is useful in acute flares. Anti inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are indicated for initial management of acute gout. However, NSAIDs are usually are not suitable for many of these patients because



of associated medical problems like peptic ulcer, kidney and heart problems etc. We have to consider risks and benefits of NSAIDS in each patient. We have drugs that decrease formation of uric acid and drugs that increase the urinary excretion of uric acid, and appropriate ones are given. Once acute gout has subsided, our goal is to prevent recurrence of disease. SUA level should remain under 6mg/dL and this has to be a lifelong process. The treatment has to be continued for a prolonged period so as to keep SUA levels under control as that shall keep the patient symptom free and prevent acute gout attacks. Occasionally large gouty tophi may need surgical excision. There are patients that may be refractory to treatment and certainly this is a challenge to the treating doctor. It is also known that gout is often poorly diagnosed and sub optimally managed. Appropriate lifestyle advice, weight loss and dietary advice including increasing consumption of drinking water and avoidance of alcohol intake are very important. No or inadequate treatment of gout does end up with recurrence, chronicity of gout and the complications thereof.

Diet and gout – what is allowed and what is not: The association between a purine-rich diet and an increased SUA and risk of gout has long been recognized. As such, proper dietary advice forms an important part of management in gout. Diet as a matter of fact has to be well balanced one. Intake of purine rich meats like red meat, liver, kidney and sea food like shellfish, shrimps and crab have to be avoided as they increase SUA. Big no to consumption of all forms of alcohol especially beer, soft drinks, sodas and energy drinks. Foods like white bread, cakes etc. have to be avoided as they are rich in urates. Again, no to binge eating and large feasting, and

with all that starvation and dehydration has to be avoided. Low fat dairy products e.g. low fat milk and yoghurt do help in lowering SUA and should be part of balanced diet. Again, regular intake of fruits and vegetables are appropriate in gout patients. Studies have shown that purine rich vegetables like cauliflower, spinach, peas, mushrooms or beans do not increase the risk of gout, as such can be taken in moderate amounts as part of the balanced diet. Consumption of a fruit rich in vitamin C is beneficial as vitamin C increases renal excretion of UA. Eating cherry fruit is beneficial as some of the studies suggest that it is associated with reduced attacks of gout. Over and above all that, it is essential to keep yourself hydrated by drinking water as an increase in water consumption has been linked to fewer gout attacks. Dietary modifications do help reduce SUA level, however we need to understand that this alone usually is not enough to keep the gout under control, especially when there are frequent gout attacks or there are complications such as tophi or kidney stones. Medicines have also had to be taken to manage pain, inflammation, and raised levels of SUA and to prevent recurrence.

Patient education and adherence to the treatment is essential for better outcomes. It is important to discuss and educate the patient about diet modification, risk factors – what can be modified and what all can be done to maintain SUA levels under control. It has to be stressed that SUA level has to be monitored regularly and the treatment has to be continued for a prolonged period. ●

(The writer is Formerly, Vice Principal, Professor. & Head Deptt. of Orthopaedics, CMC, and Ludhiana)



- Uma Kant Kachru



Kashmiri and Script Conflict

Last few weeks there have been video conference discussions on alternate/ co-script for Kashmiri since Government of India has, so far, not granted recognition to the requested Devnagri as the alternate official script for it. First of all, this is a welcome move and all the active organisations/ groups who have taken this initiative, deserve congratulatory accolades. This action should have happened decades ago.

From the discussions, there are three issues that I could identify :

1. Need for seeking recognition for an alternate script
2. Conflicting views on Devnagri or Sharada to be the alternate script.
3. Which is scientifically better suited for adapting to Kashmiri phonetics?
4. What should be the approach methodology?

I will deal with each one separately.

Need for seeking recognition for an alternate script:

To me, this is a non-issue. Instead, I would first ask myself, “Why do I need an alternate script?” The answer is very clear; because majority of the Kashmiri Pandit diaspora doesn't know how to read or write in Nastalik. In order to keep our language alive amongst the Kashmiri diaspora, we need to provide a script for our writers, poets and creative artists through which they can reach their creative works to their audience. This is the basic need and if we have consensus on this, who stops us from using the chosen medium. The critical question then is, which script? I will deal with this in the next part of this article. The focus here is that we must provide the medium for

communication, irrespective of it not having government recognition. If my diaspora across the globe standardises on a script and adopts it for writing Kashmiri, in the next one decade we will make loads of literature of varied kind available to our community that will motivate and facilitate them to communicate in Kashmiri. It is also a great opportunity for transliteration of the rich Kashmiri work available in Nastalik that can be made accessible to the diaspora. When we have large amount of literature available in the alternate script, we will have a strong footing and reason to present our case and seek recognition for it. Let us also remember that recognition has only a cosmetic value for the script, particularly in the digital world of today, except for publishing by the Sahitya Academy.

Conflicting views on Devnagri Sharada to be alternate script:

If we believe that there is need for an alternate script, the next natural question is which script? To me, any Indian script is good enough for Kashmiri with modifications to accommodate the nuances of Kashmiri phonetics. To support my argument, I will take you to the basics of the majority of the Indian scripts. The basic alphabet of all the major scripts is the same, with their respective symbols. The “स्वर” (vowels) start with अ and end with ञः. Similarly, “व्यंजन” (consonants) start with क and end with ञ. The symbols make them different for different languages. This basic concept will help us understand that Devnagri or Sharada is not the issue. The issue is which is easier in adaptation. The good news is that both the scripts have their respective UNICODE, thus making them equally digitally enabled. However, if we look at

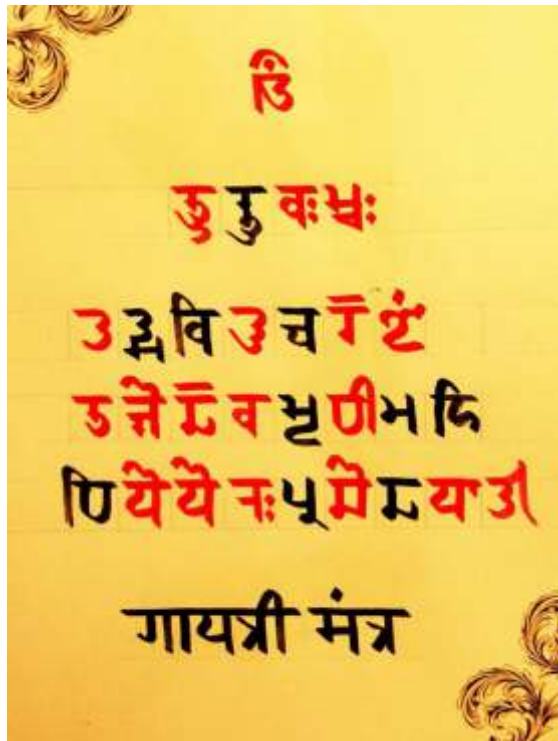
the demography of our diaspora, more than 95% are familiar with Devnagri, mainly because of Hindi being the common connecting language which uses Devnagri script. It, therefore, becomes an easier choice because the readership community will only need to learn phonetic variations through modified signs (मात्राचें). On the other hand, Sharada, by dint of its remaining dormant for centuries, the majority diaspora is not familiar with it. Besides, historically, Sharada has been more a script for scholarship than for the Kashmiri language. All the works and manuscripts in this script are in Sanskrit language, including the scriptures. We haven't found any authentic original Kashmiri work available in Sharada. This also lends support to the theory of Kashmiri having been a dialect till Nastalik was adopted as its script. Adopting this script will involve mass training in the script which is a long and tedious effort before it becomes the popular first choice for the people. Sharada, though is extremely important to be revived through training and learning as there is a lot of rich material in published and manuscript forms in libraries spread across the globe that need to be revived and readable. For this we don't only need students knowing Sharada but also knowing Sanskrit language.

We have a young group – The Core Sharda Team (CST) which started a campaign a couple of years ago to train students desirous of learning the Sharada script. This team deserves accolades for the way they have adopted a simple but effective method of training people using the social media – WhatsApp. Today they have enabled a respectable brigade of over 2000

people who can read and write in this script and these numbers are fast increasing. What is, though, a challenge still is that not all are Sanskrit enabled. This needs another drive with a different approach. The team has also developed a mobile app that facilitates writing in Sharada on the mobile phones. They now need to work on adoption of new मात्रा to make it fully Kashmiri phonetic ready and make the app available to general masses to popularise it among those who are interested in using it with some basic training.

With Devnagri, we have a different challenge. Although it has evolved as a reasonably ready script, there is no standard version adopted by the writers. Each one uses her/ his own method of playing with signs (मात्रा) for phonetic representations of typical Kashmiri words, making it hard for the reader to decipher. Incidentally, this also makes our case weaker when presenting to the Government authorities, since we don't have a standard Alphabet. This has happened because; yet again we have adopted unstructured and individualistic approach in silos when trying to adopt signs for phonetic nuances. It may be pertinent to mention that an effort in making

Devnagri as its alternate script was made more than a century ago in 1914 when the first primer for it was written by the famous Sanskrit scholar, Pt. Nityanand Shastri. What is notable is that this primer was published two years before the famous Ideologist, G I Grierson brought out the first ever edition of Kashmiri dictionary in 1916. However, what is also sad is that this primer remained only in private possession and came to light only a decade or so ago. Despite making it known, we yet again repeated the mistake by ignoring it and preferred to redesign the wheel



individually, resulting in multiple versions sans standardisation. However, let bygones be bygones. These experiences give us new learnings. The first step, therefore, is to bring all the versions to converge into one standard script. Each version has meant a lot of individual effort and we must not ignore that. We need to invite all the creators, scholars, writers, poets on a common platform and bring consensus on a standard version. Then this standard version will need to be computer enabled. This will not be a challenge because, Kashmiri script writing software – Akruti Kashmiri Arinimal Engine is already available, thanks to Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat (former Director at Ministry of HRD, Deptt. of Higher Education, Govt of India) and his team who undertook the development of the engine which is usable with the normal computer keyboard. Dr Bhat and his team deserve accolades for making this brilliant software available. However, it is not much known or easily available for use by masses. This must be made free downloadable so that more and more people use it for writing their stuff. I have already found a Hindi keyboard on my Android phone which has all the signs that Akruti is using for Kashmiri.

Which is scientifically better suited for adapting to Kashmiri phonetics?

Much of this is already explained above. Any Indian script is scientifically equal with modifications to include new signs. If Arabic script, which doesn't have signs to represent the phonetics of Kashmiri language, could be modified by the Kashmiri scholars to create Nastalik, Sharada and Devnagri scripts have many of the signs (मात्रा) suitable for easy adoption. Akruti has done it very effectively. Extending the same logic, Sharada can be upgraded by adding appropriate signs (मात्रा) to



make it fully suitable to write Kashmiri. Thus, the issue with Sharada is not in the science of its script but practicality of its adoption as addressed above. If the teams work on mass adoption of this script, it is as suitable as Devnagri. It is a collective responsibility of both the teams to see that Sharada script revives to its full glory.

Approach methodology:

1. Devnagri Script:

- Standardise on one Devnagri script by consensus with writers and scholars.
- Reach out to the intellectual community to adopt the standard script.
- Adopt the standard in Akruti.
- Adopt a publicity strategy to make the script available to the global community.
- Make Akruti freely available to all.

2. Sharada Script:

- CST continues its drive of training.
- Prepare a publicity campaign for mass reach of the concept of Sharada learning.
- Create a Sanskrit literate Sharada core group in the team to work on scriptures and manuscripts in different libraries.
- Create a time bound program for converting them into Devnagri.
- Make the converted work available to masses.
- Work closely with Devnagri team to adopt new signs (मात्रा) to create standard Sharada script for Kashmiri.
- Reach the diaspora with awareness campaign about Kashmiri-ready Sharada script.

3. Recognition for alternate/ co-script:

- Bring all active groups, scholars, writers under one platform.
- Let there be one official representative organisation.
- Adopt and agree upon the common standard script.
- Create database of available literature written in the alternate script.
- Represent the case for recognition to HRD Ministry with data through the official organisation only.
- Approach influencing Government organisations/ ministers/ officials at different levels to push the case.



- Sunil Fotedar



Social Media For Our Community A Blessing or a Curse?

Background

Ever since the advent of internet, sometime in early to mid-1990s when it became available to individuals in large numbers especially to those of us residing in the Western countries, several technological advances have taken place over the years. What was available to a few people is a worldwide phenomenon that is now used not only for personal communication or discussion between various individuals but has become a vehicle for e-commerce where a majority of commercial enterprises depend on the revenue generated through its platform.

This all started with one having personal e-mail ids and access to various bulletin boards, designed for any topic or region, where one could read and post messages freely. Here in the

US, we also started a private e-mail group for our community members, where we would share details and discuss various issues on a regular basis. On one occasion when one member was attacked personally, we set a few guidelines for posting messages so that members are not offended. This was a huge learning curve back then. Soon afterwards, we had domain-based e-mail ids provided by hotmail.com, and later by yahoo.com and gmail.com to name a few. The internet started mushrooming from that point onwards to other countries such as India. After this, the first few years in early part of this century saw emergence of social media such as Facebook and Twitter that allowed individuals to connect with each other, even with those that they had not seen for 30, 40 or even 50 years.



Curse

Internet is no doubt one of the biggest achievements in the history of humankind, other than landing a man on the moon in 1969. It is an extremely powerful tool that can be used to bring about positive changes to our lives. But it is a double-edged sword that can cut both ways, as its power can also be misused wittingly or out of ignorance. As far as our community is concerned, we are indebted to our ancestors for inculcating value of education that has been our ticket to freedom from dark ages of tyranny, discrimination and persecution at the hands of our adversaries in Kashmir. However, just because we are an educated community, it does not make all of us net-savvy. Getting on internet and writing on several forums from our homes may give us some comfort, but this is false sense of security in this age of dark web. There are hackers and cyber-criminals out there watching for every single wrong move we make, using such techniques as social engineering, phishing and implanting malware on our computers, and one false step can potentially result in us losing life savings if we are not careful. Then there are netiquettes (proper etiquettes on using internet) that one must learn and adopt. I request members getting on to the internet first time around to familiarize themselves with netiquettes as there are many resources available on internet. One should not just assume that he knows everything. Because of our exodus from our homeland Kashmir, our community is scattered all over the world. We have truly become a global

community, and as such we must make ourselves familiar with local laws and customs. Some countries enjoy more freedoms to express oneself than others. What we write on any social media platform can land us in trouble, legally or otherwise, depending on the place we live at. In one particular instance, a professional from our community in India lost his job because of what he wrote against our adversaries on Facebook. People in several countries like India have been thrown in jail for what they wrote on Facebook. Long before the advent of fake news and Russians being accused of sowing seeds of discord between various ethnic groups in the 2016 US presidential elections in order to discourage citizens from voting for a particular candidate, and in favor of the sitting president, our adversaries have used fake Kashmiri Pandit-sounding names on various discussion forums to initiate ugly debates and divide our unsuspecting community in several groups. As administrator of one popular Facebook group, we have kicked out several fake identities from our group over last several years.

Blessing

If we are careful with using the internet as it was intended to be, everything about it is not all that gloomy. In fact, such platforms as Facebook and Twitter provide us with immense opportunities to do good to our community in many ways. Instead of wasting time and bandwidth in engaging with such endless debates as inter-caste marriage, unity in our community, whether we should be called



Pandits or Hindus or Brahmins (several times discussed in the past on several forums without any end result, no matter how significant these topics can be to any individual), or using our enormous resources at our disposal for building 'Hawans and Bhawans' even though it may be important for some, we should think of ways to bring about positive impact to our community, especially to those among us who are still in dire need. Our community has no dearth of ideas but expressing our idea on any forum expecting someone else to take up on our idea and run with it is not ever going to happen. If we have something positive to contribute, we should own it up, express our idea on a forum, engage in dialog with other members and convince them that your idea is worth pursuing.

Social media can be used as a platform not to only address several challenges our community faces but initiate several working groups that tackle these from various angles. Most of us have now well-settled professionally, but there are some of us who have fallen through the cracks and need our immediate help. I have identified the following areas:

1. We have such problems as educational needs, as well as living conditions that need to be addressed. We have several organizations in India and Western countries doing their part but the fact that we still have some unfortunate brethren who are still in need to meet their educational expenses tells us that more is required. I am associated with Kashmiri Overseas Association (KOA), which is a charitable organization based in the US. A few individuals in our community soon after our exodus from Kashmir had the vision to identify certain problem areas and dedicated themselves to addressing those issues, not by using words but by action, such as financially supporting young kids and professionals to pursue our greatest asset, i.e. education. These programs have been running flawless for the past 25 years and counting. India-based organizations should parallel the efforts of KOA in terms of raising funds from well-to-do KPs in India for educational needs of those children that are not covered by KOA. It is not only KPs outside India that should be expected to help, but as they say, charity begins at home.

2. One more thing that needs our immediate action – with a lot of medical cases

like kidney, liver and heart failures, as well as life-threatening road accidents, it has become extremely difficult to raise money in large sums through appeals, primarily because of donor fatigue, and that too donations are collected on a short notice. Having some form of medical insurance in Western countries, with rising medical costs is an absolute necessity, without which we would be doomed financially should there be a medical emergency. Though we have organizations doing their utmost to cover for the medical expenses of those in need, but why leaves it to chance and address it at the last minute? We have brought up the idea of making everyone in our community buy universal healthcare insurance that can be bought for peanuts, and those who cannot afford to buy premiums for their medical insurance can be supported financially by us.

3. We need working groups of brilliant minds to address such institutions as the UN to get our community declared as ethnic cleansed that led to our exodus from our homes and hearths of 5 centuries in the early 1990s, as well as build strong cases with witnesses to try all those with our blood on their hands with crimes against humanity in the court of law, if not Supreme Court of India, then ICC at Hague.

It is a given fact that we do not possess enough votes to help any political party in India. While delivering press briefs may be important, but it is not sufficient any more only to prove that we exist. It is high time we choose deeds over words. What better way of communicating and addressing our issues and coming up with collective solution in an expeditious manner than social media that provides us access to our Biradhari anywhere in the world at a moment's notice! If we are careful in using social media, I see it as a blessing and God-sent for our community at large.

Disclaimer

I am not being critical here, as my suggestions seem to have ruffled many feathers in the past within certain quarters but requesting everyone to look at these suggestions with an open mind. We all love our community in our own unique ways and hope and pray that every member prospers. We are in it all together.

May our community achieve the heights of glory never seen before in our entire history. ●

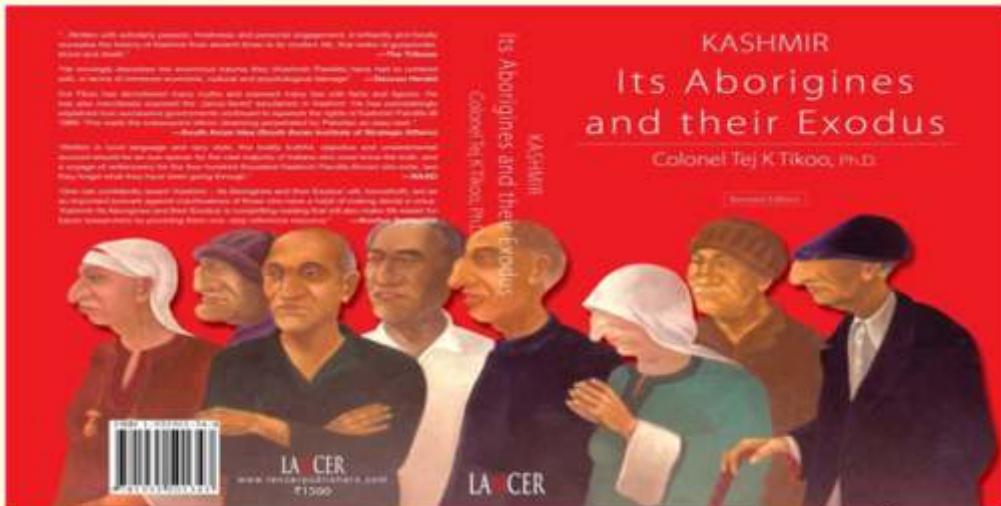
Book Review

Kashmir: Its Aborigines and their Exodus

Kashmir's past is seething with unpleasantness but the author refrains from sugarcoating, embellishing, or sandpapering these realities for political correctness or to create a superior impression.

REVIEW BY : MUDITA BADHWAR

AUTHOR : COL. TEJ K TIKOO



Introduction

This is not a book for the faint-hearted or those who choose to live happily with blindfolds. If you have your feet firm on the ground and are courageous enough to take on a journey through uncharted waters, that may even challenge your conditioning – this bold masterpiece on Kashmir is for you.

In addition to people from J&K, all other Indians must also get curious about this book since it elucidates important aspects of our civilization and history. It would clear doubts about the contemporary issues faced by our state. For those interested in defence and international affairs, this is a treat.

Col.Tej K.Tikoo's work is a brilliant encyclopedia of the state that goes far beyond personal or community-based narratives. It is rich with information and covers a variety of themes around the exoduses of the aborigines. Almost half the book is over when we enter the post-independence era. History lovers cannot afford to overlook this book on Kashmir.

From ancient history until 2019, this one book gives us all that we would wish to know about the state. The comprehensive and widely researched book is a prized contribution to the nation.

The single dominant theme of the book is Col.Tej K.Tikoo's burning desire to set-right the distorted history and false narratives on Kashmir. The author succeeds in doing so, through mammoth efforts put into the research which is obvious in the detailed references, footnotes, interviews, statistics, etc. His own rich experience as an authority on defence, an ex-army man, and a native Kashmiri is an advantage.

Col.Tikoo's energetic and lucid style of writing makes the book engaging and delightful. The author's painstaking effort is laudable. It grants impressive reliability to this priceless hardcover.

The Author

Col.Tej K. Tikoo (PhD in Defence Studies) is often seen on TV, as an expert, commenting on subjects such as terrorism, defence, and international affairs. Born and brought up in Srinagar, he was recruited into the Naga Regiment and fought the 1971 Indo-Pak war in the East. He has served several years on the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir or fighting the insurgency. In 2011, he served as the elected President of 'Kashmiri Migrant Welfare Association'. In 2017, he became the Editor in Chief of NAAD (a community

journal) and in 2018 he was elected as the President of the All India Kashmiri Samaj.

Summary

Kashmir: Its Aborigines and their Exodus is an attractive hardcover book adorned with Veer Munshi's oil painting called "Hope Against Hope". The painting shows Kashmiri Pandits queuing up to register as "migrants" in Jammu. With excellent print quality, this voluminous book is a collection of well-researched essays, carefully divided into nineteen chapters with maps, data tables, charts, graphs, and detailed appendices that prove to be very helpful. This summary has been divided into convenient sections for ease of reading.

Ancient History

Starting from the earliest evidence of human settlements, the author passionately takes us through the ancient history of Kashmir. It is an uplifting read, with legends from the Purans and archaeological findings, both given their due importance. Kashmir's rich heritage from the Vedic period and its imposing place in our civilization, the various Hindu and Buddhist dynasties, etc., are all wonderfully elaborated. The reader is left spellbound with the grandiosity of the land.

Islamic Rule

Muslims who were being persecuted in Persia and other regions were given refuge by Hindu rulers. It was these refugees who treacherously established Islamic rule in Kashmir from the 14th to the early 19th century. There are vivid descriptions of events leading to the six lesser-known gruesome mass exoduses of Hindus from the Valley.

Medieval history is teeming with deplorable details, one being, a book called Zakhirat-ul-Mulk that described the most demeaning conditions that are recommended to be enforced upon non-Muslim subjects by Muslim rulers, to let them live!

The Islamic period is an eye-opener to the cruelties committed on the indigenous people of Kashmir in the name of religion by Suni and Shia sects. The demographic shift to Islam started ages ago. The gripping read, leaves you outraged but with a few random breathers given here and there, owing to the kinder reigns of Zain-ul-Abidin and Akbar, the splendid Mughal gardens, and Habba Khatoon's romance.

Sikh and Dogra Rule

The dark period of Kashmir temporarily ended with the commencement of Sikh rule (1819). After

the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, there was a vigorous power play between the British, Dogras, and Sikhs. The British shrewdly used their 'divide and rule' policy. Maharaja Gulab Singh established Dogra rule and the Jammu and Kashmir state was formed. It is surprising to learn that during the reign of the Dogras, Kashmiri Pandits led a movement demanding the State-Subject Law that was vehemently opposed by the Muslims. The dynamic political developments of this time are pertinent for the reader to grasp since they prepared the ground for future troubles.

Land, its People and Culture

Diverse cultural and geographical descriptions of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, and Gilgit-Baltistan have been enthusiastically represented. Areas of strategic importance to India and interaction with Pakistan have been extensively explored. The author makes a soothing entry into Kashmir by quoting Kalhanas captivating words from the Rajtarangini. The mesmerizing beauty of the Valley is further infused with life through stories and events. The reader relishes the charm of the land while staying well-grounded in reality.

Plunging into the Kashmiri Pandit community, Col. Tikoo describes their history and culture. Intriguing details on innovative methods devised to preserve their culture through the long periods of Islamic persecution are presented. The intense intellectual activity of the region is seen in the form of its vast contribution to literature, arts, dance, music, science, spirituality and philosophy. The fascinating particulars offered, would leave you amazed.

Kashmiriyat

From some peaceful regional concept that is implied by the word "*kashmiriyat*", to who really coined it (quite a shock) and when – the read is scintillating with naked ground reality. It would tease journalists, scholars, and politicians who use this word liberally in various discourses. The author effectively and objectively reviews statements made in books, and by eminent people. Armed with simple facts and logic, in non-flowery language, Col. Tikoo succeeds outstandingly in ending misconceptions.

The Beginning of the Kashmir Problem

The genesis of the Kashmir problem and the events between 1931 and 1947 are vigilantly dissected. Events of partition and international developments are thoroughly dealt with. The personalities and

journeys of prominent leaders like Sheikh Abdullah, Nehru, Maharaja Hari Singh, Jinnah, and their contribution to the Kashmir issue are meticulously exposed. Important topics like the entrenching of communalism in state politics, Accession, Pathan invasion, massacres, and role of the British and UN, etc., are elaborated.

An engrossing first-person account of Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw is given. Justice AS Anand, Air Marshal KC Cariappa (Rtd) and Major General Hira Lal Atal, and other prominent people from the Forces have shared vital inputs. The Indo-Pak war, China, and international events are discussed at length. A patient study of this sumptuous portion of the book grants enormous clarity on complex subjects, and India's defence and foreign policy.

Article 370

Starting with Sheikh Abdullah's fascinating quotation, the author briskly moves into the historical background of Article 370, stating all the problems it created. Legalities of Article 370 and 35A and the questions and myths around it have been elucidated. The rationale behind the Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A and the reorganization of J&K, have been justified with clear-cut explanations.

Kashmir's Politics

Amidst the fine intricacies of the politics of J&K, we are introduced to the long rule of Sheikh Abdullah, supported by Nehru. Why did large numbers of Hindus leave Kashmir in the 1950s? What position did the Indian Union take towards shamelessly open communal politics and loud slogans like 'Indian dogs go back'? What was the majority's pulse? What (and who) helped Pakistan embed themselves so deeply? What was the impact of the Indo-Pak and Indo-China wars? What allowed rapid Islamization of the state in the late '70s in "secular" India – even cinemas were shut on Fridays!? While Col. Tikoo dispassionately answers all these questions, the reader gets passionately involved in the page-turner that is quite shocking and infuriating.

Rising terrorism and Pakistan's Role

Owing to the unique position of J&K with Article 370 and intimate ties of Nehru and family with the Abdullah's, we learn how Farooq Abdullah came to power. If you wondered what made an Indian politician make the recent comment that "Kashmiris don't feel they're Indian, the study of his

political career and Kashmir turning into a divine playground for terrorists, Islamists, and Pakistanis, shall clear all doubts. The author uncovers lesser-known truths and events that helped gather storm for the horrors to unfold.

Kashmir was a fertile terror playground for Pakistan with ample local support at myriad levels. Kashmiri Pandits were made a target, being "pro-India" *kaffirs*. Pakistan's local and international politics have been detailed, covering its Islamization in the '70s under Zia-ul-Haque and its adoption of *jihad* as state policy. The emergence of Inter Services Intelligence's (ISI) power, its international role, and involvement in J&K since 1969 are explained. Pakistan launched 'Operation Topac' in J&K (1988). The author expands upon it and we learn about the rise of organizations like Hizbul Mujahideen, Hurriyat, etc. What made thousands of Kashmiri Muslim youth support this and join terror outfits? If you believe that it was for political and economic reasons, the nasty realities could be devastating. Suspense interspersed with alarming information engages us further.

The Horrific Genocide

Col. Tikoo quickly revisits the six exoduses of Kashmiri Hindus and demonstrates how history simply repeated itself the seventh time. One would find it hard to digest the disgraceful words of Nehru spoken at the annual session of the National Conference (August 1945). Further, the author expresses how several warning signals went ignored by Pandits. Some incidents of violence are touched upon. The manipulation of public opinion in the rest of India through the spread of disinformation is stressed. The first-hand accounts of Jagmohan, Kedarnath Sahni, Director General of J&K Police, and others, plus prominent Kashmiri Pandits, including the author himself, impart immense worth and keep the interest thriving through sinister topics.

Starting with the cold-blooded selective assassinations of distinguished Kashmiri Pandits in September 1989, the author takes us through the massacre of *kaffirs* and secular Kashmiri Muslims with nationalist leanings. The zealous men unleashed a well-orchestrated terror operation. Streets echoed with their marches and deafening Islamic war cries. Innumerable local Muslims deceitfully facilitated the bloodcurdling murders of their neighbours, friends, and associates. What instigated them is something we get to learn about. Even now, uncountable murderers and conspirers

roam free in Kashmir, and this has muffled thousands of voices that remain threatened. Many non-fanatic Muslims took to Wahabi Islam succumbing to fear.

Did we know that the terror party called Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was entirely made of local Kashmiri Muslims? What was this “liberation” they were fighting for? Are we aware of the dehumanizing rapes, chopping off of limbs, gouging of eyes, stitching of lips, nailing of *tilak* marks, and such gruesome tortures that were done by the terrorists before killing victims? Have we heard about bodies floating in the Jhelum? Do these even sound like the events of a democratic nation? Where were the government and police? What happened in hospitals? We have to find out.

The freezing blood-soaked night of January 1990, has been covered minute by minute as the author also relates his direct experience, taking the reader through the pages with bated breath. Why were the Pandits targeted? What was the fate of Sikhs? How did the rest of India and the world react? Just reading this gives one sleepless nights.

It all happened on Indian soil, only about 30 years ago. It is not some occurrence brought out from dust-laden archives. Why are most Indians still ignorant about this ethnic cleansing? Why has the media and education system remained silent? Some critical questions are answered.

The Seventh Exodus, its Aftermath and Rehabilitation

The exodus of over 3.5 lac survivors out of the Valley, their unimaginable losses, and the pitiable state of the refugee camps have been enumerated. Basic human rights have been denied. Would the Kashmiri majority welcome the Pandits back home? What about their properties? What would ensure safe rehabilitation? Serious issues are addressed. While the author does not forget to give due credit to those Kashmiri Pandits who managed to turn adversity into opportunity and have made a mark at a national and international level.

Myths Perpetuated to Justify Violence

Col. Tikoo has rightfully granted an entire chapter to the myths that have been disseminated to justify violence in the Valley. All points made by the author are supported heavily by data, statistics, and other authentic evidence. This would enlighten many who have fallen prey to untrue narratives.

Conclusion

“Kashmir: Its Aborigines and their Exodus” is a powerful, refreshing, and straightforward account on the state, with the author unquestionably rooted in the spirit of *Satyam-eva Jayate*.

It teaches us how we stand on flimsy grounds when we do not know the actual history of our nation. It empowers us with extensive information on Kashmir so that we may freely and meaningfully form our own opinions.

This book successfully rescues us from misinformation and fake propaganda that has also been fueled by an influential segment of Kashmiris (Hindus and Muslim) who are plagued with negationism, Stockholm syndrome, vague ideas of secularism and, vested interest.

Col. Tikoo has done the work of a soldier through the intellect, serving us humbly with this book that acts as a protective armour of knowledge.

Kashmir's past is seething with unpleasantness but the author refrains from sugarcoating, embellishing, or sandpapering these realities for political correctness or to create a superior impression. Col. Tikoo, being a seasoned army man, has effortlessly emerged victorious in keeping evidence at the core of this project, rather than his own ethnic identity, emotions, and biases.

The book displays tremendous maturity and compassion through the substantial documentation of Kashmir's events. The ancient history gives a sense of pride in one's heritage, and contemporary history serves as an eye-opener and a healing balm of acknowledgement for those who faced terror.

Only after acknowledgement, does healing happen, justice is sought, transformation occurs, and society evolves. This harsh learning dawned upon mankind in World War II, and no responsible society must forget it.

Col. Tej K. Tikoo's big contribution deserves a salute of the nation. This repository of knowledge must be owned, especially by all those from the state. The book shall be treasured by generations to come and is a must-read for every Indian who seeks answers and wishes to learn the correct history of India and its regions.

Book Links:

- i) [Lancer Publishers](#)
- ii) [Amazon](#)

(Note: Kindly ensure you buy the revised edition published in 2020.)



ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ (REGD.)

(APEX BODY OF INDIAN & OVERSEAS KASHMIRI PANDIT ORGANISATIONS)

244, Sector - 3, R. K. Puram, New Delhi – 110022, Tele: 011-26107431

Web: www.aiks.org; E-mail: hqaiks@gmail.com

WEBINAR HELD ON 19 SEPT 2020 ON THE DELIMITATION IN JKUT AND THE POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF DISPLACED KASHMIRI HINDUS: A REPORT

Following prominent persons of the community took part in the Webinar conducted by AIKS on 19 Sept 2020 between 6 P.M. and 9 P.M.

Dr. K N Pandita

Sh. Vijay Sazawal

Sh. Vijay Kashkari

Sh. Shiban Khaibri

Sh. Ajay Bharti

Sh. Sanjay Saraf

Sh. Surinder Ambardar

Sh. Reapan Tikoo

Sh. A. K. Raina

Moderator: Col Tej K Tikoo, Ph.D. (Retd)

Vote of Thanks presented by: Sh. Maharaj K Pajan

Technical Support provided by: Sh. Sunil Kaul

The webinar, which was widely watched by the community and others outside the community, generated a keen interest and many issues were touched upon, not necessarily directly related to the agenda, but certainly impinging on our return to Kashmir.

Important Issues which Emerged from the Discussion

Though many issues were discussed during the webinar, it was on the following points of concern to which substantial time was devoted.

Delimitation (DL) and Political Empowerment of Displaced Kashmiri Hindus

From the statistics/figures quoted from published/ government records, it is apparent that since 1941 efforts were made at official/unofficial levels to project Kashmiri Pandit population far below their numbers than what actually existed in the Valley. The aim appeared to be to disempower the community in view of the likelihood of monarchy coming to an end and India becoming a democratic republic.

It also emerged that in 1947, KP community had significant numbers in six constituencies and, in fact, till 1967, it could elect three of its members to the Legislative Assembly (LA). However, later, due to alteration carried out in the boundaries of assembly seats as mentioned above, Kashmiri Pandits could not elect even one of their representatives, thereafter. This gerrymandering of constituencies disempowered the community completely. Many speakers referred to this fact during their presentation.

Dr K N Pandita elucidated on the background of the delimitation process started in India after 1962 and thereafter, being carried out every 10 years. He emphasized that the recommendations of the delimitation commission are binding and cannot be challenged in parliament or courts. After the last delimitation carried out in 2002, the then government amended the provision to freeze further delimitation till 2024. Dr Pandita mentioned that later the Govt had enhanced the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly (LA) of J&K from 80 to 114, with 24 seats kept reserved for POK and still later in 2019, 7 more seats were added without assigning any reason.

Due to such changes effected in the seats allocated, certain ambiguities remained, e.g., will refugees of 1947 from POK, who now stand regularized after abrogation of article 370 and 35A, get their share of seats out of the 24 assigned to POK? There, also, did not appear to be any clarity about KPs who are displaced, getting any consideration as constituencies are created on basis of population, which does not favor them. It is also not clear as to whom are the 7 seats, added later, to be allotted to. It is possible that these may go to Jammu due to the inclusion of nomadic tribes in the electoral rolls. Dr Pandita mentioned that in the state of J&K there never has been an equitable dispensation of political justice and it has, been a tyranny of the majority. He asserted, "Let it be clear to us that no one will dispense political empowerment to us. We need to fight for it." He said that we must work for a constituency in exile.

It was also mentioned that the Delimitation Commission (DC) included names of Farooq Abdullah and Hasnain

from the National Conference. However, they have not confirmed their participation. Later, Sh. Shiban Khaibri Ji confirmed that both have declined to be part of the said Commission. He wondered whether KPs will get a share from the additional seats added to the LA. While demanding reservation of seats for our community in the State Legislature, Khaibri Ji's comment about the demand raised by some people for creation of constituency for Chenab Valley in Doda, evinced keen interest among the participants. However, the issue was not discussed further as enough information was not available on the subject.

It was also brought out by one of the panelists, particularly Dr K N Pandita and Sh. A K Raina, that Dr Subramaniam Swamy, while speaking to members of KPA, Mumbai, had favored reserving seats in the LA for persecuted Hindus of Kashmir. He even went as far as to suggest that Kashmiri Hindus could even have constituency in exile. Sh. Sanjay Saraf also demanded reservation of seats for KPs in parliament and in the LA.

Nearly everyone voiced their concern on the least thought given to displaced Kashmiri Hindus while the erstwhile State was reorganized.

Sh. Ajay Bharti said that before DC gets down to work, we must seek justice for KP community by presenting our case before it, as population figures have been manipulated in the erstwhile state. Such manipulation adversely affected population figures of Jammu and Ladakh too.

He further gave statistical details of birth/ fertility rate over a period between 1981 to 2001, which resulted in most benefits, in the shape of allocation of lions share of funds, in favour of Kashmir for many years. He said that he was hopeful that the DC will consider our issues favourably.

Dr Vijay Sazawal too commented on the issue and opined that a well-crafted strategic approach be adopted for our return and rehabilitation. He further said that our political empowerment must be institutionalized.

Quoting extensively from Government records available in the open sources, Sh. Vijay Kashkari proved without the slightest of ambiguity that the census exercises conducted earlier in the state were meant to disempower the Kashmiri Pandits. He further said that communities can be empowered in different ways but today our focus should be on our political empowerment. He emphasized that earlier too AIKS had rejected DL based on 2011 census. Giving statistical details of errors in 2011 census, he emphasized that these errors were not a mere coincidence but a deliberate attempt to rob the community of its right to political space in Kashmir. Kashkari Ji further said, "With the deletion of article 370 and 35A, the situation has changed for good. Time has now come when we must get reservation both in parliament and state assembly," he said.

Sh. Surinder Ambardar mentioned that KPs cannot allow its civilizational roots with Kashmir to be cut. While dwelling on our exodus, he said that it was a part of an international conspiracy which re-ignited the civilizational war to which our community has been subjected to for centuries. He said that this civilizational onslaught must be fought through institutional mechanism. He said that our political empowerment is necessary to re-establish and protect our civilizational connect with Kashmir. He asserted, "Therefore, we seek reservation for 3 seats in assembly and 1 in parliament to protect of our civilizational continuity with Kashmir.

Sh. Reapen Tikoo spoke at length about his extensive interaction with the Election Commission of India on many occasions. He said that his primary focus has been to get the Election Commission to simplify the process for enabling the displaced community members to participate in the elections and exercise their franchise in their original constituencies in Kashmir, before their exodus. He said, "Our ability to vote in large numbers in our original constituencies will automatically make us relevant to the election process and will be a step towards our political empowerment. He supported the demand for the reservation of seats in Parliament and State Assembly.

Sh. AK Raina pointed out the inaccuracies in various census reports, as far as these concerned our community, post-exodus. Quoting an example, he said that in the 2011 census our sex ratio was shown as 10:1, which is clearly a farce. As a progressive community KPs are far ahead of even the national figure of 1000: 940. He said that in the census carried out in 2001 or 2011, no door to door survey was done, thereby rendering the whole process suspect and inaccurate.

He quoted government figures to prove that census exercise done in past was deliberately manipulated to our disadvantage. He said, "We need to present our facts and figures to the DC to ensure that no injustice was done."

Everyone who spoke during the webinar rejected the carrying out of delimitation based on 2011 census. There was consensus among the participants that delimitation should be carried only after the census of 2021.

Issue of Minorities

It was pointed out that in Kashmir; KPs were not considered a minority, despite their microscopic numbers. While Kashmiri Muslims took advantage of minority status at the all-India level, at the state level too, they cornered all the benefits meant for minorities, despite being in preponderant majority at the state level. As Dr K N Pandita called it, "Eating the cake and carrying it too."

Dr K N Pandita explained the concept of 'reverse minority' and mentioned that though UNHRC considered this category for people like us who are in such a situation, but our own NHRC did not take cognizance of this demand. He further mentioned that KPs were labelled as 'Migrants', while we are IDPs as per Geneva Convention of 2002. We could get rights like Afghan refugees if this just demand was accepted.

Kashmir as the Central Point of Our Focus

Dr. Vijay Sazawal during his presentation emphasized that our displaced community's focus must remain Kashmir, and more particularly, those of us who continue to be there. He said that our vision must focus on the preservation and protection of our temples and shrines, which will eventually serve as the springboard for our return and help to serve as the core of our presence there on which we can build further. This way we can continue to demand and secure our right to our land of generations.

He further said that we all must render full support to those KPs who stayed back or are currently living in the valley. "They represent of our identity and it is they who are truly shouldering the responsibility of preserving our centuries-old connection with Kashmir. Help them to stay put and grow," he said. He further said that our efforts must be directed at strengthening our identity in Kashmir, particularly through institutional means. In this connection he mentioned about the establishment of Lal Ded Chair at Kashmir University.

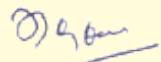
Other Issues

Sh. Sanjay Saraf assured of his and his party, Lok Jana Shakhti Party's (LJP) full support to our community. He asserted that though his party was part of the NDA, yet he will not hesitate to criticize the government for the fact that it has done little for the displaced people living in pathetic conditions in Jagati. Sh. Saraf further argued that 2 to 3 % jobs in the JKUT must be reserved in the central govt offices/undertakings for the displaced community. He further demanded registration for community members in BPL category if they fulfill the required conditions, so that they get benefits under this scheme to which they are entitled.

Sh. Surinder Ambardar dwelt at length on the political situation in Kashmir post-Aug 5, 2019 and emphasized that our displaced community must register ourselves for obtaining 'Domicile Certificate' which will strengthen our claim to be politically empowered. He mentioned that if 8/10 Lakh community members obtain Domicile Certificate; no political dispensation can ignore us.

Important Issues that Emerged from the Webinar

- 1. Political empowerment of the Kashmiri Pandit community is of utmost importance for its return and survival in Kashmir.**
- 2. Persecuted Kashmiri Pandit community displaced from Kashmir must get 3 seats reserved for it in LA and one seat in Parliament.**
- 3. KPs reject the delimitation exercise proposed to be carried out in JKUT based on 2011 census.**
- 4. The Delimitation to be carried out in JKUT by the DC must be carried out based on census-2021, which is less than a few months away.**
- 5. JKUT must institute a commission to identify minorities in the state to be statutorily recognized to dispense justice in an equitable manner without discrimination.**
- 6. Participants expressed concern at the poor living conditions of those displaced community members who are living in Jagati Township. Numerous appeals have been sent to the Govt of JKUT in this regard, but nothing much has been done to improve the situation.**
- 7. Every community org must support our community members in Kashmir in every possible manner and treat it as a core to build upon it to sustain our eventual return.**
- 8. Whereas efforts are on to streamline the process of enabling our community to exercise their franchise during elections in their original constituency in Kashmir, members are requested to enroll themselves as voters in their respective constituencies. This will also help in empowering them politically.**
- 9. Whole community is requested to register themselves for the issue of Domicile Certificate, as this will eventually help us establish our numbers authentically.**
- 10. Irrespective of which political party one belongs to, every KP political activist considers the community interests as non-negotiable.**



(Tej K Tikoo)
President

»» Destinations for your education

Continuing from the last issue, the Universities and Institutes of Health, Engineering, Architecture, Management and Law of the States of Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi State is given hereunder. The list is according to the ranking of National Institutional Framework, Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India.

»» Punjab State**❖ Universities**

- ♦ Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
- ♦ Punjabi University Patiala

❖ Medical Institutes

- ♦ Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research Chandigarh
- ♦ Christian Medical College Ludhiana
- ♦ Dayanand Medical College Ludhiana

❖ Dental

- ♦ Christian Dental College Ludhiana
- ♦ Punjab University Chandigarh

❖ Engineering Colleges

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Ropar Rupnagar
- ♦ Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology Patiala
- ♦ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology Jalandhar
- ♦ Chandigarh University Mohali
- ♦ Lovely Professional University Phagwara
- ♦ Punjab Technical University Kapurthala
- ♦ Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology Longowal
- ♦ Chitkara University Rajpura

❖ Management Institutes

- ♦ Lovely Professional University Phagwara
- ♦ Chandigarh University Mohali
- ♦ Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology Patiala

❖ Pharmacy Institutes

- ♦ Panjab University Chandigarh
- ♦ Punjabi University Patiala
- ♦ Lovely Professional University Phagwara
- ♦ S. F. College of Pharmacy Moga
- ♦ Chitkara University Rajpura
- ♦ Amar Shaheed Baba Ajit Singh Jujhar Singh Memorial College of Pharmacy Bela

❖ Law Institutes

- ♦ The Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law Patiala
- ♦ Panjab University Chandigarh

»» Haryana State**❖ Universities**

- ♦ Maharshi Dayanand University Rohtak
- ♦ Maharishi Markandeshwar Ambala
- ♦ Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology Hissar

❖ Medical Institutes

- ♦ Maharishi Markandeshwar Ambala

❖ Dental

- ♦ Postgraduate Institute of Dental Sciences Rohtak
- ♦ Maharishi Markandeshwar Ambala

❖ Engineering Colleges

- ♦ National Institute of Technology Kurukshetra
- ♦ The Northcap University Gurgaon
- ♦ YMCA University of Science and Technology Faridabad
- ♦ National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship & Management Sonapat
- ♦ ManavRachna International Institute of Research & Studies Faridabad
- ♦ Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology Hisar

❖ Management Institutes

- ♦ Management Development Institute Gurgaon
- ♦ Indian Institute of Management Rohtak
- ♦ BML Munjal University Gurgaon

❖ Pharmacy Institutes

- ♦ Maharishi Markandeshwar Ambala
- ♦ Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology Hisar
- ♦ Maharshi Dayanand University Rohtak
- ♦ Madhya Pradesh State

❖ Dental Institutes

- ♦ Government Dental College Indore

❖ Engineering Institutes

- ♦ Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology Bhopal
- ♦ Amity University Gwalior

❖ Architecture

- ♦ School of Planning and Architecture Bhopal
- ♦ Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology Bhopal

» Uttar Pradesh

❖ Universities

- ♦ Banaras Hindu University Varanasi
- ♦ King George's Medical University Lucknow
- ♦ Amity University Noida Gautam Buddh Nagar
- ♦ Dayalbagh Educational Institute Agra

❖ Medical Institutes

- ♦ Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences Lucknow
- ♦ Banaras Hindu University Varanasi
- ♦ King George's Medical University Lucknow
- ♦ Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh

❖ Dental

- ♦ Institute of Medical Sciences Varanasi

❖ Engineering Institutes

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur
- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) Varanasi
- ♦ Amity University Noida Gautam Buddh Nagar
- ♦ Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh
- ♦ Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology
- ♦ Jaypee Institute of Information Technology Noida
- ♦ Dayalbagh Educational Institute Agra
- ♦ Indian Institute of Information Technology Allahabad
- ♦ Harcourt Butler Technical University Kanpur
- ♦ Madan Mohan Malaviya University of Technology Gorakhpur

❖ Architecture

- ♦ Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh

❖ Management Institutes

- ♦ Indian Institute of Management Lucknow
- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur
- ♦ Banaras Hindu University Varanasi
- ♦ Institute of Management Technology Ghaziabad
- ♦ Amity University Noida Gautam Buddh Nagar
- ♦ Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh
- ♦ Birla Institute of Management Technology Greater Noida
- ♦ Jaipuria Institute of Management Noida
- ♦ Jaipuria Institute of Management Lucknow

❖ Law Institutes

- ♦ Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University Lucknow
- ♦ Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh
- ♦ Banaras Hindu University Varanasi

» Uttarakhand State

❖ Universities

- ♦ Graphic Era University Dehradun

❖ Engineering Institutes

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee
- ♦ Graphic Era University Dehradun
- ♦ DIT University Dehradun
- ♦ University of Petroleum and Energy Studies Dehradun

❖ Architecture

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee

❖ Management

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee
- ♦ Indian Institute of Management Kashipur
- ♦ University of Petroleum and Energy Studies Dehradun

❖ Law Institutes

- ♦ Kumaun University, Nainital

» Delhi State

❖ Universities

- ♦ Jawaharlal Nehru University Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi
- ♦ University of Delhi Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Hamdard New Delhi
- ♦ Delhi Technological University Delhi
- ♦ Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University New Delhi

❖ Medical Institutes

- ♦ All India Institute of Medical Sciences New Delhi
- ♦ Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences New Delhi
- ♦ Vardhman Mahavir Medical College & Safdarjung Hospital New Delhi
- ♦ Maulana Azad Medical College Delhi
- ♦ University College of Medical Sciences Delhi

❖ Dental

- ♦ Jamia Hamdard New Delhi
- ♦ Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi

❖ Engineering Institutes

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi
- ♦ Delhi Technological University New Delhi
- ♦ Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi
- ♦ Netaji Subhas University of Technology (NSUT) Delhi
- ♦ Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University

New Delhi

- ♦ Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women Delhi

❖ Architecture

- ♦ School of Planning and Architecture New Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi

❖ Engineering Institutes

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi
- ♦ Delhi Technological University New Delhi
- ♦ Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi
- ♦ Netaji Subhas University of Technology (NSUT) Delhi
- ♦ Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University New Delhi
- ♦ Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women Delhi

❖ Architecture

- ♦ School of Planning and Architecture New Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi

❖ Management

- ♦ Indian Institute of Technology Delhi New Delhi
- ♦ Indian Institute of Foreign Trade New Delhi
- ♦ International Management Institute New Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi
- ♦ FORE School of Management New Delhi
- ♦ Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University New Delhi
- ♦ Jagan Institute of Management Studies Delhi

❖ Pharmacy Institutes

- ♦ Jamia Hamdard
- ♦ Delhi Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences & Research New Delhi

❖ Law Institutes

- ♦ National Law University New Delhi
- ♦ Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi
- ♦ Indian Law Institute New Delhi

(Concluded)

»» Admission Alert

All India Management Association (AIMA) Management Aptitude Test (December) 2020

All India Management Association (AIMA) invites applications for Management Aptitude Test (MAT) 2020.

The Management Aptitude Test is conducted for the candidates who want to take admission in MBA and Allied Programs in B-Schools. AIMA MAT 2020 Please note that due to the ongoing

COVID-19 pandemic, conduct of MAT Dec 2020 in PBT mode is subject to prevailing situation and applicable Govt. Guidelines. In case the test cannot be administered on the scheduled test date i.e., 6th Dec 2020 at any of the centers, the registration of those candidates will be automatically carried forward to the forthcoming MAT to be scheduled in Feb 2021 or later.

December session application form is available now on the official portal. Please note that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the conduct of MAT Dec 2020 in PBT mode is subject to the prevailing situation and applicable Govt. Guidelines. In case the test cannot be administered on the scheduled test date i.e., 6th Dec 2020 at any of the centers, the registration of those candidates will be automatically carried forward to the forthcoming MAT to be scheduled in Feb 2021 or later.

➡ Last Date for Online Registration 29th November 2020

➡ Date of AIMA MAT Paper Based Test (PBT) 06th December 2020

Internet Based Test (IBT)

21 Nov 2020 to 25 Nov 2020, 03 Dec 2020 to 13 Dec 2020 and 15 Dec 2020

Candidates interested in MAT December 2020 must fulfill the eligibility criteria to apply for it. In case you clear the exam but are not eligible then you will not be able to take the final admission in the MAT associate college.

Candidates can choose any one of the following modes to apply. Register online at website link: <https://mat.aima.in/dec20/> with Credit Card/Debit Card (ATM Card). Payment Detailed procedure is given on the website link

Symbiosis Institute of Geoinformatics (SIG) Pune Admission

MSc Geoinformatics Program 2021

Symbiosis Institute of Geoinformatics Pune invites applications for admission to M.Sc. Geoinformatics for the academic year 2021-23

- ♦ Last date of Online Registration 02nd Mar 2021
- ♦ Graduate in Engineering, IT, Science, Computer Science, Agriculture, Geography, Commerce and Management from any recognised University/ Institution of National Importance with a minimum of 50% marks or equivalent grade.
- ♦ The candidates who are interested in the above courses should apply online at the SIG website <https://www.sig.ac.in/>
- ♦ Appearing for the SNAP test is not mandatory to

apply for SIG.

- ♦ 2 seats reserved for Jammu and Kashmir Migrants.

Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT) Amethi

Admission to B.Tech and Integrated Dual Degree Programs 2020

Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT), Amethi invites applications from the Indian citizens for admission to 4-year B.Tech. and 5-year Integrated Dual degree Programs in the following disciplines for the academic session 2020-21.

- B.Tech. in Petroleum Engineering
- B.Tech. in Chemical Engineering
- B.Tech. in Computer Science & Engineering
- B.Tech. in Electronics Engineering
- 5 yrs Integrated Dual Degree in Petroleum Engineering
- 5 yrs Integrated Dual degree in Chemical Engineering
- Last date for online submission of Application 20th November 2020
- Declaration of first round provisional list of shortlisted candidates on 25th November 2020
- If seats remain available after third round of admission process is over, then a fourth selected

list will be published on 26th December 2020

- Admission will be based on JEE (Advanced) - 2020 Rank List. The candidate should have 60% minimum aggregate marks in class 12th or equivalent examination.
- Interested candidates can apply online only through the official website <https://www.rgipt.ac.in>
- Following the GOI directive and to encourage technical education among the girls, 17% of the seats will be reserved for female candidates on supernumerary basis over the current strength.

»»Scholarship

SDEF School Scholarship Program 2020

Swami Dayanand Education Foundation invites applications from the students of Class IX to XII of the Delhi/NCR region for the School Scholarship Program 2020. The scholarship will be awarded for studies in India in a government or private school from class IX TO XII

Applications for the same can be submitted through online or offline mode till December 31, 2020. Read further for more details on SDEF School Scholarship Program 2020

*For any queries write to
scholarships@swamidayanand.org
Feedback: vijaykashkari@gmail.com*

Events of the Month

Ashtami	22nd Nov 2020
Ekadashi (Shukla Paksha)	25th Nov 2020
Kartik Purnima	30th Nov 2020
Ekadashi (Krishna Paksha)	11th Dec 2020
Amavasya	15th Dec 2020

Note

Panchak Starts on 21st Nov Ends 26th Nov

Kartik (Shukla Paksha) from 16th Nov to 30th Nov
Poh (Krishna Paksha) from 01st Dec to 14th Dec



AIKS Matrimonial Service



Suitable alliance invited for our son born on 8th April, 1989, 1110 hours, 5 feet 10 inch tall, at Anantnag Kashmir. The boy is B tech Mechanical with MS applied mechanics from Ecole central's, DeNantes, France and is presently working as senior business Analyst, Sopra Steria India at Noida (UP). Interested may please call for tekni and biodata from WhatsApp number 9419765031, 7051961209.



Looking for alliance for our son born in New Delhi on 1st Sept 1989. Height 186 cm. He is a Computer Engineering from India and M.B.A from U.S.A. Presently working as Senior Consultant with IT company based in New York, USA. The girl should be Masters/MBA from USA and working in USA on her work visa. Parents based in Dubai. Interested please contact on mob no +971506196474, EMAIL deep190058@gmail.com.



Looking Suitable Match for my Son, Born on 22.10.1992, 13.52 Hrs at Jammu, Height 5'11". Done B.E from Mysore and MS from USA. Working as Software Developer in USA on H1B Visa interested may contact raina50@gmail.com, Mobile 9419191462, 9419114335.



Suitable Alliance for our daughter Born 22 August 1993, Height: 168 Cms. Bachelor's in Architecture from I.P University Delhi, working with an MNC at Bangalore. Please send Tekni and kulawali at Email: dhruva62@gmail.com OR Mob. No: 9868901676 & 8383032306.



Seeking Suitable Alliance for our daughter Born on 04.09.1984 in Delhi, HT 165 Cms. Economics Honours Graduate from Delhi University and MBA (Finance and HR) from reputed institute Delhi. Working in Govt. of India Institution at Manesar, Gurugram as consultant in Human Resources Development Deptt. With good Annual Package. Interested may please send Kulawali and Tekni at Email:- arunraina50@gmail.com OR WhatsApp at 9873787189.



Suitable alliance invited for my son, born 20/5/1983 at Delhi at 9.58 PM, height 6' 2" (189 cms). He has done Engineering from Pune University and PGPM from SP JAIN, Mumbai. Well established as an Oil & Gas Trading professional at Singapore since 2012. Mutually divorced (no issue). Father retired from PSU, Mother Homemaker, family settled in Delhi, sister married. Interested may forward Tekni & Kulawali to Email:- vkkaul@gmail.com OR +919999921163



Parents seeking marriage proposal for their daughter. Our daughter is a physician and is based in the US. She is a US citizen. We are looking for a suitable professional Kashmiri Pandit match. Our daughter is talented, humble, and has been raised in Kashmiri and Indian culture

at home. She is willing to relocate to India or other countries for the right match. Date of birth October 12, 1982 at 1:30 am, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. A recent photograph would be very helpful. Please correspond with a brief writeup of the family and a tekni to: kkher50@msn.com. WhatsApp: +1 202-765-5444.



We are looking for a MEDICO Match with MD/MS for our Daughter who has done MBBS from RGUHS, Bangalore presently working as MO in a Private Hospital in Delhi and also preparing for MD, born on 30th March 1991, 17:37 at Udhampur. Interested may contact with Tekni and Biodata on 94191-30214, 94191-13288.



Wanted a suitable alliance for my legally separated daughter born 22.04.1986 at Srinagar , time of birth 10.25 hrs ,height 173 cms who has perused BE(CSE) from MIET college Jammu and M.Tech(IT) from KSOU Mysore. She is working as an Executive in a Govt of India Enterprise and presently posted at Jammu. Her job is transferable to any part in India. Her earlier marriage lasted for a brief duration only . Merely Lagan dosha. Interested may kindly send the tekni and kulawali per return mail to R.K.Raina on email id rkrjgk@gmail.com or can whatsapp the details to 9419264309.



Seeking Alliance for Our Daughter born 2/1/1991 at Jammu, B.Tech (IT) M. Tech (computer Science) Presently Working as Assistant Professor In Engineering College (NCR). Previously Worked At MNC Cognizant Pune. Interested May please send Tekni / Kulwali on Mob/What's App- 9419209499



We are looking for MEDICO MATCH with MD/MS/DN working in DELHI – NCR match for our Daughter, beautiful & tall , Born-June 87 / Ht.- 167 Cm qualified as MD in Obs. & Gynae. & Specialization in IVF & working as IVF Consultant with Hospital in GURGAON. Interested may please contact on e-mail at: bergen.kaulsk@gmail.com Mob. +91 9873452557/9414012557.



Looking for a Suitable Match for our Son Born on 13th July 1991, 11.40 AM at Jammu. Parents are presently living in Roop Nagar, Jammu. Height 5'11", Qualified as BE in Computer Science. Working as Application Developer in Dhyey Consulting Services Pvt. Ltd. at Vadodara, Gujarat. Interested may contact on MB- 9419141511, Email id: ratanpur1990@gmail.com for Tekni & Biodata.



Seeking suitable alliance for our son, born at Srinagar on 23rd July, 1988 at 11.59 AM, 173 CMS. He is pursuing his own business at Valsad, Gujarat having a decent annual income in seven figures. The family is currently based in Faridabad. Interested may please contact for further details on email: rajindermagazine@gmail.com or Mobile/WhatsApp: 9810847376



Suitable alliance invited for our son Akshit, born 10 December 1991, 1410hrs at Jammu, Height 166cms, B. Tech (software Engineering) from Delhi College of Engineering, MS/PhD in Electrical Engineering from USA, Presently Working With Intel Oregon, USA, Interested may please Contact Bharat Peer mail Id - bb.peer@gmail.com/8146625401, Anitapeer/9872967824

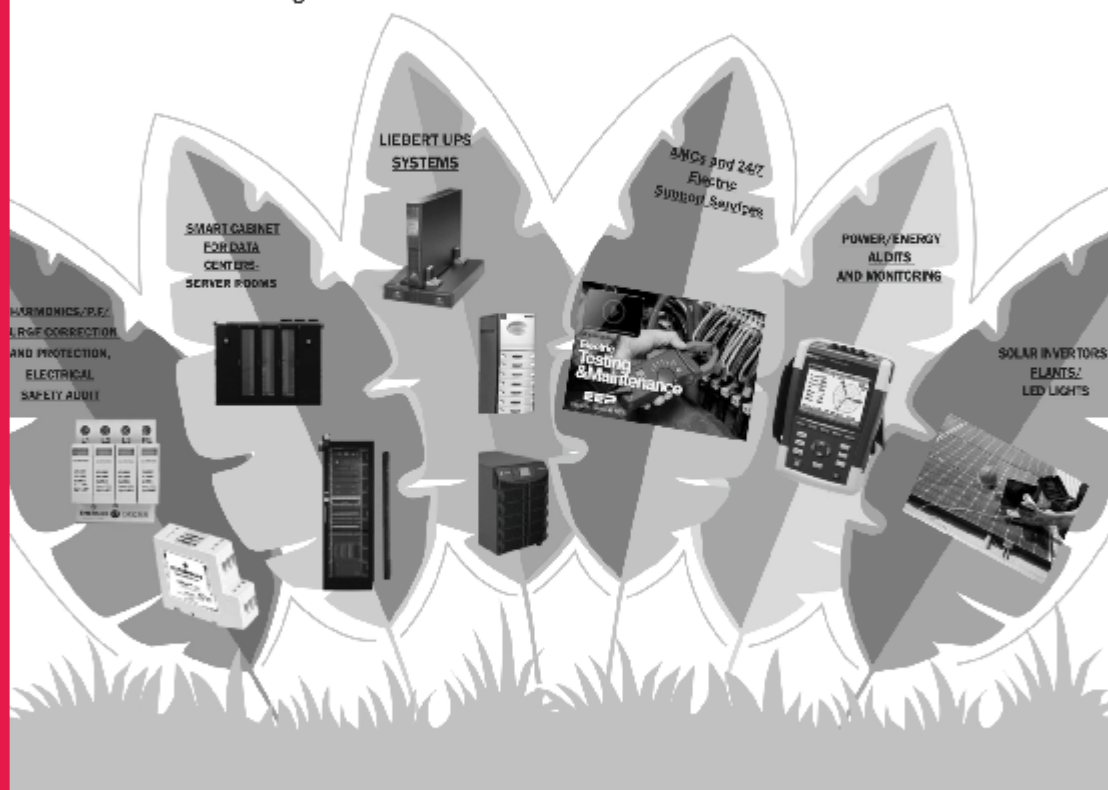


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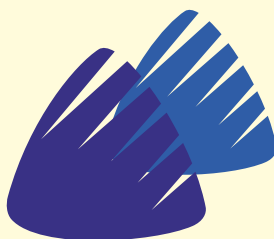
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