

*We Wish Our Readers A Very Happy Republic Day  
Long Live The Republic  
Let Truth Prevail*

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## PANDITS ABSTAIN FROM VOTING

KS Correspondent

**M**ERELY 8 to 9 percent Kashmiri Pandits caste their votes in the just concluded Assembly elections in 2008. This was despite the participation of 43 Kashmiri Pandit candidates across the length and breadth of Valley- a number of contesting candidates which must be highest ever for Kashmiri Pandits in the history of elections in the state.

This election is already being discussed as a highly participative election where an unprecedented number of voters, more than 50% turned out to vote in both Kashmir Valley as well as Jammu. Taking place in the aftermath of Amarnath agitation and a protracted campaign for boycott in Kashmir Valley by different sections of separatists, this election is being described as a victory of electoral process and democracy.

Lost in the din of accolades to democratic forces and condemnation of boycotters is the very small turn out of Kashmiri Pandit voters in the election process. With 43 KP candidates in the fray, and a protracted campaign by migrant cells of all the main political parties, as also the newly floated supposedly Kashmiri Pandit political party JKNDP, urging Kashmiri Pandits to participate in the elections in large numbers, a mere 8 to 9 percent turnover of Kashmiri Pandit voters in the elections carries a definite message. The retraction of Kashmiri Pandits from electoral process in Jammu and Kashmir since their expulsion from Valley is being ignored by the political class but it carries foreboding of a crisis of unprecedented magnitude. If those sections of population in Jammu and Kashmir who oppose separatism, have full faith in Indian Constitution, and strive every nerve to preserve the integrity of the nation, choose to view elections and eventually the democratic process as meaningless, carries seeds of disenchantment. It may spread sooner or later to all those patriotic people in the state who have already started viewing the democratic set up in the state as a 'dice loaded' to ensure political hegemony of only one section of the society.

About 7000 exercised their vote out of a total of 72000

Kashmiri Pandit voters in Kashmir Valley. This was despite the fact that there was no 'boycott call' given by Panun Kashmir this time. PK left it to the Kashmiri Pandit voters. Its leaders maintained, "We have been educating our community about the implications of exercising their right of franchise when their right to live has been critically jeopardised. We are for democracy which nourishes inclusive culture. A democratic process which legitimises exclusion and acts as an instrument of denial of genocide is negation of democracy. Our community understands it well. But we will not campaign against participation in elections. Let those who see a merit in participation convince the community and mobilise them for vote."

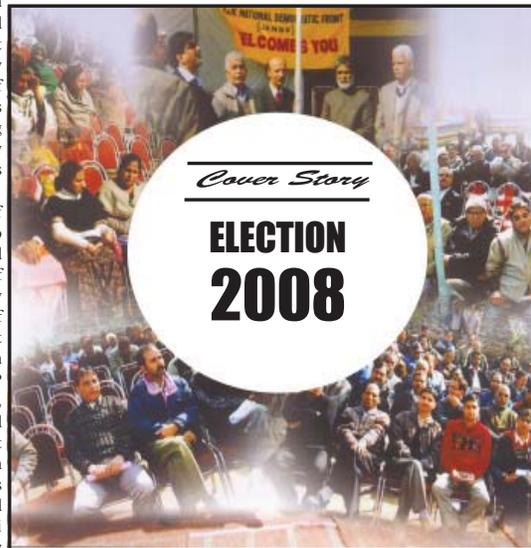
A section of Kashmiri Pandits had mobilised resources for a large scale involvement of Kashmiri Pandits in the elections well before elections. In fact this campaign started more than two years prior to these elections when change over to Azad as CM of the state had just stabilised. In a three day conclave of Kashmiri Pandits at Kolkatta from 24th December to 26th December, 2006, All India Kashmiri Samaj gave a 'clarion call to float a political party of KP's'. It was decided to appoint a steering committee to give a concrete shape to the political party.

The enthusiasm amongst the advocates for a political party of Kashmiri Pandits to participate in the elections sounded a bit intriguing. Mathematics of KP voters particularly in Jammu and Kashmir and the reality of their being in exile raised doubts about the motivation of such a move.

The voluntary abstention of Kashmiri Pandits from electoral process since 1996 had already started drawing attention both at the national and international level. How could an expelled community exercise its franchise in exile for electoral constituencies where it was not living for more than a decade, and where its properties have been usurped or purchased after generating distress, psychological as well as economic.

Religious cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits was now in international focus. Attempts to retrieve the situation was being seen with more scepticism particularly in the light of colossal failure of state to prevent the expulsion of Hindus and demonstrate its will to preserve secularism. Abstention

(Contd. on Page 4)



*Kashmir Sentinel and Panun Kashmir Foundation mourn their sad demise and pray for the peace to the departed souls*

1. Smt. Leelwati Koul W/o Late Sh. P.N. Koul of Magam Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 49-A, Subash Nagar, Rehari Colony, Jammu. 12/2/2008
2. Sh. Devi Dass Malla S/o Sh. Suraj Ram Malla originally resident of Kani Kadal Sgr; presently residing at 68-P-1-A Ext. Mandir Marg Trikuta Nagar, Jammu. 12/2/2008
2. Sh. Makhan Lal Bhat S/o Late Sh. Kanth Ram Bhat originally resident of Areh Kulgam Kmr; presently at R/o H.No: 28, Lane-5, Lower Barnai Netar Kothian Jammu. 13/2/2008
3. Smt. Uma Dhar W/o Maj. Gen. B.N. Dhar (Retd.) originally resident of Nawakadal Safakadal Sgr; presently residing at 165-A/D Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. 13/2/2008
4. Smt. Kamlawati Bhat W/o Late Sh. Neel Kanth Bhat of Ganeshpora Pahalgam Kmr; presently residing at 307 Nagrota Camp, Jammu. 13/2/2008
5. Sh. Kashir Nath Garoo S/o Late Sh. Nand Ram Garoo of Handwara Kmr; presently resident resident of H.No: 1400, Sector-7, Kamal Haryana, 13/2/2008
6. Sh. Mohan Lal Wali W/o Late Sh. GN Wali R/o Lane No; 7, Talab Tillo, Jammu. 14/2/2008
7. Smt. Shanta /Roop Mathu W/o Late Sh. Som Nath Mathu R/o Zaindar Mohalla Sgr; presently residing at 51 Mohinder Nagar Canal Road, Jammu. 14/2/2008
8. Smt. Gouri Shori Bamboo W/o Sh. Hari Krishen Bamboo R/o 59 Jawahar Nasgar, Sgr; presently residing at 98/P, Sector-1, Ext. Mandir Marg Trikuta Nagar, Jammu. 14/2/2008
9. Sh. Gopi Nath Koul S/o Sh. Sona Koul R/o Sirmoo Pulwama Kmr; presently residing at Lane No: 4/A, Lakshmi Vihar Tomal Bohri, Anantnag Nagar, Jammu. 15/2/2007
10. Sh. Madsudhan Koul S/o Late Sh. Madav Koul presently resident of H.No: 86, Block-B, Hari Nagar, New Delhi. 16/2/2008
11. Sh. Mohan Lal Sadhu R/o Hutmarah Anantnag Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 504, Sector-5, Surya Vanshi Nagar, Lower Roop Nagar, Muthi Jammu. 16/2/2008
12. Smt. Soomawati Malla W/o Sh. Nand Lal Malla of Jahab Kulgam, Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 24, Sector-6 Model town Gangyal, Jammu. 16/2/2008
13. Smt. Prabha Devi W/o Late Sh. Shamboo Nath Raina of Pethbagh Dialgam Anantnag Kmr; presently resident of H.No: 56/2, Adarsh Nagar, Bantalab Barnai Road, Jammu. 16/2/2008
14. Sh. Triloki Nath Handoo S/o Late Sh. Gopi Nath Handoo R/o HNo: 67, Chinari Colony Bagti Barzulla Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 10, Sector-4, Pamposh Colony Janipur, Jammu. 16/2/2008
15. Sh. Chuni Lal Bhat S/o Late Sh. Radha Krishen Bhat originally resident of Khrew Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 724, JMC, Sector-3 Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. 17/2/2008
16. Smt. Shobawati Kaw W/o Late Sh. KN Kaw erstwhile resident of H.No: 84, Jawaha Nagar, Sgr; presently resident of H.No: 84, Jawahar Nagar Sgr; presently resident of H.No: 166, Sector-2, Roop Nagar Enclave Block-A, Jammu. 17/2/2008
17. Sh. Prithvi Nath Mattoo S/o Late Sh Dina Nath Mattoo formerly resident Kralteeng SR Gunj Sgr; presently residing at H.No: 6, Lane No: 1, Bharat Nagar Enclave Jammu. 17/2/2008
18. Smt. Roopawati W/o Late Sh. Pre Nath Dhar R/o Gol Gujral Camp, Trilokpur Jammu and originally resident of Sahipura Langate Kupwara, Kmr. 17/2/2008
19. Sh. Shamboo Nath Bhan S/o Late Sh. Nath Ram Bhan R/o Khaipora Tangmarg Kmr; presently resident at Kashmiri Colony, Saror Nehar Bari-Brahmana Jammu. 17/2/2008
20. Sh. M.K. Koul S/o Late Sh. Maheshwar Nath Kaul originally resident of Bagh-Jogi Lankar Rainawari Sgr; presently residing at H.No: 67, Sector-17, Faridabad. 17/2/2008
21. Smt. Jaikishori Razdan W/o Late Sh. Janki Nath Razdan of Salia Anantnag, Kmr; presently residing at Qtr. No: 188, Phase-I/nd Purkhoo Camp, Jammu. 18/2/2008
22. Sh. Brij Nath Wali W/o Late Sh. Shamboo Nath Wali originally resident of Gurgari Mohalla Zaina Kadal Sgr; presently residing at 77/C, Pocket-B/5, Dawalgiri Appts. Sector 34, Noida (UP). 18/2/2008
23. Sh. Shankar Nath Koul R/o H.No 117, Lane No: 1, Vikas Nagar, Sarwal Jammu. 18/2/2008
24. Sh. Triloki Nath Shangloo of Kralakhud-Kharyar Sgr; presently residing at H.No: 4, Sector-1 Lower Roop Nagar, Jammu. 18/2/2008
25. Sh. Janki Nath Kachroo resident of 54-A/D Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. 18/2/2008
26. Sh. Amar Nath Dhar S/o Late Sh. Anand Ram Dhar, R/o Tankipora, Kathlishor Sgr; presently residing at H.No: 6, Lane No: 1-A, Hazuri Bagh Road Bohri Jammu. 18/2/2008
27. Sh. Roshan Lal Turki S/o Late Sh. Amar Nath Turki originally resident of Sheel Teng Babapora Sgr; presently residing at H.No: 150, Old Janipur, Jammu. 18/2/2008
28. Sh. Jai Lal Koul S/o Late Sh. Madav Ram Koul, R/o Bragam Doru Anantnag Kmr; presently resident of Panchayat Ghar Sabzi Mandi, Channi Himmat Jammu. 20/2/2008
29. Sh. Sham Lal Bhat of Bona Devsar Anantnag Kmr; presently resident of Battal Ballian Camp Udhampur. 20/2/2008
30. Prof. Badri Nath Parimoo of 126, Narsingh Garh Sgr; presently resident of 302, Block-E, Ambience Gurgaon. 20/2/2008
31. Sh. Soom Nath Tiku S/o Late Sh. KR Tiku of Khand Bhawan-Bul Bul Lanker Sgr; presently residing at 24/7, JDA Housing Colony Roop Nagar (Upper) Jammu. 21/2/2008
32. Smt. Tulsi Devi W/o Late Sh. Prem Nath Pandita originally resident of Dewan Bagh Baramulla Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 641-A Janipur Housing Colony, Near Devak Community Hall Jammu. 21/2/2008
33. Sh. Pitambar Nath Bhat S/o Late Sh. Shridhar Bhat R/o Akingam Anantnag Kmr; presently resident of H.No: 520 Lane No: 5, Vansh Nagar Muthi, Jammu. 21/2/2008
34. Sh. Prithvi Nath Moza of Late Pandit Kanth Koul., R/o Bohri Kadal Sgr; presently resident of Gole Gujral Colony Jammu. 21/2/2008
35. Sh. Anil Manwati S/o Sh. S.K. Manwali resident of Gund Ahalamar Nai Sarak Sgr; presently resident of 274 Patoli Mangotriaran Jammu. 21/2/2008
37. Sh. Veerindr K. Koul S/o Sh. T.N. Kaoul; presently resident of Flat No: 7, 2nd Floor Dee-Bee Tower, Lane-5, South Main Road, Korigaon Park, Pune. 22/2/2008
37. Sh. H.N. Pandita S/o Late Sh. Narayan Pandita R/o Talab Pulwama Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 375, Lane-10 Kunjwani By-Pass Jammu. 22/2/2008
38. Smt. Gonwati Bhat W/o Late Sh. Nand Lal Bhat of Krere Nagbal Uttursoo Anantnag Kmr; presently resident of Qtr. No: 921-22, Phase-III Purkhoo Camp Jammu. 22/2/2008
39. Sh. Makhan Lal Wali S/o Late Sh. Shiv Ji Wali R/o F-56 New Plots Lane-1st Jammu. 23/2/2008
40. Sh. Brij Nath Koul S/o Late Sh. Kanth Koul of Salia Dalsar Pahalgam Kmr; presently resident of 513/5 Muthi Jammu. 23/2/2008
41. Sh. Nand Lal Raina S/o Late Sh. Swaroop Chand Raina of Akhoora Anantnag Kmr; presently resident of H.No: 106, Lane-3, Dream City, Jammu. 23/2/2008
42. Sh. Khamindar Raina resident of 38 Subash Nagar, Jammu. 23/2/2008
43. Smt. Shubhawati Bhat W/o Late Sh. Nand Lal Bhat of Khirbawani Tullamallah Kmr; presently resident of Lane No: 2, Chandan Vihar Muthi, Jammu. 24/2/2008
44. Sh. Girdhari Lal Saraf S/o Late Sh. PN Saraf originally resident of Bagh Jogi Lankar Raina Wani Sgr; presently residing at H.No: 618, B2, Block-9, Kailash Dham Sector-50 Noida. 24/2/2008
45. Smt. Shobawati Wattal W/o Late Sh. SN Wattal of Jawahar Nagar Sgr; presently residing at H.No: 10, Lane-2, Nova-Ashoka Road Shipra Sun City Ghaziabad. 23/2/2008
46. Smt. Shobawati Koul W/o Late Sh. Gobind Joo Koul resident of 186, Upper Laxmi Nagar, Sarwal Jammu. 25/2/2008
47. Sh. Soom Nath Tiku originally resident of Bulbul Lankar Ali Kadal Sgr; presently resident of Jullaka Mohalla Jammu. 24/2/2008
48. Sh. Romesh Kumar Dhar S/o Sh. Omkar Nath Dhar originally resident of 402, Jawahar Nagar, Sgr; presently residing at B-1 Kashmiri Appart. Pitampura New Delhi. 25/2/2008
49. Sh. Girdhari Lal Patoo S/o Late Sh. Raghu Nath Patoo R/o 91/7, Trikuta Nagar Jammu and originally resident of Bulbul Lankar Ali Kadal Sgr. 25/2/2008
50. Smt. Kamlawati Bhat W/o Late Sh. Sham Lal Bhat originally R/o Kharapora Bandipur Kmr; presently resident of H.No: 11, Lane-3, Gobind Nagar, Gole Gujral Jammu. 26/2/2008
51. Sh. Jagar Nath Zutshi R/o H.No: 138 Bana Mohalla Habbakadal Sgr; presently resident of H.No: 270, Sector-2, JDA Housing Colony Roop Nagar, Jammu. 26/2/2008
52. Sh. Lacha Ram Pandit S/o Late Sh. Sona Pandit originally resident of Chogal Handwara, Kupwara Kmr; presently resident of Sari Rakhwala Jammu. 26/2/2008
53. Smt. Poshkuji Bhat W/o Late Sh. Tara Chadn Bhat, R/o Gund Dolipora Handwara Kmr; presently R/o Qtr. No; 317, Phase-1st, Purkhoo Camp Jammu 27/2/2008
54. Smt. Somawati W/o Sh. Vasadev Pandit of Brariangam Umanagri Anantnag, Kmr; presently resident of 20/4 Basant Nagar Ext. Jaggi Darbar Jammu. 28/2/2008
55. Smt. Kamla Devi W/o Late Sh. Dawarika Nath Raina of Irkimoo Kokernag Anantnag Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 294, Lane-14-C, Sector-6, Nanak Nagar, Jammu. 28/2/2008
56. Sh. Nand Lal Bhat R/o Village Chickhillora (Magam) Pattan Kmr; presently residing at H.No: 491, Jeevan Vihar Kunjipore Road Karnal Haryana. 28/2/2008
57. Sh. Shamboo Nath Thusoo S/o Late Sh. Anand Ram Thusoo of Gotengoo Kupwara Kmr; presently R/o Qtr. No: 304, Phase-1st, Muthi Camp Jammu. 29/2/2008

## EDITORIAL

## NC-Congress Should Change Line

**T**HE new NC-Congress coalition is in saddle now in the state. The electoral mandate of 2008 has ensured that PDP gets elbowed out of power. Both NC and Congress being old political formations with experience of handling political power, it is expected that this coalition will be more stable and the functioning of the government will be in an accommodative spirit rather than that of one upmanship.

For NC, return to power is critical. It has been desperately trying to retain its influence particularly in Kashmir Valley. PDP has made inroads into Kashmiri Muslim electoral base all-over while retaining its stranglehold in South Kashmir. The five percent swing in favour of PDP is an ominous signal for National Conference and its top leadership has already taken due notice of it.

Many a political Pandits did not fancy enough chances for PDP to do better this time. In fact after the fall of Congress-PDP government the party faced stiff resistance at the ground. Even in its strong base South Kashmir people attacked its rallies and beat its leaders. This resistance at the ground reflected in the deffidence of PDP leadership which sought a postponement of the elections. It feared that post-Amarnath agitation atmosphere in Valley was not going in its favour and people were blaming it for duplicity.

PDP had also failed to win support of Jamat-i-Islami and separatists till the eve of elections. The separatists as well as Jamaat were publicly opposing PDP and advocating a boycott. The entire separatist block changed track as the elections began and the fundamentalist establishment lead by Jamaat, as well as Ahli Hadisi formations publicly canvassed for PDP. Did the terrorist attacks in Mumbai and subsequent international isolation of Pakistan influence the decision of separatists and fundamentalists in Kashmir Valley?

NC leaders have openly acknowledged the role of 'Islamist Agenda' in promoting PDP. They believe that rural urban divide and claims of rural development by PDP may not have been enough to push PDP into a position where it is now. This however poses a real challenge to the NC think tank. After all, this think tank had relied heavily on mimicking the PDP ideological line after being thrown out of power in 2002. NC tried to upstage PDP through competitive communalism and secessionism. It abandoned its line on terrorism and tried to befriend Pakistan. National Conference actually believed that it had effectively neutralised or won over Pakistan and fundamentalist establishment in the Valley till the beginning of elections.

The message and lesson for NC in this election is that at the crunch time both Pakistan and the communal establishment in the Valley have chosen PDP as its running horse and not NC. Will NC learn from such an experience? Or will it pursue the same line of outwitting PDP by appearing more pro-Islamist and pro-secessionist? If it pursues the game of competitive communalism and secessionism it will only concede more space to PDP which is now openly siding with Pan Islamic sentiment and seeking to erode the boundaries of Kashmiri Muslim subnationalism.

For Congress Party which has still managed to remain the largest political party in Jammu, the dilemma is no less intense. It has over the years represented mainly Jammu in legislative spheres. But at the same time has pursued the politics of keeping a distance from the dominant political sentiment in Jammu. With BJP winning 11 seats and staking serious claims in almost 19 more assembly seats, Congress Party also has to rethink its line.

The middle ground which both NC and Congress can arrive at, is to have a cohesive strategy to survive. And this cannot be other than contesting communal politics and pursuing a balanced development of all regions. Can this coalition bring about a shift from competitive communalism to competitive secularism?

## LETTERS

### We are on our own

Sir,

Let's not expect too much from the US, which cannot do without Pakistan's help to win its "war on terror" in Afghanistan. India has to evolve a precise and covert strategy of its own to deal with Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Even if that implies destroying terrorist camps in Pakistan.

—Ashok Ganjoo,  
Jammu

### The inaction is inexcusable

Sir,

The UPA govt, needs to take lessons from Israel, which bombed the Gaza strip soon after rockets were launched from there.

Instead the current govt prefers to wear bangles and cry, while complaining to Big Brother US to take action.

The Americans are an evasive lot and they do not want to help resolve the India-Pakistan conflict, since they would like to continue selling arms and ammunition to both the countries and keep their Commercial interests alive.

—R.L.Koul  
Jammu

### Which offensive

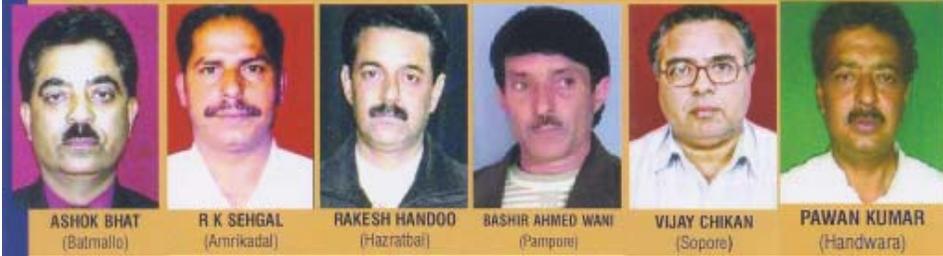
Sir,

Even as the so-called diplomatic offensive by India is underway, Pakistan continues its policy of "bleeding India with a thousand cuts". This is evident from the deep incursion that the Pakistan-based terrorists have made in the Poonch sector of J&K. The magnitude of the incursion is self explanatory. India continues to believe that Pakistan will act on its promises. This expectation will prove disastrous. It is time to think afresh and act decisively.

—Subash Wali  
New Delhi

# Pandits Abstain From Voting

## JKNUF CANDIDATES



(From Page 1)  
of KP's from elections only highlighted the state of siege perpetrated on it. The over eagerness of AIKS and many of its ilk to mobilise pandits for elections was seen by community more as an attempt to delegitimise genocide than an urge to create political space.

The campaign for participation of Kashmiri Pandits took a bizarre comical-turn as the elections drew near. The political party, which was to be floated as the Kolkata convention of AIKS envisaged, eventually brought a vertical split in AIKS. The faction which came out took no time in declaring the political party, Jammu Kashmir National Democratic Front. The bitter feud, which had unleashed in Kolkotta conference, seemed as if the two factions were in fierce competition for controlling of some spoils or favours which might accrue out of the campaign to make Kashmiri Pandits vote.

As the elections drew near the most common feature of the contesting KP candidate's mindset was an expectation that Muslims in Valley will boycott the elections whole hog. Each one of these candidates fancied his chances to go into the state Assembly on the strength of the paltry and denuded KP vote bank. Election of Raman Mattoo from Habbakadal Constituency in 2002 elections by managing a few hundred postal ballot votes had soared their imagination to the levels of ridicule. Some of them even fancied a cabinet dominated by KP's.

Most of the KP candidates who participated were unknown faces with almost no experience of even rudimentary involvement in community affairs. Yet all of them had a bloated self image and believed that they were actually the front runners in their respective constituencies. Many of them

also believed that they will be getting large number of Muslim votes in the Valley. A joke became common during these days of electioneering amongst displaced community. A candidate enquired from a community worker about his chances of getting KP votes. The community workers told him that KP vote strength is so less that even if everybody votes for him he may still loose. So he should try to win some Muslim votes in his constituency in Valley. The candidate said he had already visited his constituency and spent more than two hours there and people's response was good. The community worker shared this response with another contesting candidate from the same constituency. This candidate ridiculed the expectations of the other by saying 'how could he get more Muslims votes than me by spending just two hours there. After all I have spent full two days in my constituency in the Valley'.

As per the voter list of 1988 the total number of Kashmiri Pandit votes in Kashmir Valley was around 1,09,285 dispersed along 46 constituencies. By 2005 this number had been brought down to 63,137 through an orchestrated process of deletions. KP's in exile could not prevent it and contest the expulsions. In 2008 the number of voters could not be brought even to the level of 1988. The hasty revision particularly during the penultimate days to election process lifted these numbers marginally upwards from 2005 figures upto around 72,000 voters.

In 1988, there were 16 assembly constituencies where KP vote was less than one thousand, 22 constituencies where KP votes were between one thousand and three thousand, 3 constituencies

where Pandit votes were between 3000 and 5000, 2 constituencies where votes were 5813 and 7103 respectively one constituency where votes were around 11,450 and one constituency were votes were 22,892. With almost 40 percent reduction of voters in almost all constituencies in Valley in 2008, we had just 15,000 votes in the

largest KP constituency of Habbakadal. The fate of voters in other constituency can be only imagined.

Less number of voters and wide dispersal along the length and breadth of the Valley and also breaking and gerrymandering of those constituencies were KP voters were in reasonable strength has

already reduced Kashmiri Pandits to a minority which would be unable to elect even Municipal corporators not to speak of assembly members on the strength of its votes.

The pattern of deliberate denudation of Kashmiri Pandit voters from voter lists since 1988 onwards and its implications can be understood from following table.

**See Table**

The dwindling of KP votes, despite government claims to ensure their presence at least in voter lists in almost all constituencies, is a part of the religious cleansing operation which is still under way. There are many examples in the revised voter lists in Kashmir Valley where Pandit names have been

(Contd. on Page 12)

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT CONSUENCY WISE SHOWING THE STRENGTH OF MIGRANT VOTERS (HINDU) IN YEAR 1988, 2005 & 2008			
No. & Names of Assembly Constituency	Total No. of Voters		
	Upto 1988	Upto 2005	Upto 2008
1. Karnah	22	Nil	Nil
2. Kupwara	1753	2340	2731
3. Lolab	869	744	1051
4. Handwara	2591	2328	2528
5. Langate	1423	1025	1338
6. Uri	635	704	250
7. Rafiabab	493	261	581
8. Sopore	2140	1503	1614
9. Gurez	0	0	0
10. Bandipora	1057	489	1228
11. Sonawari	358	134	149
12. Sangrama	906	520	659
13. Baramulla	2314	1967	2029
14. Gulmarg	1846	1873	2086
15. Pattan	651	463	470
16. Kangan	570	524	582
17. Gandherbal	615	684	738
18. Hazratbal	5813	1616	1933
19. Zadiab	523	223	259
20. Eidgah	1347	437	516
21. Khanyar	2814	795	1087
22. Habbakadal	22862	8039	13302
23. Amirikadal	11450	3422	3058
24. Sonawar	3035	1507	801
25. Batmaloo	7103	2730	2840
26. Chadoora	739	468	566
27. Budgam	1070	748	703
28. Beerwah	490	285	480
29. Khanshab	546	336	493
30. Charar-e-Sharief	661	542	683
31. Tral	1697	973	1157
32. Pampore	1008	872	824
33. Pulwama	1383	1066	941
34. Rajpora	2503	1781	1942
35. Wachi	2564	1534	1594
36. Shopian	1449	1104	1390
37. Noorawad	609	534	498
38. Kulgam	2491	2046	2284
39. Hoomshalibugh	1296	452	832
40. Anantnag	3753	2481	2882
41. Devsar	2908	2416	2581
42. Duru	1859	1164	1689
43. Kokernag	565	2471	2374
44. Shangus	2962	2216	1674
45. Bijbehara	4917	3413	4003
46. Pahalgam	2191	1907	1373
<b>Total</b>	<b>109285</b>	<b>63137</b>	<b>72793</b>

## 2008 ELECTIONS

## Let Us Not Learn Wrong Lessons

By Dr. Ajay Chrungoo

**2**008 elections are now over. A power shift has taken place. PDP-Congress alliance has been replaced in the state by NC-Congress alliance. Chief Ministership of the state government has reverted back to a Kashmiri for full six years, if the alliance lasts that long. All the major portfolios like home, finance planning, revenue and power have been retained by NC signifying the retrieval of the status quo of power. This status quo had marginally changed during PDP-Congress alliance.

There are attempts to analyse the assembly verdict in Jammu and Kashmir through the traditional 'secular' prism and draw inferences which are either false or far fetched. The wrong assessments will eventually effect the success or failure of the 'government' which has been catapulted into power at a critical time when a stand off between India and Pakistan is building in intensity.

**UNDERSTANDING THE FAILURE OF BOYCOTT**

The turnout of voters in this election particularly in Kashmir valley has been phenomenal, more than 50% on an average. It is invariably a big victory for electoral process in Kashmir Valley. Many a eminent Kashmir analysts in New Delhi had prophesied that, "the government will be lucky if they

get more than 10 percent people to come out and vote."

Out of all segments of people living in Jammu and Kashmir only Kashmiri Pandits abstained from voting. Their vote percentage was less than 10% and that too despite the fact that more than 43 Pandit candidates were in electoral fray and there was also no boycott call.

Both the factions of Hurriat Conference campaigned for boycott of elections well before the onset of elections. JKLF through its protracted 'Safar-e-Azadi' campaign focused eventually on boycott of elections at the conclusion of its rallies and interactions across the length and breadth of the Valley. Mirwaiz Omar Farooq Chairman of All Party Hurriat Conference had declared with confidence that 'there will be 100 percent poll boycott' Ali Shah Geelani, to enlarge the appeal of 'boycott slogan' even praised JKLF chief Yasin Malik and stated 'we want boycott Safar-e-Azadi way'. The analysts who conclude that the 2008 elections have been a decisive rebuff to separatists essentially underline the 'boycott call' as the only indispensable strategy of separatists. The flexibility and the deftness of the strategic interventions of Separatists in Kashmir Valley get overlooked in this formulation. The separatists establishment does give consideration to all such tactics which delegitimise the democratic process in the state. But they have always valued deepening of its entrenchment in the power structures within the state. Separatism in Valley

has always considered its reach and sway to influence and control the elected governments in the state as its primary support structure perhaps as important as the support of Pakistan. So delegitimising elections by labelling them as rigged or coerced process or by campaigning for boycott are not simple black and white imperatives which the separatists pursue. They operate more in the grey area where they engage directly or indirectly into the election process. They influence the election manifesto and party policies of the political formations participating in elections. They influence the selection of candidates. They throw up proxy candidates into the election fray. The most essential objective which is pursued is not to allow any paradigm shift in the state policy and ensure that subversive entrenchment is only deepened but never eroded.

The entire spectrum of separatist strategies has evolved over a period of time. Ali Shah Geelani got himself elected to state assembly but relentlessly challenged Indian constitutional position and debunked election process. Jamat-i-Islami portrayed National Conference as its ideological rival in Kashmir and squarely blamed it for accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India. The anti-Jamaat rivalry manifested into streets when massive anti-Jamaat riots were lead by NC cadres. But this rivalry was also not a black and white phenomenon. A symbiotic relationship existed right till 2002. Jamaat cadres would mobilise voters for NC and NC would

reciprocate by increasing Jamaat entrenchment in administration. Jamaat and other separatist formations built the same symbiotic relationship with newly formed PDP well before 2002 and has carried it right through the elections in 2008. There was, of course, a conflict of interests between separatist formations including Jamat-i-Islami and PDP which had come into public domain in last into years. Separatists visualised PDP as a usurper of its agenda. It sensed encroachment on its space by none other than PDP. The stand off between PDP and separatist formations would have continued but the terrorist attack in Mumbai changed the Course of events in the Valley. Increased isolation of Pakistan and pressures on separatist' feeder channel's across made Jamaat-i-Islami to change track. Mufti as per reports had been intensely campaigning for their support.

It is difficult to comment as to when exactly Jamaat decided to come out whole hog in support of PDP but its involvement in elections started manifesting right after the 1st phase of elections. It built into a crescendo in the later phases. The top Jamaat leaders were seen openly campaigning for PDP in Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama as also everywhere. Analysts read too much into the anti-election rhetoric of Ali Shah Geelani but ignored the Traditional line of Jamaat-i-Islami which maintained distance from boycott call and cautioned that in the prevailing political scenario such a stance

may prove 'counterproductive'. One thing is very clear now. The separatist establishment intervened in election process not to boycott as was their public stance but actually to increase the turnout of voters.

This assessment does not at all indicate that even if separatists would have campaigned aggressively for boycott they would have actually succeeded. In that eventuality voter turnout would have been less but certainly an improvement over 2002 elections.

**OTHER FACTORS**

The rural urban divide in Valley and developmental issues were a dominant consideration for the people. Sweeping inference is being drawn by some analysts in Delhi that the growth of PDP in Valley is primarily the reflection of rural urban divide rather than communal campaign. However many credible analysts have come out openly to record that PDP campaign had a brazen communal character. Noted columnist Sh. Parveen Swami states, "for the PDP, the returns from the incendiary communal campaign it ran this summer, as well as its efforts to reach out to secessionists have been disappointing." Immediately after the election results were declared Farooq Abdullah openly accepted that PDP ran a campaign on 'Islamist agenda'. Many residents of Kulgam area confided in their Pandit friends that Miss Mehbooba Mufti was openly telling voters to choose between a 'school or a mosque'.

(Contd. on Page 10)



Voters queuing for voting at one of the polling booths in Jammu.



Inspection and demonstration of electronic voting machine at Mutli displaced camp Jammu.

# Omar must emphasize on nationalistic outlook

By J N Raina

*“The old order changeth, yielding place to new...”: Tennyson*

A new wave of ‘political modernisation’ is discernible in Jammu and Kashmir. Omar Abdullah, grandson of legendary Kashmir leader Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, has emerged as a top banana in India’s volatile Northern state.

He has taken over the reins of the state administration, heading the resurgent National Conference-Congress coalition Government, on the crest of the recharged political scenario, following the Amamath wave. We are now witnessing a generational change in Kashmir, within a span of 75 years, since Sheikh Abdullah began his crusade against the autocratic Dogra regime.

Omar Abdullah (38) has earned the distinction of being India’s youngest Chief Minister. People, who have voted for peace, stability, economic development and democracy, will expectedly find in him a dynamic leader, imbued with a different outlook and an approach to various problems confronting the state. His line of action seems to be different than those of his predecessors, including his maverick father, Dr Farooq Abdullah, who took everything casually.

Omar’s cut out task is formidable. He has to pass through many hurdles and keep at bay not only the separatists, represented by two factions of the Hurriyat Conference—one led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and the other by rambunctious Jamaat-e-Islami leader Syed Ali Geelani—but also the ‘soft-separatist’ People’s Democratic Party (PDP) clan, led by its patron Mufti Mohammad Sayed and his daughter Mehbooba Mufti. Omar’s opponents are crestfallen, but defiant. People have overwhelmingly voted for better governance, stability, modernization and democracy. They are fed up with Pakistan-sponsored militancy.

Omar has a different pedigree and does not seem to suffer from prejudiced notions as such. His mother Mollie Abdullah is a Christian. His grandmother Akbar Jehan’s father, Michael Harry Nedous

was a European hotelier. Omar was born in the United Kingdom on March 10, 1970. He studied in a missionary school in Srinagar and finally got a degree in MBA from Scotland. He was the youngest minister at 29, in the Vajpayee cabinet as minister of state for Commerce and Industries in 1999. Later he was shifted to the External Affairs Ministry in 2001. His role has

not been allowed. He must tell them to roll back madrassas, the breeding ground of terrorism, as in Pakistan.

The PDP is quite upset with the NC-Cong alliance, fearing retribution. Till last, the Mufti made frantic efforts to wean away Congress from NC. He even offered Chiefministership to Ghulam Nabi Azad, his bete noir, for full six-year term and was

irksome but uncalled for.

The Mufti was highly disturbed over the stitching of the NC-Cong alliance, although the PDP-Cong combine if formed would have just been 38, against the NC-Cong alliance’s 45 in the 87-member House. This clearly exhibits his opportunistic politics and unfulfilled agenda of making Kashmir ‘green’, in alliance with the secessionists.

to co-exist with the Union Government for speedy economic development of the troubled state. Jammu and Kashmir has enough of autonomy, a separate flag, a separate Constitution et al. Any attempt to demand for greater autonomy will jeopardize relationship between Kashmir and the rest of the state. It will create regional imbalance. Two-month-long agitation in Jammu is an eye-opener. Kashmiris want a society free from corruption. What has the autonomy given to them? It is a weapon to play fraud with the masses and to hoodwink them.

If Omar has a proposal to set up a “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” to investigate custodial killings, torture etc, he must also probe the circumstances which led to the genocide of five lakh Kashmiri Hindus and forced them to leave their ancestral land of birth. No government can survive if it continues to be Kashmir-specific. Mufti’s healing touch policy for the militants has proved disastrous. Ultimately he had to bow out. Geelani must see the writing on the wall. Rather than create fresh trouble for Omar. The Hurriyat Conference has stirred up a hornet’s nest by declaring at a seminar, when Omar was being installed as Chief Minister that ‘elections were not a setback to the secessionist struggle’.

*\*(The author is a veteran journalist based at Pune)*



His Excellency Governor N.N. Vohra administering oath of Chief Ministership to Sh. Omar Abdullah at Jammu.

been generally praise-worthy. It was Begum Akbar Jehan who would support him in his political activities.

Soon after he was voted to power, Omar gave vent to his powerful feelings and announced that he wanted a coalition government, consisting of parties ‘committed to nationalistic outlook’. He made it known succinctly: “We cannot afford to have any experiments when expectations of people in Jammu and Kashmir are so high. We have to have a coalition government which can be stable, which consists of parties committed to nationalistic outlook”.

He is upbeat and has started discussing issues with separatists and others who have a different agenda. He has a different wavelength, with emphasis on nationalism rather than ‘Kashmir-centric’ polity. ‘No one has talked about nationalistic outlook but only on Kashmir-specific issues’, he has said during and after the poll. He need not placate the separatists as the Mufti did. Omar must convince his detractors that Talibanisation of Kashmir will

ready to concede more. The Mufti wanted to further his party’s interests, and adopt a resolution, aimed at resolving the so-called Kashmir issue, outside the ambit of the Indian Constitution. But he has failed in his scheming. Last year he had supported an “Out-of-box” solution for Kashmir as was suggested by former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. He had also advocated for floating Pakistan currency in Jammu and Kashmir, along with the Indian currency. But people could understand his game plan and prankish approach, because no one can dare to talk of resolving the Kashmir tangle outside the Constitution. It was this kind of stance which harmed him.

Poll results have changed the contours of mainstream politics in Jammu and Kashmir. Every segment of the society was involved in the hectic poll activity. Azad’s assertion that mandate was ‘fractured’ than that of the previous poll and that the ‘unfortunate mandate’ is not good for the people of the state is preposterous. His remarks that the BJP has won 11 seats, but Jammu has lost is not only

Ms Sonia Gandhi did best to avoid Mufti on the government formation, as it would have led to horse-trading and political corruption. The former Chief Minister wanted to further his soft-separatist ideology, to the chagrin of the nationalists in Jammu and Ladakh.

I remember the day when Omar, then just 12, was roaming barefooted on Srinagar’s Maulana Azad Road, sucking his thumb. It was September, 1982, a few days before Sheikh Abdullah died. When a journalist friend of mine told him to go home as someone would ‘kidnap’ him, Omar just smiled and gesticulated with his thumb.

It is wrong to infer that the NC’s alliance with the BJP (when NDA was in power) had tarnished its face in the valley. Rather it was Sheikh Abdullah’s policy to align with any party at the Centre to avoid confrontation. Omar has been ill-advised that ‘his key goal should be to undo NC’s image of being a party that had bowed down to New Delhi’. It is absurd, as if Kashmir is a sovereign state. This is how the people are being misled. Any party in the state has

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# Pandits, Politics and Elections

By S.N. Pandit

**K**ASHMIRI HINDUS have almost completed 19 years of their exile and are at the threshold of entering the 20th year. The state has witnessed three Assembly elections and four Parliamentary elections since 1996 but the situation has not changed for hapless Kashmiri Hindus. The promises are at galore. In practice all the political parties that came to power at the State or Centre did little to ameliorate the plight of the Hindus in exile and not to speak of the reversal of the exile. The tragedy of the nation is that an entire minority community has been forced out of their homeland. Addressing their concerns is not the priority of the Indian state. Instead ensuring the democratic process that is already loaded in favour of those who have been overtly or covertly responsible for the exodus remains the prime concern for the government. Notwithstanding the fact that the exiled community has all these years shown little or no interest in the election process the Indian state and all other interested agencies exploit the vested interest within the community and twist the statistics to project the community participation in elections to hoodwink the national and international community. The just concluded elections also reflect the same story.

Voter list forms the corner stone of any democratic process and presence of Kashmiri Hindus in the voter lists of Kashmir is a nationalistic imperative. Undermining this fact amounts to contributing to the secessionist and communal politics of separatists and Islamist fundamentalists. The decline of Hindu vot-

ers to almost half should have sounded alarm bells in the Election Commission of India and the nation. Such a decline has no parallels in the history of world. Only the number has not been halved but the deliberate mistakes in the voter list leave a minuscule Kashmiri Hindu community eligible for voting. But the issue has

been undermined and made a non issue the same way the exodus was undermined and relegated to a non-issue. The Election Commission of India, who is patting itself for holding the free and fair elections in J&K, cannot absolve itself from its responsibility. Extraordinary situations demand extraordinary solutions particularly in a situation where national integrity and national values are at stake.

The Indian political establishment needs to rise above narrow political considerations and evolve a consensus to ensure that every Kashmiri Hindu is included in the voter list of his ancestral place. It needs to evolve a mechanism to enable him to vote for his present residential constituency. When the Indian state ensured the voting of the NRIs, why such a mechanism cannot be evolved for the nationalistic exiled community? Sooner the measures in this regard are taken, the better it is for the nation.

**Participation in elections:** Since 1996, election process has remained a non issue for Kashmiri Hindus. A community that has been denied right to live in its homeland has every justification for not voting for the constituency, where from he has been thrown out. Every civilised society that values human rights recognises the fact that "right to live" is a primary principal of human rights and "right to vote" is a secondary one. As such it sounds absurd to ask a community to vote that has been denied their "right to live". To vote for a system that has been responsible for the plight means to add to one's vows. It has been this consideration in view that almost all the



Chief Election Commissioner N Gopalaswamy.

functional Kashmiri Hindu organisations and leaders met in 1996 and decided to boycott the elections then. While Panun Kashmir and some other organisations stood their stand, the vested interest changed colours in consideration of their petty interests at the cost of community interests. But the fact is that despite claims and projections, the exiled community showed little interest in the electoral process.

Even if the political leaders and their agents within the community exploit the desperation of the community brethren, the end result has been their humiliation. The leaders who won on the basis of the so-called migrant vote did nothing cred-

ible to address the vows of the Hindu voters of their constituency. A cursory look at the 2008 election shows that just 8 to 9% migrant voters exercised their franchise. It is despite the fact that there was no call for boycott from any community organisation. The Panun Kashmir that had previously pursued anti-election campaign vigorously, this time didn't launch such campaign and left it to the conscience of the community after describing elections as irrelevant for the community.

Why didn't community exercise their vote then? It is a big question mark on those individuals and organisations who put the blame of then failure on the doorsteps of Panun Kashmir. The fact is that their is unanimity amongst the community that elections have been irrelevant for them not in theory but in practice. The fact that more than 40 candidates participated in the election process doesn't mean that the community is actually participating in the election process. It underscores the fact that the vested interests within the community easily fall prey to the temptation and trap of various organisation and agencies. These very agents project themselves to be the champions of the community but in reality they hurt the interests of the community. The community has disowned them and it is better for them to read the writing on the wall.

This election shall serve as a lesson for those leaders who were nursing hopes of entering the Assembly knowing very well that even a miraculous victory of an individual cannot tilt any balance in favour of the community.

## DATA

### Nearly 7,000 have died since 2004: MHA | Pakistanis buy guns in droves as insecurity creeps in: NYT

**NEW DELHI:** Nearly 7,000 people have lost their lives during the UPA government's rule since 2004 in over 25,000 incidents, according to latest data available with the Union home ministry.

While the first year of the UPA government saw 6,029 incidents that claimed 1,721 lives, the number of incidents fell as also the number of casualties from the next year onwards.

In 2005, there were 5,709 incidents in which 1,598 people died while in 2006 there were 5,240 attacks that left 1,352 people dead.

In the following year, 4,907 incidents occurred in which 1,215 people lost their lives.

This year till September one, 3,157 incidents took place in which 760 people died.

The figures for the current year exclude the Mumbai terror attacks in which nearly 200 people have died.

Major terror strikes during the UPA period includes the Hyderabad blasts that claimed over 40 lives, Samjhauta Express explosion in which 68 people died and Malegaon and serial train attacks in Mumbai that left over 230 dead, besides the latest Mumbai attacks.

During the NDA period, which saw 36,259 incidents and 11,714 deaths, the major attacks were on Parliament House, Akshardham temple and terror strikes at an army camp in Jammu besides storming of the Jammu and Kashmir assembly.

**NEW YORK** Middle class Pakistanis in scores are now procuring guns and other arms to protect themselves, as a surge in Islamist violence has led to fears that the country may be headed for a wave of violent kidnappings, extortions and other crimes.

Registrations of guns and rifles have recorded a new high, Wall Street Journal reported quoting officials who attributed this trend to rising sense of anxiety, fear and insecurity among the people, who now seeks arms to protect themselves.

This has come in vogue among the middle-class people who foresee a wave of violent kidnappings and robberies that will target those who look like they might have money.

These fears have been generated as over the past year, Pakistan has witnessed the assassination of popular political leader Benazir Bhutto and bloody bombing of Islamabad's Marriott Hotel.

The recent terror strikes in Mumbai, allegedly carried out by 10 Pakistani militants trained here, has further frayed the nerves of the people here.

"The spreading Islamist insurgency in the country has led to a wave of insecurity, and people doubt the ability of the new civilian government to safeguard them," paper said.

"People buy weapons because they're insecure," a senior Interior Ministry official told the paper. "No need denying it."

The 11,758 murders recorded in the first 11 months of 2008 were the highest in Pakistan in at least in a decade, it said quoting Islamabad police, who compile nationwide crime statistics.

Arms licenses are issued by numerous Pakistani agencies.

Local authorities and police hand out permits for weapons that can be used only within their states.

## KS Correspondent

JAMMU, Dec 26: Panun Kashmir staged a walkout from the meeting convened by the state Governor NN Vohra in Civil Secretariat on 26th December 2008, to discuss the return and rehabilitation package announced by the Prime Minister, with the leaders of the displaced community.

The convening of the meeting to discuss the issue of Prime Minister's package for return and rehabilitation by none other than the state Governor surprised many, why should Governor organise such a meeting at a time when election results were a few days away and the new government was about to take the reigns of the state. At the very outset of the meeting the Governor Sh NN Vohra did mention that the meeting could only set the agenda rolling and the actual decisions will have to be taken by the new government. However the way the agenda of the meeting was introduced by the Commissioner Secretary Revenue and Relief Sh Lokesh Jha and then further elucidated by Governor Vohra it seemed that the meeting was not convened to discuss the Prime Minister's package for displaced Kashmir Hindus, as the letter of invitation clearly indicated, but to seek the consent of the displaced leaders for a premeditated and pre conceived objective. The Revenue Secretary took pains to explain how a significant section of community had already given consent to avail off the economic incentives in the Prime Minister's package to rebuild and reconstruct their houses in Kashmir Valley. Revenue Secretary also informed that thousands of unemployed youth have already consented in written to return to Valley in case they are given employment. The issue which was to be discussed was only how transition living facilities have been conceived by the state government to facilitate return. Participants were informed about a power point presentation on the same issue could be made in front of them in case there was a unanimity on the issue.

Intrigued by the manner in which the state government was treating the sensitive issue of return of Kashmiri Pandits. Panun Kashmir leader Dr Ajay Chrungoo intervened at the very inception after the representation of All India Kashmiri Samaj Sh. Wangnoo finished his presentation. Dr Ajay Chrungoo appreciated the sensitivity of the Prime Minister in giving the relief and rehabilitation made measures some impetus but cautioned the government not to treat the issue of return in a superficial way. "Let us not address the issue of internal displacement of Kashmiri Hindus and their return and rehabilitation in Kashmir Valley as if we are addressing the problems of rehabilitation of victims of fire, earth quake or flood. We are addressing the issue of religious cleansing and genocide of community. The issue of return of such a community has profound political and human rights implications. There is enough international expertise available at the international level as to how such issues have to be treated. The experience with international refugees and internally displaced person of bodies like UNHRC and Red Cross should be certainly looked out.

## PK stages walkout of Governor's Meeting

### Seeks Delinking of Employment Package from Return



Governor N.N. Vohra reviewing implementation of Kashmiri Pandits return package in a meeting at Jammu.

Return policy of the government in past has lead to many massacres. We want to return in a situation where we have not to leave again.

We welcome the employment package of Prime Minister for unemployed youth but we urge you to delink this package from return. Employ these youth in Jammu till the situation becomes conducive for

ing when the agenda of the meeting was unable to accommodate his views. Dr. Agnishekhar immediately took up the issue raised by Dr. Ajay Chrungoo and without getting ruffled by Governor's interjections emphatically said, "we have discussed the issue of return in all the three Round Table Conference and Working Group Meetings. We asked for a

premeditated intention to get some sort of sanction from the Pandit leaders for the transition facilities for return they were envisaging to build in Kashmir, Panun Kashmir staged a walk out. Before leaving Dr Ajay Chrungoo, addressed the governor, "Sir we came to this meeting to discuss the agenda as per the letter of invitation. We have raised serious issues and that is not Jargon. In fact what government is doing is not more than a Jargon. We have regards for you and we came to this place on your invitation. We don't think we can be a party to the premeditated and predetermined outcome of this meeting with utmost respect for you we beg to leave. "Dr Agnishekhar endorsed the line and both the leaders left the meeting.

As per sources other than four Vijay Bakaya, Shadi Lal Pandita, Chuni Lal Bhat and Mr Hangloo all other participants sought delinking of employment package from return. Mr Bakaya parroted governors line and described Panun Kashmir concerns as mere 'philosophy'. Mr Bakaya was adequately rebuffed by Hira Lal Chatta who had contested on BJP ticket from Habbakadal Constituency. He said, "I have spent a month in Kashmir Valley. I know what is the condition there. Nobody welcomes us there. Those who have never lived in camps are supporting the return in the name of camp dwellers.

We welcome the employment package but it should be delinked from return," As pre sources meeting lasted only for fifteen minutes after PK leaders walked out. Govt presentation could not be screened subsequently. Governor concluded the meeting by assuring that there concerns will be communicated to Govt. of India.

Dr. Ajay Chrungoo and Dr. Agnishekhar then addressed a joint press conference at Press Club Jammu to inform media about their walk out.

The stand taken by Panun Kashmir got overwhelming response in coming days. Many organisation came out publicly in their support.

Why was Governor so eager to push through the return agenda baffled many. The new Chief Minister Omar Abdullah however, distanced from creation of transition facilities for migrant "I do not want to shift them from one camp in Jammu to another in Valley".



Dr. Ajay Chrungoo & Dr. Agnishekhar addressing media persons at Jammu immediately after the walkout from Governor's meeting.

return".

Governor Vohra instead of appreciating the concerns appeared irritated and interjected many times during the presentation of Dr Ajay Chrungoo. He called the concerns of Human Rights as a 'Jargon' and expressed surprise as to why Dr. Ajay had chosen to attend the meet-

probe into the crore issues which lead to displacement. We are not prisoners and war. Why are unemployed youth being asked to fill up written undertakings to return to Valley in case they want to be employed. We want the issue of unemployment to be delinked from return".

As the government persisted with its

## Panun Kashmir warns against lowering of Guards



The participants during the citizen's meet.

—K.S/Photo

### KS Correspondent

JAMMU, Dec 21: Panun Kashmir organised a citizen's meet today at Invitation Banquet Hall, Roop Nagar Jammu. The meeting was addressed by Sh. Shailandra Aima, Kuldeep Raina, Prof. M.L. Kaul, Prof. B.L. Fotedar, Sh.C.L.Chrungoo, Sh. B.L. Ticku, Sh.O.N. Trisal, Shl.D.N.Kissu and many others.

The meeting observed silence in the beginning and paid tributes to the departed community leader late Padmashree. J.N. Kaul. The speakers described Sh. Kaul as a leading light and a friend and a guide.

While welcoming the emergence of a parliamentary consensus against terrorism in India and the legislation of anti-terror laws as well as creation of a federal agency to tackle terror, the Panun Kashmir leaders warned against any lowering of the guard. They also were critical of the very rationale of the Indo-Pak peace process started by NDA and pursued by the UPA.

The meet unanimously resolved that "the Indian nation holds Pakistani State squarely responsible for the terror acts perpetrated by its so-called non-state actors; and that Government of Pakistan is no longer a victim of terror; Pakistan is either a responsible State fully accountable for what springs from its soil or merely a failed state now".

The meet welcomed the Government of India in seeking global cooperation in the war against Islamic terrorism. But the PK leaders at the same time cautioned the Indian state against believing that separatism in Kashmir is outside the ambit of the objectives of Pan-Islamic fundamentalism. The leaders

expressed their strong concern that Sh. Pranab Mukharjee, the External Affairs Minister of India, sought to de-link the terror attack in Mumbai from the Kashmir issue in the Parliament, while describing the attitude of Pakistan to establish such a linkage as a 'straightjacket simple formula'.

The PK leaders expressed that Sh. Mukharjee was only

regression or abatement at the other front. In fact, any political concession to terrorism flares up its flames and escalates its stridency all over".

The leaders opined that "the 26th November attack in Mumbai is a type of 'performance violence' which is guided by a special kind of 'strategic thought process'".

The meet concluded that

***"In this atmosphere of new energy the paramount task for the government is to reaffirm the commitment of the nation to indivisible unity of the nation. In the war of the nation against terror those who think that India is political invention and its unity divisible are subversives sapping the national will and morale. In this war against terror those who talk about root causes legitimize terror. In this war those who advocate concession in the name of religion or ethnicity negate the very idea of secular, plural and free India."***

partly correct in stating that "It (attacks) is not related to Jammu and Kashmir. It is a part of global terrorism." PK leaders said, "The attack in Mumbai was certainly a part of the global Islamic terrorism. But so is Kashmir turmoil part of the global campaign of pan-Islamic terrorism". The leaders also warned that the countries claiming to fight global terrorism have many a time conceded to terrorism in the name of historical or economic alienation, "The US intervention in Afghanistan post 9/11 and spill over of Jehad into rest of India should have made both the US and Indian State wise enough to realize that concessions to Islamic terrorism at one front never lead to its

"The Mumbai terrorist violence has galvanized the national opinion and crystallized national consensus more than any act of violence in recent times. Terrorism in Punjab failed to stir the national response. The religious cleansing of Hindus from Kashmir did not outrage the nation even though in intensity and by implication it continues to be the most gruesome attack on the 'idea of India'. The 26/11 terrorism in Mumbai is tending to become 'a game changer'.

The meeting RESOLVED that "In this atmosphere of new energy the paramount task for the government is to reaffirm the commitment of the nation to indivisible unity of the nation. In the war of the nation against

terror those who think that India is political invention and its unity divisible are subversives sapping the national will and morale. In this war against terror those who talk about root causes legitimize terror. In this war those who advocate concession in the name of religion or ethnicity negate the very idea of secular, plural and free India.

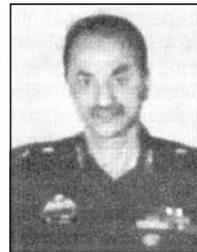
"The war on terror cannot be fought by self delusion or self flagellation. Apportioning blame on politicians or bureaucracy or corruption in the system may serve only as a diversionary ploy. Fracturing the national consensus through a systematic process of ideological subversion is basically feeding the callousness, apathy and inertia and this subversion cannot be defeated without committing ourselves to the

vision that India is not a political invention but a civilizational continuity and also India is an indivisible unity. To defeat this war on the 'idea of nation' we have to neutralize and defeat that class in our academic and policy research centres, electronic media and press as well as bureaucracy which does not share this vision. To defeat terrorism we have to take care of not only of the external enemy but the internal enemy-as well".

The participants committed themselves to their resolve to fight the internal as well as external enemy, to raise their banner of struggle against all kinds of terror and to awaken a world opinion in their favour for reversing the genocide of Hindus in Kashmir as a cardinal principal of fight against terrorism.

### Heartiest Congratulations

**K**IRTI CHAKRA Brigadier Shri Sunil Razdan S/o Late Sh. Ramchandra Razdan Ji of Purshyaar Habbakadal is being conferred with Vishistha Sewa Medal for his distinguished services rendered to Ministry of Defence! The Officer was instrumental in establishing the centre for "Joint Warfare Studies" an independent think tank of the three services on **Joint Warfare**. President of India Shrimati Pratibha Patil will be honouring Sh. Razdan for his remarkable contribution who not only has made us proud but also made us feel that we belong to the race of brave people. He along with other brave Officers from the community are truly great **Lalitadiya's** of our community! Before too dearest Razdan Ji was conferred with Kirti Chakra for his extraordinary bravery that he demonstrated in Kashmir operation during peak militancy.



Brigadier Sunil Razdan

Please accept our salutations the **Bravest** son of the great soil of **Bharat Mata!**

# Let Us Not Learn Wrong Lessons

(From Page 5)

"We are for Mosque. If you choose a Mosque a school will automatically come. But not the other way". PDP in its expositions has been identifying with Muslim causes globally more than NC. It has sought to project "Selfrule" document as more in consonance with the movement of Pan-Islamism rather than Kashmiri Aspirations.

However, under playing of rural urban divide as an important influence on the elections will be equally incorrect. Rural-Urban divide has evolved in Kashmir Valley with the emergence of a large rural middle class over the years. Emergence of Mufti Mohd Sayeed, Late Abdul Gani Lone, Jamat-i-Islami and MuF reflects it more than anything else. This time PDP made significant inroads into North Kashmir. PDP has won six seats there while NC has done marginally better by winning seven seats. Central Kashmir extending between Kangan and Ganderbal with Srinagar as its core has been virtually swept by National Conference. However, PDP retained its stranglehold on South Kashmir where it won 12 out of 16 seats. The better performance of PDP is also a reflection of the urge of rural political class to control political power.

This rural urban rivalry has deepened over the years and now spilled into the public domain. Previously this divide was subdued but now it has exploded into open. Reverberations of this rivalry can be heard even after elections. Recently Sh. M.G. Hassan Mukhtar a freelance journalist wrote in Kashmir Times that, "The original citizens of Srinagar treat all villagers as second class irrespective of the language they speak. If a villager goes to moon the urbanities would never digest it and rather pull his legs...In reality the superiority complex (read inferiority complex of foolishness) of urban fellows on the basis of nothing towards villagers is not a good thing" In Srinagar this bitterness can be gauged by a cursory talk on politics at a vegetable vendors shop or a burgers shop.

The increased developmental process during PDP-Congress regime in rural areas has further heightened the divide. Mufti used the Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojna to build extensive road connectivity particularly in

South Kashmir. Any village with a population of 500 or more was connected by a metalled road. A large portion of the 24,000 crore special aid package to Kashmir was spend in the rural areas. Creation of development authorities in Gulmarg,

comments that, "despite the apparently dramatic improvement in BJP's fortunes-which have taken it from just one seat in 2002 to 11 now, Hindu Chauvinism hasn't yielded exceptional pay offs". The massive support to Amar Nath

going to National Conference and JK National Panthers Party. Congress lost to BJP in those constituencies where Amaranth Agitation was weak like Reasi, Basohli and Bani. The defeat of Shilipi Verma the widow of Kuldeep Verma the martyr hero

undermined the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits seemed trailing almost to the end of the counting process only to sail across after few hundred Pandit votes caste in his favour where counted towards the end.

The Kashmiri Pandit votes cast in small numbers showed preference in favour of NC where the main choice was between NC and PDP. Dr Shafi of PDP won from Beerwah constituency by a mere margin of 124 votes which included 80 votes from KP's. This may be an exception because he was favoured not for his party affiliation and was considered a better person having close relationship with the Pandits of his constituency.

Congress won 3 seats from Kashmir Valley. Has done well in 5 more constituencies. It has at least a clear demarcated chunk of 10 assembly seats to work for in the next elections

## CONCLUSION

"The 2008 mandate can stabilise the situation if NC plays its cards well. After 2002 elections NC adopted a policy line of mirroring or aping PDP line. It changed its policy on Pakistan and terrorism hoping that it will steal a March ahead of PDP. At the crunch time of elections fundamentalist establishment and Pakistan made a choice in favour of PDP leaving it in lurch. Will NC ride the same ideological band wagon?"

Congress has survived on the edge. Will it ignore its legislative base as it has done in the past and loose its relevance in Jammu?

BJP enthused by the response of people during the elections and hoping to win around twenty five seats threw enough hints that it was ready to join hands with PDP or NC to come to government. It has shown ready willing to dispense with its ideological baggage for which it still has space in Jammu. Will it play the power game or the role of an instrument to bring a fundamental change in power balance in favour of Jammu?"

CPI(M) has again survived a sole presence in the present assembly from Kulgam constituency in Kashmir Valley. Jamaat declared it as a party of "Kuffar". People still voted it into power in a stiff battle. Will CPI(M) still flirt with Muslim communalism and separatism as it has done so far?"

The future in J&K is pregnant with possibilities both good or bad.

\*(The author heads Panun Kashmir)



Voters queuing for voting at one of the polling booths in Kashmir.

Tangmarg Pahalgam, Sonamarg and many other places hastened the developmental process in rural areas which did translate into political benefits for Mufti.

Mufti has not only used predominantly the fundamentalist card and soft secessionist slogans, but also the rural urban divide and developmental slogans to stabilise his party.

NC retained its previous number of 28 in the assembly. PDP has increased its tally from 18 to 21. In 2008 elections there has been an overall swing of 5 percent in favour of PDP. It has shown tendency to grow all over the Valley and has made dent in certain areas of Jammu. The new Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has acknowledged this trend by openly admitting, "the results definitely gave a fair idea that PDP is making inroads everywhere in Valley. I think we need to take stock of it."

## JAMMU RESULTS

While belittling the communal contours of PDP's rise the 'liberal' analysts infer a rise of communal stridency in Jammu region. Which well-known columnists like Shankar Jha describe as 'historical' as if it is integral to the attitude of people living in Jammu. Even a better informed journalist like Parveen Swami does not contest such sweeping generalisations. His

Agitation in Jammu and heightened consciousness about the systematic and organised discrimination meted out to Jammu is an expression of Hindu Chauvinism for even the unbiased 'liberal' intellectuals in rest of India. This is perhaps an expression of a faulty vision which recognises concession to the Muslim identity politics in J&K as a secular imperative. .

In Jammu province Congress won 13 seats and BJP won 11 seats. There was almost a 3 percent negative swing against Congress and a 10 percent swing in favour of BJP. BJP has been runners-up in 13 seats and the number three in 7 constituencies in Jammu region which means it has now decisively staked its claims for at least 30 constituencies in Jammu. But is the rise of BJP an outcome of communal polarisation in the aftermath of Amarnath Agitation? Certain features of the election outcome in Jammu have to be recognised to answer this question.

BJP candidates lost in most of the constituencies where the intensity of Amarnath agitation was high. It suffered defeat in Kathua, Billawar, Samba Vijaypur, Bishnah, Gandhi Nagar, Chhamb, Akhnoor Udhampur, Chenani and Ramban. Mostly Congress candidates won from these constituencies with one each

of Amarnath Agitation is revealing. Also notable is the fact that those Congress candidates won who had a better record as MLA's or ministers and who had also supported Amarnath Agitation. Sham Lal Sharma from Akhnoor and Raman Bhalla from Gandhi Nagar are the best examples to elucidate the fact. Almost all the Congress Ministers in previous assembly lost this time. The best examples are that of Pt. Mangat Ram Sharma and Gulchain Singh Charak. These ministers had not one come out openly in favour of Amarnath agitation. Even the star campaigners of BJP like LK Advani, Rajnath Singh, Narendra Modi, Arun Jaitely, Murli Manohar Joshi, Navjot Singh Sidhu could not succeed in wooing voters against those Congress candidates who had performed well as sitting MLAs and unambiguously identified with the sentiment of Jammu.

## SIDELIGHTS

Towards the end of this analysis it will be pertinent to record some observations which have a value for the future. Sakina Itoo won from South Kashmir against the tide of Islamists. Mohd. Yusuf Tarigami of CPI(M) defeated his PDP rival for whom Jamat lead no holds bar campaign. Mr. Tarigami of CPI(M) who at every opportunity has supported separatists cause and

## INTERVIEW

By Imrana Khwaja

**Q: Is there such a thing as a "Muslim Identity"?**

A: Yes, there is such a thing as a 'Muslim identity'-one's self-consciousness as a Muslim. There is a sense of belonging to a larger community, there are rituals and buzzwords which are anchors and give us a commonality of identity references. All these contribute to our perception of ourselves as Muslims.

However, there is a great diversity as to how such consciousness is expressed because the subjectivity underpinning Muslim identity and its modes of expression are largely shaped by the context. And since the context (historical, cultural, political) remains in a state of flux, the forms of Muslim subjectivity are bound to change as well. Consequently, Muslim identity is a dynamic reality rather than an academic construct.

Take for example the multicultural, Indo-Persian context of 'Muslim India'. Urdu arose from a creative synthesis of several languages and the Taj Mahal became 'a miracle of Islam' because only India could furnish the ground for such a miracle to happen, as psychologist Carl Jung noted. This inclusive dynamic in Muslim identity continued even under British rule whether in Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's learning Hebrew to write a commentary on the Bible or Maulana Ubaidulla Sindhi's spiritual politics where Muslim identity creatively engaged with vedantic pantheism, Islamic mysticism, and radical socialism.

**Q: What expression is being given to Muslim identity in the present day?**

A: In the present context of a sectarian, post-Zia Pakistan, Muslim identity has become problematic because violence has been factored into an 'Islamic' self-affirmation-in fact, it is becoming increasingly irrelevant whether the 'other' against whom such violence is unleashed is Christian, Shia, Ahmedia or Sunni. An example of what I'm trying to say was graphically summed up on June 5 this year, marking Eid-e-Milad-e-Nabi-the very same day on which President Musharraf made his famous speech at the ulama's convention in Islamabad, and where he virtually conceded that religious violence in Pakistan had reached such a scale that Pakistanis the world over were virtually regarded as terrorists.

## 'It is high time Muslims took responsibility for why Islam and terrorism have become synonymous'

As if to prove the President's point, rival Sunni factions were firing at each other's Milad-e-Nabi processions in Karachi, with one group trying to occupy the mosque belonging to the other. Then on June 6, two bearded men left a copy of the holy Quran at a 'rival' bookshop in Binori town selling religious publications. The Quran was actually a time bomb that exploded after the men left. What is disturbing is that the news of these incidents was largely ignored by the media. I read about it in the inside pages of Dawn.

Such indifference is symptomatic of our complicit culture, where religious violence has been naturalised to such an extent that it has become integral to our religious culture.

It is ironic, that in a society so prone to taking to the streets on the slightest rumour of the Quran's desecration, there were no signs of outrage at this incident. In this case of the Quran's desecration, the tearing out of its pages and fitting the hollow space with a bomb, even the religious right remained silent.

This is precisely what one should be apprehensive about the popular attitude that the Quranic bomb might well be reflective of *Ghalaba-e-Islam*. Osama bin Laden's Islam is precisely an extension of such a misplaced fantasy of Islam exploding its way to glory and power. Where power is seen only in terms of a capacity to wreak death and destruction, rather than creativity and construction.

The Quranic bomb and Osama bin Laden, then, are two sides of a Muslim identity and a Muslim cultural imagination steeped in the crudest forms of literalism, erasing the boundary between jihad and terrorism. No wonder 83 per cent of Pakistan regarded Bin Laden a mujahid hero (at least until the Taliban's defeat) and his posters riding a horse and wielding a sword were doing the rounds from Karachi to Peshawar.

**Q: There is a feeling among Muslims that the equation of Islam and Muslims with violence and terrorism is a construct of the western media. What is your view?**

A: I think it is important to ask ourselves why terrorism and violence have become the rep-

*For the benefit of our readers we here publish an interview of Sh.Suroosh Irfani a well-known Pakistani psychologist and cultural observer who is currently teaching at Lahore. The interview was conducted by Sh. Imrana Khwaja and was published way back in the Herald annual issue of January 2002. --Editor*

representative face of Islam. Is it the western media or are we in some way responsible for this. We say that this is a western construct and a western creation and a result of the western media. After the September 11 episode I was addressing my class of about 100 students and there was this feeling among some of them that Muslims will automatically be blamed for these events. My response at that time and my first reaction was that the perpetrators are Muslims but they are Muslims who haven't lived in 'Muslim' society. They have been studying in the West and this is why they could conceive of such an act. It needs a creative imagination, a certain daring that cannot foster in a Muslim society because Muslim society is a ghetto. The perpetrators had been exposed to a society that allowed them to think the unthinkable.

It is high time that we Muslims took responsibility for why Islam and terrorism have become synonymous. It is the simple way out to blame the western media. At the moment Muslim culture is promoting a complicit culture of religious violence. Religious violence has been naturalised in our society and, in particular, in Pakistani culture.

**Q: Don't you think there are political reasons why Muslims the world over have taken up terrorism as a form of expression?**

A: Of course we can't deny that. That is a given as far as I am concerned but I am trying to look beyond that.

**Q: Are you saying that the reason why the political grievances of Muslims express themselves in violence is something to do with our religion?**

A: There are two levels of which one is of global politics. No doubt there is an element of discrimination and a sense of persecution, which is in many ways justified. But the way I am approaching this problem is through the internal dynamics of a Muslim society. What we are and have been doing and why have we reduced ourselves to a cultural ghetto. Is it something to do with us? I think we haven't

focused on this sufficiently. It is easier to latch on to global issues and blame the US for our ills. But that is not going to get us anywhere because we have to function within the parameters which are available to us.

**Q: Do you think that religious violence will remain central to our religious culture or do you foresee a change, particularly in the post-September 11 scenario?**

A: I think a change will take place, it has to take place. At the moment, violence is a ready-made channel for expressing Muslim identity. The pressing challenge today is for creating the space for a more inclusive Muslim identity. We must create cultural space for expressing other forms of Muslim identity. This won't be possible without tearing down the cobwebs of a soul-destroying literalism that has reduced Muslim society to a cultural ghetto. And this requires standing up and reclaiming the legacy of Abrahamic defiance-of demolishing an outmoded form of god in the name of God'. Or as Iqbal put it in his Persian verses quoting Rumi: *Naqsh-e-Haq Ra Hum Bay Amre-e-Haq Shayken*".

However, this is a conceptual Iqbalian project that most of us would find too scary and rather do without. Consequently, we'd rather settle for the more familiar-and naturalised forms of Talibanic Islam and brand the propounders of Abrahamic Islam as agents of an 'American Islam', as the terrorist opponents of President Khatami are doing in Iran.

**Q: Do you see the beginnings of this process of change anywhere?**

A: There is one place where a Muslim cultural efflorescence is broadening the horizons of Muslim identity and creating the space for spiritual humanism as well as a creative engagement with the West. Iran.

Notwithstanding the pressures of Iran's home-grown Is-



Sh.Suroosh Irfani

lamist death squads, post-revolutionary Iran is probably the only Muslim society where the constitution of a Muslim identity in terms of a creative and inclusive individuality is seen as a task by so many Iranians. How has such a tectonic shift in cultural imagination come about in Iran? There are numerous reasons but I will focus only on one the transformation of armed struggle-jihad (as war), or even 'terrorism' into cultural production.

In other words, the transformation of the 'heroic' and a change in meaning of the 'heroic'. The best known signifier of such transformation is Mohsen Makhmalbaf, an Iranian film director whose film *Kandhar* was declared the best film of 2001 by *Time Magazine*. Way back in the 70s, Makhmalbaf was tried as a 'terrorist' by the Shah's regime and given a long prison sentence for stabbing a policeman-Makhmalbaf wanted the policeman's gun to rob a bank and then give the money to the urban guerrillas fighting the Shah's dictatorship. He was in prison as a 'terrorist' when the Iranian revolution exploded and won his release.

In this sense, Makhmalbaf is just one example of the transformation of the 'heroic' to a urban guerrilla (jihadi, freedom fighter or terrorist), into an intellectual fighter at the frontiers of culture. His creative experiments are daring leaps of another kind for that of a teenaged idealist with a gun.

Clearly, Makhmalbaf epitom-

(Contd. on Page 12)

## Pandits Abstain From Voting

### JKNUF CANDIDATES



(From Page 4)

shown Muslim parentages. The communal hatred is manifest were a Pandit voter is shown the parentage as Nest-u-Nabood. (Annihilated). The voter cleansing is the part of the broader religious cleansing campaign. Physical cleansing, residential cleansing, administrative cleansing and voter cleansing constitute a sinister process which is a crime against humanity.

Kashmiri Pandits realise the gravity of the crimes committed against them. The community has sought state intervention to address the issue of genocide perpetrated on it. The State has chosen steadfastly to deny the genocide and trivialise the tragedy. To fudge the issue respective governments have resorted to perverted symbolism like that of 'voting in exile'.

The community disenchantment in the election process is reflected by its voluntary abstention from electoral process. As per relief commissioner only 2013 votes were polled in Habbakadal Constituency which has the largest number of Kashmiri Pandit votes. In Amirakadal Constituency which has the second largest number of KP votes only 456 KP voters caste their votes.

The retraction of Kashmiri Pandits from voting was evident

from the very first phase. Seeing the pattern of almost a total abstention by KPs the state government tried to confuse the public by giving the voter percentages not out of total voters in the constituency but out of the total number of M-forms filled up by the Kashmiri Pandits. Relief Commissioner declared that 43% migrants caste their vote in 7th Phase'. Looking at the actual figures, reality was markedly different. 3,572 KP voters had caste their votes out of 8,267 whose M-forms were entertained and accepted. Percentage publically declared was out of M-forms registered and not out of total voters in the constituencies which went for polls. Actually percentage of voting fell around 6% only. The government embarrassment was manifest in the disinformation which it tried to generate.

Large number of KP candidates contested in this elections despite an overwhelming disenchantment of community with electoral process. Some analysts explained it as a sponsored participation. These analysts say that the government faced by the spectre of widespread boycott in Kashmir Valley encouraged Pandit candidates to field their nominations from almost all constituencies in Kashmir Valley. The idea was to send the message across that

Muslim boycott may help sending KP candidates to Assembly. This perception never tallied with the ground situation in the Valley. A large number of Kashmiri Muslims had already expressed their wish to contest in the Valley. To scuttle the boycott call given by separatists there were large number of Muslims candidates ready to take the bait of government and jump into the fray and make some money. The campaigning in various constituencies in the Valley reflected almost no impact of contesting Pandit candidates vis-a-vis the turn over of the voters.

Others opine that Pandit candidates participation imparted symbolic secular hue to the elections in the Valley which the government desired particularly in the light of polarisation which took place in the state during Amarnath Agitation. So government must have made some investment in this direction and many must have been ready to reap the harvest.

The volume of money which is being spent these days on elections creates a sort of a bazaar or market which some try to exploit. For breaking or adding even small chunk of votes from a particular section of voters, prospective rich candidates spend money lavishly. A naivety that a comprehensive boycott in Valley may actually translate into

Pandits getting elected is also seen as a factor in Pandit candidates jumping into the fray.

There are however some analysts who see more in the abstention of KP from voting. Kashmiri Pandit abstention exposes the contours of a 'guided democracy'. The democratic process is devised such that it ensures hegemony of Kashmiri Muslims disproportionate to its numbers. For example the total votes polled by the 3 winning candidates in the last Parliamentary elections from Kashmir Valley fall short of the losing candidate from the single parliamentary constituency of Jammu and Poonch. The Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies in Jammu are far bigger both in terms of voters as well as area as compared to constituencies in Kashmir Valley. The average number of voters per assembly constituency in Jammu region is 83,263. For the Kashmir Valley voters per constituency are only 70,884. Area wise the assembly constituencies in Jammu are almost double the size that of Valley. In such a structure of democratic setup right to equality as a cardinal principal guiding democratic process has been abandoned to ensure the perpetuation of political power of only one segment of the people in the state. Religious

cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus underlined the lack of commitment of the nation state to preserve even symbolically the pretension of secularism and equality. KP Abstention gradually lifts the lid over these contradictions which the democratic set up in the state carries in its womb. If the people having faith in the India nation state start internalising the perception that democracy in the state violates the principle of equality and legitimises exclusion, it is a sign of deepening crisis. To camouflage this crisis governments at the helm may encourage mercenary participation of Kashmiri Pandits in electoral process to give an impression of stabilisation of this democratic process.

Communal establishment in Kashmir valley also has stakes in hiding the contradictions of the democratic set up in the state. After all the structure of this set up is such that it ensures its hegemony in the state power. Communal entrenchment in state power has acted as a vital support structure to keep separatism alive in the state. This quarter may also encourage mercenary activity aimed at diluting KP resistance.

Political naivety but good intentions, vested interests with noble pretensions or merely a masochism to submit and play the game of the usurper, broadly are seen as the reasons which prompted 43 Kashmiri Pandits to jump into the fray of the 2008-elections. Kashmiri Pandits in overwhelming majority chose to remain away from elections. For them voting in exile is accepting a fiat accompli of permanent expulsion. For Kashmiri Pandits any process which even inadvertently contributes to the denial of their genocide and legitimise a system of exclusion is abhorrent.

END

## 'It is high time Muslims took responsibility for why Islam and terrorism have become synonymous'

(From Page 11)

mises a cultural context and a Muslim identity that has outgrown self-righteous violence for affirming one's individuality and identity.

However, such a transformation of the 'heroic' has not been an overnight development, as the historical seeds of 'the heroic' as an inner battle for self-for-

mation and enlightenment have been central in Islamic mysticism (termed as *Jihad-e-Akbar*). In fact, one could recall the transformation of Tariq bin Ziyad's 'burning boats' zeal in the Iberian peninsula into the cultural achievements that made Islamic Spain a high point in human civilisation. Such a transformation also underpins

President Khatami's 'civilisational dialogue' initiative, in itself just another nodal point of post-revolutionary Iran's cultural efflorescence. Indeed, Iran's example shows us that it is possible to construct a pluralistic Muslim identity at home with Islam and the challenges of globalisation. By doing so, you exorcise the ravages

of colonialism and the violence of religious extremism.

**Q: How can we in Pakistan learn from the Iranian experience?**

**A:** There is a great complexity in the times we are living in and the challenge today is the intellectual challenge. We have to create and produce knowledge ourselves before we are able

to catch up with the times. We can't go on mimicking the West. We have within our own tradition an intellectual rigour and struggle which was embodied in Sufism and which was ingrained within the Indo-Persian culture of which we are a product. That eclipsed dimension has to be reclaimed.

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# Sarada Shrine-Revisiting Folklore-III

By Upendar Ambardar

**K**ASHMIR, a repository of an ancient culture, rich heritage and time tested traditions abounds in unequalled mysticism and piety. The unsullied serenity and spiritual ambience of the holy land instantly unites us with its illustrious past. Folklore, ancient stories, legends and mouth tell tales rooted in majestic traditions remind us of our exalted spiritual, religious and cultural past. They keep our hopes and faith alive and afloat.

Likewise, the famed Sarada temple situated in Krishanaganga Valley shares a history that stretches back into thousands of years old legacy. Sh. Janki Nath Dhar, an erstwhile resident of the village Bamhama, district Kupwara (Kashmir) visited Sarada Shrine in August, 1947. Despite his declining age and lengthy passage of time, he still retains the obsessive reverence for the Sarada Mata Shrine. Sharing the cherished moments of his visit with the author, Sh. Dhar recounted that Goddess Sarada was the most revered, most talked about and one of the tallest indigenous deity of Kashmiri Pandits in the times of yore. The temple was also venerated as one of the most holiest shrines as faith in Goddess Sarada resonated down the ages transcending social, cultural and belief affiliations. During a long interaction with the author, Sh. Dhar revealed that Sarada Shrine situated in now nondescript area of Drov, in Krishanaganga Valley in Pak occupied Kashmir was a religious heartland in the days bygone. The entire neighbourhood of Krishanaganga Valley was regarded as the holy domain of Goddess Sarada.

Recapping the fondest memories of his visit to the temple, Sh. Janki Nath Dhar nostalgically recalled that pilgrimage route commencing from his native village of Bamhama would lead to the village of Laderwan, situated at a distance of about four kms. from Bamhama. It would take two hours to foot the distance from Bamhama to Laderwan, both villages lying on the Chowkibal road. He recollected that the pilgrims would make a night stay mostly at the village Zurhama, which is about 3 to 4 kms away from Laderwan, though some would prefer Laderwan for the same. The village Zurhama was wholly inhabited by Muslim households. At Zurhama, the devotees would commonly make a night stay near the village water-will. The pilgrimage trek from Zurhama village would take a steep ascent towards Bundoopkal, which is about six to seven kms away from here. Bundoopkal, also known by the

alternative name of Ganeshpal is a dense forest populated by huge Pine and Deodar trees. Kashmiri Pandits identified the huge boulder of Bundoopkal with the image of Lord Ganesh. They would accordingly engage themselves in performing pooja with the 'Roth' (sweetened home-made rotis) carried by them. Dudhniyal, the next village on the pilgrimage path was situated on the bank of the legendary Krishanaganga river. About twenty five to thirty Muslim

temple was intermediately positioned, located about thirty feet from the last stone-step of the staircase. An appreciable area of the temple courtyard had a lavish spread of chiselled stones. The inside enclosure of the temple was somewhat arched occupying an area of about fourteen feet. The holy 'Shila' comprising the sanctum sanctorium occupied a central place inside the temple. The temple built of massive rock stone blocks had a wooden roof with a heavy dou-

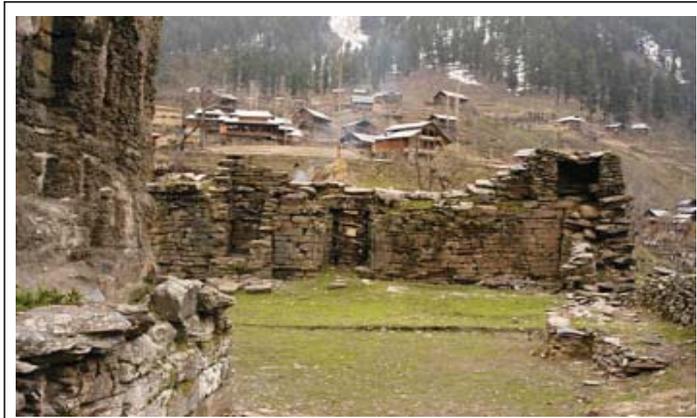
ffering sacrificial oblations. A water flow believed to have its origin from the celestial 'Amrit Kund' beneath the holy 'Shila' could be spotted on the left side of the approaching path of the temple.

It would eventually mingle with the meandering Krishanaganga river after ascending down. A little away from the temple courtyard on the right side was the imposing fort. A small pathway from the temple courtyard would also lead to the

falling on Bhadrpada Shuklapaksh Ashtami, locally known as Bhaderpeth Zoon Pach Athum, was the most enthusiastically looked forward festival. The festival would last six to seven days. The temple teemed with devotees and would buzz with religious activities and fervour. The pilgrims would immerse themselves in heartfelt and meaningful prayers and would get blessed and spiritually rewarded in entirety. The sacrificial offering of a male sheep performed on Bhadrpada Shuklapaksh Navami, a day after Ashtami was a part of Sarada temple festival. It was effected in a space reserved for the said offering in the backyard spot below the temple staircase. The offering of 'tahar charvun' (rice cooked with turmeric powder and oil and mixed with cooked sheep liver) was also a part of the temple ritual on Bhadrpada Shuklapaksh Navami. The temple priest would invariably get the shoulder blade meat portion of the sacrificial offering on the said day. Many of the devotees would also prefer to make vegetarian offering of halwa and kheer. As per a popular folklore widespread in Krishanaganga Valley and its neighbourhood in not too distant past, Lord Krishna is believed to have made a sojourn to the said area to meet Pandvas during their wandering in exile.

In commemoration and remembrance of the said memorable and monumental event, the native river Ganga is believed to have been renamed as Krishanaganga in honour of Lord Krishna by the residents of the land. In addition to it, the visit Lord Rama, Mata Sita and Lakshmana to the said region during their exile also formed a part of the centuries old native legend.

Suffice to say that Sarada Mata is a part of our native identity and collective faith asset of thousands of years old civilisational heritage. Irrespective of the social and cultural diversity and beliefs, the reverence and faith for Her is integrated fully into our local culture and folklore. The numerous legends, stories, oral narratives and myths woven around Her have not only immortalized but also historicized Sarada Mata Shrine. Unquestionably the Goddess Sarada's sovereign authority and hold over the entire region extending from Krishanaganga Valley to Kashmir constitutes a sort of our folklore emblem. It is due to Her overpowering and overbearing presence that Kashmir is known as 'Sarada Mandal', 'Sarada Desh', 'Sarada Peeth', the native language as 'Sharada' and forest, in the vicinity of Sarada Shrine as 'Sarada Van'. --To be continued



Inside of Sarada Temple complex. This photo was taken on 12th April 2005.

Photo Courtesy: Hanif Gharib

households existed in the village at that time. Many pilgrims would prefer to spend the night at Dudhniyal, while others would move ahead. A three to four feet wooden foot-bridge held in position by suspended iron ropes, locally known as 'Zampakadal' would ferry the pilgrims across the Krishanaganga river. Marhom (Marhoma) was the next village ahead, which is at a distance of 10-11 kms. from Dudhniyal. About three kms. ahead of Marhom, was the village of Khargam. A lone Kashmiri Pandit, native of Seerjagir, Sopore owned a shop at Khargam. On the last leg of the pilgrimage was a small 'Zampakadal' type wooden foot-bridge, locally known as 'Sarada Kadal', which would lead to the village Saradi.

The village Saradi has a plain area in the beginning, which would extend gradually towards an upland elevation. Recapitulating further, Sh. Dhar recounted that shopkeepers comprising both Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits, had their shops situated on the left side of the approaching shrine path. The temple was situated on a small hillock, which overlooked the surrounding Saradi village. The temple is said to have occupied an area of about four kanals of land. Sarada

ble panel wooden door laced with a stout fastening iron chain on the outside. The devotees with overriding devotion would pay obeisance to the holy 'Shila' amidst sacred chants, bhajans, tolling of bells, burning of incense sticks and dhoo. Flowers and milk usually mixed with saffron were offered to the holy 'Shila' accompanied by vermilion application.

The stone staircase was braced by stone-walls on both sides with an accompaniment of a decorous entry gate-way. The temple was approachable both from Muzaffarabad town now in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and also by Chokibal road along the west bank of Krishanaganga river branching from the frontier district of Kupwara (Kashmir). Amongst the temple priests, Pt. Nand Lal Laderwani was the lone priest, who was permanently settled at Saradi village along with his family. He owned a house and a piece of cultivation land, where he would raise maize plantation. A few dharamshallas numbering 5-6 also existed on the left side of the temple courtyard, where the pilgrims would stay. According to Mr Dhar there were two 'Havan-Kunds' of about 4x4 feet dimensions, which were 10-12 feet away from the dharamshalla and were used for

fort, though it remained mostly in disuse.

About 200 feet away from the temple premises overlooking the enthralling Saradi village, a few nomadic settlements could be spotted. Maize cultivation and cattle rearing were their main stay and source of sustenance. Their belief in the Goddess Sarada, popularly remembered as 'Maie' was steadfast as they had unwavering faith in Her. The native Muslims spoke of Her as bestower of success, prosperity, good luck, nourishment and bounteous crops. During unsavoury situations and troubled times, they would prey and petition Her for protection and shelter. Sh. Janki Nath Dhar also revealed that the native Muslims would also offer a part of their maize crop to 'Sarada Maie' as an offering of thanks after harvesting crops. They also held a strong belief that Sarada Maie would never let them down and would steer them through tumultuous times and hardships. The trust and sureness in the Goddess Sarada was so enormous that Muslim shopkeepers selling milk would refuse to accept money from Kashmiri Pandit pilgrims once they would become aware that the milk offering was for the Goddess. Ganga Ashtami also known as Sarada Ashtami

# A historic symbol of Kashmiri Shaivism: Bada Shivala of Rani Katra



By Dr. B.N. Sharga

**K**ASHMIRI PANDITS are basically the worshippers of Lord Shiva, Kashmir is abode of Baba Amarnath. Every year in the month of *Sawan* according to Hindu calendar lacs of pilgrims from all over the country visit



Ragyna Devi.

the holy cave of Amarnath to pay their obeisance to naturally formed ice *lingam*, a rare phenomenon with no scientific explanation. Kashmir even otherwise is a unique place in the sense that it has innumerable *asthapanas*, shrines, temples and other holy places spread all over its area connected with different gods and goddesses. These holy places are not only of religious and historical importance but are actually symbols of distinct cultural identity of Kashmiri Pandits. So they should be protected and preserved at any cost, because they represent our centuries old customs and traditions and our existence as a distinct ethnic group in this vast sea of humanity.

The Kashmiri Pandits who had to leave their motherland for whatever reasons in different periods being *Shaivites* built a number of *Shiva* temples and *Shivalas* in different important cities of North India in the 18th and 19th century as nerve centres for their community just to keep their heritage alive and vibrating even in newly acquired surroundings. These exclusive religious places used to serve as important centres of their social activities and

mutual interaction to strengthen the community bonds as religious functions and social gatherings in that period were generally organised at these places for certain reasons to maintain strict privacy on such occasion. This system actually helped our ancestors to a great extent in preserving their distinct ethnic identity without any dilution for about 200 years, which otherwise would not be possible in evolving their social history.

Since Delhi, Lucknow and Lahore used to have a big concentration of Kashmiri Pandits diaspora before independence outside the Kashmir Valley so naturally these three important cities have a large number of Shiva temples and *Shivalas* built by Kashmiri Pandits in different times to carry out their religious obligations without any difficulty and to keep their heritage intact.

Oudh occupies a very important place in the social history of Kashmiri Pandits diaspora. Its ruler Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula due to some personal differences with his mother Bahu Begum and grandmother Sadrejahhan Begum shifted his seat of government from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775. With this change a large number of Kashmiri Pandits employed in the country also shifted their base from Faizabad to Lucknow and a locality after their name known as Kashmiri Mohalla came into existence, which subsequently played a key role in shaping the destiny of many Kashmiri Pandits with the independence of the country in 1947. It became a nerve centre for social awakening under the able guidance of the stalwarts of the community who were the real visionaries and pathfinders. Various social and political movements were launched by these men of calibre and integrity from this place to infuse new life in the community and a bring certain reforms in it to face the new challenges boldly and squarely.

Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula (1775-1797) was a liberal ruler so he gave employment to many Kashmiri Pandits on important posts in his court. One of them was Pt. Zind Ram Chowdhary, who became the incharge of the salary of "tankha" department to give salaries to the court employees. His descendants subsequently adopted Tankha as their surname.

Pt. Zind Ram Chowdhary was originally a resident of Chowdhari Bagh of Rainawari in the Srinagar district of Kashmir. His ancestor Pt. Shankar Das Chowdhary was a *mansabdar* during the rule of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) in Kashmir. He earned a lot of fortune and built a number of houses in Rainawari, his son Pt. Mahesh Das Chowdhary became a great builder when Saif Khan (1668-1671) was the governor

of Kashmir. So that way Pt. Zind Ram Chowdhari Tankha inherited the construction traits from his ancestors.

Actually a branch of this Chowdhary clan left Kashmir during the rule of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) around 1670. They settled down first at Barielly, which was the capital of Rohilkhand then. They lived there happily for four generations. When Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Oudh conquered Rohilkhand in 1773 and made it a part of Oudh Pt. Bishambhar Nath Chowdhary and Pt. Uncha Nath Chowdhary then shifted their base to Delhi whereas Pt. Zind Ram Chowdhary came to Lucknow to join the court of Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula.

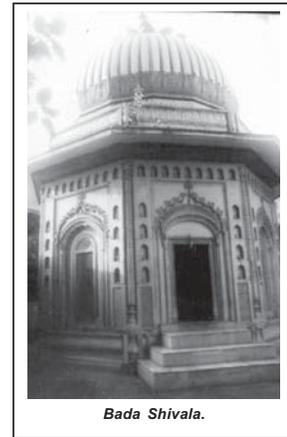
It is said that a great famine broke out in Lucknow in 1778. Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula then to provide succour to the hungry subjects started the construction of Asafi Imambara for which skilled masons and artisans were called from Iran and some other places to execute this project. But according to historian P.N. Oak it was actually a reconstruction and remodelling work which was undertaken to give a new look to the already existing structure known as *Panch Mahal* and some ancient ruins of a fort built at that spot probably by *veerver* Lakshman the founder of the city.

Pt. Zind Ram Chowdhary Tankha grabbed this god sent opportunity and engaged the same skilled masons and artisans to build a magnificent structure in Rani Katra known as *Bada Shivala*, which now some locals call as *Sankata Devi Ka Mandir*. There are many stories connected with this rare piece of architectural beauty. This marvellous edifice of great historical importance was a nerve centre for the activities of the Kashmiri Pandits for a very long time when the whole area was inhabited by them. This *Bada Shivala* is one of the ancient Shiva temples in the Lucknow city. How its *Lingam* was brought in the narrow lane and placed inside the sanctum sanctorium is still a big mystery.

This temple complex besides a unique *lingam* a symbol of cosmic power has other idols of gods and goddesses as well. A well chiselled idol of Kashmiri Pandits' *Kuldevi Ragyna* made of snowwhite Maccaranar marble also adorns this complex. The locals worship it as *Sankata Devi*. There is also a *Yagna Shala* in its compound for performing *havans* and other *vedic* rituals. During the life time of Raja Brij Narain Tankha whose ancestor built this whole complex its *purohit* used to run a *Vedic Pathshala* in its precincts to teach *Karmakand* to young disciples. The idol of *Ragynadevi* was dressed in typical Kashmiri attire with 'dijahaos'

and "author".

On every *Navratra* and *Shivratri* this complex attracts a very large number of devotees from all parts of the city due to its religious significance. It is an important landmark of Lucknow's history. On every Monday in the month of *Sawan* the whole complex is beautifully decorated with flowers and coloured lights. The state government is now contemplating to make it a destination for religious tourism to earn foreign exchange. In absence of any legal authority to run its affairs and to properly look after its management unscrupulous elements are now desperately trying to usurp this uncared valuable



Bada Shivala.

property to mint quick money. This property is mentioned as H.No: 407/118 in the records of Lucknow Municipal Corporation. Its real owner Pt. Ratan Narain Tankha now lives at Laxmi Niwas, West Field Estates, off Warden Road, Mumbai-400026. The matter was also brought into the notice of the office bearers of Lucknow Kashmiri Association several times for some action but uptill now nothing concrete has been done in this regard. The Kashmiri Association is giving more importance to *bhawan* and *havans* as if other things are meaningless for them. It seems that there is dearth of selfless leaders in the community to do something for a social cause with a missionary spirit. Actually we have lost the will to act, may be due to the influence of *Kal Sarp Yog* one can take a horse upto the water body but cannot force it to drink. Under the influence of western way of life we have already left many things far behind. Now it is turn of leaving this mortal frame to attain complete salvation, Jai Shiv Shambho!

\*(The author is a social history Researcher living at Lucknow)

# Lord Buddha at Takshashila



By Sanjay Godbole

**T**HE city of 'Taxila' is situated at a distance of 35 kilometers from Rawalpindi in the Punjab province of Pakistan. It is the seventh Tehsil of Punjab province. The old name of 'Taxila' was 'Takshashila' and it was famous throughout the world as an ancient centre of Hindu and Buddhist culture. There is a verse in the ancient epic 'Ramayana'. The verse describes how Bharat, the son of queen Kaikayi, after defeating all his enemies in war, established two settlements, namely, Takshshila and 'Pushpakalavati' in the Gandhar province. Both these settlements were abounding in all necessities of life. Bharat deputed his two sons, Takshak at Takshashila and Pushpal in Pushpakalavati to take charge and rule them. The state capital of 'Takshak' situated on the top of a mountain was popularly addressed as 'Takshakshila'. This name 'Takshakshila' in course of time, got changed to 'Taksh-Shila'. The grandson of Arjuna, named as 'Janmajaya' conquered Takshashila and established his rule on a hill there, called 'Haathiyal'. The first presentation of the great epic 'Mahabharata' was given by 'Vaishampayana' here only. 'Haathiyal' means abode of elephants. This whole region was called 'Gandhar' meaning thereby 'Land of fragrance'. In the opinion of some Archaeologists from Pakistan, King Takshak belonged to the 'Naga' Dyansty and he had established the city of Takshashila.

The University of Takshashila was an important knowledge imparting centre of ancient India and it was operational between the 6th century B.C. to the 5th century A.D. Here the student aspirants were admitted at the age of 16 and finished their educational courses.

Here various courses, such as archery, horse riding, elephant riding, philosophy, defence sciences, grammar, religion, law etc. were taught. The merit list of the alumni of Takshashila University included such famous names such as Jyotipal the commander of armed forces of the king of Varanasi, the physician Jeevak of King Bimbisar, Prasannaajet king of the state of Kaushal and the emperor Chandragupta. The famous grammarian Panini was at Takshashila

during the sixth century BC. Similarly, Arya Chanakya, (Kautilya) was also busy in imparting education at Takshashila University. Many historians from Pakistan are of the opinion that Kautilya wrote and compiled his world famous treatise on economical sciences (Arthashastra) at Takshashila only. Takshashila was renowned all over the world then for unequalled quality of education imparted and the discipline observed. In one of the 'Jatak kathas' of Srilanka, composed in the fifth century, there is a stray reference to the University at Takshashila.

has been constructed with wood, bricks and soil. The residences at Takshashila had storage spaces for food grains in the rear walls.

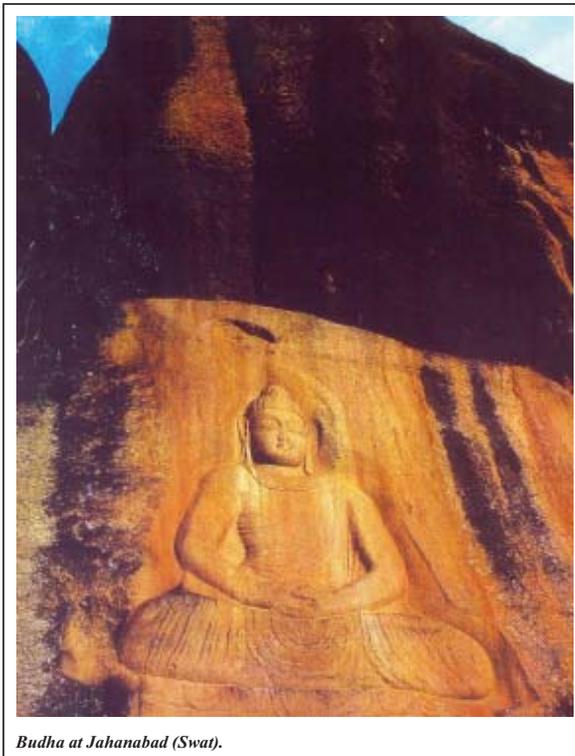
'Sirkap' is a small settlement near 'Tamra-Nallah' near Takshashila. The remains of the fortification, surfaced during an archaeological excavation, have long been testified in ancient literature. In the biography of 'Apolonius' authored by 'Philostratus', he writes that Takshashila is as imposingly colossal as the city of 'Neenwah'. He further adds that Takshshila has all the characterically

addressed Takshashila as 'Chuchshila'. He has described the four large 'Stupas' there and has praised both the ruler and the ruled. Hu-en-tsang, the famous Chinese traveller visited Takshashila in the 7th century. He addresses Takshashila as 'Taa-chi-shilo'. He also says that Takshashila was included into the kingdom of Kapisha initially but was included in Kiyashilo Kingdom (Which is Kashmir at present.) He has specially described the brave people, the fountains and the area abounding in flowers & fruits and the vegetation in general.

The Takshashila University charged one thousand 'Karsharpane' (the then prevailing unit of currency) towards tuition fees from the rich. The poor, however, were provided with education, free of cost. The coaching work was on throughout day and night. Takshashila could be very aptly described as the one and the uniquely one University, which was fully operative and functional in the whole of the universe for one thousand record years and that too, without any incesance or disturbance. During the British regime, the firstever attempt was made by 'Cunningham' to fathom the hidden whereabouts of this ancient city of Takshashila. Subsequent to these attempts, in the years 1912 AD and 1934 A.D. an archaeological excavation exercise was undertaken, under the able leadership of Sir John Marshall at Takshashila. In this excavation many constructed structures were surfaced at different levels in various encrustations. These include remains of the 'Bhallar Stupa' on the sharda hill at an enormous height, at the banks of river 'Haro'. The Kushan Kings erected many 'Stupas' and monasteries at 'Jalian'. In one of such monasteries, many coins struck by Tormana and 'Samantdeva', so also, many stucco idols (made from lime) of 'Bodhisatva', Goddess 'Hariti' in Gandhara style surfaced. At that time complete sets of ornaments also surfaced. One 'Armaic' inscription was also found. Several earthen pots, terracottas, stucco idols and hoards of Indo Greek and Saka Kushan coins were also surfaced. There is a stupa erected by emperor Ashoka at Dharmarajika. At this Dharmarajika stupa, there is an inscription of the Sythian king 'Azes'. In that inscription the name of emperor Ashoka had been referred to as 'Dhar raja'. This inscription was brought to light during that excavation. At 'Jandiylal' the remains of a uniquely characteristic and typically distinctive Greek temple were surfaced.

During the excavation at Takshashila many miniature stupas deployed during worship and several Urns for preserving the remains were brought to light. After Sir John Marshall, Mr. Mortimer Wheeler undertook an excavation at Takshashila. After the partition, Takshashila

*\*(The author is a noted archaeologist, based in Pune)*



Budha at Jahanabad (Swat).

During the regime of the Iranian emperor, 'Dariyush the Is' prior to the year 486 B.C. the King 'Pukkusati' of Takshashila was defeated by the Iranian forces. On the tomb of king Zerzes the 3rd (year 338 B.C.) the fact that he conquered 'Gandhar' along with the images of the Gandhar's warriors are carved out. Alexander the great reached Takshashila in the year 326 B.C., when king Ambhi was the ruler. Ambhi subsequently surrendered to Alexander. The region where the remains of old Takshashila lie scattered and strewn is presently known as 'Bheer'. These remains are scattered in an area admeasuring some 1600 sq meters. A strong fortification exists in this area and

distinctive Greek features including a Greek styled fortification. Sirkap has narrow roads like 'Athens' and has single storeyed houses have Parthian type roofs. The remains of this city are strewn over a large area of 12000 sq. meters. During the regime of Alexander the great the Greeks addressed this city as 'Taxile'. 'Strabo' has described this city as vast and expansive and abounding. After the Greeks, emperor Chandragupta Maurya conquered Takshashila. After, Maurya, the Bactrians, the sakes and then Kushanas ruled Takshashila. The white Hunas devastated Takshashila on a great scale during the 5th century A.D. The famous Chinese traveller, 'Fahiyaan' visited this area in the 5th century. He

# Witness to an Era-A Memoir

My ancestor Pt. Tika Ram Razdan was a highly placed officer during the Pathan rule. Once, the Pathan Governor had gone out for hunting a Lion was spotted. The Governor who was on 'Machan' shot at the Lion. He missed the aim. The Lion came to attack him. Tika Ram, who was accompanying the ruler, put on his iron glove and thrust it into Lion's mouth. He pulled his tongue out. The Lion fell down and died. The Governor ordered that, hence forth, Tika Ram would be called Tika Ram Sher. Since then this epithet has stuck to the family.

Pt. Tika Ram had two sons—Kailash Ram and Chandrjoo. The latter migrated, probably, to Gwalior. Kailash Ram had a daughter, Zoonmali and a son, Gopal Joo. Pt. Gopal Joo died in Askardu in 1915 AD. He married four times. My father Pt. Mukand Lal Sher was born to his first wife.

My family belongs to Bulbul Lankar Mohalla of Ali Kadal, Srinagar. I was born in 1922. Pt. Mukand Ram Sher served as a Patwari for twelve long years in Bijbehara, an ancient town. I had my early schooling in Lower Middle School, Bijbehara. We lived in the Pandit locality of Haer Mohalla.

## 13th of July, 1931:

During the turbulent days of July, 1931 we were at Bijbehara. Many of the locals, belonging to the majority community would often drop at our residence to have a chat with my father; One of these gentlemen was Hakim Ghulam Rasool, our neighbour. On 11th of July Hakim Saheb came to advise my father to remain indoors on 13th of July. He informed him that some locals come to him on the pretext of 'nishandineer' of their land and take him out of the town.

Exactly what the good Samaritan Hakeem had told my father happened. Two Muslim gentleman of Jamia Masjid Mohalla dropped at our place on the morning of 13th of July. They requested Pt. Mukand Ram to accompany them for 'nishandineer' of their land. Subsequently, we came to know that there was a plan to murder Pt. Mukand Ram. Pt. Balkak Dhar, Wazir-i-Wazarat, Anantnag helped my father to come out of Anantnag district.

## Kashmir-1930s:

During the Roti agitation (1932), mohalla elders used to take out children to shout slogans against the government. I too joined them. The children's procession would terminate at Shital Nath, the headquarters of

**Pt. Radha Krishan Sher was a noted Commentator on Kashmir affairs. He lived a principled life and never compromised with official administrative apathy. The Community's exile had left a indelible mark on his personality. Pt. R.K. Sher was a staunch disciplinarian and a nationalist to the core. He passed away recently at Jammu. We reproduce his memoirs published in Sept. 2004 issue of Kashmir Sentinel as a tribute to this great Kashmiri Pandit.**

--Editor

Yuvak Sabha. Those days lories plied regularly between Srinagar and the district headquarters. In winters the Banihal Cart road would remain closed. There were few schools for senior students—Bagi Dilawar Khan and SP High School. In Rainawari, Hari Singh School was upgraded only in 1936.

In 1938 I passed Matriculation. At SP School, my class fellow was Syed Mir Qasim, who later became Chief Minister. My family wanted me to join the state service. Jobs were scarce. The state had little revenue. During the best years of RC Kak administration it totalled just Rs 21/2 crores. Pt. R.C. Kak was my father's class-mate at Bagh Dilawar Khan. His in-laws, Tikoos were also our neighbours. My father made many requests to him for my job. Pt. R.C. Kak abhorred favouritism. As a matter of policy, he did not want to do anything out of turn. Kak hated to do something that would eventually sully his reputation. He practised a fair-minded approach in governance. It was at his instance that a Session Judge from Jammu, who happened to be a Muslim, was brought as Chief Secretary of the State. My yearning for the job also made me to meet Kash Kak, the great Saint, who lived at Manigam (Ganderbal). Those who visited him, for getting some wish fulfilled, did not have to communicate it. He would answer on his own. It was through my father, then Patwari at Harwan, that RC Kak purchased 4 kanals of land from Pt. Narid Lal Zutshi. When the popular government took over, its supporters vandalised his new bungalow and the land was also encroached upon.

## College Years :

I graduated from SP College in 1942. Prof. Ram Nath Kaul and Late Jia Lal Tameri were my class fellows. The year I joined the College, Principal Macdermott was shifted to as Director School Education and Prof. Molvi A. Ibrahim took over as new principal. The same year Prof. Kanji Lal, an outstanding scholar of Sanskrit, also retired. SP College had some of the finest teachers

in every subject. These included Prof. Giani Ram and Prof. Shambhu Nath Kaul (Mathematics), Prof. Chand Narayan, a Lucknow Kashmiri Pandit (English); and Prof. Jagadar Zadoo (Sanskrit). Prof. R.C. Pandit



Late. Sh. R.K. Sher

taught us poetry. Two teachers from Mirpur, Prof. Maqbool and Prof. Ehsan-ul-Haq, who taught English, were fine people and taught well. It pained us when we learnt that Prof. Maqbool, who was on way to Lahore in 1947 to collect the results, was murdered at Jammu.

## Early Years :

I was appointed to the post of clerk in 'Peshi office'. The Peshi officer, Mr. Ramaswamy was a Madras. My good handwriting was one of the factors had influenced my selection. This office maintained record of criminal matters and 'Shikars' (Huntings). Soon, I was sent to the Palace, where I had the privilege to work under Pt. Dina Nath Jalali (of Rainawari), Private Secretary to Maharaja. A great man with simple habits, Pt. Jalali even treated his subordinate staff with great affection.

One day, Pt. D.N. Jalali had called me to his room, when some one from the staff shouted ; 'Sarkar agai'. The Private Secretary came out to receive the Maharaja, while asking me to remain in the room. I had strong curiosity to see His Highness. I half-opened the door to have a glimpse of the Maharaja. As I reached to the door, in fear I tumbled down. Maharaja. As I reached to the door, in fear I tumbled down. Maharaja had already

seen me and opened the door. He reached for my arms to lift me up, when the other members of the staff joined. It was my second encounter with His Highness. As a college student to Tawaza, where Shri RAJ Lal Khajuria, a conservator Forests, was on deputation to Department as Director. Later on Maharaja asked the Chief Secretary to absorb me and another Muslim gentleman in the political department, when Tawaza was closed down. P Shambhu Nath Labroo, PA to the Chief Secretary sat over Maharaja's recommendation. I had to seek intercession of Pt. Amar Nath Kak to get the order issued.

## Political Department :

In 1945 I joined the Political Department. Lala Madan Gopal, who spoke Kashmiri more fluent than a Kashmiri, was my Superintendent. He was my real teacher, who taught me the intricacies of office procedure. My stint in the Political Department at a period when crucial historical events were taking shape, provided me a ring-side view about men and matters in the state.

RC Kak was a man of sterling character. He never bypassed protocol. During Quit Kashmir Movement, Pt. Maharaj Krishan Dhar, Governor had come to seek his advice to tackle the situation created by Nehru's defiance at Kohala. RC Kak told him curtly, "You are the District Magistrate and enjoy full powers. I do not wield such powers as you do. Why do you ask me for guidance on such matters? It is your business." When RC Kak submitted his resignation, two other senior officers—Sham Lal Dhar (later Home Secretary) and Justice Shahmiri (Sessions Judge) were also prematurely retired. They were subsequently rehabilitated by Sheikh Abdullah.

Violating all the norms of civilised behaviour, the new NC government humiliated RC Kak. The latter maintained his dignity and said, I had to do whatever I did because I was loyal to his Highness". Despite cool relations with Maharaja later, Pt. Kak

never spoke or wrote anything that could have lowered the prestige of Maharaja. There are few instances in history, where the loyal servant took upon himself the responsibility for acts of Commissions and commissions of his superiors.

As NC government continued to rough handle Pt. Kak, Nehru's image suffered a dent. There was strong pressure on Nehru from the British government. Nehru wrote a DO to Sheikh Abdullah, asking him to release Kak forthwith. This DO, which the writer had the opportunity to go through went on to praise Kak for his administrative acumen. Nehru told Sheikh, "You would have earned a name for yourself as a good administrator had you tried to utilise Kak's services by befriending him". Nehru also reminded Sheikh Abdullah about the flak he was facing on the Kak issue. Kak was released the following day. We also heard that Nehru had sent Raj Kumar Amrit Kour to RC Kak, requesting him to assist Nehru administration at the Centre. In 1958, after his release from Jail, Sheikh Abdullah desired to talk to Kak.. The former Prime Minister bluntly told the messenger, "that time is gone".

## Scott's Mischief:

The role of Brigadier Scott, the chief of staff of Maharaja's Army was quite sinister. Britishers had permitted Maharaja Hari Singh to keep troop strength below ten thousand. This included three thousand non-combatants. The state had a long border to defend. During the turbulent days of 1947 the small army was hardly sufficient to tackle the situation. Brig Scott further complicated the problem. On the eve of the tribal raid he, without seeking Maharaja's consent, he dispersed the troops in such a way that they could not put up effective resistance anywhere. Maharaja strongly protested against Scott's arbitrary decision. The latter said, this has been done for 'border ki hifazat ke liye' (for protection of border).

Maharaja Hari Singh was a leader who always led from the front. When raiders attacked Kashmir, he had desired to lead the state army himself. He was restrained. He did not leave Kashmir on his own. There was every apprehension that raiders would like to capture him and coerce him to sign the instrument of accession. GOI had this consideration in mind when they asked him to visit Jammu wide no loss of time. In 1947 it was at

(Contd. on Page 20)

## Hard Times: A Helping Hand and a Beacon of Light

# A TRIBUTE TO SHRI J N KAUL



By Vijay Kumar Kaul

**W**HEN 'Papa Ji' - PadmaShri Shri J N Kaul passed away on December 16, 2008, after a relatively brief illness, social and community activists from all over the world joined his family and friends in mourning his loss and remembering his contributions. How does one add to the chorus of people and organizations who have already expressed the profound loss of this great social activist and the tallest of tall sons of the Kashmiri community? When asked to write this tribute by Panun Kashmir, I felt honoured to document my memories of this great Icon who was perhaps the tallest if we look back two centuries in History and who will be remembered for centuries for the indelible marks that he has left in the History of time.

The creation of SOS Children's Villages of India as the largest Children's NGO in India is widely known. In the early 80's, the SOS office was situated in Nehru Place. This is where I had my life's first glimpse of Shri J N Kaul, most smartly dressed, carrying a brief case, and catching the lift to his office sharp at 9 A.M, every morning. Nehru place in New Delhi had so many corporate offices those days, but the likes and looks of Kaul Sahib made him look different as the best dressed and the most 'impressive' business executive one could find in this bustling business hub. I knew nothing more of Kaul Sahib those days except for the fact that he was heading a Children's organisation. However, at the very first sight he looked a distinct personality that easily commanded great respect.

Then came the early 90's that brought to the Community

winters of discontent and a period of 'great depression'. The displacement and Diaspora brought to the fore many well meaning community members who felt deeply disturbed and shaken up with the sufferings of their own community and life of destitution and misery that settlement in tenements of Jammu had brought along. One of these 'sensitive' minds was Shri J N Kaul. When approached by Kashmiri Sewak Samaj,

Faridabad in 1992 to head as its President, he felt honoured to accept it. Kaul Sahib, as one of his first major acts of memorable contributions, joined hands with All India Kashmiri Samaj and placed at their disposal the resources of SOS Children's villages of India for setting up a Centre of Computer learning for the children of Jammu camps. While giving relief to the needy was the norm in those troubled times, Kaul Sahib showed his vision and leadership by practicing in the belief "Do not give them fish but teach them how to catch fish"! This program ran for many years successfully and succeeded in making bread winners for many hundreds of families. When Kaul Sahib donned the mantle of leading AIKS also, the program got a great fillip. The cynics always used to sow doubts about the usefulness of this program and suggested doing this at Jammu, closer to the camps. However, Kaul Sahib persisted and continued getting a few dozen boys and girls recruited every summer, and lodged them in Hostels with modern amenities at Faridabad.

The induced hygiene factor of attending the School in the beautiful environs of SOS campus always had a metamorphosis effect on the camp children's personality. During the early years of 90's, many young men and women also were given employment in various SOS schools and thus many a families were saved from economic hardships in those years of despair. Kaul Sahib also set up Hostels for working girls in Noida, who were helped to get jobs in industries in this area.

Perhaps, this combined activity of rehabilitation launched by the great visionary was the most commendable non-governmental effort at that point of time. Every Sunday, Kaul Sahib used to visit these Hostels in Noida and verify the safety, security and well being of the Community daughters living there.

With the initial pain of displacement subsiding a bit, Kaul Sahib started formulating a



Late Shri J N Kaul

blue print for Institution building in the mid 90's. This is where he left an indelible mark in the history of Kashmiri Pandits. "Mochi Fouli Saet Athrot" concept of saving a bit with the aim of giving was very dear to Kaul Sahib's heart. For the tenure of his 15 years of service to his community, he always talked and reminded of saving for our less fortunate brothers and sisters. In this he used to lead by example. Every month, 'Mimmi' Smt. Indira Kaul, wife of Kaul Sahib would deposit her family contribution with the treasurer in KSS. As General Secretary of KSS, I am witness to scores of men and women who used to call on him from all over to seek succour and help. Some of them used to be terminally sick. Kaul Sahib used to treat them with courtesy and humility. Help was not given with the normally practiced trait of "good riddance". He would delve deep and enquire how the family of the needy person could

be helped to augment resources for long term survival. Alas, Kaul Sahib's continued exhortation to the community to develop a permanent global corpus for help to the needy has remained yet an unfulfilled dream. Seeing the lack of needed focus within the Community on this pressing humanitarian need, Kaul Sahib towards his last days even was toying with the idea of starting a family trust called 'Athrot'. The idea didn't travel far as Kaul Sahib fell sick soon after.

In the mid-90's, Kaul Sahib unveiled his grand vision of Institution building and gave birth to the idea of building Sharika Bhawan and Hari Parbat in the district of Faridabad. Sceptics were full of doubt and pooh poohed both the projects. Sharika Bhawan was allotted a plot of land by Govt. of Haryana for a sum of Rs. 3 Lakhs close to the famed Rose Garden of Sector 17. The Organisation had no money to buy the plot of land. Kaul Sahib made the entire KSS executive to give personal bonds for raising this sum. The same was submitted to Haryana Urban Development Authority, who were quick to allot the land in a prestigious place in a central location. When Kaul Sahib unveiled his plans and submitted the Architects plans of building a multi-purpose Community centre at a cost of Rs. 1 core, it was met with doubts and cynicism. The advice from all quarters was to build something 'affordable, cheap and low cost-Shrogh Shrogh ta Panahdhar"! Unmindful, Kaul Sahib continued with his thoughts. I recall, as the General Secretary of Kashmiri Sewak Samaj, he asked me to send out the first appeal to the Community, far and wide. He took great pains to guide me in a making a brochure to help sell the idea of necessity of having Sharika Bhawan. The initial responses that we received, though meagre in contributions, gave us some hope. In close confidence, Kaul Sahib once told me that he believed Rs. 1 Crore was not too

big a sum for the community. However, if the community could not afford it, he could get it done single handed. Despite all odds, he announced the foundation laying ceremony of Sharika Bhawan. It was attended by 70 people from NCR. Kaul Sahib gave a contribution of Rs. 5 Lakhs that he had been given by SOS to fulfil his cherished desire of building a Hostel for girls within Sharika Bhawan. This very handsome donation by Kaul Sahib helped start the work and there after, some philanthropic minds contributed many times this amount and helped build Sharika Bhawan in a record time. The Executive members of KSS were so excited with this project that they all individually contributed significantly to set personal example to the masses. Sharika Bhawan today is mark of Kashmiri Pandit identity in entire Haryana.

Simultaneous to building Sharika Bhawan, Kaul Sahib embarked upon building Hari Parbat in the Aravali hills at village Anangpur in Faridabad. The idea to build Hari Parbat was spurred by 'Mimmi', Shrimati Indira Kaul. She has been an Ardhangani in truest sense of the word for Kaul Sahib. She was always by his side for celebrating or observing any event happy or not so happy. The story is like this. Kaul Sahib and Indira Ji were sitting in the company of Anangpur village elders in the SOS Medical Centre in Anangpur. Indira Ji pointed towards the hillock in front of her and told the gathering that a similar hill in Kashmir was the abode of Ma Sharika, the presiding deity of Kashmiris. So moved were the village elders with the story and the fact that this temple was out of easy reach for the faithful due to displacement that they passed a resolution in the village Panchayat placing the hill at Kaul Sahib's disposal. They wanted him to replicate the Hari Parbat in Anangpur and bring the sleepy village to life. The villagers felt that such a temple in their midst would help build character in their young ones and wean away them from any vices of gambling and drinking.

(Contd. on Page 18)

## Hard Times: A Helping Hand and a Beacon of Light

(From Page 17)

Kaul Sahib, in order to unveil his plans of building Hari Parbat in Anangpur, announced celebration of Navreh in Anangpur Village and on this day a large procession of village folks and Kashmiris went up the hill wading through through thorny hedges. They

Herself to alleviate the sufferings of the masses at the hands of demon "Tchand", it was Shri Kaul who replicated this effort at a time of great suffering and depression that visited us in the twentieth century. Do we say he was a reincarnation of a kind in modern times?

While Sharika Bhawan in

and provide easy access to South Delhi. Prior to one of the Navreh celebrations, he travelled on this Kutcha Road in a Sumo and was full of plans to develop the track into a motorable Road. Perhaps, his health did not permit him to embark on this mission. Every year for the last one decade, Anangpur village sees great festivity when thousands of Kashmiris celebrate Navreh and renew their social bonds. Kaul Sahib wished that KSS and all other NCR organizations would continue to organize this event for all times to come, the way he had led it year after year.

Simultaneous to building the above two centres, Kaul Sahib announced launch of 3 schemes for building housing societies that were named Sabzar, Gayatri and Lalleshwari Vatika. I vividly recall when Haryana Govt. cancelled the Scheme initially; all the members were unanimous in demanding their earnest money back. After seeing this short sighted approach, Kaul Sahib got up to address the gathering and said the opposite of what the majority wanted. He said "consensus is that no one will withdraw money and we will let the housing societies continue". These very Societies helped the members get 4 acres of land allotted a couple of years later. Such was Kaul Sahib's vision and impact on the ordinary minds. They would never disobey him or dare to disagree with him in public. These housing projects took nearly a decade to complete but with all the troubles that Kaul Sahib and his dedicated team of co-workers whom he entrusted with this task had to face, the completion of these Housing Societies is testimony to his vision of grandeur in Architecture, concept of space utilization, amenities and provisions towards ensuring a better quality of life for the Society residents. Kaul Sahib started living in one of the Societies for a few months. He always longed that the residents showed greater depth of

understanding, brotherhood and helped create a 'Happy place' for their own sake. This was the purpose of his mission in investing so much of his time and effort in initiating this project. He would often say that his community collectively had become richer by a few hundred crores with this possession, celebrate!

Kaul Sahib also was called on to take the responsibility of leading Kashmir Education, Cultural and Science Society in Pamposh Enclave. In spite of his not so good a health he accepted it and it is during his time that construction of a cultural centre was started on land that had been allotted to Pamposh Colony residents many decades ago. He brought the Centre to life by organizing events and seminars, periodically.

Kaul Sahib was appreciative for the struggle of Panun Kashmir and was proud of its unmatched activism. He had always hoped for greater thrust to the cause of the movement within the Community.

The achievements of respected Kaul Sahib are numerous to be recounted here in full. In days to come, all of us who have worked with this legendary figure need to document experiences individually lest we lose out on his sagacity and utmost wisdom.

It is hard to write an ending to this tribute to Kaul Sahib. Many years after his death, we will still mourn him, we still will wish we could hear his voice, read his words, and wonder

where he will take us next, and we will miss his welcome smile. No doubt, we will discover more visions and more struggles. Like Kaul Sahib, may we see each vision and each struggle as a way to pursue towards excellence for our young ones and unite us to help each other.

Kaul Sahib was a living embodiment of excellence in all walks of life. In every talk and speech he reiterated that the only way for survival was building virtues of excellence in our young ones. He was a stickler for punctuality. In the Sunday prayer that is held at Sharika Bhawan, he was always 5 minutes early. He liked to call social meetings as "Business meetings" and would conduct them with grace and professionalism that is of rare kind in many Social bodies. Serious business was always interspersed with light humour by him. He was intolerant to side talk and gossip among participants, and would mildly admonish saying "if you have anything interesting, tell this to your President!" Even when he was not in good health in last few months, meetings with his co-workers would bring him cheer and restore him to a jolly mood. He emerged stronger, vibrant and cheerful whenever he got to discuss community issues and projects. There are many ways to honour Pandit J N Kaul Sahib's work and to continue the commitment that he demonstrated while serving the community. May Ma Sharika show us the way!

*\*(The author is Ex-Gen Secy Kashmiri Sewak Samaj, Faridabad)*

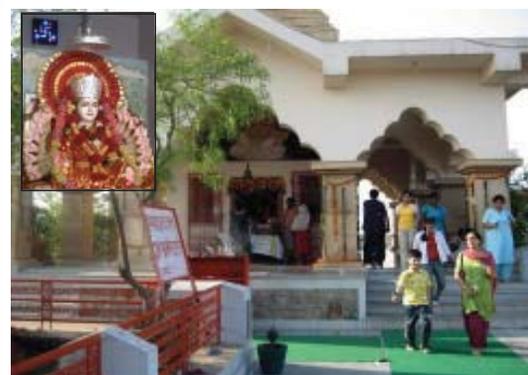


KP's from NCR region visit Hari Parbat at village Anangpur, Faridabad on Navreh festival.

respectfully listened to Kaul Sahib's grand plans of building Hari Parbat in the rocky and inhospitable terrains of Aravali Hills. However, some minds were full of doubt and disbelief. During this time, some Articles appeared in community magazines charging Kaul Sahib with being a heretic and felt he was indulging in blasphemy. They did not like Hari Parbat of Kashmir to be replicated. Kaul Sahib was clear in his mind. Kashmir was not so easy to reach for the vast majority given the frenzy of intolerance there and he saw Hari Parbat in Anangpur as solace to the vast majority of Kashmiris who had taken refuge in the NCR region of Delhi. He saw this Temple a link to the Original Hari Parbat that Ma Sharika had built when she took the form of a Myna – 'Hari' and created a hillock to destroy a demon called "Tchand" who had taken shelter in a remnant of Satisar lake in the vicinity of present Hari Parbat. The demon "Tchand" was so powerful physically that he started shaking the hillock to free himself out of the clutches of Ma Sharika. To destroy the demon, Ma Sharika Herself sat over the hilltop and thus made this place as Her permanent abode. While the Hari Parbat in Kashmir was built by Ma Sharika

sector 17, Faridabad was being built by resources raised from the community, the pace of construction was little slower here than that of Hari Parbat. Sharika Bhawan needed wider consensus at each step of construction while at Hari Parbat Kaul Sahib acted like a one man army, moving the 'mountains in a hurry'. Once the temple was complete, he created a cultural gallery dedicated to Memory of Ma Lalleshwari with her popular sayings carved on black marble plaques.

He even had identified land for building the "Pokhairy Bal" in the vicinity of the Hill. Indrajai was the force behind building Swami Vidhyadhar Satsang Bhawan at the footsteps of the Temple. Once when I enquired with Kaul Sahib, how he envisaged that Hari Parbat could run and be managed in future, he said that it was time that the Community started actively taking interest in its upkeep, organising functions periodically to help in keeping it as place of cultural happening and vibrance. Kaul Sahib had many more plans for developing the place further. He had planned to develop an existing kutcha road that would connect the place from the Suraj Kund-Badhkhal Road side. This road would help bypass the village

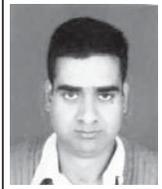


Sharika Bhawan Faridabad (inset) Mata Sharika.

## Chronology Of Events Dec 1, 2008- Dec 31, 2008

- Dec 1: Security forces busted a hideout in Kandi, Rajouri and recovered a cache of arms and ammunition.
- Dec 2: Arms and ammunition was recovered in Chingus, Rajouri. A campaigner of GR Kar, Bashir Ahmed Kababi was killed in New Hamdan locality in Sopore. A jawan committed suicide in Badamibagh Cantonment.
- Dec 3: A grenade was recovered from Town Hall, Doda. A hideout was busted and arms and ammunition recovered in Ranthal forests in Dharmasal, Rajouri. AK Antony said that PoK is being used for training and recruiting terrorists.
- Dec 4: A JeM terrorist was among three arrested in Kashmir Valley. A police search party was attacked in Ganderbal. 10 KG RDX was recovered from Marmat, Doda. 58 civilians and 11 trucks crossed LoC at Kaman Post.
- Dec 5: A Pakistani was arrested in RS Pura sector. A grenade was lobbed in NC rally in Tangmarg. Civilian movement was yet again foiled on Friday.
- Dec 6: Two Harakat Commanders were killed in Lolab. A hand grenade was lobbed towards the residence of an independent candidate at Wathoor. An LeT terrorist was killed and his Pakistani associate injured in an encounter in Gandoh, Doda. EU said that Pakistan was hosting terrorist groups.
- Dec 7: 50% polling was recorded in Budgam and Baramulla districts.
- Dec 8: PSO of an Independent candidate was killed in Doda. No PoK traveller was on weekly bus service as the Mumbai attack shadows Indo-Pak relations.
- Dec 9: Masood Azhar was put under house arrest in Pakistan.
- Dec 10: A jawan was injured in an encounter at Chatru Kishtwar. Three separatist leaders GM Hubi, Abdul Maman Bukhari and Sheikh Afzal were released. Pakistan detained LeT Comdr Lakhvi and Sarar but refused to handover former ISI Chief Hamid Gul to the US.
- Dec 11: UN Security Council imposes sanctions against terrorist outfit Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) and Pak sealed JuD offices. BJP asked government to stop running to US for tackling terror.
- Dec 12: Acting against JuD, Pak authorities arrested 31 JuD men and sealed 65 offices. US tells Pak to act forcefully against terrorism.
- Dec 13: A woman was killed and two civilians injured in a terrorist attack in Khilani while two HM terrorists including a woman were arrested in Assar, Doda. One person was killed and 19 injured in poll related violence as Shopian-Poonch districts recorded 47pc turnout. Amidst crackdown on terrorists, UJC was dissolved as terrorist leaders disappear in PoK and Pakistan.
- Dec 14: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asked Pakistan not to allow its territory to be used by terrorists while British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that Pak based LeT was behind Mumbai attack.
- Dec 15: Separatist leader Shabir Shah was arrested in connection with Aug 11 firing that killed Sheikh Aziz. BJP National President Rajnath Singh described POTA as deterrent to militancy and asked for ban on all secessionist outfits. 12 PoK citizens reached Poonch via Chakan-a-Bagh.
- Dec 16: While Foreign Minister Pranab Mukerjee asked Pakistan to fulfil her commitment to curb terrorism, Defence Minister AK Antony said there was no plan to attack Pakistan. Rajnath Singh said that Pak nuke weapons are not safe. Central government tabled two anti-terror bills.
- Dec 17: Two terrorists including Rayees Kachroo who had escaped from a Pulwama Court were killed in an encounter in Shopian. 10 Valley constituencies recorded 62 percent polling.
- Dec 18: Two terrorists including Pakistani Saifullah Qari were killed in two different encounter in Doda district; a jawan also lost his life in one of the encounters. Two LeT terrorists were arrested in Baramulla while a tragedy was averted by defusing an IED in Bandipore. Asiya Indrabi was booked under PSA. A Pak boy Pholaj, living in India for last three years at different places, was arrested in Akhnoor sector.
- Dec 19: Two more LeT terrorists were killed in Doda, an SPO was injured in today's operation. Reports suggest that Jamat favoured PDP in Assembly elections. Nawaz Sharif confirmed that Ajmal Kasab, the terrorist arrested in Mumbai, hailed from Pakistan.
- Dec 20: One more terrorist was held in Kerala for links in Kashmir. Demanding vote for BJP for ending discrimination with Jammu, LK Advani termed Amarnath agitation as reflection of anger against injustice.
- Dec 21: Police claimed to have foiled Mumbai like terror attack as it arrested three Pakistani terrorists including HUUJI chief Sohail Ahmed from Samrat Hotel Jammu. Two police personnel were injured and lost a weapon as miscreants attacked an independent candidate in Rajouri. Kadal, Srinagar. Congress President Sonia Gandhi said that India is capable of living befitting reply to promoters of terrorism, Pranab asked Zardari to dismantle terror infrastructure.
- Dec 22: Terrorists gunned down two CRPF jawans in Sopore. 143 civilians crossed LoC via Chakan-da-Bagh, Pranab Mukerjee said that terror infrastructure in Pakistan is threat to world peace.
- Dec 23: Another group of four Pakistani terrorists reportedly entered Jammu using air and train route. Describing situation worrisome, Prime Minister said that nobody wanted war.
- Dec 24: Two dreaded terrorists were arrested in Udhampur. Srinagar district recorded twenty percent polling which is remarkably much higher than the previous elections held since eruption of militancy in the state.
- Dec 25: DG Police Kuldeep Khoda claimed that the number of militants has dropped to below 1000. 56 cross sides in Karvane-Aman. Amnesty International said that Pak failed to prevent attacks from its soil.
- Dec 26: A surrendered terrorists was gunned down by terrorists in Marwah, Kishtwar. Udhampur police recovered arms and ammunition on disclosure of two recently arrested HM terrorist. A Pak intruder was killed on IB in Samba sector. After Mirwaiz, Sajjad Lone admits election turnout as a setback. Government announced post Amarnath Agitation economic package. Service Chiefs called on PM to brief him about defence preparedness.
- Dec 27: Three HM terrorists who had recently entered J&K from Pakistan surrendered before Awantipore Police. One another Pak intruder was shot dead in Arnia sector. Large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered in Kalakote, Rajouri. Two HUUJI harbourers were nabbed in Chatroo, Kishtwar. Union Home Minister said that India will weed out terror from Pak if global efforts failed.
- Dec 28: NC emerged single largest party in elections as it won 28 seats followed by 21 by PDP, 17 by Congress, 11 by BJP, three by NPP and one each by CPM, JNDP-N and PDF and four independents.
- Dec 29: Steep fall in PoK visitors as only three cross LoC via Chakkan-da-Bagh.
- Dec 30: Accusing Pakistan of creating war hysteria, India asked Pakistan to dismantle 30 terror camps and handover fugitives to India. Omar will be the next chief Minister J&K as NC and Congress stitched alliance in the state.
- Dec 31: LeT admits role in Mumbai blasts as India blasted Pakistan for being in denial mode. Omar asked separatists to honour people's verdict and said that war between India and Pakistan is not an option.

# Spiritual Religion Can Safeguard The Indian Nation



By Mahesh Kaul

INDIA is at the crossroads today. The reason being the onslaught on its spiritual and national core from internal and external threats. The grave threat which India has been facing right from the partition of the subcontinent is the terrorism meant to bleed the spiritual core of the nation (tribal invasion in 1947 sponsored by Pakistan). The 26/11 made it visible to the elite classes who had otherwise shut their eyes towards any incident that was meant to balkanize the Indian nation and hence civilization. The threat faced by India is not recent one. It was there but the media and the intellectual class never paid any heed towards it. Whether it was the en masse exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits from the valley of Kashmir in 1990 or the terrorist attacks on the landmark of the Indian democracy - the parliament. This denial mode has cost the nation in a big way. It has led to the mindset and the class of people within the the domain of the law of the land to dilute the Indian civilization and create the Indian state which seems to be in conflict with the Indian nation and hence, the Indian civilization.

Policy makers in haste and perhaps in a bid to create vote banks have diluted the sovereignty and integrity of India. Thus creating a political class which has created the political establishment, which sees every attempt to bail out the fifth columnists as their natural duty as it helps them to keep the flawed infrastructure of their entry into executive intact to subvert the

civilizational edifice of India. The greatest blow to the national character was given by the political class in 1947, who were negotiating the transfer of power in tandem with the partition of the subcontinent without realizing the magnitude of the displacement and bloodshed that accompanied the vivisection of the Indian subcontinent. It didn't stop there, the sore has been developing with

facilitating their acts overtly and covertly. And by doing this these elements want to paint the religion of the land in the black.

What these elements in the political establishment forget is that the religion grounded in the human values has been the soul of India. And no power however, strong has been able to hurt this core and hence the spirit. That is why despite continuous victimization of the

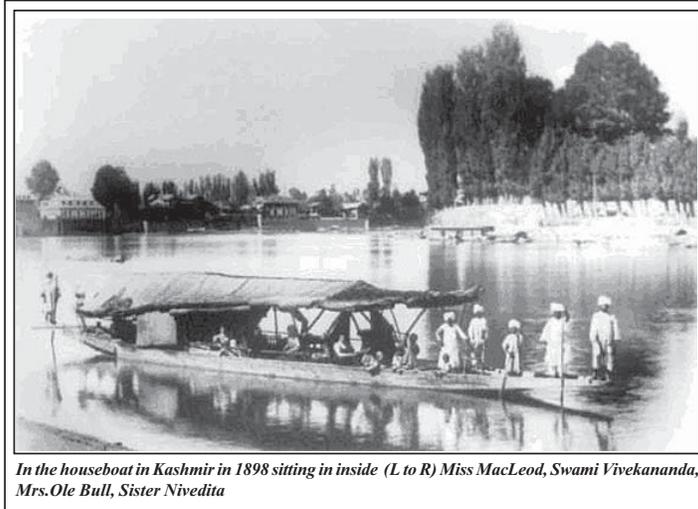
philosopher spoke thus, on Swami Vivekananda, "Apart from the natural attachment which every man has to his country, literature, its traditions, its customs and usages, patriotism has an additional stimulus in the acknowledged excellence of a national civilization. If Britons love England with all her faults, why should we fail to love India whose faults were whittled down to an irreducible

emphasizing the point he says, "According to Sidgwick, physical expansion proceeds from a desire for a spiritual expansion and history also supports the assertion. But why should not India then be the first power in the world? Who else has the undisputed right to extend spiritual sway over the world? This was Swami Vivekananda's plan of campaign. India can once more be made conscious of the greatness by an overmastering sense of the greatness of her spirituality. This sense of greatness is the main feeder of all patriotism. This only can put an end to all self-depreciation and generate a burning desire to recover the lost ground."

The challenges before India are manifold keeping in view the global scenario. And greatest challenge is the threat to its civilization. India has to rise first to pull out itself from the state of self deception and look into its glorious past and then lead the world community, which is in a crisis keeping in view the economic meltdown and the political fall out associated with it. Only India can insulate the mankind with its religion of spiritual humanism that is the bed rock of the Indian civilization. Only then can we come out the illusion of self deception. In which we have been entangled by the political class who don't pay heed towards the spiritual wisdom of Indian heritage. Consequently, the scenario is there for everyone to see. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, more there is an attempt to hide the humanistic Indian religion "more forcefully it reappears."

Policy makers, politicians and intellectual class need to pay heed to these words of advise. Swami Vivekananda says, "In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the Hindu race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is no power on earth to destroy them?"

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In the houseboat in Kashmir in 1898 sitting in inside (L to R) Miss MacLeod, Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Ole Bull, Sister Nivedita

every passing year and now it seems that it has graduated to such an extent that the support to balkanization of already divided India is finding takers in the political class who want to convert it into electoral gain. But the question is at what cost? The answer is simple at the cost of the Indian civilization. The continuous invasion of the foreign invaders in the past appear small as the acts of internal elements seem to be more dangerous as they provide the necessary oxygen to these external elements by

people of the land and destruction of their religious places India emerged as the jewel of the human civilization. Instead of getting vanished from the world map it not only reappeared but also provided the shelter to the persecuted people of various religions.

Swami Vivekananda, the tiger among the nationalists of the land stressed the need to look inward to keep the soul of the nation intact. In June 19, 1907 - Sri Aurobindo another proud son of the soil, revolutionary visionary and

minimum till foreign conquests threw the whole society out of gear? But instead of being dominated by the natural ambition of carrying the banner of such a civilization all over the world, we are unable to maintain its integrity in its native home. This is betraying a trust this is unworthiness of the worst type. We have not been able to add anything to this precious bequest; on the contrary we have been keeping ourselves and generations yet unborn from full enjoyment of their lawful heritage?..? Further

## Witness to an Era-A Memoir

(From Page 16)

his initiative that arms were distributed to partisan groups, who wanted to take on the infiltrators. The role played by Ichama front in saving the Srinagar airport is yet to be acknowledged by scholars. During the raid days National Conference also played a very good role in the city. Ultimately, it helped Sheikh Abdullah.

The role of Hari Singh, RC Kak and Sheikh Abdullah in 1947 has remained a matter of intense debate. A correct picture will emerge only when the classified papers of that period would be thrown open to scholars. It is said Jinnah, who lived in Karachi, had snubbed Sadiq by refusing to meet him. Jinnah told the

writer "to tell emissary of Sheikh Abdullah that the Kashmir leader was master in emotionally exploiting his people" and added that Kashmir was a blank cheque in his pocket.

Emergency administration: Sheikh Abdullah reinstated Pt. Sham Lal Dhar and appointed him as Home Secretary. Justice Shahmiri too was rehabilitated. Prem Nath Bakaya, Triloki Nath and RK Sher were on his personal staff. 1953 was inevitable to happen, because Sheikh Abdullah was pursuing such policies, which were bound to take Kashmir out of India. During those days Indian intelligence was quite effective. GOI sent a strong DO asking Sheikh to explain the dangerous policies he was pursuing.

Bakshi-A clever politician: Bakshi was all out to help his community. There were no Muslim candidates available. The administration had to rely on Pandits. Among Pan-

### CONTINUATION

dit, he was only helpful to the people of his locality (Khankah-Sokhata/Nawakadal). He recruited around a hundred people from among his neighbours. That was the period when he had plenty to offer. The beneficiaries played main role in crafting up his image as a great secular leader.

Bakshi pursued patently discriminatory policies against Pandit students in selection of trainings. It was Bakshi who was architect of 70:30 policy-30% was reserved for non-Muslims, which included

Jammuites also. Hardly 2-4 seats would go to Pandit boys. During Bakshi era Pandit boys sought admission on their own in colleges outside the state. Bakshi created a new Muslim middle class and neo-rich mercantile group to bolster his political authority.

It was Bakshi, who thrust Deputy AG, Gh. Ahmed Shonthoo as Chief Secretary. Shonthoo remained at the helm for ten years and had little ability. His nothings never went beyond 'yes' and 'no'. Both Bakshi and Shonthoo admired sycophancy. A new practice was started, where a Government servant was required to pay obeisance at the gate of Ama Shonthoo if he wanted an undisturbed service career. This writer hated such a practice and suffered terribly. Mr. Abdul Aziz Fazili and SAS Qadri, the competent and non-parochial bureaucrats undid

some of the wrongs committed by the Chief Secretary. I retired on 31/1/1977 as Superintendent, when many of my colleagues reached the coveted posts of Secretary/Commissioner.

Sadiq-a man of Integrity: Sadiq was a man of strong integrity. He governed efficiently, without any bias. He always addressed his subordinate staff with great respect (Toih, not Chah). Sadiq always went through the files himself. In intricate cases it was he who took the final decision. Sadiq never compromised when it came to defending principles. Many of the wrong decisions associated with him were virtually imposed on him by the vested interests. Sheikh Abdullah injected communalism and vindictiveness in bureaucracy and governance. We are reaping the fruits today.\*