
THE KASHMIRI PANDIT INTERNATIONAL

Newsletter of Kashmiri Overseas Association, Inc.

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PANGS OF SEPARATION

O Lord Shiva, could I see my Kashmir once! Grant me this one time wish to gaze at Shankarachar Parbat and Tulamul, Chashma Shahi and Kokarnag; Dachihigam and Harvan, Achhabal and Verinag, lolab and saffron blossom. It would comfort my aching soul. Often I crave the taste of Vosta hak, hak from Khanayar, Bumb, Obaj, Tsok tsin, Tsoka Ludur, Leesa, Meethi, Nadur from Dal lake, Kyana Babi, Vai Lador, Juicy pears and trelas, and Sabz badaam. I guess my wishes will come true only in my dreams! I suppose it is too much to ask! Or is it! (Translated by editor from Hindi version)

Pushkar Bhan, Patna

KOA 96-97 CALENDAR

THE NEW CALENDAR WITH 12 PICTURES AND LOTS OF VALUABLE INFORMATION IS READY FOR MAILING TO PAID MEMBERS OF KOA. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT AS YET BECOME MEMBERS, PLEASE MAIL YOUR MEMBERSHIP CHECK (\$30/FAMILY, \$15/SINGLE) TO LALIT WANCHOO, 4302 ROCKPORT LANE, BOWIE, MD 20720.

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

Dear Friends,

Namaskar. Happy Navreh. Hope you all had a great Shivratri. Besides attending the Shivratri function of the Washington area, I also had the privilege this year of attending Shivratri in New Jersey area. Several other chapters celebrated the occasion and I am sure you will read about some of the highlights in this issue of the newsletter.

On 6th January I went to India for three weeks. My first stop after landing in Delhi was Jammu, where I spent three full days meeting with various associations, visiting refugee camps in Jammu and Udhampur and making a first hand assessment of various projects undertaken by KOA. Here is a brief report:

1. Shriya Bhatt Medical Mission (SBMM) run by Panun Kashmir Foundation is temporarily housed at New Plots. The mission is making very good use of the medical van purchased by KOA. Three physicians and support staff visit various camps regularly and see large number of patients. They also give free medicines. In addition, patients are seen at New Plots facility every day. There they have a small lab to conduct some of the basic tests. One day we went to Udhampur and saw 104 patients. One Mr. Saraf has donated a plot of land in Jammu to the mission for the construction of a hospital. We hope to conduct a drive to raise funds for this hospital. People who donate \$500 or more will have their names inscribed on a plaque. This will be the first KP-charity hospital. Any one interested, please contact me for more details.

2. The Sharda Peeth Rishi Model School at Batal Balian camp in Udhampur, funded by KOA from specific donations from J.B. And Veena Kaul of Michigan, is almost ready. It is an impressive project for which the land was given by the local government. Currently the children are studying in tents. After school hours the facility will be used for vocational training.

3. We are starting a Children's Nutrition Program in Mishriwala camp, Jammu. Under the program 120 children between the ages of 1-5 will be given Rs.200/child/month. Their health will be monitored by SBMM team. Immunizations and celebration of an annual children's day will be part of the program.

4. About 55 students who had obtained admission in technical schools and have limited or no resources to bear the expenses have been given educational scholarships. The students are matched with the donors to this project, and in most cases the donors have already heard from these students. The project was initiated by Tej Kaul and is administered by Mr. Khosa, President of KP Sabha, Jammu.

5. Vocational training is being provided for destitute women at the Nagrota camp in Jammu. Sewing and knitting classes are conducted and after proper training the women are helped in finding suitable jobs so they can sustain themselves.

6. Arrangements were made to have the new Jantri (by Jotshi Prem Nath) mailed directly to all paid members of KOA. I understand that most of the people have already received it. Jotshiji has also prepared a book (Karamkand) and two excellent cassettes (Shivratri and birth day pooja). If there is enough interest among the members, we can obtain these in bulk for you.

In Jammu I emphasized the need for various associations to work together for the betterment of our community. For example, Panun Kashmir can look after political aspects and the medical mission, KP Sabha will concentrate on educational and religious problems whereas, Samiti will attend to social problems. While I was doing this we were all surprised by the visit of one of our US members to start a parallel educational scholarship program. We need to improve our communication, set aside personal differences and work for a united community.

In Delhi, I participated in a silent march organized by Panun Kashmir. 10,000 flyers were distributed, and the general public showed great interest in the plight of our community. I also met with the special secretary and two joint secretaries in charge of Kashmir affairs and requested them to set up an administrative branch of Kashmir University in Jammu to cater to the needs of migrant students. Back in the U.S., people are making

arrangements for the 4th July East Coast camp. It is my understanding that several other areas are planning similar camps this year. You have to give it a try. I hope all the paid members received the new directory. I apologize for any mistakes, which I assure were not deliberate. We will soon issue an update with address corrections, so if you have a correction please send it to Lalit Wanchoo. The first issue of Miltsar, after a long break, was sent to you recently. Kanwal Kher has done a very good job. Please send him material for the next issue to be published in August. We have not forgotten cultural events. Omji Dhar of New Jersey is trying to bring Vijay Malla to USA. KOA will make arrangements for him to visit several places and give concerts. This year we will again print the calendar. Each of the 12 pages is being sponsored by an individual or a group for \$75. The sponsoring person has a photograph of a Kashmir temple or of a sage with short message printed on a page facing the calendar page. We did not get any response for the suggestion of having a KP Samelan; a two day event focusing on our culture and religion. For the first time in history of KOA our paid membership has exceeded 350 (about 58%). However, our goal for this year is 75%, so send in your membership and become an integral part of the community.

Six of the Board Members completed their terms and a seventh one resigned because he had to relocate in another area. Six members (including two previous ones) were elected uncontested. Election was held only in zone 3. The Board Members and Chapter Presidents need your support and cooperation to make KOA an effective organization. I appreciate the help given to me by the previous Board Members in fulfilling my responsibilities. In addition I would like to acknowledge the outstanding help from Lalit Wanchoo and Shana Mattoo, Secretary and Treasurer of KOA, and scores of other members who have devoted their time and resources for the community. I thank them all. With best wishes.

Ashok Raina

SHIVRATRI CELEBRATION-WASHINGTON CHAPTER:

Shivratri was celebrated by the Washington Chapter of KOA on March 9, 1996, at a church in Beltsville. Approximately 125 people attended to enjoy an evening packed with various activities. Highlights included a children's program, puja, dinner and live music. Seventeen children participated in a cultural show well organized by Rita and Raj Pawha. Sonal Bakaya as MC did a superb job that included a Hayrath quiz. All the kids received personalized trophies. As per tradition, Inder Bhat distributed Hayrath Kharach and welcomed area's three newborns; Anish Kanesa-Thasan, Sameer Kak and Shiv Ambardar. Everyone participated in the puja lead by Kamni

Bhat. Ashok Raina and Lalit Wanchoo spoke about the KOA programs, and introduced two new families to the area. Jagar Nath Dhar narrated few couplets. Anila Bhan and Malini Bazaz were elected joint Chapter Presidents for the next year. A sumptuous dinner of Kashmiri dishes prepared by everyone was followed by live music and dancing. A team effort by the organizers made this yet another memorable event for the Washington area. As this past year's Chapter President, I would like to say how much I enjoyed working with the community, and gaining respect for the veterans who have, and will continue to provide the backbone for such events to continue.

Deepti Qasba

SHIVRATRI CELEBRATION -SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Southern California members celebrated Maha Shivaratri with great pomp and show on February 17, 1996 at UCLA Community Center. The celebration started with Shiva puja, bhajans, abhishakam and Mritunjay jap performed by our priest Sri Naam Dev Ji. Over eighty people took part in the puja and benefited from the Lords prayers. This was followed by a cultural program coordinated by Priti and Rajiv Khashoo. They presented the children and youngsters of the community in Bharat Natyam, bhajans and several presentations befitting the occasion. The elders presented a chorus of "Bel tai Madal ven Gulab Pamposh Dastai - Pooza lagas Param Shivas Shiv Naathas tai", and the hall was resounding with the melody.

Our next director Mr. Shiban Tiku was introduced to the group to carry the association for the next two year term. As usual the celebration culminated in a carefully planned Kashmiri menu organized by Renu Bhat-Hansen and Asha Saraf.

Maharaj Wanchoo

POLITICS 101

What was behind home Minister Chavan's outburst against the U.S. recently? Was he genuinely concerned about the American involvement in Kashmir or was it yet another "off the cuff" remark the minister is famous for? Or was it simply the case of a typical Indian minister (whose children typically migrate to the U.S. and who themselves frequently visit here for medical treatment and R & R) exploiting the historical anti-U.S. bias in Indian media and public for political ends? The answer should not surprise anyone familiar with Indian politics. Tip O'Neill used to say, "all politics is local". The Indian version of the saying is "all politics is personal". Read on.

To understand Chavan's outburst, you have to go back to Chavan-Pilot Rivalry. In the battle of egos, Chavan has taken the lead, but nothing has been forgotten. Friends of Pilot are enemies of Chavan and vice-versa. And because Pilot has been supporting Farooq Abdullah, Chavan is dead set against him. Normally, that would be satisfactory, but Chavan has his own favorite - Shabir Shah. People say that he and Shah worked out a

deal prior to latter's release from jail (that could explain how this person switched overnight from Nizam-e- Mustafa philosophy to "secular" philosophy), but common wisdom is that Chavan is convinced that nobody hates Abdullah as much as Shah and of course anyone who hates Pilot's friends is a natural friend of Chavan.

Things seemed to be as expected in the Indian political landscape until Ms. Robin Raphel's recent visit to India. During that meeting she refused to meet with Hurriyat in general (Editor: please see the previous issue of KPI for explanation), and Shabir Shah in particular. On the other hand she invited Farooq Abdullah for a breakfast meeting in Delhi that lasted 90 minutes. A dejected Shah took the flight back to Srinagar, and an even more dejected minister was upset at the turn of events. It took a casual remark by Abdullah, "The U.S. supports my Autonomy plan" to light the spark of anger in Minister's chest and the rest is history.

But do you know what else is part of that recent history? Minister Chavan managed to pull an upmanship on Abdullah by arranging Shah's presence at a function held by the U.S. Embassy in honor of visiting George Bush a couple of weeks later. At the Bush function, Shah attended among others by President S.D. Sharma, Weisner and Bush praised as "Nelson Mandela", etc, etc. So much for concern about American intrusion in Kashmir affairs.

But wait, there is more. Congressman Ackerman has just completed a trip to J&K courtesy of the GOI. In fact he was stranded in Srinagar for three days because of bad weather. That gave him a chance to have extended meetings with Hurriyat, etc. If the U.S. interest in Kashmir is a source of concern, then why is GOI allowing him to visit the state.

And why has not the Indian media pointed to this oddity? That is easy to explain-after all most Indian newspapers are living on government dole (aka advertisements, and most (best of all) pressman are only too happy to publish public government announcements and government version of events. Mr. Chavan does not want to publicize that his compulsions are purely personal and he was merely using his favorite "whipping boy" to settle personal scores. The real tragedy, is that he is just one among the dubious dozen politicians that are at helm in India where patriotism and nationalism has been replaced by greed and expediency.

Vijay Sazawal, VA

CONGRESSMAN'S LETTER TO THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR

Dear Mr. Shattuck,

First, thank you for your willingness to provide information to me during the recent congressional debate over the U.S. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. I sincerely

appreciate your availability for consultation during the difficult debate over U.S. policy in the Balkans.

This letter involves another human rights problem on another continent. I was touched by their story and shocked by the human rights abuses that have been visited upon a proud people who occupy a special place in the history of India and the subcontinent. I have continued to champion their cause at every opportunity. I believe the Pandits are truly the forgotten people of Kashmir.

Last spring when Assistant Secretary Robin Raphel testified before the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee of House International Relations I asked why the Pandits were not mentioned in the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. I was gratified that Ms. Raphel promised to revisit the issue for the next report, and extremely pleased when she recently informed the subcommittee that the Pandit plight would indeed be addressed in the report for 1995.

I urge your consideration of the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits-the killings, the rapes, the abductions, the brutalization and exile. As refugees in their own land, they are now relegated to squalid camps that lack basic necessities. Their predicament truly is dire and the problems they face are formidable; there is a growing sense of uneasy, even alarm, among the Pandits that they have been forgotten by the rest of the world. I am doing everything I can to make sure that is not the case, and I would greatly appreciate mention of the Pandits in the Country Reports. I would, of course, be willing to help in any way possible.

Sincerely, Sherrod Brown, Member of Congress

PANUN KASHMIR UPDATE

After deliberating on the issue of participation of Kashmiri Pandit Community in the proposed state assembly and parliamentary election in J & K state, the Kashmiri Pandit organizations in their meeting on March 3, 1996 at India International Centre, New Delhi, unanimously resolved:

1. That in view of the ground realities in the valley and some other parts of the state, time is not ripe and conditions are not conducive for the Kashmiri Pandit community to participate in the election process. The phenomenon of threat and scare under which they were forced to leave their homes and hearths still continues.
2. That Kashmiri Pandit Community is not opposed to any democratic process as such, but it will vehemently oppose manipulations by governments and vested interests of the state to play fraud on the constitution and draw mileage from human suffering. The entire world knows the persecution and the ethnic cleansing of the Kashmir Pandit community for which the election process is no solution, unless conditions are created ensuring their survival, security, dignity and honor in Jammu and Kashmir state. The [exercise] of right

of franchise is not an end by itself; proposed elections at this juncture seem to be a fraudulent means of making a show of democracy at the cost of survival of Kashmir Pandits. Elections of this nature will be destructive of democratic process which is likely to set a dangerous precedence for the country as a whole. The Kashmir Pandit Community condemns all separatist and secessionist elements and opposes any attempt of reversing any process of integration of the state with the Indian Union.

3. It was further resolved that unless the below mentioned conditions were not met, the participation in any election process will be meaningless and self defeating:

a) Taking into consideration the failure of the existing political structure and the international conspiracy against stability in Kashmir and the rest of India, the Government of India should take decisive and concrete steps to bring about change in the political and administrative structure of J & K State with a view of securing survival and development of Kashmiri Pandits and restoring them all rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

b) The Government of India should appoint a commission of inquiry headed by a Senior Judge of the Supreme Court to probe into the causes of armed insurgency and the resultant forced exodus of the Pandit Community from Kashmir in 1989-90 and thereafter and fix responsibility for it.

c) The Government of India and the State Government should ensure that denial of service rights and benefits, and injustices meted out to the Kashmiri Pandit [state] employees are remedied through a just and effective administrative mechanism. The rights of the agrarian sections of the Community to their holdings who have suffered enormous losses and are deprived of their livelihood be protected especially when reports of tampering with the revenue records are pouring in. The legitimate interest of business class of the Community whose enormous losses have remained unaddressed so far and who live in great misery need immediate redressal.

d) The government of India should formulate a "National Policy on Internal Displacement of Kashmiri Pandits" in the light of UNHRC recommendations. It is necessary to ensure that there is no "Refolement" of the Community by coercing them against their free will.

e) The Government of India should order a Special Census of the entire Kashmiri Hindu Community in order to ascertain their actual numbers and ensure their civil liberties and rights.

f) The determination of the electoral constituencies also needs to be properly reviewed. The resolution was endorsed by representatives from:

- Panun Kashmir
- All India Kashmiri Pandit Conference,

- All India Kashmiri Displaced Employees Forum
- All India Kashmir Samaj
- Kasmiri Samiti, Delhi
- Kashmiri Internally Displaced Association, Noida
- Refugee camp Mishriwala, Jammu
- Refugee camp Purkhoo, Jammu
- Refugee camp Batal Balian, Udhampur
- KP Association, Bombay
- Institute of Peace Research and Action

AN APPEAL TO MEMBERS IN ZONE 3

About 18 months ago, a few members in the New Jersey/Pennsylvania area (zone #3) decided to form a group under the banner of Kongposh. As I understand it, their contention was that the New Jersey chapter of KOA was not fulfilling its primary objective of being a socio-cultural association, and secondly, that it was becoming too political (I do not know if they meant KOA or some of its members). Let me address the second point first. In 1989 when our community suffered a catastrophe, we all became concerned. Because KOA could not engage in political activities, we formed a sister organization, the Indo-American Kashmir Forum (IAKF). By being a Kashmiri Pandit and concerned about our community in India, we all became defacto members of IAKF. IAKF was primarily responsible for changing the perception about Kashmir problem among the U.S. lawmakers. KOA retained its main character of an organization meant to promote Kashmiri Pandit ethnic and socio-cultural heritage. A few of us actively participating in IAKF activities did not make KOA a political organization. All cultural activities of KOA continued, may be at a slower pace (how could we be enjoying sumptuous dinners and musical programs, when our kith and kin were suffering?). We are trying to get back to normalcy (although we have not forgotten those unfortunate people, and we continue to provide whatever assistance we can). As such I do not feel there is any justification for another organization, particularly when its objectives are no different from those of KOA, the parent organization. If some people have personal differences, I request them to set these aside and work for the unity of our rather small community. In the interest of KOA and a great majority of members of our community. I can not accept or endorse such factions that are divisive and in the long run harmful to the community. I sincerely hope that the people of New Jersey/Pennsylvania unite under the single banner of KOA and working with their Chapter President and Board Member further strengthen KOA so that it can fulfil its goals. If you do not like something about KOA, let us know, and we will try to improve it. Looking forward to every one's cooperation.

Ashok Raina

UPANAYANA OR YUGNOPAVIT (CONTINUED FROM ISSUE NO. 25 KPI)

Gayatri Mantra (Also Called Savitri)

"The focal point of the whole Upanayana ceremony is the recitation of the Gayatri Mantra and teaching its essence to the initiated. The Mantra is considered to be the most sacred and according to Manu `there is nothing more exalted than the Gayatri'.

Om tat savitur varenyam
bhargo devasya dhimahi
dhiyo yonah prachodayat

"This original 'Gayatri Mantra', which is also known as "Savitri", is a Rigvedic hymn (RV III,62- 10) which usually is preceded by the recitation of the 'Om Bhur, Bhuvah Svah' which upon translation connotes:

Om bhur bhuvah svah
tat savitur varenyam

That splendid magnificence of Savitre, the Cosmic Sun permeating the three worlds, the Earth, the Space and the Heavens is assuredly Savitri; the inspirer, life giver, the stimulative force".

Bhargo devasya dhimahi

"May we meditate on the life giving divinity, Savitri assuredly is God, and therefore I meditate on his splendor".

dhiyo Yonah prachodayat

May He himself illumine our intelligence. May He himself breath it into us".

The Gayatri Mantra derives its name from the metre in which it is written, the Gayatri being a Vedic poetic metre of 24 syllables which, as per tradition, is authored by the sage Vishvamitra. The Mantra consists of three sections (PADS) having eight syllables each and has to be recited in a particular cadence. Therefore the Gayatri Mantra is not a magic formula nor is it merely a logical sentence. It connects in a very special way the objective and subjective aspects of Reality. It is neither a mere sound nor sheer magic. Words have not only sound but also meaning which is not apparent to all those who simply hear the sound. Such living words have a power that transcends the mental plane. To acquire this energy of the word one has to grasp not only its meaning but also its message, or its vibrations, as they are sometimes called in order. Therefore the phonetic quality of the Mantra demands that it be recited in a particular way. Faith, understanding and physical utterance as well as physical continuity (Since the Mantra is supposed to be handed down by a master) are the essential requisites. Every word links up with the source of all words. The ultimate character of the Word (Shabada Brahma) is a fundamental concept in spirituality.

Abhid (The Alms) The alms giving (Abhid) is now a symbolic act reminiscent of ancient institution of obtaining voluntary contributions for the sustenance of the guru's ashram in which the initiated students used to study. Presently during the Yugnopavit ceremony the act of alms giving is symbolically staged and is known as Abhid. This has now taken the complexion of "dakshina" for the presiding guru.

Relevance of Yugnopavit in the Present Times The Yugnopavit ceremony used to be one of the most exalted functions in the life of a Brahmin, particularly in respect of the Kashmiri Brahmins. But due to massive changes in the social and economic factors its importance in the course of time has significantly dwindled. In recent times it has lost its vitality and sublimity. It has unfortunately now been reduced to a social "Tamasha" without any attempt by us to restore its former sanctity. This sacrament used to be one of the most important instruments for inculcating and imparting discipline, values of life and the principles of right conduct.

Now, in the aftermath of our exodus from Kashmir it is doubly important to try and restore the intrinsic sanctity and usefulness of this samaskara so that we are able to give a worthy gift unto the young. Whereas modern education with its scientific spirit and vocational training is important for our children, but at the same time cultivation of matrices of right conduct, overall personality development with humane values of life so as to develop a vibrant ethos are the very essential credentials that would enable us to face the challenges of the present world. At present our children are facing a cultural cul-de-sac which suggests a drifting and a meaningless existence.

A sense of direction is needed more than ever before. The infusion of the spirit behind the "Yugnopavit" ceremony which also aims to promote compassion, love, benevolence, non-violence, fraternity, self-discipline and finer human relationship etc. in addition to the urge to meditate on the refulgence of the Supreme Consciousness can act as one of the most important instruments for achieving this goal.

The intrinsic message of the Gayatri Mantra engulfs a wide gamut of ideals such as what the Isha Upanishad says:

Yastu sarvani bhutanyatmanayay vamu
pashyeti sarva bhuteshu ch atmanam tato na
vijugupsate yasiman sarvani
bhutanyatmyvbhdi janatah tatra ko moha kah
shokah eikatva manupashytaha

"He who sees all creatures in himself, himself in all creatures, does not show abhorrence to any one; knowing all beings to be one's own-self and seeing the unity of man-kind, how can there be for him delusions, sufferings and sorrows".

(Concluded)

Pushkarnath Nehru (Pune), India

ELECTIONS

Dear Members:

On behalf of the Nomination/Election Committee, the details of nominations and election for seven KOA board members are as follows. Nominations/Election committee was appointed by the KOA Board during telecon of December 31, 1995 and consist of:

Inder K Bhat (VA)--Chairperson

Lokesh Bazaz (VA),

Jeevan Zutshi (CA)

Rajiv Khashoo (CA)

Awtar Ganju (FL)

Lalit Wanchoo--Secretary KOA

Committee was tasked to invite nominations from seven KOA zones for the board directors and subsequently conduct elections for those zones that would have more than one candidate contesting the elections. Notice inviting nominations were mailed

along with the December 1995 KOA newsletter (KPI) and by a separate mailing that informed members of extending of the late date for submission of the nominations.

Nomination responses were opened on January 28, 1996 by the committee. A total of fifty nine nominations were received for seven directors. Out of these 59, ten were invalid due to either; a) the nominee was not a paid member for 1995 or 1996, or b) the nominee and the nominating member were not from the same zone for which nominations were solicited. The summary of the nominations response is: Zone 3 (PA & NJ) was the only one zone where two candidates accepted the nominations and elections were conducted. Nomination/Election committee conducted telecon on February 9, 1996 and a) approved the selection of five directors; Sanjay Kaul from Zone 2, Sushma Bhan from Zone 5, Rajinder Kaul from Zone 6, Autar Karihaloo from Zone 9, and Shiban Tiku from Zone 10 b) put on hold Zone 7 nomination, as one of the candidates was on travel to India, and c) established the rules and guidelines for the election process in Zone 3.

Election package was prepared and mailed to 70 families in PA & NJ who were listed with the KOA irrespective of their membership status (paid/non-paid). All the responses were opened on February 27, 1996 by the committee and the results are:

Total Election Packages mailed:	70
Number of Paid Members	40
Response Received (12 from PA & 19 from NJ)	31
Total Invalids (Duplicate mailing by one member)	1
Total Valid Ballots	57

Candidate Name	Total Votes
Rohit Dhar (NJ)	24
Ashoke Kachroo (PA)	33
Total	57

Ashoke Kachroo was elected as the next director from Zone 3. Both candidates were informed of the results after counting was completed.

Zone 7 candidates contacted the committee on March 5, 1996 and Ameeta Bamazi was approved unopposed. This completes the nomination/election process for 7 directors for the KOA Board for a term of 2 years ending December 1997. Congratulations to the newly elected board members and looking forward to working together for the KP community.

Committee is thankful to the KOA members for their participation and appreciate timely response and cooperation. KOA activities that have been undertaken would not have been

possible without the support and active participation of all of our board members. We very much appreciate outgoing directors contributions and thank them for giving their valuable time and resources for the community. We would like to count on having their continued support and help in the years to come.

On behalf of KOA's executive committee, Board, and the membership, I would like to congratulate Nomination/Election Committee on job well done and thank each of them for sparing their valuable time for this activity.

L. Wanchoo, KOA Secretary

COMMUNITY ROUND-UP

Matrimonial:

"37 year old KP boy PhD Engineer settled in Pittsburgh seeks a suitable alliance with a slim, attractive, & sophisticated professional with family values. Please contact at (412)221-5145 or 011-91-11-6421882".

Condolences:

KOA conveys its heartfelt condolences to: Shashi Kher (VA) on the death of her mother; Girja Jalla and Shiban Raina (VA) on the death of their father; Hiralal (MD) and Dilip Nakhasi (NJ) on the death of their mother; Hreday Sapru (NJ) and Kanta Kachroo (PA) on the death of their mother.

Kashmiri Cookbook: A book that contains 215 recipes of Kashmiri cuisine (both Hindu and Muslim) has been published by Pt. Shyam Sunder Kaul Kilam and his wife Shyam Rani. This unique book costs \$25 (including shipping), and can be ordered from Mrs. Sharda Cherwoo at 203-629-4949. The proceeds of this book will be donated to Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Pattaparthy, India.

KPI STATUS

Following is the text of the letter sent by Dr. A. Raina, President KOA to Mr. K. L. Kaul, President IAKF.

Dear Kanhyalal Ji,

Namaskar. It is my understanding that the news letter Kashmiri Pandit International, was originally conceived by IAKF. Initially, it was to be a joint news letter of KOA and IAKF, with both organizations sharing the cost of its production and mailing. Since KOA is bearing the entire cost of this news letter, and to keep the budgets of the two

organizations separate, I am requesting you to permit KOA the exclusive use of the name KPI.

Because of the financial constraints, we have decided to publish the KPI 6 times a year, in January, March, May, July, September and November. IAKF is welcome to send any of their material for publication to the editor. As before we intend to mail the KPI to everyone irrespective of their membership status.

Hope this arrangement is satisfactory to you. With best wishes and regards.

Sincerely, Ashok K. Raina

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

Thanks for the informative and timely article on "Demographics of J & K" in your December issue. It becomes clear that the Pak sponsored Islamic terrorism has not only devastated the KP community, but has also destroyed the privileged position of Kashmiri Sfunni Muslims. Those Sunnis who support this terrorism, will live to regret it, if they do not do so already.

December issue also published, let us say, an amusing letter from K. Razdan of Texas. ("KP culture = counter-culture of pseudo-intellectuals & anti-intellectuals"). One wonders what these terms mean! ("Nehru, Indira & Rajiv, all degenerates, and = Suha Bhatt"). One wonders why the label & why the comparison?

I do understand that each one of us is in severe pain and anger due to what our community is undergoing. Everyone has a right to express his opinion on that, but has also an obligation to see the reaction. Here is my reaction: I think Mr. Razdan's statements, comparisons and epithets are full of, well, let us say absurdities. I suggest KP International's Reviewers add an Amusement Section" in the Newsletter for statements like

these. B. Tikku,CA

Dear Sir,

Recently the state officials in UP renamed historic Kashmiri Mohalla Ward as Maulana Kulbe Abid Ward. This change initiated by Lucknow Nagar Nigam this year is just to appease a particular section of the society and to undermine the valuable contributions made by the Kashmiri Pandits who have been residing in this locality for the last 200 years in various fields in the development of this city from time to time.

I would like to mention here that Kashmiri Mohalla came into existence in Lucknow between 1775 and 1780 when a large number of Kashmiri Pandits settled here during the rule of Nawab Asafud-Daula. It must be mentioned here that all along Nawabi rule in Oudh from 1775 up to 1856 and then during the British period from 1857 up to 1947 the Kashmiri Mohalla of Lucknow was a nerve centre of the activities of the Kashmiri Pandits in the whole of Northern India and so it has assumed its own importance and has been mentioned as such in the books about history of Lucknow all over the world.

Dr. B.N. Sharga,Lucknow

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