
THE KASHMIRI PANDIT INTERNATIONAL

Newsletter of Kashmiri Overseas Association, Inc.

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No. 28 July 1996

President's Column

Dear Friends, namaskar. KOA programs have been going on as per schedule. Once again the July 4 KOA-East Coast camp was a great success (for details read Sunita and Sunil Dhar's report). A gathering of 300 KPs for 3-4 days was reminiscent of a Kashmiri 'khandar'. I again urge people in various regions to organize similar camps (there was a camp held in Indiana and another one is being planned for November in Texas). We do have a record membership however, there are still many of you who have not sent the 1996 dues. Why procrastinate? Mail your membership today. We are also aware that many more KPs are coming to the United States each year. If any of you have information about the new arrivals, please pass it on to Lalit Wanchoo, or urge them to contact him directly at 301-262-7743. KOA had received a request for a financial loan for purchasing an airline ticket for a KP originally from Anantnang. The young man has been accepted for postgraduate studies at Stanford University. The ticket has already been purchased. The KOA website is being visited by many people on a regular basis and the comments are very encouraging. If you have not done so, please try it at: <http://webusers.anet.dfw.com/~koausa/koa.html> To make the best use of this newsletter, we need your regular input. Please send short articles (letters) and news items about yourself or the community at large to the Editor. KOA Board in its last meeting had approved to form a committee that will solicit nominations to recognize each year 2-3 youth who not only have excelled in education but contributed significantly to community service. As we have decided to streamline the elections for the President and the Board Members, we will soon be starting the process for the next round. This will be your opportunity to nominate and elect the right candidates that you consider most suitable for the job. As indicated in my informal report, KOA will be placing greater emphasis on educational programs for the refugees. Tej Kaul has done an excellent job for the first year with a success rate of over 95%. He has collected funds for the second year and the first instalment check has already been mailed. I have not as yet received the plans for the proposed hospital in Jammu. The school at Batal Balian is fully functional. It may soon start evening classes in computer programming. KOA recently paid \$1000 for operational expenses of the school. I am told Kanhyalal Kaul has raised additional funds to supplement this. The child nutrition program at Misriwala camp is running successfully. Let us make this communication a two way thing. With best wishes to all of you.

**Ashok Raina,
Beltsville, MD**

JAGAN KAUL NEEDS OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Kaul for State House Committee
RR3, Box 114
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Please remember winning elections require financial support. I request the readers to send whatever you can to the address noted above.

- **Editor**

IAKF UPDATE

The statements by the Gowda government on Kashmir have created new uncertainties and increased consternation among the KP community in the U.S. For those who have access to the KP net, the issue continues to be a "hot item". It was therefore only natural that the topic surfaced as a major (political) issue at the recently held KOA-East coast camp and participants held a two hour meeting on the subject (and related issues) on July 6th to finalize a response to Indian government's pronouncements. The issue of granting "maximum autonomy" to Kashmir, as stated in the 13 party UF government's Common Minimum Program (CMP) and reiterated by Mr. Inderjet Gupta (home minister), is like any other issue related to Kashmir, both complex and ambiguous. To the terrorist backed Hurriyat Conference it means total independence from India to choose the degree of subservience to Pakistan. To National Conference it means going back to 1952. To Congress it translates into 1975 Accord. To KPs and other Indian nationalists it is disaster - pure and simple. But what can the Gowda government do, if anything at all? First and foremost, it will seek glory amongst its leading constituency, the Indian Muslims. It has already done that. By including a statement on Kashmir in the 25-page CMP, the UF government has clearly shown its defence to the wishes of the Indian Muslim lobby (IML). However, having said that both by written and verbal means, there is really not much else the government can do at this time. Any changes in Kashmir's authority within the Union will require parliamentary approval. For the minority government it will not only be difficult, but impossible. Besides the obvious rejection by BJP, even the Congress party will not support such a move (they have already stated their position in dealings with Farooq). Indeed, like all its predecessors the Gowda government will find it is easier to make a promise on Kashmir than to keep it. The issue however does not end there. There are votes to be "bought" from the vote banks. And IML will continue to demand a high price. So what are the likely options the government will pursue to keep its major constituency happy? We have already noticed the trend when Mohd. Maqbool Dar from Anantnag was named the Junior Minister in the Home Ministry Replacing crooked Muslim gangster politician who was forced out after his police record became public. You should know that the IML extracted a commitment from the prior Congress government that the Minister of State for Home Affairs will always be a Muslim. Needless to say, the present government is committed to honor many congress pledges, including what the IML wants.

There are other near-term and long-term actions the government can pursue short of seeking parliamentary approval. In the near term, the UF will demonstrate its intentions

to devolve more powers to the states and set up a high power committee to update the Sarkaria Commission. The government has also pledged to amend Article 356 of the constitution to make it harder for the federal government to dismiss state governments. The IML believes such a change will leave a strengthening effect on the Article 370. In the long term, if the government survives, it will rely on executive powers (rather than by legislative means) to grant additional executive and administrative waivers. We all know what the KMs want. They want Indian rupees without federal oversight or accountability. So expect to see a slow erosion of federal departments like the Income Tax Department, Vigilance Department, etc. On the other side, federal dole to the state will increase substantially through grants and loans. A cynic would say that considering the Indian government is currently spending 15 crores a day for operating the security apparatus in the state, if the same money is physically handed to the politicians/militants who want to run the state it will become a zero sum game for the federal government. Hence VP Singh's affirmation of Shabir Sham or government's continuing dialogue with the Forum for Permanent Resolution of J&K makes more sense than ever.

The interchange of ideas among the KOA camp participants resulted in the following action plan:

1. IAKF was re-affirmed as the channel for the KOA community to pursue our common political agenda.
2. Meetings will be held with the Indian Ambassador to express our concern and reservations regarding the autonomy issue.
3. IAKF will draft a memo to the Indian President and/or the Prime Minister expressing the community's displace at the recent announcement by Indarjit Gupta. This memo will be circulated to IAKF and KOA leaders for review and if possible, community participation will be through mass signature campaign.
4. KP net will continue to be the medium for active communication amongst politically active community members to share information, etc. Efforts will be made by netters to reach Indian parliamentarians through the electronic medium. A single message (letter) will be draft by actionists through inter communication on the KP net.
5. IAKF and its affiliates in India will continue to maintain active contact with Shri Jagmohan and use him as the voice of conscience for the KP community. Biradari members are encouraged to send complimentary letters to Mr. Jagmohan thanking him for his support to our community.
6. The community activists will try to contact "Think Tanks" and solicit their support for our cause.
7. Some participants suggested that paid advertisements should be taken out in Indian paper bringing out KP concerns and issues

However, it was explained for the same money, a fund raiser can be held for either of the two pro- KP congressmen (Sherrod Brown and Rob Andrew) and a letter from either both of the congressman to the Indian Prime Minister would be more effective and generate greater publicity than paid advertisements. Vijay Sazawal agreed to follow up with interested community members willing to sponsor such fund raisers. (if anyone is interested to sponsor a fund raiser, please call Vijay at 703-212-8163 ASAP). The

political meeting, like the rest of the camp, reinforced the unity of our community and the determination of our political activists. Thanks to all for making it a success.

Vijay Sazawal, IAKF

KOA EAST COAST CAMP

A bridge with scenic view welcomed about 300 KPs once again to the Sunrise Resort, Moodus, Connecticut, for their annual 4th July camp. The camp started on 3rd and ended on 7th July. One of the highlights this year was a 'havan' performed by a priest of Menakshi temple in Boston. He explained some of the rituals and their significance in our daily lives. The 'havan' concluded with recitation of Shiv Mahimnastotram by our elders and arti. Several children recited bhajans and shlokas. The occasion was capped by a traditional meal of 'nadir-dal, olu-churma, chuk-wangun and chatni'. Pradman Qasba and Rabinder Koul presented very interesting talks linking a science to our religion, particularly Kashmir Shaivism. Camp fires were held on three nights. The youth had their own camp fires. Nostalgic Kashmiri songs, Arti Kaul and Lalit Kaul taking the lead, and jokes by Inder Bhat highlighted the adult camp fires. There was even a 'hangama-night', where some young, many young-at-heart, and few seniors too, danced to Bollywood music. Campers also engaged in a variety of other activities such as, volleyball, canoeing, cricket, mountain biking, kite flying, or simply walking through the woods. The most sought after activity was undoubtedly the 'Kath-bath' and what made it more enjoyable was eating 'buzith makaiwache and doun', sheer- chai and kulcha, and of course kahawa served from the samavar. In the middle of this, kids Aditya Kaul, Samir and Shail Munshi and Manik Bhan managed to raise \$60 from their snack-sale, which they donated to a little migrant girl in a Jammu camp. Dr. Ashok Raina President of KOA, opened the meeting and described all of the KOA's programs and activities. In the general body meeting, KOA office bearers presented the state of affairs followed by a lively discussion. Asha and Piara Lal Qusba, Ashok Moza and Tej Kaul were honored for outstanding community service (Qusbas for organizing the 1995 and 96 KOA East Coast camps, Ashok Moza for KPI-news letter and Tej Kaul for coordinating the educational project). A meeting chaired by Vijay Sazawal of IAKF was also held to discuss the recent autonomy issue and disinformation campaign by KMs. We are already looking forward to the next year's camp. Inder Bhat agreed to work on the details of the 1997 camp. See you there.

Sunil and Sunita Dhar, New Jersey

ELECTION REPORT

Elections In The Valley:

If there was any lingering doubt about the free and fair nature of the parliamentary polls held in Jammu and Kashmir, the announcement of the results should set it at rest. Of the six constituencies, four were won by the Congress and one each by the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Janata Dal. The individuals who won the elections were:

Srinagar Shri Ghulam Mohd. Mir Magami (Congress) Baramulla Shri Ghulam Rasool Kar (Congress) Anantnag Shri Mohd. Maqbool Dar (Janata Dal) Jammu-Poonch Shri Mangat Ram Sharma (Congress) Udhampur Shri Chaman Lal Gupta (BJP) Ladakh Shri P. Namgyal (Congress)

Interestingly, there were keen contests for all the seats, including for those in the Kashmir Valley, where the polling process was under considerable strain due to militancy. All the seats were closely contested. While such contests were expected in the Jammu and Ladakh regions, it was presumed that the candidates belonging to the reformed militant groups-variously called "surrendered militants", or "renegade militants"-would walk away with the seats. It was expected that the boxes would be full of invalid votes. Nothing of the kind happened. Baramulla was won by the Pradesh Congress Committee chief, Mr. Ghulam Rasool Kar, with a tally of 110,331 votes, from a total of 328,628 ballots cast; the other contenders also received substantial number of votes. The Awami League candidates, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Mir, received 45,350, followed by Mr. Abdul Ahad Yattoo 26,343, Mr. Din Mohd Chethi 24,688, the Janata Dal member, Sheikh Mohd Sadiq 25,554 and Panthers Party's Daljett Singh-1,038 votes. Similarly in Srinagar the seat was won by Mr. Ghulam Mohd Mir Maghami of the Congress with 55,503 votes, the contest was even closer. The Janata Dal candidate, Mr. Farooq Ahmed Andrabi, polled 53,904 votes while the Awami League candidate won 38,834, Panthers Party candidate Mr. Mohd Akbar won 36,330 and BJP's Amar Nath Vaishnavi 35,991 votes. In the hotly contested Anantnag seat, Mr. Maqbool Dar of the Janata Dal secured over 58,000 votes against his nearest rival Mr. Taj Mohiuddin who ironically was more worried about Mr. Shuban Krishen Tickoo or Captain Tickoo, backed by the Awami League. Surprisingly the voters chose the traditional political parties instead of the new outfits, The Congress, the Janata Dal and the Bharatiya Janata Party surprisingly did well in the Valley; so also the reformed militants, even though they did not win any seats. The results indicate that if Assembly elections are held soon, one could reasonably expect good participation of the people. The reformed militants are likely to win a few seats in the Valley. The former militants are naturally disappointed that they have not succeeded in their first brush with the ballot box; but the number of votes that they have received should encourage them to persevere in their chosen path.

More than anything else, the Parliamentary elections have demonstrated that Pakistan will not be able to disrupt the Assembly elections, unless the situation changes dramatically. Pakistan did try hard to do its worst...

During early May, Kashmir Valley was plastered with posters from Afghan commandoes warning State Govt. employees to leave their houses three days before the polls and directed the people to resist from casting their votes.

The posters concluded with a warning: "If you do not follow these instructions, you will be responsible for the results". The warning went unheeded. Will Pakistan heed the message now?

Gazanfar Butt, Srinagar

Migrants to move court against EC

A STRONG resentment is brewing up among the rank and file of Kashmiri Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) putting up in camps and elsewhere in Jammu against the childish attitude of the Election Department regarding migrant's vote.

The Kashmiri IDP leaders said they were working out the modalities to move the Supreme Court against the Election authorities of Jammu and Kashmir regarding ballot secrecy.

The anger was visible among the IDP and their leaders since Saturday evening when Door Darshan and the Election authorities announced that the postal ballot of IDPs was taken up first for the counting and started giving results without mixing the ballots.

The trouble started when authorities announced that 90 percent of the IDP vote had gone to the BJP in Srinagar Parliamentary constituency.

A BJP leader of Kashmir unit said Kashmiri pandits who had been bearing the brunt of terrorism since seven years, were deliberately exposed before other parties including the terrorists, for supporting the BJP. He said that this was a dangerous trend and had been done under a well planned strategy to defame the migrant community. The leader felt the migrant votes should not have been declared separately. This put the majority of pandits who were thinking of returning to the Valley, in a dangerous and unsafe position.

The J&K leaders said they would move the Supreme Court against the Election Commission, Jammu and Kashmir Electoral Office and the Door Darshan for not maintaining the secrecy of the ballot.

They said the Election Commission has been taking this community for a ride which was evident since the announcement of the postal ballot and the problems faced by the community members thereafter.

The leaders were very critical of the concerned authorities adding that their return to the Valley was now a dangerous proposition. They said that since the United Front Government at the Center was supported by the Congress, their future was at stake in the hands of these non-BJP leaders. Condemning the act, an IDP intellectual said, "We were apprehending such a mischief from the authorities, majority of whom are working hand in glove with the militants and the Congress".

Another leader of a pandit organization said many IDPs did not cast their votes because "we expect anything from this rotten system".

A large section of the Kashmiri IDPs was seen discussing the outcome of the situation with fear and anger clearly visible on their faces.

An IDP who has been visiting the Valley regularly, said he would not dare to visit the place again as nobody would spare him now.

Pioneer News Service, Srinagar

Chechen Killed During Election

Four foreign Islamic terrorists, including a Chechen, were among nine people killed in Jammu and Kashmir during the elections.

This is the first time in the seven years of Terrorism One mercenary from Chechnya, was among the four foreign terrorists killed by Rashtriya Rifles at village Arizal in Badgam district of Kashmir, a spokesman said.

Documents recovered from the killed mercenary and statements from local villagers indicate his name to be Abu Kubab alias Abu Zoldin alias Abu Abida.

TO ALLAH THE COMPASSIONATE & MERCIFUL O'God! Compassionate and Merciful;

Who can call thou so, Who are so cruel and unjust, To snatch a gem once gifted, One dozen and eight summers back. A bullet Thou hast given, Stuck in our Hearts, No death, nor healing-no way like fish out of waters. O'God-so much cruelty and injustice?

Oh'Soon, Thou hast reached: The kingdom of the Divine- Where the road of Sansar leads, Think not: feel not, Thyself alone

For: we are all coming to thee One by one, sooner or later When call comes from above But crave for forgiveness, For delay and absence.

With hands stretched above With eyes wide open, With mouth agap-shivering; Looking to Him, who is unseen Praying to Him who hears, Though cruel, compassionate, Merciful, whatever He may be called- Peace be unto the soul, Departed.

Late Sarwanand Koul "Premi"

Summary of KOA General Body Meeting

Summary of KOA General Body Meeting held on 5 July, 1996 at KOA East Coast Camp in Moodus, CT Ashok Raina, President of KOA, opened the meeting and described all of the KOA's programs and activities. On behalf of KOA, Ashok Ji recognized; Riara and Asha Qusba, CT for organizing KOA East Coast Camp for the last two years, Tej Nath Kaul, NY for his dedication for KOA Educational Assistance Program, and Ashok Moza, TX for publishing KPI Newsletter and each was presented with a plaque. Later on questions and suggestions were entertained from the

members present at this meeting. This meeting was attended by over 200 people.
Lalit Wanchoo, Secretary, KOA

KOA - Houston Chapter Camp Announcement

KOA - Houston Chapter is organizing three day camp for November 15-17, 1996 at Bastrop National Park in Austin, Texas. For details please contact: Sushma Bhan (713) 492-7575; Anita Kaul (713) 420-1487 and Pran Chaku (713) 466-9532.

MATRIMONIAL

Alliance invited from well settled educated Kashmiri Hindu boy for Kashmiri Pandit girl, convent educated, 32, handsome, medical doctor, currently working in India. Please contact Rakesh Jalali, 85 Thorneliffe Park Drive, Suite 3007, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4H 1L6. Tel: 416-423-1443 (home), 416-448- 3604 (work).

Looking for a suitable KP boy (Preferable Doctor) for a good looking Doctor (MBBS) KP girl, age 26 years, working as Jr. resident Doctor in one of the leading hospital at New Delhi in India. well connected family in India and abroad. Interested families may contact in Canada to "Dhruv Narayan" on 905-625-8950 (H), 905- 507-9595 (O) or fax Takeni with details to 905-276-6070 (H). In India Pl. contact Mr. V.K. Kaul, B-28 Pamposh Enclave, G. K-1, New Delhi. Tel.: 91-11-6421307 (H).

CONGRATULATIONS

Ashok and Renu Kaul of Quincy, MA for newly born boy - Ananya. Lovely Fotedar on completing her Ph.D in Bio- Physics/Bio-Medical from University of Texas, Houston, TX.

CONDOLENCES

Neeru and Ramesh Ganju of Brookline, MA on death of Neeru's father Prof. A.K. Raina. Prem and Kamlesh Moza, TX on death of Prem's father Sh S S Kaul.

MEMBERSHIP CHECKS Please send your membership checks to:

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