23rd of June 2007, the day of Zyath Arbor, marked a red letter day in the history of KP community living in Noida. The occasion-start of first phase of the construction - by laying of the foundation of compound wall of the Socio- Cultural Centre in Sec 34, after taking over the formal possession of the plot from the Noida authority. The 1st brick was laid by Sh. H.L. Munshi, President KMMA on behalf of the entire community living in Noida & surrounding areas after an elaborate Hawan & Pooja of the bricks. This was followed by laying of one brick each by the participating members. On this occasion KMMA also released a local newsletter.

It may be recalled that the Association had made a formal application with Noida Authority way back in February 2000 & the realisation of this occasion was the outcome of a rigorous followup with the authorities for more than seven years, with many ups & downs in between & initiative of one or two individuals to put the detailed process back on the rails at a crucial time when the project was virtually abandoned.

The current status of the project is the result of direct & indirect support of hundreds of community members living in Noida or elsewhere. However, those who have been actively involved in the process, in one way or the other, during the last over seven years, include S/Sh. M. L. Kaul, Ashok Manvati, L. N. Kaul, C. L. Pandita, A. K. Tikku, A. D. Vesin, M. K. Dhar, Ramesh Manvati, Col Avtar Shali, Krishanji Raina, Vijay Kashoo, Dr. Ajay Dhar, B. L. Wali, J. N. Kaul, Dr. M. L. Dhar, Jatinder Kaw, Kuldeep Khassu, Dr. N. K. Safaya, M. K. Razdan, C. L. Tikku, Jagdish Makroo, P. L. Dhar, P. L. Kaul & Late Prof S. K. Shah. During his tenure as President, some ten years back, Late O. N. Channa had also made efforts in procuring the land from the Noida authority for this purpose.

"... distinctly different ..."

Editorial:
Friends! Namaskar. "Sezar, Pazzar, It-Shrozhzar" have been hallmark of our community's social life in the 'earlier' times i.e. before our recent displacement from our place of origin. The present displacement has opened a number of opportunities for us. But, it has thrown before us many challenges as well. These three distinct features of our community life have seen a marked decline as is reflected in our present day social behaviour - at least in the public life. The glimpse of which can be easily caught in the emergence of umpteen number of KP organisations and publication of numerous community news magazines / papers at a rapid pace, one after the other, over the recent years all across the world. At least one organisation and four publications being added just in the last couple of months only.

Apparently, in the present age of democracy and information technology, there is nothing wrong in sharing distinct ideas or community information-discriminating mediums that may give a new direction and / or highlight the positive features of our community life or such features that help the community to preserve and promote its rich cultural legacy and march forward with the path of Excellence and thereby help reclaim our lost roots. It holds true as long as

(1) the idea or the medium is different,

Worship Of 'Kul-Devi's' In Kashmir

Godesses as Devi: The Great Goddess, known as Devi (Goddess), has many guises. She is Ma(Mother): the gentle and approachable mother. As Jagatmata or Mother of the Universe, she assumes cosmic proportions, destroying evil and addressing herself to the creation and dissolution of the world. Devi is all important in the Brahmanic tradition and all Goddesses are different manifestations of Devi. Today millions of Brahman's men and women, conduct regular Pujas of Devi through one of her many forms. For some she is their primary deity, for others she is part of a greater pantheon. In Kashmir, Naga religion of original inhabitants basically revolved around the worship of springs, rivers, important Naga chiefdoms and had predominance of song-cult. With the immigration of Mams (Aryans) to Kashmir, whose religious beliefs had amalgamated with those of original inhabitants of Bharatavarsha, religious worship incorporating forms that had manifested in Bharatavarsha, including Aryans, also took roots in Kashmir.

The most talked Goddess in Kashmir was Uma; a form of Devi. The very land of Kashmir was Mother Goddess Kashmir, a form of Uma; mother antagonistic attitude towards other cults. The other Goddesses revered were; Sita, Saci, Lakshmi, Bhadrakali, Durga. In Kashmir tendency of describing one deity as the highest among others, at one time or the other,
Upholding our Traditions

'Pravrat-Pancawali' & 'Zarram-Statam' Poozat was performed by Kashmiri Pandits in Noida recently. Poozat was organized by KMWA, at SCC premises in Sector 34.

From Archives:

Going up the Ladder

I. N. Kaul has been nominated as 'International Professional of the Year 2007' by International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England on 23rd May 2007.

Ashesh Dhar
has recently joined Automartindia Ltd. as Vice President (Operations). Automartindia is a Mahindra Group, HDFC & Sah & Sanghio venture. Earlier he was General Manager, TVS Motors India Ltd.
Ashesh is son of Smt. Rajani & Sh. M. K. Dhar of Shatabadi Villa (E-3), Sector-52, Noida.

Thank You!

Dr. Mahesh Sharma
Chairman & Mgmt. Director

Kailash Hospital & Research Centre Ltd.
1267, Sector 52, Gurgaon
Ph: 0124-4076222
Fax: 0124-4076223
Web: www.kailashhospital.com

MESSAGE

I am happy to receive newsletter "PAANVAAAR" edited by Sh Ramesh Manwati ji. The newsletter is a value addition of activity of displaced community across the country especially in Noida. I am sure that the newsletter will help in bridging the gap between the displaced members of Kashmiri Pandit Community and will highlight the issues confronting the society. I extend my full support & best wishes to this venture.

On behalf of Kailash Groups Hospitals, at Noida, Greater Noida & Deepak Memorial, Vikas Marg, Delhi, I assure the displaced community of all possible help. We are committed to provide state of the art medical services with personalized attention round the clock at affordable price. Should any member need my help they are free to meet me.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma
Chairman & Mgmt. Director

Contd from page no. 1

Glimpses of 'Laying the Foundation for Future'

(2) there is no imitation or duplication of the existing efforts.
(3) there is no over-playing of the role of those individuals or groups behind such organizations or publications, and last but not the least
(4) there is no under-playing or neglecting totally the genuine role and efforts of the groups or individuals - who in this case do not necessarily toe the line of so-called 'official' version of promoters of such organizations and/or the means of communication.

The emergence of Panun Kashmir, way back in 1990'91, caught the imagination of the community 'ol 'n' 'taaz' alike & was an instant success as the idea was something new and different. Making an assessment of the community feelings, in tune with the ground realities, only two distinct ideologies emerge - either the community is for 'Homeland' or some are still not reconciled to this concept.

While going through the contents of various community information-decimating mediums across the world, including the net, one often tends to get dismayed and saddened on coming across such expressions that are in no way healthy for the collective well-being of our exiled community. And, one is compelled to close that medium without moving the fingers further with the same eagerness as one had opened it in the first instant.

Those willing to 'risk' to express a different opinion are viewed with suspicion and no stone is left unturned to undermine them in public. One must admit and acknowledge that, time and again, we come across the same known active members, cutting across their individual or collective perceptions and beliefs, at every Pandit function. Most of the times their physical count does not cross 25 and in any case it does not go beyond 49 (forty-nine). And many a times media people present at such functions, outnumber the Pandit participants. One would feel elated if the number could even touch 50-a 'respectable half a century mark' in the present day hectic life styles and given scenario. (Havans being an exception though.)

The only and simple reason could possibly be that each participating member feels more concerned and wants to contribute genuinely for the betterment of our community and in the process also aspires to get a "good word" for his/her efforts. It is in the interest of none to question the intentions of our fellow travellers. It is high time, we as responsible community representatives recognize the ground realities and have respect for this human urge and make a collective use of the available 'men and material resources' having a common concern, common baggage of the past & a common 'collective' objective as well.

Perhaps, in absence of such an approach, none of our organizations or community publications have attained the stature that can qualify them to be a true and a representative "body or mouth-organ" of the Kashmiri Pandit community as of now, even though one cannot undermine the monumental role of organizations like Panun Kashmir and AKJS (efforts of its affiliates put together) and a couple of popular community news-magazines/papers, including Kashmir Samachar - which has nearly fifty decades of history behind it, played in the past or being played even now.

It's high time to have respect for dissent and acknowledge each others' efforts -whether official or non-official, to help other sense of belongingness across the board. Any body willing to risk, to express a different opinion needs to be given due attention rather than to be viewed with suspicion. It's better to befriend our fellow travellers rather than create a situation that makes them our competitors.

Our Govts. have also realized, over the years, that maximum quantum of progress can be achieved only with the help and active involvement of the private-enterprise in their quest to implement their people-friendly policies and programs. Therefore, now is the time to shun the 'official' as well as the 'nodal-agency' approach to fight, effectively, a collective community battle.

On this "Zarram-a-Sataam" occasion, Narthine incarnation of Lord Vishnu, born in dark hours at the dead of night during a dark fortnight reminds us all to come out of the cage of darkness of our ignorant minds so as to rediscover the spirit of Sivratri-Pazar-ni-Shrozhur in our community affairs. And yes, We Can!
Kul-Devis Forms. The mother Goddess of all worship of Shakti in Kashmir was Uma or Parvati and various forms/names of the Goddess were formulated for this Kul-Devi worship; mostly forms of Gaari/Durga. There also seems to be conflict of the forms of Kul-Devis, based on black complexion of idols, while Mahamayas, Stotras, Bhija Mantras attribute their form, in some cases fair complexion. In a query raised by a Kashmir Shavite scholar with one of our great Shavite scholars of recent times as to whether the Kul-Devis being of Krishna Yoni (dark complexion) indicated that they were manifestation of Goddess Kali, the answer by the great scholar was in affirmative. To me it is erroneous and it can attributed to the thinking of the Kashmir Shavite scholars, who adhered to Tantric Agam and not plain Shastra or Shakti Puja. Kali is one of the forms of the Mother Goddess and manifested for a particular cause i.e. She is said to have emanated form the bow of the Goddess Durga (Slayer of Demons during one of the battles between the divine and anti-divine forces). Kali is considered the 'forceful' form of the Goddess Durga and not vice versa. Krishna Yoni is reaffirmation of the fact that these Goddess are indigenous to inhabitants of Bharatvarsha, who themselves were dark skinned (Krishna Yoni) as confirmed by this Verse (345-50) from Niman Puranam indicating King Nia of Krishan Yoni (Translated); “Seeing in his midst, Nila, resembling a mass of black amantry.........” and; "O Nila of dark blue complexion, O lord of the gods, O king of the Naga’s (Verse 353)". Even Lord Krishna was dark skinned and given the name of Krishna Yoni and was even referred to as Kaile Krishna (It was Moghul King Akbar (1556-1605 AD) who instructed that a blush image be given to Lord Krishna’s idols. Was he repeating what Niman Puranam, written around 6th century AD, had ordained the color of original inhabitants; Dark Blue?}. New names for the Kul-Devis, like Shanka, Raghuna etc. mostly new to Brahmanic pantheon manifested; unique and peculiar to Kashmir. Since the Kul-Devis' main shrines were limited and catered for local populace, shrines of deities with other similar names came up in other areas and became more or less Gran Devta. Their manifestation, festival or dedicated days were either overlapping or common, which continues till today. This new dispensation enabled common man to carry out his normal duties (Karma) with routine of Kalupuja (worship of family deities) within his place and Kul-Devis closer to their locations. In this process of transition and refinement, Bhatarwas and Ganras also became divine companions to be worshipped with Shiva and/or Shakti (in the form of Kul-Devis) on important festivals and days.

Firming of Kul-Devi Worship. While Shavite religious doctrine given by Shavite scholars was reaching apical level, King Harsha (1089-1101 AD), whom Kalhan calls a 'Rakshasa', indulged in plunder and destruction of the shrines and desecration of Murta, a setback to the process of further development of Shavite Brahmanism in Kashmir, Jaisalundra (1285-55 AD), after the religious terror of Harsha, gave Vedic renovation programme in the form of 'Shakti-Upasana' (worship of Shakti) to Kashmir and many shrines were built or rebuilt. As continuation of Jaisalundra's rule, during the reign of Bopa Deva (1171-81 AD) the Brahmanas (Sadhaks) gained a great deal of supremacy but during the reigns of Raja Deva (1213-36 AD) an orgy of destruction and plunder was let loose upon them and many were killed or suppressed. This was another turning point reinforcing revised form of worship of Kul-Devis by common man in Kashmir. This was the time (12 century beginning 13 century) various Stotras (Shalokas), Bhija Mantras (seed or basic Mantras in verse form) and Mahatmyas in praise of deities; mostly Kul-Devis were composed. Mahatmyas (eulogising of deities in verse form) generally set forth the different legends connected with various places of pilgrimage, the merit to be acquired by their visits and the rites to be performed at each of the sites. They contain lore, legends and local traditions. Composed Stotras were the verses invoking the Gods/Goddesses and Bhija Mantras in their praise in musical mode. Many manuscripts of
these scriptures have been found, mostly in 19th century. A compendium of Mahatmayas named Bringeesh Samhita was composed by one Brahmin scholar Bringeesh Bhata of a south Kashmir village containing mythological, spiritual, religious and Tantric backgrounds regarding different Tirthas of Kashmir (Bringeesh village and Bringeesh Nath are known after his name). Whether it contained contents of extant Mahatmayas also is not known, but, Samhita covered most of the Tirthas of Kashmir. Many of the manuscripts have been recovered though many are either lost or had been recomposed by later scholars. Bringeesh Samhita, from the analysis of recovered manuscripts, seem to be work of the later part of 18th century, whose contents spread around beginning of 19th century, as it also contains details of Amarnath Yatra, which had been found around 1750-75 AD. It was in the last quarter of 19th century that Dr. Buhler's collection of some 16 Mahatmayas and later M.A. Steins collected some more. 51 Mahatmayas have been traced in Kashmir, most of them are from Bringeesh Samhita pertaining to shrines, which had come up during beginning of 1st millennium AD, till date of composition of Samhita.

Kal-Devis. Major shrines dedicated to Shakti (Kal-Devis in Kashmir are: Chakreshvari (Shikara), Kothy, Tripursundari Jwala, Shailputri and Bhadrakali. In fact there are many more Kal-Devis of smaller hamlets, villages in the valley, basically connected with the Goddesses of yore or of that particular geographical location. Some of these are: Uma Bazaar of Bhade Devi, Vijaya of Bijbehara, and Bala Devi etc. With the advent of Muslim rule in 14th century, Aryan Saraswat Bhrumas of Kashmir could just maintain basic Brahmanic philosophy, could not proliferate as conversions took away big chunk of its followers in the valley. With advent of Islam, Sufl-Rishi order also took root making a strange combination of Shaivism, Shaktism, Shitism, and Kal-Dev worship with admix of Sufl-Rishi cult.

Mubarak Mahara Chuv

They have shifted to new house in the recent past.*

Prof. C. L. Sapru to 13-B, Shatadhi Vihar (E-3), Sector-52, Noida (from Vaundhara Enclave, Delhi)
Tel.: 9871481177

Sh. P. N. Dhar to Flat No.: A-03, Harmukh Apartments, Agra-1, Greater Noida (from Noida)
Tel.: 2323117

Deepak Bhat to Flat No. 506, Tower-T2, Parvatiya Mahant, Indiranagar near Shipra Mall, Ghaziabad (from Shipra Suncity)
Tel.: 9419137204

A Goodwill Gesture

Khushi Medical Agencies, leading pharmaceutical distributors & stockists in Noida, have offered to make available the medicines of the companies they represent, at discounted prices to the needy community members living in Noida & surrounding areas. (See advt. at the back page.) For details contact:

Kuldeep Khushi
(Mobile No. 9810412185) or
Krishna Khushi
(Mobile No. 9811451313)

KMW A, Noida to hold fresh elections

as decided in its recent general body meeting held at Esco Cultural Centre premises in Sec-34. Dr. U. Kakru (Sec-50) & Sh. D. N. Rangoo (Sec-34) have been nominated as two Returning Officers to conduct the elections - likely to be held in November this year.

Join "Havan" in Faridabad

on the eve of Ram Navmi at Shankha Bhawan in Sector-17, Faridabad as per following programme.

Kashish Pooza (9th October 2007, Friday): 8:00 p.m.
Purna Aahut (20th October 2007, Saturday): 12:30 p.m.
This will be followed by the AGM of the Samaj & Naved at 1:30 p.m.
All are requested to join & get blessed.
For details contact: Kashmiri Sewek Samaj, Faridabad

Bitter Realities

Third Round Table Conference, chaired by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in Delhi on 24th of April '07 yet again proved to be a farce for the displaced community as none of the recommendations made by KP representatives, participating in these RTC’s till date have been incorporated in the draft declaration that was adopted at the end of the 3rd RTC. Three community representatives including Dr. Anil Bhaker, Dr. Ajay Chandra & Amanah Khan had given an in depth account of the proceedings at a joint press conference later in Jamnagar. Dr. Anil Bhaker & Dr. Ajay Chandra dissociated from the ‘partial’ draft declaration adopted in the last RTC by recalling that the 1st RTC was convened by the Prime Minster on 22nd Feb, '06 in New Delhi, followed by the 2nd RTC in May 2006 at Jamnagar with a view to find amicable solutions to the vexed Kashmir problem. Inside account revealed that DJB President Ashok Kajaria had proposed two minutes silence in memory of five members of Hindu minority community killed just before the 3rd RTC in a village near Rajauni in Jammu province which was rejected on the plea ‘why only for selected minorities’ whereas in RTC-1 two minutes silence was observed in memory of Muslims killed in the valley after a similar proposal was made by Mohd. Yousuff Tarigami.

From UK: European Parliamentary Report on Kashmir

Baroneess Emma Nicholson, Member, European Parliament and Rapporteur on Kashmir, presented her report on Kashmir, duly adopted by the European Parliament in April 2007, before the members of the KP community living in Europe after inaugurating a conference, summing up Jammu & Kashmir, held at the Day’s Inn in Naunton, Warwickshire, U. K. on July 14, 2007. The seminar organized by IEKF and attended by a large number of delegates from Europe, America and the members of Kashmiri diaspora living in UK, deliberated on the present situation and future prospects in J&K. The Report, adopted and passed by a powerful legislative body of European Union, addresses the concerns of the exclded Pandit community with sensitivity and appreciation of their present condition. It is for the first time ever, that an international body, with a legislative mandate, has vociferously advocated the cause of Kashmiri Pandits. While describing the community “as the forcibly displaced Pandits of the Kashmir Valley”, the Report urges Pakistan to “revisit its concept of democratic accountability in tackling the menace of terrorism.” On the issue of plebicicle in Kashmir, the Report denounces holding of the plebiscite in Kashmir by noting “that UN-laid down conditions for such a plebiscite have not been, and can no longer be met by Pakistan.” The situation has moved on.” And thus depunks Pakistan’s claim on Kashmir. Addressing the conference, Dr. Vijay Sazawal, Indo-American Kashmiri Forum, informed the participants that efforts were also on to get a similar legislation ratified under the US law and the matter was receiving due attention of the US senators. Besides the interactive session on the Report among the participants of the conference, many learned papers were presented in the conference, which included those presented by Dr. Vijay Sazawal; Mr. Anil Bhanot, General Secretary Hindu Council, UK; Mr. Suraj Sehgal, Chair of the World Council of Hindus; Mrs Krishna Bhan, President IEKF; Mr Anurag Tikou of Switzerland and Mr Richard Bell, First Secretary, Embassy of the United States of America in UK. An introductory presentation of KBC’s website on Kashmir manuscript heritage made by Mr. S. N. Pandita, was, however, a singular departure from the main political theme of the conference.

It may be noted that Pandim Kashyap & many Pandits including Dr. K. N. Pandita have played a key role in projecting expelled Pandits as “Internally Displaced” community at various international fora including the UN.

Saani Nechhipattiri Maenz

Some important dates / festivals to remember (Oct. 2007 - Dec. 2007)

1. 02-10-07 Tuesday Sahib Sapami (Rupa Bhawani Diwas)
2. 12-10-07 Friday Navrata bagns
3. 17-10-07 Wednesday '1st Kaarit' Sankranti
4. 19-10-07 Friday 'Aetham'Vratt (Durga Ashtami)
5. 20-10-07 Saturday 'Ram-Nawam' (Maha-nawami), Badarkali Yatra
6. 21-10-07 Sunday Vijay Dashmi (Dussehra)
7. 26-10-07 Friday Poornamashri
8. 09-11-07 Friday Diwali
9. 16-11-07 Friday '1st Megar' (Maag)- Sankranti
10. 18-11-07 Sunday 'Aetham'Vratt
11. 24-11-07 Saturday Poornamashri
12. 16-12-07 Sunday '1st Posh' - Sankranti
13. 17-12-07 Monday 'Aetham'Vratt
14. 20-12-07 Thursday Geeta Jyanti
15. 23-12-07 Sunday Poornamashri
16. 31-12-07 Monday Mahakali Jyanti

From our Roots

Need to re-discover Lal Ded?

M. K. Dhur

In March this year, a book titled "Lal Mere Dhristhi Main" by Dr. Bimla Raina, was released in a function held at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Delhi. The function was presided over by Dr. Shashi Shekhar Toshkani & attended by a galaxy of prominent community representatives & writers including Dr. B. L. Kaul and Sh. Motilal Pandit who also spoke about the contents of the book. Dr. G. L. Badam, Senior Consultant IGNCA, introduced the objectives and working of its Kashmiri chapter. The programme was conducted by Shri Brij Nath Belab.

Dr. Bimla Raina read out certain portions from the book. She also explained the reasons for her project of interpreting 'Lala's Vakhs' and how she could replace certain words in the 'Vakhs' which, according to her, had got distorted over the centuries due to non-availability of a written manuscript.

Review

Name of the book : "Lal Ded Mere Dhristhi Main"
Author : Dr. Bimla Raina
Pages : 291, Price : Rs. 400.00
Cover : Painting by Ghulam Rasool Santosh
Foreword : Dr. Bhushan Lal Koul
Published by : N.P. Search, B-6/62, Sadafganj Enclave, New Delhi

Lal Ded the 14th century poetess and follower of Shairvais is a cultural icon for all Kasmiri. She is revered by people of all faiths. Her poetic compositions, "Vakhs", have come down to us through word of mouth. There is no written authentic manuscript. Whatever is available in written form has been the work done by several scholars in 19th century and thereafter. This transference of "Vakhs" by words of mouth from generation to generation has been the cause of distortion or even change of words in number of "Vakhs". Consequently the meaning of several "Vakhs" do not agree with climatic conditions or socio-cultural situations or even agree with the real expressions of such an illuminated soul. It was but natural that a number of scholars started working on the "Vakhs" and tried to find the real words which would give an appropriate meaning to the "Vakhs". The meanings had to be consonant with the times and the philosophy which "Lala" followed.

This therefore, is not a very easy task. The person doing so is expected to be well versed with Shairva philosophy, linguistics and the social and cultural ethos of the times when "Lala" existed.

It seems Dr. Bimla Raina has put tremendous energy both intellectual and spiritual in finding out the words which go with the meaning and philosophy of the "Vakhs". However, it is possible that she might have errored at places. What is needed is to begin somewhere. A beginning has been made. Let the Kashmiri intellectuals and literatures join and debate each and every "Vakhs" so that a final text of "Lal Vakhs" is prepared and presented before the readers.

Dr. Bimla Raina deserves to be congratulated for her bold and courageous attempt for presenting a linguistic study of these "Vakhs".

(he writes is a former Principal of National High School, Srinagar & lives in Noida)

Donate liberally

for the ongoing construction

Socio-Cultural Centre
in Noida

Contribute in the form of A/c Payee Cheques/DD's favouring "Kashmiri Migrants/Welfare Association, Noida A/c 10477"

KM Welfare Association in Noida has made elaborate arrangements for complete "Mrityun Sangree" & the same is available at any given point of time.

Contact Person : Sh. M. L. Kaul, Nilgiri-1, Sector-34, Noida.
Tel. : 0120-2506283, Mobile : 9871485830

Homage

to all those Pandit Martyrs (30,000 approx) who have become direct or indirect victims of Islamic terrorism before 1989 & subsequently in exile, away from their roots, on the eve of 6th Kashmiri Pandit Balidan Divas (14th Sept.)

to Arun Kaul, a well known film maker, who left his mortal remains on 21st of July '07 in Delhi after a long battle with his physical being. He shot into prominence, within the community, for his immense contribution to Pandit society by serializing much of its rich legacy through 35 episode tele-serial "Kashmir Filie", broadcast by Doordarshan some years back.

A fan of Pandit Kashmir & recipient of many awards, including Sadbhavna Puraskar, presented to him by Motier Teresa, Arun Kaul had made critically acclaimed Hindi film Diksha & produced tele-serial Turning Point based on science & technology.

".... AKKH CSH TT BEYYI BH GHANZZAR MABBA ...."
Readers' Response

"...I am highly impressed by Paannyaar for its quality. You deserve all praise for bringing out this newsletter...
M. L. Bhat, Sec-39, Nolda

"...I found that Paannyaar is mind boggling...
Wg Cdr Rajinder Wanchu, Sec-25, Nolda

"...Thanks for Paannyaar. It is really very good.....
Dr. Vinod Choudhry, Sec-40, Nolda

Compliments I was honoured to receive the April-June 2007 issue of Paannyaar. You deserve all praise for the hard work and sincere efforts put in for the publication.

We the KP's from Bangalore congratulate you for the excellent content and quality of your esteemed newsletter. Personally, I have observed that your efforts have contributed significantly in bringing together various segments of our community, which is an achievement in itself.

Regarding launching of political party for the good of community, personally I am against it however I strongly feel that any such efforts should not be at the cost of diluting the functionings of Kashmiri Sanities across the country that are primarily social cultural organizations. You and your newsletter Paannyaar is doing a great service on preserving the values of Kashmiri culture besides highlighting the real icons among us who include the Padmashri Awardees. Keep it up. We will continue to try my best and keep the biradari especially the youths involved with the positive activities for the benefit of community.

Dr. Vijay Chellu, Bangalore

I have gone through the article of Mr. A. N. Kaul Sahib (April-June 2007 issue of Paannyaar, Pg. 7) in response to Dev. K. N. Pandita’s article "Kashmiri Pandits: A Moment of Introspection" (Paannyaar, Jan-Mar 2007 issue). Very attentively and many times. It would be too impertinent on my part to try to contradict or refute the opinion/statements of such an old, learned and experienced editor as Mr. A. N. Kaul Sahib. But we are living in the world’s largest democratic Nation and we have a right to expression. Hence, as a responsible KP Youth, I feel it’s my duty to present my views on the above subject.

It’s high time we should throw away the mask of hypochondry and old, lethargic spirit should transform into revolutionary spirit. Truly stated by author that “It has been our traditions, from times immemorial, to adore and follow various saints and sages”, but he forgets to mention that it was also our tradition to call our parents Bapji, Bhabi, Kahni etc. but, now in every house we see children calling their parents Papa, Mummy and Mom & Dadetc.

As young KP boy, I want to be candid, if there would be normalcy in Kashmir, I will never go back to Valley. Not even by any stretch of imagination, I think of flying back to Kashmir. And, I want to ask all my fellow friends all over globe, tell me will you go back or look for sustenance in other parts of world. Let’s be honest and accept the fact that Kashmir is not going to offer us anything in the present situation. We all know and understand it very well. I want to ask learned writer and other elders like him will they like to see their grandchildren’s future in the Valley or in the other parts of the world?

In his writeup, Sh. Kaul has further stated that “Please do not enter the domain that is not your’s”. Let me remind him that we are already living, breathing, eating and working in other domain. And, we are thankful to this domain for giving us education, sustenance, courage, respect and platform to live and scale the heights of success. This domain has given our women opportunity to "breathe the air of freedom" and perhaps many of them have now occupied top positions in corporate, MNCs and several organizations. Would they have scaled such heights and vision if they would have been living in Kashmir? We should not forget a cat with gloves can never catch mice.

The Pandit community must come out of its thousands of years old mindset. The reason is simple. The times are drastically different and unless they throw of the backlogs, they will be lost to history.

Pandit Kashmiri nostalgia is misplaced. The reason is that the Pandits have never been really conscious of what a life of servility and obscurity they have lived for past one thousand years. Actually, Dr. Pandita is ringing the bells of a political, social, economic and psychological revolution and reformation for Kashmiri Pandit community.

And a final word to my fellow members, dear friends an iron is hot let’s make it hotter by striking. World is open for us, so let’s explore its every corner and mount the ladder of glory. Remember, in an orchard of opportunities you can not wait for the fruits to fall down.

Aditya Rangroe

Upholding the Kashmiri legacy

SIR AUREL STEIN WEB SITE LAUNCHED

S. N. Pandita presenting salient features of the website

Kashmir Bhawan Centre, Luton (UK), in its ongoing mission to preserve and promote cultural heritage of Kashmir through myriad means and ways, three years ago, embarked on to showcase Kashmir’s past cultural glory by developing a web-site dedicated to Kashmiri legacy of Sir Aurel Stein—the famous editor of the Rejastorangani.

The much awaited website which was officially commissioned at the Indian High Commission, London in December 2003, was launched on-line at the British Library, London on July 17, 2007, by Baroness Emma Nicholson, Rapporteur of the Committee of the European Parliament on Kashmir and the Hon’ble Member of the European Parliament, in presence of a large gathering of scholars, intellectuals and other Stein lovers from Britain and Asian diaspora including the officials of the Kashmir Bhawan Centre, the Heritage Fund, and the British Library. Among those present included, Dr. Penny Brook and Dr. Antonia Moon of the British Library, Mrs. Krishna Blase, President (IEKP) Mr. Zeidur A. Ahmed, Chairman of the Dallow Community Centre, Luton, Dr. Irfat Lal Wango, Dr. Om Prakash, Dr. Valery Prakash, Mr. Shisham Kotwal, Mr. Surinder Kaul of the Kashmir Bhawan Centre, Dr. Pamplesh C. Gill, Dr. Sameer Kaul, Dr. S. N. Pandita, Dr. Vijay Dhar and eminent Indian Vedic scholar Mr. C. V. Gopinath.

The impressive ceremony, held in the Conference Centre of the British Library, began in a traditional Indian style by invocation renderings in Sanskrit, by young Apeksha Pandita, daughter of S. N. Pandita, the compiler of the website.

Inaugurating the function, Baroness Emma Nicholson, stated that “the website is an opportunity to reinterpret the past cultural glory of Kashmir as the legacy of the people in evolving a peace process here. Describing this region of South Asia “as a region of learning and scholarship in earlier times”, Baroness Nicholson, commenced the initiative taken by Kashmir Bhawan Centre in bringing Sir Stein’s Kashmiri legacy for a wider and greater public appreciation in view of the fact that it was important to address the issues of the identity of the people in the region to a lasting peace process. She declared that “the website of this nature helped in understanding the issues there apolitically.”

The website is a tribute to Sir Aurel Stein’s life and work as a Sanskrit scholar and a poignant memorial to his love affair with the land and people of Kashmir.

The website is based on the archival materials of Stein’s collection housed in the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford and other secondary native sources in Kashmir. It aims to bring before the world Stein’s Kashmiri legacy as a contribution to the history of world culture. Spread over 350 pages of text and about 300 complementing images, the website has been compiled & prepared by S. N. Pandita, the corresponding Kashmiri Bhawan Centre scholar and grandson of Professor Nityanand Shastri, one of the closest Kashmiri scholar friends of Sir Aurel Stein.

"The website for the first time ever features some select Kashmir Sanskrit manuscripts with their translation in English. It will be for the first time that the manuscripts written by the ancestors of the present day generation of Kashmiris will be seen by them. Besides, the website recognizes Sir Aurel Stein’s important role in forging a collaborative interface of scholarship between the Kashmiri and Western scholars during the 20th century. Rare and fascinating photographic images and facsimiles of various letters and documents capture the cultural essence of Kashmir and its native scholarship in the twentieth century which combine academic interest with aspects of community heritage," informs S. N. Pandita.

The launch conference also placed on record commendation for the exemplary service and visionary guidance rendered by Dr. S. N. Ganju the Founder Member and the Project Coordinator. In acknowledging his great services to the cause of Kashmiri heritage and promotion of its culture, all the participating members of the conference gave a standing ovation to Dr. Ganju.

Correction: Please read the name Anus Shali as Col Antar Shali on Page No.2 under the heading of “Upholding our Traditions” (Photo courtesy, Paannyaar issue-3).

The typographical error is regretted.

Editor

"SAHIBBO SATHT CHHAM ME CHANEE, WATTH ME ASLUECHH HAAVTUM"
From Our Neighbourhood & Around The Country

Jammu:
"Sanskrit Samman" was presented to Shirya Bhat Mission Hospital, a project of Poonam Kashmir, for its missionary work in the field of health & disease particularly for the poor & needy exiled community on 16th April. The award has been instituted by Prof. Amitabh Matteo, V.C. Jammu University who was also felicitated for his immense contribution in the field of education by the Trust on this occasion, in presence of a large number of intellectuals, writers, poets, social activists and other eminent personalities drawn from various fields.

"Aur Kaam Karna Padeaga"

As a part of its efforts to spread the message of peace & brotherhood Shashi Sahay: a well known Delhi based NGO organised an interactive session with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, on 1st May '07, in New Delhi. While speaking on the subject of "Moving Beyond War & Violence", Swami Ji informed that more than 5000 Himalayan cuisine initiates had undergone Art of Living course for transformation in Kashmir in the past.

"...Koshish Karne Rahena Padega. Aur Kaam Karna Padeaga...." replied Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in reply to a question: "Swami Ji, you are encouraging terrorists like Yaseen Malik & others, but, Kashmiri Pandits who are the actual victims of terrorism & have to leave the valley many years back have found no transformation in them": posed, during the interactive session, by Susil Vakil, editor, Koshish Gazette.

Among the prominent people present were A. N. Kaul Sahib, T. N. Vanchow, Ramesh Manvati, Kamlesh Vakil & organizers including Mrs. Kattan Kaul & Mrs. N. Rishi & Mr. Sushil Ansal, Chairman, Ansal API.

Rotarians Honour A.N. KAUL SAHIB

Shri A.N. Kaul Sahib was presented with a prestigious Plaque of Honour for his outstanding contribution to the humanitarian activities of the International Organisation in India on June 1st, 2007 at the jam-packed Sathya Sai Auditorium, New Delhi by Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Smt. Meira Kumar, in presence of Shri C. K. Jagnani, former Prime Minister of India and Smt. Rajashree Birla, Director, Aditya Birla Group.

The Group, Rotary, a well known worldwide organisation of business and professional leaders that renders humanitarian service, encourages high ethical standards in all vocations, and helps build goodwill and peace in the world. A recognition from Rotary is, therefore, considered as a rare honour.

Shri A.N. Kaul Sahib served in the Parliament of India (Lok Sabha Secretariat) for 40 years and retired in 1992 as Director, Parliament Library, Research, Reference and Information Service. Soon after his retirement, he was invited to work as a Consultant for Rotary Awards for Service to Humanity (India) Trust, an organization established by principal Rotary leaders in India, to administer the annual Rotary India Awards for Excellence in Humanitarian Service.

A social activist right from his student days in Kashmiri Sh, Kaul is one of the founder members of Kashmiri Samiti Delhi. He was instrumental in starting and editing the Kashmiri Sahachar through its transition from a cyclostyled sheet to the printed version and has remained its Editor-in-Chief from Nov. 1995 to May 2002. He is presently editor of NAAD (published by Aaks in New Delhi).

To encourage the use of Kashmiri Language among the community children, Sh Kaul has set up the "Kaul Sahib Memorial Award" in memory of his late wife as a couple of years back.

For his qualities of head & heart & affable nature, Shri A.N. Kaul Sahib can be proudly described as a living lamp of Poonamrat.

KP's observe World Refugee Day - 20th June

Baroda:
To highlight the Human Rights' violation of exiled community, Kashmir Sabha, Baroda & Roots-in-Kashmir jointly organized a seminar & screening of the documentary "...And the World Remained Silent". Main speakers at the seminar included Dr. Agnishekhar (Chairman: Poonam Kashmir), Dr. Shalilja Bhardwaj, BJP President (Baroda) Sh. N. V. Patel and Registrar of Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Col. A. V. Gupta & Sanjay Moza, GS, PK. The function was presided over by Hon. Mayor of Baroda, Sh. Sunil Solanki.

Earlier, RIK activists had organized a similar screening & panel discussion in Delhi to mark this day.

"..... AAHAN MAHARA BH CHUSS KASHUR BATH..... "

Deli (17-6-2007)

An initiative with a difference

Deeak, Akshay, Sathyaant & Evashish (L to R on the right side) receiving the Trophy.

For the first time in the recent memory, an initiative with a difference was taken by a group of prominent social activists of the community (under the banner of KPUF), including Dr. Ramesh Raina, Nagarjana Ganju, L. K. Raman, Sanjay Wali and Alka Lahori Handoo, to honour more than fifty young students of the community who have excelled in their board/CBSE (10th and 12th Std) exams this year. At an impressive function, the students were presented a beautifully designed glass trophy in presence of a large gathering including their parents and prominent Kashmiri Pandit representatives. Prominent among those present on the occasion also included A. N. Kaul Sahib, H. L. Muniyi, Ramesh Manvati, Vijay Saqi, Shihan Dada, Balkishan Sanyasi and S. N. Raina.

Among those honoured, also included four students from Noida including Devashish Chaudhary, Deepak Manvati, Satyavat Sopori and Akshay Monga (All having scored 99% and above marks in their 10th CBSE exam).


It is worth while to mention that Ms. Janvi Dhar (Faridabad) has secured 99% (495 / 500) marks in her 10th board exams this year - A record performance indeed.

The entire award presentation function was very ably anchored by another meritorious student Ms. Somecha Wali & concluded with a dinner served to the students & other participants present on the occasion.

Taazh meets the Old - Bridging the Gap

A personal visit to Lucknow recently on 2nd July, 2007, provided me an opportunity to call on Dr. B. N. Sharga, a living legend & described as a modern day "Khalan" for his immense contribution to Kashmiri Pandit society by recording in six volumes (Kashmir Pandit Ke Anmol Ratan), the life, times & the achievements of various Kashmiri Pandit stalwarts whose families had been forced by the circumstances to come out of their place of origin in Kashmir Valley in earlier times (as early as 17th century A.D. & onwards) prior to 1947.

69 year old Dr. Sharga is a former President of Kashmiri Pandit Sabha in Lucknow & former senior Vice President of AIKS. He has been actively involved with the community affairs for a long time in the past & has been conferred many honours including 'Man of the Year' by 'American Biographical Institute', North Carolina, USA in 1998. Dr. Sharga's ancestors had come out of the valley as early as in 17th century A.D.

Though not in good health, Dr. Sharga was very keen to exchange his views concerning the displaced Pandit community and expressed his deep happiness on being presented, by me, one copy each of the paintings of Goddess 'Sharifa & Sharida' (attributed in ethnic Kashmiri dresses). Dr. Sharga revealed that Goddess 'Sharika' was their Kul-Devi & that their family still continued to observe popular KP festivals like Hieath (Shivratri), Sauth, Navreh, Fana etc. even though they have lost their mother tongue.
Emerging Youth Icon

Apeksha Pandita

A student of Class X, DPS Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, is recipient of six National prizes (4 first prizes, one second prize & one third prize consecutively for six years), representing her school in inter-school Sanskrit recitation competition held every year by Bharti Vidya Bhawan on the 'National Sanskrit Day' (Gita Jayanti Celebrations) — a distinction unequalled in her age group till date at the national level. For this achievement she has earned a coveted trophy for her school a record in itself.

Apeksha is being invited to inaugurate the functions with her Vedie Sloka recitations at the stage in presence of high dignitaries and large crowds since the age of 7 years, both within the country & abroad.

Besides her cultural activity, she has maintained her academic performance too & is recipient of her school’s Scholar Badges. She has also earned the best prizes, in painting and writing competitions organized by different organizations.

Apeksha, daughter of Veena & S. N. Pandita lives in Dwarka, New Delhi. She is the only Kashmiri Pandit girl, presently in her age group, with such repertoire of rendering Vedie traditional recitations and faultless pronunciation of Gita Slokas orally by heart.

In recognition of her excellence in preserving oral traditions of Gita recitation with devotion and hard work and keeping alive the traditional cultural attributes of Kashmiri Pandit that are fast diminishing and even reeling from the memory of its present generation, Kashmiri community honoured Apeksha with a shawl conferred to her by Mr C. L. Godoo and Padamshri Shri J. N. Kaul at a function of KSS in Faridabad some time back.

From our Homeland

A glimpse of ’Shobha Yatra’ on the eve of Zarram-Sattam in Srinagar, organised by Kashmiri Pandits living in the valley, under the banner of ’Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti’

The Yatra, 1st in the last 18 years, started from Ganapiyar temple, went through various bazaars of the city, including Lal Chowk, amid tight security & culminated in Ganapiyar temple. It may be recalled that the traditional yatra used to start from the historical Sheetalnath temple prior to our forced exile in 1989-1990.

Besides some functionaries of KPSS including Sanjay Tickoo, Sanjay Saraf, Bhusan Bhatt, well known activist of the community Pt. Moti Kaul also participated in the yatra.

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"Those who merit understanding, find pleasure in its company, but those who are of it devoid can’t with merit happy be. Look, the bee comes from the forest to the lotus in the lake, but for the frog lives besides it that flower does no difference make."

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