

RNI Registration No. MAHMUL/2004/13413



मिलचार

Price: Rs. 20/-

Website: www.milchar.com ~ E.Mail: editormilchar@yahoo.co.in

Vol. IV, No. 4

Official Organ of KPA, Mumbai

July-August 2007



60 years Of Indepen- dence - 17 Years of Exile



Roots in Kashmir
(RIK)
at India Gate
on
15th August 2007

(Photo courtesy:
Aditya Raj Kaul)

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Project ZAAAN: Website : www.zaan.net

E-mail: projectzaan@yahoo.co.in

MILCHAR

Official organ of

Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai
(Regd. Charitable Trust. Regn. No: A-2815-BOM)

E.Mail: kpamumbai@yahoo.co.in



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Yearly Subscription Rs. 200
Life-time Subscription Rs. 2000

Advertisement Tariff

Matrimonial (upto 50 words)	Rs. 100
Each Extra word	Rs. 5
Back Cover	Rs. 1500
Back Inside Cover	Rs. 1000
Inside Page	Rs. 750
Inside Half Page	Rs. 500

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Message from the President - M.L.Mattoo

Between Ourselves



amaskar,
AIKS - The agenda for Jammu:
KPA could not be represented at AIKS executive & general meetings at Jammu between 17th and 19th August as I was down with a fractured leg.

However at Jammu, one of the major events was relaunch of **Martand** of yesteryear organized by All State Kashmiri Pandits Conference, Jammu, through the hands of Shri M K Kaw, President AIKS. KPA has already conveyed their good wishes to Shri Amar Nath Vaishnavi and Shri Hira Lal Chatta for this long awaited newspaper.

Another major point for discussion was the floating of a new political party. This suggestion has been hanging fire since Kolkata meeting. Some individuals were thinking that talking to a few individuals would have been enough to meet their ends, ignoring some of the oldest and important affiliates of AIKS. In this regard, KPA Mumbai sent their views through e-mails including the last one on 10.08.2007 to President & Gen. Secretary AIKS disagreeing with the whole issue. This note is separately published in this issue.

Khargar Project:

As on today our activity has been to see how this project comes up. By the time you receive this issue, we would have reached laying of 1st floor slab and also proceeded to casting of Lift Well,

which requires lot of care at the time of water proofing procedure.

Some more donors have come forward and our sincere thanks to all of them.

1. Swami Laxmanjoo Trust (Rs.50000-1st installment).
 2. Smt. Ratan Rani Fotedar (Rs.2000)
- I humbly request you all to come forward with your donations and help us realize this great dream.



Khargar Project is calling you. Please send your donation cheques immediately

Term of present Board of Trustees is already over on 1st April 2007 and fresh election for new BOT members will be held in the month of October, 2007. Due intimations will follow and my earnest appeal to Biradari members would be to come forward as voluntary successors to complete the stupendous task of Khargar Project which is in hand today.

Launch of 'härvan' - the net-journal of Project ZAN :

KPA congratulates Shri Maharaj Krishen Raina, our Editor 'Milchar' for launching Project Zaan's net journal 'härvan' on 15th August, 2007. It is a trilingual magazine dedicated to Kashmir and Kashmiris. The journal is edited by Shri M.K.Raina along with Shri T.N.Dhar as its Consulting Editor. It may be noted that 'här-van' is the first KP net-journal to be launched to reach KP readers internationally. **

Editorial - P.N.Wali

‘härvan’ - A New Star

This independence day, a new star ‘härvan’ has appeared in the journalistic horizon of Kashmiri Pundits. Question arises as to what is new about it. Much.

Kasmiri Pundits have already a number of journals being published from various centers. I suppose the earliest was published from Lukhnow more than a century back (Bahar-e-Kashmir). In Kashmir, we lived with Martand for decades. To compete with it Joyti was published in sixties and seventies. The KP Diaspora immediately after independence created sizable pockets of KPs in places like Jammu, Delhi, Mumbai etc. These pockets of the community felt the need to communicate with each other, also relate themselves to their origin. Thus came publications like Milchar from Mumbai, Koshur Samachar from Delhi, Vitasta from Kolkata, Khirbhawani Times from Jammu, etc. Post exodus, many more have come from places like Chandigarh, Faridabad and others, as the concentration of the community reached a critical mass at such places. The most notable and perhaps also successful of these have been Aalav from Bangalore for the last few years. A super journalist –Shri R K Mattoo, who is its editor and also the president of association in Banglore, blesses it. The official organ

of AIKS has also been around intermittently

The most successful in circulation and financial standing has been Koshur Samachar.

In the early days of wilderness of



a displaced community people started looking for cue as to what is happening. They looked to Samachar. Its matrimonial became a big draw when the traditional channels of seeking alliances where lost. At one stage even its content tended towards excellence till sycophancy took away some of its glamour.

Running a journal is time consuming and a costly proposition. Very few are able to generate fund enough sustain themselves like Koshur Samachar does. Most

often issuing periodical is a labour of love of some devoted guys and obviously there is no monitory compensation. When such persons are overtaken by their own problems and preoccupations, the publication gets effected. Thy are not able to maintain schedules. The quality suffers. Then there is the problems of logistics like composing, proof reading, printing, address labeling, franking and dispatch. These make sustaining a publication a daunting task.

In light of the above 'här-van' is new

Project Zaan was meant to bring out what Kashmir is and what it meant to be a Kashmiri. 'här-van' will do it on bigger canvas.

in concept and design. It is an E-magazine. It comes to you through your E-mail, provided you have registered your mail address with them. There are no charges for registration. It employs the latest information technology in reaching you irrespective of what part of the globe you happen to be, as long as you have access to a computer. When issuing a normal magazine we are not sure what interests a particular reader, if any. In an E-magazine the reader has the choice in downloading only that, which interests him. He can choose the type size that suits him

Conceptually, 'här-van' is an extension of the Project Zaan earlier undertaken. Project Zaan was meant to bring out what Kashmir is and what it meant to be a Kashmiri. 'här-van' will do it on bigger canvas. It will therefore deal with all aspects of our culture viewed through geography, history, traditions, customs, literature (poetry, prose, drama etc) and philosophy.

We wish the new venture all success. We feel they will supplement what Milchar itself is enduring to do. **

Kashmiri Nursery Rhyme

वदवुनि गोबुरो
ओश मो त्राव
कावन त्रॉवुय
र्यकु अड पाव
अँड हन थव चंदस
स्व खे वंदस
अड हन थव ऑलिस
स्व खे र्यतुकाँलिस

They Left Us

Shri Babuji Jialal Kaul, father of Shri D.B.Kaul, originally resident of Bana Mohalla, Narpirastan, Srinagar, Kashmir, and resident of A3/6/1, Millennium Towers, Sector-9, Sanpada, Navi Mumbai, left for his heavenly abode on 12th July 2007.

Shri Pearey Lal Mathu, Retired Dy. Director of Industries, J&K State (Son of Late Pt. Anand Joo Mathu) originally resident of Tankipora, Srinagar left for his heavenly abode at 166-H, Durga Nagar, Talab Tillo, Jammu on 25th July, 2007.

Arun Kaul, the noted Kashmiri film maker and screenplay writer and KPA life member, left for his heavenly abode in New Delhi on 21st July 2007 after prolonged illness.

Capt. Piyarelal Wazir (member of KPA) husband of Smt. Piyari, son of Late Balbadar Wazir, brother of Shri Omkar Nath, Mohan Lal, Maharaj Kishen, Daya Kishen, Smt Tosha Raina and Father of Rajiv & Rajesh passed away suddenly on 22nd July 2007 at his Lokhandwala residence.

KPA conveys its deep condolences to the bereaved families.

Kharghar Donations

Swami Laxmanjoo Trust


1st installment - Rs.50000

Smt. Ratan Rani Fotedar

Rs.2000

Reaching Out - S.P.Kachru

TRACK & TRUTH

 ne who answers a point even before having heard, brings embarrassment of folly to himself. That any truthful information & knowledge are unmistakable key to success is well known to all. Whenever someone tries to bypass the icy terrain of semi-truths, he does not find success in conclusion. Truth, therefore, is like an indestructible plant, one may try to bury it under a rock but it is bound to prevail when the time comes. Education, upbringing and the degree of resultant acceptance of inter-personal values and concepts surely make up a major part of the true

Education, upbringing and the degree of resultant acceptance of inter-personal values and concepts surely make up a major part of the true character that we display in day to day life.

character that we display in day to day life. But none of us is in anyway immune to surprises since never may the difficulties and imponderability encountered in the search for truth discourage us from getting to the bottom of the obscure, in order to avoid falling foul of any deception or illusion. The closer we approach the truth, all the more thoroughly do we lay foundations for a well established verdict, a formal decision on the next turn to take. That may apply to interpersonal relationships too, in the attempt to solve the professional problems or even to forming an opinion on political issues which may seem vital to our future. It is common

knowledge that truth becomes questionable whenever it becomes a political issue, at that point one is surely prone to add that manipulation of truth, the systematic dissemination of semi-truths or even malicious lies, does not only open the less pretty side of politics to public view, notwithstanding the fact that politics is not considered to be most reputable of occupations in our country by the vast majority. Even the so called yellow press and of course the unavoidable multiplicity of TV channels are already well known for the discrepancy between their highly profitable sensational headlines, breaking news, trumped campaigns, sting operations and behind the facade facts.

The moral stature of a Mahatma Gandhi may be light-years away from such business practices but it would nevertheless be much more recommendable starting point for more peaceful future. Gandhi ji is known to have stated that without truth it is impossible to apply any principles or regulations in one's life, which may further mean to convey that without truth there can be no peace. Truth is not made up of proofs but in reduction towards eventual simplicity. We may not all finally succeed in that quest but as that popular saying reminds us "Truth may go under now and again but never will it drown." □□



chal duur chalen hamdam, is des ko tyagen ham.

Kashmiri poetry, devotional as well love songs, is musical and melodious. Some verses:

1. Thavas pyaall bEry bEry yiyam naa su salay

Panun paan pEErith bl karhas havalay ... pholith aav gulaall dosan peTh, vajan manz, dilas dag kami kuy roTuth kya malaalay

2. zItSI tI IEhar paanIvEEEny, naallmEty kyah karaan, dur tI kosam haraan, maay tI lool bEEgraan

graavi graavI kyah karaan, zItSI tI IEhar paanIvEEEny

3. husun paanay tshaayi ruuzith loolu kuy samanI kya, maslahat cha gardishas manz vantI natI paymanI kyah paan zaalun bEd kathaa chhanI yii magar andeshi chum, gath kErith nuuras pazii sEErii banan parvaanI kya vuzImalan hund raks Diinshith hoosh Dol sahib dilan...

4. sharadaa kan thaav myanen naadan, pEEry pEEry lagye mEEj tsarnan manI Eenas kaastam khay, doy tI dly tsalem ganem pray...

The prose piece at the end of the volume is a historic document which was addressed to the Qazi of his village and his childhood friend. Pandit Vidyalaal Kaul, a widely respected teacher of the area, writes, barely after spending the first Hot Summer away from home, with nostalgia, anguish, melancholy and concern. At the ripe age of 80 years he had been driven out of his home and he found himself helpless:

“apni jagah sochta huun ki aakhir log mujhe maaren ge kyon, main ne un ka kya bigara; gariibii men din kaate, dost-o-ahbab kaa bharosa raha aur kadam barhtaa gayaa. Meeraa kasuur kya

hai?... ab main huun aur yahaan ki tapti huyi galiyaan...aarzuu hai ki maut ke pahle ek baar apne watan ‘kashmir’ ko jii bhar ke dekh luun, uunche uunche pahadon ki marmari chotiyon aur sarsabz-o shaadaab ghatiyon ki sair karuun...meri khwahish hai ki zindagi ke aakhri din apne aabaayi gaan men hii kat jaayen, sach puuchiye zindaa rahne kii zamaanat chahata huun, kya mil sakti hai?

Gariib aldayaar naachiiz
(Vidyalaal Kaul)



NEWS MAKERS



Amita Fotedar (Kaul)

Mrs. Amita Fotedar (Kaul), daughter of Dr. B.K.Fotedar and wife of Shri Vishal Kaul of Jammu has been awarded Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Environmental Sciences by the Jammu University, Jammu. She worked on the topic ‘Ecological Studies of River Sewa and its catchment - District Kathua, J&K’ under the supervision of Dr. Anil Kumar Raina, Head of the Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Jammu.

KPA congratulates Dr. Amita on her achievement.

The great king, Sultan Zainul Abidin's chief glory was his tolerance towards his Hindu subjects. He manifested every desire to repair the wrongs inflicted on the Hindus by his father, Sultan Sikander. Zainul Abidin fostered the study of Hindu literature and philosophy. He also got Mahabharata and Rajatarangini translated into Persian language. Scholars, who crept into the Valley of Kashmir from Bukhara - the holy city of Muslims in the medieval times, found Kashmir as the best place to propagate Islam. Kashmir, which once was a great seat of Buddhism & Saivism, became the center of Islamic studies. With the influx of Muslims in this miraculous Valley, the trade & commerce of Kashmir received tremendous boost. Home industries of Bukhara and Samarqand - stone polishing, stone cutting, bottle making, window cutting and gold beating; were introduced in the Valley. The merchants from Kashmir, along with their merchandise, used to proceed to Yarkand, Kashgar, Samarqand and then Bukhara. Silk, musk, carpets, hides, herbs and paper were the chief exports to Khurasan from Kashmir. The art of paper-making came to Samarqand from China, and then it was introduced in Kashmir. Carpet weavers from different parts of Central Asia were welcomed in the Valley. These merchants and artisans made a deep impact on the society of Kashmir. The cultural ties were strengthened. The commercial relations were also established with Kashgar & Yarkand, but there were little cultural intercourses with these principalities. The shawl & silk industries of Kashmir depended much on the raw material imported from Kashgar and Tibet. Architecture of

medieval Kashmir borrowed much from Central Asia. Brick work had become special feature and stone was replaced by timber. Jamia Masjid, Khangah-i-Mulla, Mausoleum of Zainul Abidin's mother and Mosque of Madin Sahib in Srinagar are specific specimens of architecture. The fascinating Valley of Kashmir has great social and cultural affinity with Central Asia. Now after the crumbling down of Soviet empire, this traditional relationship can provide a commendable base and even open new vistas of mutual reciprocity between India and the Central Asian states. NOTES:-1. "Khanates" were the principalities of Central Asia ruled by "Khans" - the title of rulers and officials in the 19th century. These Khanates included Bukhara, Khiva and Khoqand. Now these territories contour Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirghizia and Kazakhstan. There is also the Chinese part of Central Asia - Sinkiang. 2. "Hindukush" is formed of two parts: Hindu + Kush. "Kush" is the later form of "Koff" of old Persian from which we have got "kooh" in Iranian and "koh" in Indian pronunciation. Thus the word means Hindu koh or Indian Mountain, which divide India from Central Asia including Afghanistan. The earlier reference to the range of mountains is to be found in Metrologica of Aristotle under the name Parnasos. After the Alexander's invasion of India in 326 B.C., the Greeks called it Paropamisus and then as Indian Caucasus. Ibn Batuta, who crossed the mountain range in A.D. 1334 on his journey of India says that the name Hindu-Kush or Hindu-Killer is derived from the fact that so many of Indian slaves died on the passage of this

RETURN OF THE BRAHMIN = 5

The 'Mahabarat-Yudd' is inferred to have been an event, which has taken place towards the end of ' Dwaper- Yug' and the beginning of ' Kali-Yug'. It is an event therefore about five thousand years+ or the beginning of Iron Age { {Late-Holocene}.

In Kashmir, *Vitastians* i.e. – a unique assimilation of *Shardian-Saraswat* Brahmin population was an established civilization. They had by now observed the constellations and observed also the Great Bear (Sapt Rishi] and perhaps known the implication of pole star.

The installation of geometrically shaped 'Tulmul Spring' was in commemoration of 'Sapt-Rishi Samwat' the Sapt-Rishi calendar. The Rig-Vedic hymns were already making the vibes. Kashmiri Brahmin, as introduced and discussed by now turns out to be a distinguished breed of men – women of yester years. They love, worship emulate the Nature. Their established belief has been universal oneness. In this kind of precept every thing melts down to integral brotherhood where the Nature was a great support – rather the only support. To these people by now Life was never an unexplained phenomenon.

God is assumed to create, not without being part of its Creation. Thus

it is an intrinsic system in the 'visible invisible' syndrome of objective world in which nothing stands untouched, unguided, uncontrolled or unobserved by

its Creator. What we may define as God, it is *an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent entity*. An integral definition thus brings God very close to humans who enjoy the unique power of introspectiveness. It involves Humans and God equally.

Being introspective, Man is ever in state of search. It is because he is given to play second fiddle in the equation of creation. Man is but a Creator too, and he knows it well. The 'chick-egg' riddle may not need any complicated explanation. Man created the 'God Figure' who out of itself had created the suniverse and His prototype the Man. In this riddle it hardly matters whether the 'egg' or the 'chick', each is for the other and not without. Further the 'Time' as a factor in the equation of creation, has a unique obligation, in which the Creation has to be a 'singular event'.

Therefore the 'riddle' looses importance if any. Subsequently to the Creation the objective world is set on a long and an evolving journey and 'series of events'.



Any exercise of will on the part of the Creator or its prototype the Human Being is bound to turn into seed and hence an event in Creation. Time automation is thus also a function of the Cosmic Will.

Remembering Roots - P.L.Raina

Revisiting Kashmir after 17 years The way ahead - 2



Ashrams :

One could get time to visit *Ishber Ashram* near Nishat and *Ramakrishna Ashram* near Shali store. Both the Ashrams are well kept with CRP personal posted there. Ramakrishna Ashram has added a new guest house for its devotees and a large hall for serving food on special occasions. Pooja of Bhairwa at Ishber and Shiv linga at RK mission gave us great satisfaction. A few days back Shri Shri Ravi Shanker Ji prayed at Ishber Ashram when he was on a brief visit to Kashmir.

Development works :

As a result of huge inflow of funds from govt. and non govt. sources, Kashmir looks different now. Right from airport one can see the change. Airport is a modern one which can handle about 20 incoming and outgoing flights with peak traffic flow of about 20000 passengers. Srinagar city has doubled in area with constructions every where. Railway line from Qazigund to Baramulla is nearing completion. Additional bridges have been built on river Jehlum. To get an idea of development works there were just two cement factories in 1990 producing hardly 600 tons of cement per day. At present there are seven large and small cement factories producing about 7000 tons of cement per day and another four large scale factories are under construction which will add about 6000 tons per day. There are hardly any power cuts. All the power from Dulhasti power project of Kistwar which was

commissioned recently has been diverted to Kashmir as there are no transmission lines for transfer of power to other parts of India. Many new English medium schools have come up including DPS.



The sad part of story is that Srinagar city is heavily fortified, growth of city is very erratic with no planned development, roads are narrow even in Rajbagh where land prices range plus one crore per kanal of land, Dal Lake has shrunk in size resulting in overcrowding of houseboats, even River Jehlum has been reduced to a stream. The standing walls of burnt down buildings are a reminder of the faded glory of City.

Life in Kashmir :

Month of May when we visited Kashmir is usually full of excitement with lot of tourists from India, which involves people of all walks of life to focus on doing good business. Thus everybody seemed to be praying to militants to hold guns for some time. While Muslims and Sikhs are fully enshrined in Kashmir, the few KPs (less than 5000) look like lost in wilderness. The prosperity of people is very visible from the houses they live in, the number of cars they own, the dress they wear and the food they eat at restaurants.

Our Prospects of returning to Kashmir : Under international laws, we as aborigines of Kashmir, have a right

of the temple. This time the hillock was given the name Gopadari or Gopa Hill. This name and Jeshteshwara for the temple prevailed till the Kashmiris dedicated the temple to the sweet memory of Adi Shankaracharya, who visited Kashmir and stayed at the temple complex. This is confirmed by Tarikh-i-Hassan (pp.80-82, Vol.I), although there is some confusion about the dates of Adi Shankaracharya's visit to Kashmir. However, after the dedication, the temple and hill came to be known as the Shankaracharya temple and hill after the great sage and scholar from the south of the country. After the first repairs to the temple carried out by King Gopaditya, King Lalitaditya (697-734 A.D.) repaired it. The original Shiva Lingam in the temple, along with over 300 precious idols of gods and goddesses therein and other structures and residential quarters around the temple, were destroyed by Sultan Sikandar (the iconoclast), who ruled Kashmir between 1389 and 1413 A.D. King Zain-ul-Abidin (1420 to 1470 A.D.) repaired the temple and its dome, which had been damaged by an

at Durganag Temple Complex, carried out some repairs to the temple. The Maharaja of Indore electrified the temple during the forties of this century and installed a dazzling flash-light on its top, making it conspicuous during the night also. The temple was originally connected with Vitasta (Jhelum) near the temple of Goddess Tripursundari on the right bank of the river, now known as Shurahyaar (Shudash Dashyar) by a finely sculptured stone stair overlooking the present Badami Bagh Cantonment of Sonawar. This flight of steps was dismantled by King Jehangir and the stones were used by his queen, Nur Jehan, who built a huge mosque, known as Pathar Masjid near Zaina Kadal in Srinagar. The mosque was never used for prayers by Muslims (Sunnies) as it had been built by a woman belonging to the Shia sect. The temple was approached via a bridle path from the Durganag Temple at the base of the hillock. This path was later electrified by the Dharmarth Trust. In early seventies, however, when the Central government, at the persuasion of the State

The Maharaja of Indore electrified the temple during the forties of this century and installed a dazzling flash-light on its top, making it conspicuous during the night also.

earthquake, as a gesture of goodwill towards the Hindus of Kashmir, who had been persecuted by his father and grandfather. Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-uddin the Governor of Sikh ruler of Punjab (1841-1846 A.D.) also repaired the temple in his own time. Later, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the second Dogra ruler of Kashmir repaired the temple once again and installed the present Lingam in it. Later, a saint from Nepal and Swami Shiv Rattan Gir Saraswati, who had his seat

Government, put up the TV tower on the Dal Lake side of the hillock, a road was constructed to connect the tower with the lake near Nehru Park. Later, the Dharmarth Trust laid a flight of about 599 chiselled stone-steps, with side walls and landings, to connect the TV tower with the temple. That way the temple was lately approached both via the bridle path starting from Darganag temple and via the TV tower road.

**

contemporary India. Many of them will find entry into financial organizations and mass media structures of the country and our emerging entrepreneurs will become components of its commercial and economic machine.

Thus by next two or three decades, the community will have put under wrap its saga of exile and exodus: it will have overcome the nightmare of discrimination and suppression. This community cannot escape the ordained role of becoming frontline planners and builders of new India.

But this is not the end of our struggle. Once the inherent potential of dynamism is unleashed, the community will look beyond the shores and climes. Our advance columns have already set their feet on foreign lands. We need to create an urge and a burning desire in our youth to transcend geographical boundaries or the constraints on freedom of movement. No land is foreign to us, no territory is forbidden to us, especially the developed world. On the Indian soil, we may have hurdles in maintaining our identity, but on a foreign soil, all necessary conditions are available to create, perpetuate and propagate our true identity. This is because we have all the requisite qualifications to make us the true citizen of the world. We are the globalized community in an era of globalization. These traits in our character need to be exploited adequately.

It is futile to waste our time and energy in running after the Indian political class for the amelioration of our condition as it is today. We are nobody's vote bank because we are numerically insignificant — a non-entity — and economically bankrupt. Therefore, for them we are a liability, a stinking lot.

Being a pariah no political group in this country would own us, adopt whatever modus of servitude we may.

The Indian media considers it a sin to talk a word about us except in negative terms. The saffronites exploit us, the khadiites despise us, and the reds club us with the bourgeoisie.

We ask for Homeland — a proposition more in the broader interests of the Indian nation state than in ours as an ethnic group: we ask for representation in conflict resolution dialogue as victimized people: we ask for representation as a minority: we ask for representation in power sharing, law making and nation building mechanisms. Does it mean anything with those holding the reins of power? Does the presence of a miniscule non-Muslim entity in a predominantly Muslim and radically Islamized society mean anything? Don't we see and understand that a "secular democratic" Indian Union has not only literally but practically accepted a non-secular, Islamized Kashmir as its now much fragile "inseparable part", provides frugal funding for the perpetuation of a mini - Pakistan at home, and, in the process, pockets tons of humiliation hurled into its face by the beneficiaries of its largesse? Which of India's political parties is secular or democratic in the context of the situation of our community?

Therefore, our reasonable demands like 'homeland', 'representation' etc. ironically makes us jokers not only in the eyes of the stalwarts of Kashmir fundamentalism-terrorism but also in the eyes of the Sultans of Delhi. I no more want to mislead my community members. I no more want them to be the daydreamers. It is not at all 'maej

Kasheer' (Mother Kashmir) for us. Kashmir, as the Srinagar-New Delhi camaraderie plan, is the other name of ignominy and servility for us. Let us come out of a great deceptive notion.

A thousand years - old servility has broken our spirit. Even in exile, where our tormentors may not reach us, we remain servile to powerless and faceless gods. If our gods and goddesses had any power, they would have defended themselves. They could not. They have never had power except that of mesmerizing us and intoxicating us with utter servility, slavish mentality and Buddhist escapism. Let me be frank and forthright. A new pattern of the hangover of that servitude is visible in the behaviour of the community in exile. In Jammu in particular where we have a concentration, enormous money is wasted in the building of ashrams, shrines and institutions after this or that person giving them the new epithet of "bubs". One wonders why we are going along a regressive and not a progressive path. Why don't we build technical schools, polyclinics, craft centres, nursing schools and homes, computer learning centres, institutions for preparing students for professional and competitive exams, gyms, play grounds, indoor games studios and the like? What are these ashrams going to do for the destitute community? Remember not gods and goddess, not mendicants, recluses and 'bubs' make the destiny of a people. It is the wise, the visionary, and the courageous leadership that shapes the destiny of a people. Worship not their name or their fame; worship the ideals they have set for us. The ideals mean dynamism, objectivity, and pragmatism. Shaivism is fine; a subject for understanding and research but not

for submerging our self in its placid waters.

We cannot move forward if we keep our womenfolk deprived of their share in new thinking. They are the foremost who need to be educated into a new process of thought and action. We need to engage them mentally in search for new vision and movement. They have to come out of the customary mindset and men folk need to play their honest part in that exercise.

Secondly, our womenfolk have to break the shackles that make them the slaves of the kitchen. It means they have to implement a changed agenda of food habits of the community members and the dress regime of their own class. Vegetable sandwiches must replace plateful of rice and the kitchens should close at 8 PM in the evening to allow time for our womenfolk to walk, read, discuss, medicate and introspect. More time has to be allotted to outdoor activity, physical exercise community life and social engagements. Our womenfolk will meet the first ray of liberation the day they say good-bye to the damned *sari* and the despicable *kameez* and *shalwar* (the legacy of the Pathan rule) as the common dress. As long as they remain bandaged in a seven-meter long obnoxious bundle of textile, they are tied down in fetters of slavery. Our womenfolk's dress should be the same as is used by the Jewish women, viz. trousers and the top.. Keep your hands free to work, to move, to brandish and to hit a miscreant. You need not a *dupattha*. It enchains you. Throw it away into the garbage and then when you walk remember what Tagore told the Bengali women. "Look straight into the eyes of the people when you walk". That gives you power, confidence, boldness and individuality.

*Short Story - T.N.Dhar 'Kundan' **

WHO CARES?

Giridhari got his Masters Degree in English. He was very fond of this language and had acquired a good command over it. Although he had more interest in classics yet he was well versed in English literature as such. From Chaucer and Milton to Pope and Dryden and from Shakespeare and Ben Johnson to Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats as also Eliot, Yeats and other architects of English literature, all were at the tip of his tongue. He would quote them, use their idioms and phrases and admire the thought contained in their writings. He had particularly specialized in 19th century English poetry. With this profound knowledge and depth of study he was a fit person to undertake research in any aspect and work for obtaining a Ph.D. from some reputed university. Any professor of repute would have loved and felt honoured to take him in his tutelage and be his guide for the research work. Unfortunately this was not practicable due to his family circumstances. He had lost his father. He was married and thus had his mother, his wife and himself to feed. So he decided to seek some employment. A lecturer's post in the local Intermediate or Degree College would have ideally suited him but he could not get that job. He applied for a number of posts, from an accounts assistant to a clerk, from a supervisor to an assistant and from a police constable to a forest guard but did not succeed. He was a Hindu and that toa Brahmin and there

was no reserved quota in the jobs for him. So it became very difficult for him to seek employment in any office or department. He did think of moving out of Kashmir and was sure to get some work at Delhi, Lucknow or Chandigarh but the greatest hindrance was that there was no one in whose care he could leave his old mother and young wife. He was giving tuitions in the mornings and evenings and during the day he would knock at the doors of various departments, meet officers and beg for a job of any kind that would provide his family and him some succour. He was by now so desperate and dejected that he was ever prepared to get a No for an answer. A refusal, a negative answer and even an insulting response would not bother him. Along with his file containing the certificates, diplomas and degrees he would always carry a book with him. He would wade through he pages of the book while waiting outside the office of a Secretary, a Director or any other dignitary who he was going to approach for a job. He never bothered whether the job he was seeking was suitable or unsuitable, befitting the knowledge he had acquired or even remotely connected with English literature that he had so assiduously learnt and mastered by burning the midnight oil.



One fine morning he came to know that there were some vacancies of

** Translated from his own Kashmiri story 'Bebuj'.*

Primary school teachers to be filled immediately. He took his file, which by now had worn out by constant rubbing, opening and closing, and his best friend, a book and rushed to the office of the Inspector of Schools. He filled in an application form and handed it over to the Receipt-Clerk along with a Ten Rupee note as his 'Bakhshish', without which he would not have entertained the application form. He was asked to come to the office the following day when he would know the fate of his application. When he was about to leave, the peon on duty came behind him and demanded some money on receipt of which he would tell him the way to get a favourable reply. Giridhari paid him one rupee and he told him the address of the 'Bara Babu', the Head Clerk, Mr. Mohiuddin, whose palm needed to be suitably greased to get the appointment order.

Giridhari went back to his home. He needed at least an amount of Five hundred Rupees to pay to the Head Clerk. Luckily he collected some amount from the boys he was teaching at home and some from his wife, who had saved a little money from the day-to-day expenses. The deficiency was made good by borrowing from a local shopkeeper. With this money arranged, he set on his visit to Mohiuddin at his house in Ali Kadal, early next morning. On the way he also purchased some fruits to be placed before him so that he gives a favourable reply. On reaching the house of the Head Clerk he saluted him and requested him to help not on the consideration of his merit, which he had but which was of no consequence, but on the consideration that he had an old mother and his wife dependent on him without any other source of income.

Mohiuddin was impressed that this man had offered money without asking and had also not come empty-handed without any gift; he had brought some fruit. Outwardly he told him that all this was not needed and that he should not have taken the trouble. To this Giridhari replied politely that this was for the children and was just nothing significant. Mohiuddin remarked, 'this is what I like of Kashmiri Pandits. They are wise and courteous too and do not pay a visit to any house empty handed.'

He promised that he would try his best to help him and asked him to call on him the next day in his office in the afternoon. Next day at about 11 a.m. the matter of making appointments was discussed by the Inspector of Schools with his Head Clerk and the final list was drawn up. Since Giridhari was a Hindu, there was a lot of debate and discussion about his candidature. At one time the boss even made a remark that he was over qualified for the post. Mohiuddin had an obligation to find a way out to adjust him somehow because of the money he had already accepted from him but his religion was a great hindrance. But the 'Bara Babu's have their own ways. They are capable of twisting the rules, finding loopholes and advancing sound reasoning to substantiate what they propose to do. He made a sudden suggestion, 'Sir, why not put him in a single-teacher primary school in some remote village, no other person would like such a posting?' The Inspector agreed and this pleased Mohiuddin, whose pocket contained the crisp currency notes offered by Giridhari the previous day.

In the afternoon when Giridhari came to the office he was given the

appointment order. On seeing the place of posting he was rather disappointed. It was a good one and a half-hour bus ride from his house to that village. Besides it meant additional travel expenditure as well, which he could ill-afford. Mohiuddin consoled him saying, 'you go and join there. After sometime I shall shift you to a nearer place. After all I am here to help you'. What other alternative he had? He heaved a sigh, took the appointment order and left for his home with the resolve that from the following day he would take up his post. After all he had got a permanent government job. The staff in the inspectorate had a hearty laugh as soon as he turned his back. This laughter did reach his ears too but he had to swallow this insult as well. His need had by now made him immune to such insults. Gone were the days when a 'Batta', Kashmiri Pandit was given due regard and respect by one and all because of his character, scholarship and demeanor. Giridhari conveyed the good news to his mother and wife. They were happy that after a great effort and running about he had finally succeeded in getting a government job. The place of posting did dampen their spirits but even then they offered prayers at the local temple and prepared 'Tahar', the customary yellow rice, and distributed it among neighbours. Next day Giridhari travelled by bus to the village Sempur, met local villagers, got the one room school opened and started the school. He enjoined upon the villagers the advantages of education and ensured that they send all their children of school-going age to school. He sent his joining report to the Inspectorate and also reported to them that with his efforts he was able to enroll about two-dozen

children in the school.

Sempur was a small village with about thirty families, mostly Muslims. Their main occupation was agriculture and some cottage craft. They gave due respect to the new teacher, whom they addressed as 'Mashterji'. They had all along been very keen to give education to their children to the extent they could afford. However, most of them had dropped out and joined their parents in working in the fields or in their craft. There was one person only in the past, who did continue and went to Srinagar to join the college. His name was Ghulam Rasool. The villagers were keen to have many more boys like him under the patronage of the new 'Mashterji' so that the literacy rate in the village increases year after year. This was the main reason that 'Mashterji' was welcome in the village. Giridhari was highly qualified and a specialist in English literature. It was a torture for him to teach tiny tots. They were to be taught the Urdu alphabet, figures from one to ten and occasionally to draw some straight or curved lines. He would write all these on a black board and ask them to copy in their respective wooden boards. Himself he would sit in a shabby chair provided for him and read pages after pages from his permanent companion, the book. Children were required to squat on the floor. The only compensating factor was the soothing climate of the village, cool breeze, fresh air and a free atmosphere, besides the simple village folk.

Time advanced, months rolled by and nobody in the Education Department bothered even to enquire about the new teacher or about the progress this forgotten school made under his

guidance. Ghulam Rasool got his Bachelor's degree, securing bare minimum marks in third division. His family, nay the entire village celebrated his success. He was the first Degree holder produced by the village. After the celebrations were over, Rasool went to Srinagar one day. He reached the Inspector's Office at about 11 a.m. and sought an interview with the Inspector, Mr.Imtiaz Ahmad. Entering his spacious room, Rasool saluted him and then said, 'Khwaja Sahib, I am Ghulam Rasool from Sempur. I am sorry to report to you that the teacher you had appointed in the primary school there has unfortunately died and now the school is closed. Since I am a graduate and belong to the same village it would be in the fitness of things that you appoint me as teacher in that school.' The Inspector called his 'Bara Babu', Mohiuddin and asked him to clarify the matter. The Head Clerk said to Rasool, 'but we have no information about his death.' Rasool said convincingly, 'Jenab I know. The school had only one teacher. When he died there was no other person there to report to you, not even a peon. I belong to the same village and am concerned about the educational needs of our children. That is why I have come personally to report to you and request you to appoint me there in the interests of these children.' He was asked to wait outside. The Inspector and his Head Clerk huddled into a serious meeting for nearly half an hour. Thereafter it was decided to appoint him as teacher in that school. It was also decided to write in the appointment order that he should take over the charge of the school as such because there was no one to hand over. Ghulam Rasool was called in and the

appointment order was handed over to him.

Next day Rasool went to the school and asked Giridhari to hand over charge of the school to him. Giridhari pointed out that there was no mention of his posting elsewhere. Rasool said politely that this he should find out from the Inspectorate. Reluctantly he gave the charge to him, wound up his personal establishment and left for his home at Srinagar. The government offices were closed for a couple of days. So he had to sit back and wait. The day the offices reopened, Giridhari was at the Inspectorate very early. He approached Imtiaz Ahmad and asked him about his fate. Khwaja Sahib called in the 'Bara Babu' and told him to look into the matter and report. The Head Clerk went back to his cabin, took out the relevant file from his cupboard and entered the Inspector's room. He said very coldly, 'Sir, as per the official records Pandit Giridhari Lal is dead and in his place Ghulam Rasool has since been posted at Sempur school. Now that he says that he is not dead he must prove that he is alive and then put in an application along with the proof. We shall certainly consider his request.' Giridhari looked towards the Head Clerk and the Inspector by turns, chuckled and with a lot of pain said, 'Inspector Sahib, I am before you all in one piece and talking. What other proof do you need about my being alive?' The Inspector told him in a flat and emotionless voice, 'Look, it is a question of procedure. After all the paper work has to be complete before any action is taken; we are also answerable to the higher ups. You please go and do as directed by the Head Clerk and then come back with your application'.

Crestfallen, Giridhari Lal, a Kashmiri Pandit, an M.A. in English literature with distinction, a specialist in 19th century English poetry, a bread-earner for his old mother and wife and till recently a primary school teacher, teaching small village children alphabet and counting came out on the road, looked up to the skies and wondered how he was going to prove that he was alive. But alas! Who cares? **

Arzan Div An Unknown Hero - Kamal Hak -

His name was Arzan Dev though every body called him Arzan Div. Nobody knew his surname and he didn't own any material possessions. He, perhaps, never possessed a second set of clothes in his life and as such he would never change what ever he was wearing. For that matter he would never even take a bath. Soap, tooth paste and hair oil were a taboo for him. Most probably, he never ever purchased any of these items. He was a bachelor and didn't have any relatives. At least nobody ever asked for him when he was alive or after he died in the year 1988. His room was a reservoir of all the filth, dirt, ash and dust accumulated over decades. He would forcefully resist any external attempts at cleaning his room. Though, his room had windows, those were never opened. He used to wear a dirty shirt and a stinking pheran all the year round. His yellow turban would be multi-layers of grease and dirt. He was virtually a walking filth store with very lazy habits as well. Arzan Div would sleep till 12.30- 1 PM, perhaps, because of having no steady job to attend or having no compulsions of earning a decent livelihood. In fact, he had never indulged in any worthwhile vocation.

Arzan Div was, thus, a perfect recipe for hatred, ridicule and contempt. Amazingly that was not the case. Despite his dirty appearance, lack of hygiene, careless attitude, Arzan Div was a respected figure in Rainawari.

Not many people will recall him now, but there will be a few of our elders, who would not have forgotten him. Arzan Div spent all his life in a large room provided to him by the Hak family of Kralyar, Rainawari. In between, he also stayed briefly with Hakhu family of Bagh Jogi Lanker, Rainawari.

Arzan Div's life story is very relevant today

NOTICE

Annual General Meeting of the Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai will be held at Kashyap Bhawan, Plot No. 16, Bhawani Nagar, Marol Maroshi Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai 400 059 on Sunday, the 14th October, 2007 at 10.00 am sharp.

Election for the new Board of Trustees of the Association will also be held on the same day.

All the eligible Life Members of Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai are requested to attend to take part in the deliberations and also to elect members of the new BOT.

**S.P.Kachru
Gen. Secretary, KPA**

and is a perfect demonstration of one's actions and conduct being the only prerequisite for being a good human being. Today, when we are reflecting upon our failure to set up a corpus for the needy amongst us and are just debating on the possibilities of needful action, people like Arzan Div can be a great source of inspiration.

Arzan Div didn't have the need for doing any thing. The Hak family would provide him all the things required for his sustenance, which in any case were so meager that there was never any requirement of a special financial outlay for him. But, Arzan Div had a passion for which he lived till his death. His entire life was devoted to collecting funds for an organization known by the name of Widhwa Rakshani Sabha. The money was eventually distributed to poor widows of the community. The organization used to operate from some where in Sathu Barbar Shah and was, perhaps, renamed later. My memory betrays me here as I fail to recall that name now.

Arzan Div would devise his own strategy for collecting the funds and had long ago adopted the very ways to raise money as are being suggested now. He had identified regular donors and would reach them every month for collection. His crudely maintained ledger would serve as a planner also. The ledger would help him to plan his calls. One can imagine the Herculean task he had to face as the most of the individual donations would be a maximum of Re. 1. There would be some two rupees donors also, though their numbers was very less. There were, perhaps, no regular donors

above this. Every month, he would make a walking trip to Sathu Bar Bar Shah office to deposit the money and

receive some pittance as the compensation for his efforts. Marriages and the Mekhals were the special occasions eagerly looked forward to. He was, most probably, hardly invited to any marriage or mekhal, but he never lost an opportunity to present himself at the venue armed with his irresistible insistence and a receipt book. A fifty rupee collection, which was rare those days, would be considered a fortune.

As far as my memory goes, Arzan Dev had a life long habit of not taking any thing for lunch. An extra sweetened cup (Khoas) of Kehwa and a phulka would be sufficient for his needs. As such he would never take any food in the marriages where he would reach for collection. This used to be a subject of a constant debate with him and he would always respond by saying a rupee for a poor widow was more important than his lunch.

One can imagine the hardships he would have faced in his life long endeavor. That he sustained his motivation for many decades is a remarkable feat in itself. He could not have done any ill towards any body, yet, lying on the bed in the general medicine ward of SMHS Hospital, he raised his folded hands towards me and requested for forgiving all the troubles he might have given our family during his entire life. A few moments latter, he again folded his hands towards the ceiling and loudly asked his creator to forgive his sins and take him to HIS world. The very next moment he left this world leaving behind nothing but his memories.

There may not be the likes of Arzan Div any more but their spirit will always be there to inspire us.

Orzu.

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ARVIND GIGOO'S 'THE UGLY KASHMIRI'



he latest book to come to me as a gift from my nephew Arun from Delhi is the much talked about book 'The Ugly Kashmiri' (Cameos in Exile) by Arvind Gigoo. The cover of the book depicts an ugly wooden figurine, a piece of relief, straight from the wood. My friends from delhi with whom I exchanged my views on the book have known the author not as 'ugly' but as a handsome well-known, knowledgeable professor of English literature, translator of Kashmiri poetry into English and as a critic and writer of repute. Gigoo's unique impressive work has not only given me sumptuous thought for the year, but drawn distinct and crystal clear picture of what he rightly feels and understands about Kashmiri psyche. The book is one of its kind, each of his one or two liners speak volumes. I surely feel he has shown brevity in writing his one-liners. I for myself can correlate and place the subject easily, who he has lampooned, mocked and jeered at so truthfully, forcefully and artistically. The cameos are no trite or banal but certainly terse maxims forthright, very bold and pregnant. Some are beautifully sugar-coated while some are open which can force one to brood, sulk, ruminate and even laugh heartily.

There is satire, truth, pathos, nostalgia, anger and typical Kashmiri humour. The book opens with a cameo titled STILL. "I still am, I am not still". It is about the strength of Kashmiri Pandits who in spite of the tragedy of the nineties are still carrying on. But they are

not 'still'. They are not calm. Everybody is tense and worries - homesick, rootless and nostalgic. **Strength:** "Divided we stand, united we fall". This cameo shows the lack of unity in our community. The author is very sad and critical of this attitude of the community. Then there is **Address** --- blank rectangular space. The cameo shows that our community members have no address. We have lost our roots and our homes. A **Signboard** reading in bold letters "Body for Sale". This cameo depicts how the property of Kashmiri Pandits was sold in Kashmir at throwaway price. All these excite sympathetic sadness and inflict pain and alarm. They are followed by **One & Many:** "One is good, many is danger". **Tourism:** "Permanent tourists! What luck!" **A Drop:** "A tear fell upon the trunk in the truck, it was a Muslim tear". This one liner shows the relationship of Kashmiri Muslim with Kashmiri Pandit. "Muslim tear" is a sad expression. **Sensitivity:** "Mister you have fine skin". Hide-sir-hide". **Words:** "Dear sir, only in my writing do I say that we must return. I am better here." **The Middle Path:** "Merge or leave or perish. I followed the middle path. The other two will follow me". This cameo shows how Kashmiri Pandits were treated in Kashmir. Then there is sarcasm, a dig at our politicians and the man on street. **The King:** "Then the king went to a distant land when his subjects were being killed, and he shed tears in the **Great Hall** when his throne was restored." This is satire on the politicians who betrayed their own people

when they needed them most. **Emancipation:** "Listen! How can I talk about the plight of Kashmiri Pandits? I am a secularist." This is a biting satire on the Indian pseudo-secularist politicians who feel it below their dignity to talk about Pandits. **Chameleon:** "From Pakistan to plebiscite to India to Pakistan to Independence to anything and anywhere in one breath." **The Signal:** "Our leader is wiping his eyes with a green hankie". "This is green signal". Again Kashmiri [politicians have always played with the sentiments of Kashmiris. **Holy Places:** "And the wisest among them founded Ashrams and erected the replica of their holy places". "Do holy places have replicas?" This depicts the highest degree of ignorance of scriptures and zero faith in ones deity.

Lastly, I do not approve of this cameo which says "Let us celebrate the Shree Bhat Day." "O that great doctor who charged a fee that we pay". Why curse Hakim Shri Bhat? I see no fault in what he did for the community. In fact he rendered a yeoman's service in resettling our forefathers in the valley who had fled Kashmir under Afghan tyranny. Shri Bhat relieved Badshah Zain-ul-Abadin of excruciating pain after treating him of his carbuncle. Hakim did not ask for any land, silver or gold but begged of the Badshah out of love for his brethren to resettle Pandits in Kashmir. Thousands flocked back to their roots. Shri Bhat never could see tomorrow like Nostre Damus or else he would never have asked for such a wish. He was a pucca philanthropist. Our community would have shrunk further, had he not asked for this boon. We would not have had millions of beautiful Kashmiris but more of 'ugly' ones. What does the author mean when

he calls himself 'anti-Kashmiri Pandit'? He doesn't seem to be anti-Kashmiri Pandit. He feels pain for the community although he is critical of the bad things in the community.

I have never come across a book like Gigoo's 'The Ugly Kashmiri' because so much has been said in so few words. Here we find history of Kashmir reduced to some words; we find the love-hate relationship of Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits; we find political events that happened in the history of Kashmir till date; we find the deep psychological insight of the author into the mind of the Kashmiris - both Muslims and Pandits. The meanings of most of the cameos are veiled. Some of the cameos are difficult to comprehend. One must have sufficient knowledge of history, politics, sociology and the past rulers of Kashmir. Gigoo is not obvious anywhere. He makes you stop and think for a long time. His knowledge of politics and history, and his razor sharp observation add to the beauty of each cameo. The Preface is well written and crisp. He has no solutions to offer. **The Ugly Kashmiri** should be read slowly otherwise the reader will miss sarcasm, wit, irony and humour. Some of the cameos make one way sad. I recommend the book to all those who want to enhance their knowledge of Kashmiri politics and history and want to know more about the events that took place in Kashmir in the nineties and before that too.

Read Monthly 'här-van' - the
net-journal of Project Zaan.
Visit: www.zaan.net

Biradari News

❖ This year's Annual General Meeting of the Kashmiri Pandits' Association, Mumbai will be held on 14th October 2007 at Kashyap Bhawan, Andheri (E). Elections for the new Board of Trustees of the KPA will also be held on the same day. All life-members of the Association are requested to attend and take part in the proceedings of the AGM and also elect a new team of BOT.

❖ Aditya Birla Group has selected former ICICI Prudential AMC managing director Shri Pankaj Razdan as CEO for Financial Services. He will be part of company's commercial think-tank.

❖ A 'Meet the Eminent Contemporary' programme was organised by J&K Academy of Art Culture & Languages on 22nd August, 2007 at K.L.Saigal Hall, Academy Complex, Jammu, to honour Shri Arjun Dev Majboor. Dr. Rafeeq Masoodi, Secretary Academy, Dr. Rattan Lal Shant, a renowned writer and Prof. Saigal spoke on the occasion and described the literary and personal life of Shri Majboor. The programme was presided by Shri Nilamber Dev Sharma, a veteran Dogri writer. On this occasion, the 360 page translation of Nilamata Purana by Shri Majboor was also released.

During the Interaction period, a 'Question-Answer' session was arranged where Shri Majboor answered questions on various topics from the audience. More than a hundred writers in different languages participated in the programme.

❖ Dr Satish Ganjoo has taken over as Head, P G Dept of History, Ramgarhia post Graduate College, Phagwara (Punjab) with the additional charge of the Dept. of Computer Sciences and Information Technology.

MATRIMONIAL

❖ Wanted a suitable match for KP boy, Dec.1971 born, ht. 5'-9", working in Sahara. Please contact: P.K.Razdan, 3-Inderdeep, 396/2 North Avenue Road, S'cruz (West), Mumbai 400 054. Tel: 26604280. Cell: 9892407220.

❖ Alliance invited from KP family for our handsome smart boy, born Oct. 1980, 5'-7" tall, BE (Information Technology) from Mumbai University. Diploma in Marketing Management from Wellingkar Institute of Management, Mumbai. Presently working as Business Development Manager in a reputed MNC in Mumbai, drawing handsome salary. Please contact: Mr. S.K.Kaul. Ph. 022-28120224. Cell: 9321095199.