



“He said, “We have such gardens in Europe but this kind of setting is not there”

## TULIP FESTIVAL IN KASHMIR

**Nida Rafiq Shiekh**

**S**rinagar, April 11: More than sixty varieties of Tulips, all imported from Holland, were showcased at Siraj Bagh during the Tulip Festival from 7th to 14th April. About 12 lakh bulbs spread over 200 kanals of land greeted the guests during the festival. The Siraj Bagh is situated in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, at the foot of the Zabarwan Hills, overlooking the famous Dal Lake.

The garden is known as Siraj Bagh and officially known as Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden.

This year the main attractions, besides the vibrant Tulips, were the daily cultural shows, sale and display of handicrafts and handlooms, agro products and traditional foods organized by the J&K Tourism. Tanvir Ahmed, Inspector of Tulip Garden said, “Around 5000 people visit the Siraj Bagh on holidays, out of which 80% are national and foreign tourists and about 1500-2500 people visit it daily”.

Joseph Jacob, a doctor from Italy, found the setting of the garden very distinctive. He said, “We have such gardens in Europe but this kind of setting is not there”. Sen Thil, from Chennai found the garden very colorful and eye appealing!

The Tulips are very sensitive; as a result the constant rains in the month of April damaged the flowers of the garden. Sasha Matthews from Italy who visited the garden for the second time said, “Last week the view was much more beautiful as the Tulips

were in full bloom but this week many flowers have withered”.

Currently, the Tulips are spread over 200 kanals of land but the target of the authorities is 700 kanals and from next year they are planning to export the Tulip cut flower. The Siraj Bagh is the biggest Tulip garden in Asia, but the authorities are working towards making it the biggest in the world.



It is pertinent to mention here that this garden was the dream project of the former Chief Minister, Gulam Nabi Azad, and was inaugurated last year.

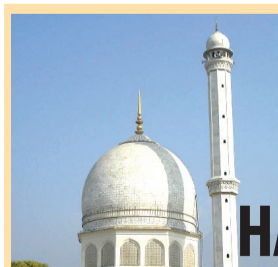
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# THE UNTOLD STORY OF BUDGAM

**Nazir Ahmad Ganaie** from Budgam shares the unheard tale of the place of his birth.

**B**udgam district came into existence as a separate administration limit in 1979, carved out as it was the erstwhile district Srinagar. Budgam is situated at an average height of 5,281 ft. above sea level and at 75 degree E Latitude and 34 degree N Latitude. The general topography of the area is both mountainous and plain. While the southern and south-western parts are mostly hilly, the eastern and northern parts are relatively plain. The soil is loose and mostly denude.

Khawaja Aazam Deedmari, a historian wrote that earlier Budgam region was called as Deedmar Bagh. He also added that it was densely populated hence called Budgam which means "Big Village". Since last four years, the landscape of Budgam has changed tremendously.

The coming of train in Srinagar and other parts of the valley brought a lot of happiness on the faces of Kashmiris. People who earlier suffered due to lack of fast transport facilities would now be availing the services of the train. The government employees, students and other people who prefer to be at work as early as possible won't have any problems now. The people of Budgam who have given their land to



the railways have lost some beautiful landscapes. Because of the railways and other construction projects of the government, many villages near Budgam town have been converted into shambles, the topography of these areas have totally changed, which is having an adverse effect on the residents of Budgam.

The roads connecting Budgam to other districts of Kashmir narrate similar stories. If one wants to visit Srinagar, the nearest district to Budgam, he will himself come to know about the pathetic

conditions of roads and the problems they create for the locals of Budgam and other adjoining districts.

Budgam, Gods gift to nature and home to many people, is loosing its charm day by day. In the name of development it is facing a lot of devastation which has not only resulted in topographical changes but has also affected health and sanitation of the area.

"We the people of Budgam are the victims of government's apathy. Till now government has not shown any concern

towards this district", said Nazir Ahmad Khan, a student and a social activist. "The rush of tippers and other vehicles has affected our lives very badly and we have lost many precious lives", he added.

Budgam, the land of Sheikh Noorud-din Noorani R.A. and the dwelling place of different Sufi saints is known for its scenic beauty and holds a prestige of being a tourist attraction. Some of the most enchanting and world famous sites of Budgam are Yusmarg, Dodh Pathri, Touse Meadaan, Chrar-i-sharief, Nil Naag, Sokh Naag, Doodh Ganga and many more.

The only responsibility which comes on the shoulders of the district administration and the residents of the area is to make it more attractive and alluring in terms of infrastructure and other administration related issues.

Budgam, being the nearest district to the summer capital and the place where from one can take flights to rest of the world, needs a lot of heed from the people at the helm of affairs. The present government, especially Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, needs to take bold steps to restore the glory of the place.

## FOOD HABITS OF KASHMIRIS

**Isra Amin** traces the history of food habits in Kashmir.

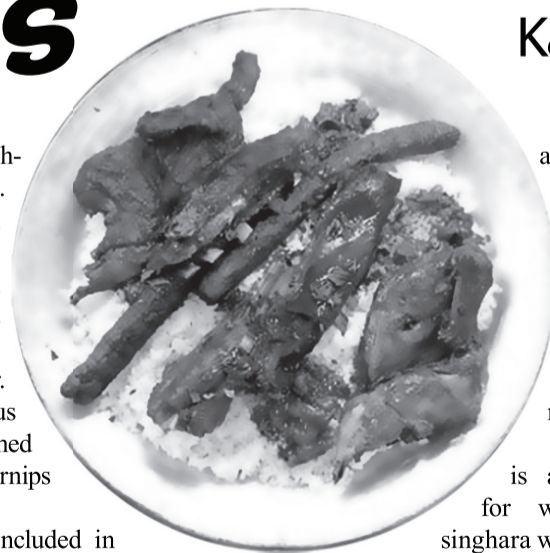
**T**he food habits of the common people have changed with each period that Kashmir witnessed. Kashmir is famous for its delicious foods. Kashmiri food is famous for its scrumptious blend of spices and mouth watering presentations.

In early periods the staple food of the inhabitants was rice, but wheat, barley, maize and several other grains were also eaten. Vegetables such as turnip, radish, lettuce and many other varieties were also very plentiful and were exclusively used. The leaves of the Dandelion, Plantain, and several other plants were made into soup and the catkins of the walnut were employed as food, seasoned with a little salt, mustard and walnut.

The stem of the lotus called Nadroo, boiled and flavored was also eaten. It was

considered as a highly nutritious food. Dried fruit hokh phal and dried vegetables hokh syun formed an important article of diet in Srinagar during winter. In winter both Hindus and Muslims consumed a large number of turnips in large quantities.

Fish was also included in the diet sheet of Kashmiris. The flesh of sheep and goat was eaten by the Muslims and Hindus alike. Hindus would not touch poultry or eggs, garlic and onion, but they would eat wild fowl and the eggs of the lake birds. Beef was not procur-



able, as the killing of a cow was regarded as sacrilege by the Sikh and the Dogra rulers.

Kashmir is also famous for water-nut or singhara which was the chief article of diet of hanjis who lived on the margin of Dal, Nagin and Anchar lakes. These people used to grind these singharas and make bread. Kashmiris, rich and poor, had a great taste for tea. Two kinds found there way

in the markets of Srinagar – surati and sabz (Noon chai). Noon chai is highly consumed by the people of Kashmir and it comes from various sources to Kashmir.

Formerly guests were served with food stuffs like bread, baqir khani and kulcha but with changing time and life style of people and of course with establishment of hotels and sweet shops in the city the food habits of the people began to change slowly. The presence of foreign bakery in the city proved itself to be very obtrusive as is evident from present situation.

There was the time of nabad nout – an earthen pot with boiled sugar inside it. This nabad nout was essentially used on some auspicious occasions and predominantly on marriage ceremonies.

# Kashmir

## LANGUAGE AND MEDIA

AHMAD IQBAL analyses the problems that Kashmiri language is facing and the lack of attention from the media.

Decades as of now, since the emergence of journalism in Kashmir, people related to the media have witnessed a meteoric rise to money and fame. Links with politicians, industrialists, bureaucrats, et al has changed the professional interests of most of them.

Media is said to promote the culture of a society it dwells in. It gives masses knowledge about their culture, which is at cross roads, and the values of their culture.

Talking particularly about print media, it has an immense role in promoting the language of a society. The language gives representation to the society on a global level and needs to be preserved.

Now \_\_\_ where do we stand? How many daily news papers do we have in Kashmiri language?

History stands a complete witness for a plethora of cultural changes throughout the globe. A century ago, English language was not as powerful as it is today. English language has caught the taste of every tongue, and the main part played for the drastic promotion of this language is English journalism particularly print.

How sad! A selfless competitive world is knocking at our doors and we did not allow a blink of our eye to observe the

matter. We do not let the realistic resonance to disturb our slumber.

So, let's know where does the problem lie?

Unveiling the unvarnished, it's more or less our problem. How come are we ready to sacrifice our language at the cost of foreign flavor? We can be offered variety of things against our culture, but it is we who have to choose and differentiate what is ours and what's not?

If a rose will try to avoid thorns which uncompromisingly stand erect beneath it, always ready to jeopardize their lives for the comfort of rose- the rose will lose its own charm. So why to blame thorns, if interest of roses has got changed?

Allama (r h) says:

*MAGRIB KI GHULAAMI PE  
RAZAMEND JO HOUA TOU,  
MUJE TO GILA TUJ SE HAI  
MAGRIB SE NAHIE,*

Now something about the media education centers in the valley. Students are offered courses in English journalism, Urdu journalism, but nothing on Kash-

### Life in different eyes of people

*A rich man bursts into laughter and said,  
Life is money*

*A poor man wearing rags and shivering with  
cold said,*

*Life is struggle.*

*A preacher in his lecture said,  
Life is only way to reach god.*

*A soldier with a gun said,  
Life is like a battle field.*

*A sparrow flying freely in the sky said,  
Life is freedom.*

*A helpless bird in cage said,  
Life is bondage.*

*A prayer after his pray said,  
Life is worship of god.*

*A lover waiting in loneliness said,  
Life is hope in waiting.*

*But Rameez says,  
Life is challenge to face.*

*Rameez Ah Wani*

miri journalism to enhance the language. They may blame that there is no scope for such courses in the market, but how will the scope be there when there is no manpower to get things done. Don't we feel that this is also a problem? Of course it is .... But my heart sings:

*Khamosh aai dil! Hai waqti  
sada kuch aor...*

Here are some points which can pull back our society from the mess it is in.

We should not feel inferior to communicate in our own language; rather ensure that we communicate in our own language at every place and at every time media, particularly print media should rise to enhance Kashmiri language.

Media education centers should provide opportunities in Kashmiri journalism.

*Not only will it militate,  
Compel it will to abdicate.  
Options abundant, all at ease,  
Few to boil, few to freeze.  
Celibate now hell is to come,  
Or juxtapose to beat the drum.*

Nazima Shafi

Srinagar, April 06: The results of the entrance tests for various courses in the arts stream conducted by the University of Kashmir were declared last week. Despite 40% increase in the number of seats available in almost every department, it is still for less as the number of aspirants has increased enormously. With high hopes regarding the selection, the aspirants enthusiastically appeared in the examinations so that they can enter the highest seat of learning. But luck favored only a few.

"2234 application forms had been submitted by the aspirants in the

Urdu department for PG course, while as the number of available seats was only 86, including 20 payment seats and 25 seats for the candidates of reserved category", said the section officer of Urdu department, Mr. Muhammad Altaf.

## ADMISSIONS TO NEW SESSION KICK OFF AT KU

The English department also witnessed a rush of 410 aspirants for total 71 vacancies, out of which 15 seats are meant for reserved candidates & 17 for the candidates applying on payment basis. While in the Linguistics department, 235 aspirants had applied for 60 vacancies in the PG course out of which 15 seats were for the reserved candidates and 12 vacancies for the payment seats.

In Persian department, 74 candidates had applied for the entrance test, out of which 55 have got selected.

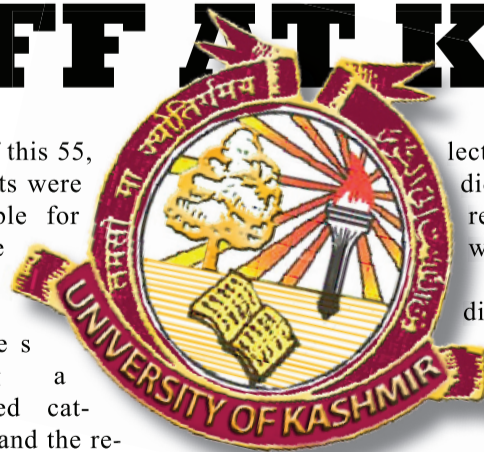
Out of this 55, 16 seats were available for the candidates having a reserved category and the remaining 39 seats for the candidates applying on the open merit basis.

However, no entrance test was

conducted in Hindi department in order to select the candidates for the course as only a few candidates applied and thus whosoever applied got selected.

This year, only 15 candidates had applied including a reserved backward candidate while, the capacity

of the course was 60. "Hindi has no scope here in Kashmir as it has not been introduced at the school level in most of the schools of the valley and also at the college level, so hardly a few students are interested in doing a PG course in Hindi" said Raqeema, a student of Hindi.



While I get on to the highway for the university, I have to stand on the road side to wait for transport to pick me up. The very first thing I encounter is the late arrival of the transport. I run out of my nerves because I have to reach on time. For some time I try to persuade my neurons not to fight

care of my shoe laces as well because yesterday, a young man stepped on the laces and edited the whole woven structure of the laces! The second shot goes like this that there is this man who exhales a strong breath straight into my olfactory lobe and for a moment I feel it as an anesthesia. But, I

after traveling some distance, the road gets narrower, stuffed with all the 'crazy boys', 'road cruisers', 'cool guys', 'dhoom bikers', 'outlaw truckers', and the like! The intensity of the drama builds here because now the film runs in slow motion with a few narrow escapes from the truckers with no number plates but obviously red,

# Stop, Look, Go!

What is it that makes life chaotic especially when travelling in Kashmir  
 comments **Mohammad Faheem UI Islam**

with each other, convince them and make them understand to get adapted to such a phenomenon. Frustration is obvious on my face so much so that I start checking time in minutes and seconds which otherwise, I don't check even in hours. However, after showing all my patience, here come the wheels.

Nevertheless, after getting into the chariot the 'establishing shot' of the film is this that it is stuffed so much that I have to first decide where to touch the floor, without forgetting the 'uneven road surface'. Then I start looking for a place not to sit but to stand, if at all I happen to stand on both my feet! To stand is fine but to stand that too on just one foot is something that builds the drama.

While I stand on just one shoe, being careful from falling, I have to take

realize it later that the person is late for his office and in frustration he has had a cigarette. The wagon is so stuffed that I start suffocating and you know how conscious we are about ventilation! There is this man whom I request to slide the window pane, who with executive looks ignores and looks at his watch. I learn it later that he has to face an interview for a job?

However, the next shot is a different one with a transition. There is the same gentleman with executive looks, whom I ask the time as it is not only difficult but absolutely impossible to check that from my 'cell phone clock' because of the wagon's 'state of art' packaging!

Although there is no interval in the film, but the next few shots run in 'fast forward' as do the wheels! All of a sudden,

blue and white 'up-arrows', with triangles and rectangles! The sequence continues till a stage comes where all of us have to get down for security check, resulting in a loss of another 5 to 10 minutes.

Nevertheless, in next shot there is this raised road surface which is not coloured at all and our driver misses to slow down at that invisible 'speed breaker' making all those not slept well, last night, conscious that they are about to reach their destinations.

Finally, in the last shot, all try to get down first which is never possible and consequently no one succeeds in getting down safely as some one loses his t-shirt button and some one is hooked up with some screw of the door! And I am the last to get down because I have to write an account of the whole film!

## PAHARIS IN KASHMIR

Liyaget Geelani

Literally Paharis are the people who reside in far flung, hilly areas and usually speak Pahari language. In Kashmir Paharis have dominated certain conspicuous regions like Karnah, Uri, Sindh Belts in Bandipora, Kupwara, Anantnag, Pooch, and Rajouri. In fact, at present one would find one Pahari speaking person in every ten Kashmiris. Along with Gujjars, Paharis usually occupy the hilly areas and bear the tough climatic conditions of the region.

Pahari speaking people are mostly stout, fair and friendly. According to a survey there are more than 20 lakh Pahari speaking people in Jammu and Kashmir. But the conditions of this most ignored section has not yet improved since Independence. The welfare and the overall development of Pahari community has never been given attention. Though one prime

factor is that there has been no good representation of Paharis at state level,



that is why Paharis are still living in their previous setup.

Located on the borders of the state, Paharis have always been neglected by the authorities and the administration. Few decades back the Gujjar community was sanctioned as Scheduled Tribe, but the same Pahari who is the neighbor of that very Gujjar was once again neglected. From then onwards Gujjars have been able to sustain and progress

because of the Scheduled Tribe status.

To re-establish themselves the Pahari community set up a forum few decades back known as 'All Jammu and Kashmir Pahari Culture and Welfare Forum (AJKPCWF)'. In 1990's it lost its hold but again in 2005 due to efforts of some dedicated and responsible people of the community the forum was recognized and reaffirmed the achievement of prime goal. That was gain of Scheduled Tribe status for Pahari community, in order to uplift the downtrodden section of the society. To preserve the Pahari culture is again in the agenda of AJKPCWF.

There are few Paharis who have been able to come up and many others are striving and struggling hard. To uplift this culturally rich section of society, achievement of Scheduled Tribe status is compulsory and this is the only thing which can bring a ray of hope and happiness to the Paharis.

### Catching the Last Service

It started raining,  
 no, it was snowing too!  
 Oh, no! I've certain things to 'do',  
 but can't be reached with just 'two'!  
 I need 'four' or 'six',  
 for things yet to 'fix'.  
 They made me 'busy',  
 with something very 'cozy'?  
 I somehow 'managed',  
 and quite late, I 'started'.  
 I left the campus in haste,  
 keeping in mind 'haste makes waste'.  
 Crossed the gate. With a run,  
 with 'wheels' a 'deal' to be done.  
 After a 'long wait',  
 came the 'date'.  
 Finally arrived a four wheeler,  
 no different, he was a similar 'dealer'.  
 On my foot thumb, got 'in' but 'out'?  
 As usual, 'stop', 'go', the man would shout!  
 Yet in the first mile,  
 he came with 'no smile'.  
 Where? Dash dash, I replied,  
 crushed me, pushed me, aside.  
 'Give', he shouted, 'chiller'?  
 I winked, let me hold some 'pillar'!  
 Ok. Hurry up, he maintained.  
 So did I, the wheels are not 'accelerated'!  
 The whole scene was an argument,  
 not with me, but obviously an amusement!  
 Got down, received a 'call',  
 this was my mom, oops, escaped a 'fall'!  
 Don't you 'wait', I'm on the 'way',  
 she is 'worried', I would say.  
 Repeating the same 'scene', as earlier,  
 caught 'four',  
 again 'stand', had no 'floor'.  
 We are getting 'late', yelled a man at the  
 back,  
 better 'carry' us, on your shoulder, as  
 'sack'!  
 Gear up man, we don't want to 'miss',  
 we have to go 'beyond', catch the 'last  
 service'!  
 The 'distance' was too 'vast',  
 finally caught the 'last'!  
 Got in, a 'six', was it,  
 after 'long', got to 'sit'!  
 I was second after the third,  
 and a scream, I heard.  
 A lady behind my seat,  
 with her son very neat.  
 Talking to someone, on phone,  
 for me not known,  
 complaining about her husband, with  
 whom she had a fight,  
 which I could smell was right!  
 It turned absolute dark,  
 and 'dogs' with their extremes, started  
 'bark'!  
 Meanwhile, he came, took the fare,  
 I was 'far', yet so 'near'.  
 Shock! My phone got canned, turned off,  
 on 'technology' had a laugh!  
 But the 'wheels' so moving, I had a 'nap',  
 and in my 'mind', made a 'road map'.  
 To my 'home', I reached, all alone,  
 with an ache, oh! My back bone!

Mohammad Faheem UI Islam

# THE SUNDAY MARKET

P.S.BALI

Light flickering through the branches of chinar trees beneath which stand the footpath vendors busy dealing with customers in a bid to convince them. Affordable at a reasonable price, the products speak of their own to grab the gaze of the customer.

Over the years, Sunday market at Lal Chowk has emerged as the hub of attraction for Sunday shoppers. Thousands of people, especially those who remain busy on weekdays, can be seen thronging the market. The market stretches from Srinagar Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) up to the west end of Lal Chowk, near Kashmir Haat.

While shops and business establishments in Lal Chowk remain mostly closed on Sundays, Sunday market enjoys brisk business with over flowing rush of customers who come from all walks of life, and buy products on the relatively cheap rates.

The market selling second hand garments and other products attract customers from every nook and corner of the Valley. Sunday market is flooded with readymade garments and meets the requirements of people, both in winter and summer seasons. From

branded pants, sweaters, shoes, caps, blankets and the other day to day products make this market a common man's mall.

"Being a student it is very hard to purchase expensive products from the market as present phase is going through the recession. So it is better to come to Sunday market to keep your hobby alive. I come here twice every month to make purchases" says Aijaz of Gopalpora, who travels a distance of 11 kilometers to buy a variety of stuff from Sunday market.

"It is a better place to find wide variety of goods" says Saleem from Bemina.

"This market is suitable for all ages, as a mother, I easily find warm and cozy clothes for my daughter", says Ruksana from Lal bazaar.

"Sunday market not only attracts the locals but it is also fancy of the outsiders, this place is like any other visiting place in Kashmir for the visitors to



visit", says Rashid, a vendor.

But the existence of this market in city's commercial hub has raised many questions as these roadside shopping stalls are no less than annoying for the pedestrians and vehicle owners, for them it becomes very difficult to commute through the huge number. For this the government should shape out a separate space for these Sunday market vendors.

According to sources, the Sunday market vendors in order to carry on with their business have to shell out a commission on monthly basis for police personnel. "Sunday market provides a good income to police as these garment vendors provide them with money. Go-

ing by this the Sunday market business will never face any problem from law enforcing agencies", said a vendor, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The Sunday Market vendors, however, have no reservations with relocating their makeshift stalls if provided with some suitable place elsewhere. "We have no problem in shifting our business from Lal Chowk if the government provides us with space to earn our livelihood" says Mohd. Ganaie, a Sunday market vendor.

"There are thousands of youth, who rely on Sunday market business. How can government stop their livelihood without suggesting an alternative?"

Muzafar Wani

Ever since its invention the wireless cellular phone has gained popularity in the whole world

## Mobile Phone harmful or not ?

and it has become the inseparable part of the human lives. However, there is always a concern about the harmful effects of the electromagnetic radiations emitted by this wireless gadget. Numerous studies have been conducted on this subject.

Dr George Carlo, former chairman of wireless technology research (WTR) has stated that studies of possible harm from cellular phones indicate evidence of genetic damage in human blood and brain cancer among wireless phone users. Such studies pointed out that exposure to microwaves doubled the immune cancer cells

in mice and also resulted in memory loss and formation of tumors.

While some controversial experiments may suggest that excessive exposure to microwaves can be harm-

ful, these experiments involve exposure at much greater rates and in much different conditions than those of cell phone users.

On the other hand the recent research reports published by Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) state that, the users of the cell phone don't run the high risk of getting cancer than non users. The research findings discarded the earlier reports that human cellular DNA gets mutated by cell phone radiations.

Reports based on the three year extensive study conducted by the scientists at university of Essex state

that short term health effects such as anxiety, tension and tiredness are not caused by the emission of phone masts. Heart rate and blood pressure don't get affected either.

According to studies published in the journal of American Medical Association (Dec 2008), there is no risk of developing brain tumors, memory loss, birth defects and negative impact on behaviour.

In a recent study involving the rates of cancer by CTIA, it was

noted that waves with frequency of 2450 MHz were used while as cellular phone usually works around 800 MHz and that the time and condition of the exposure to the microwaves could not

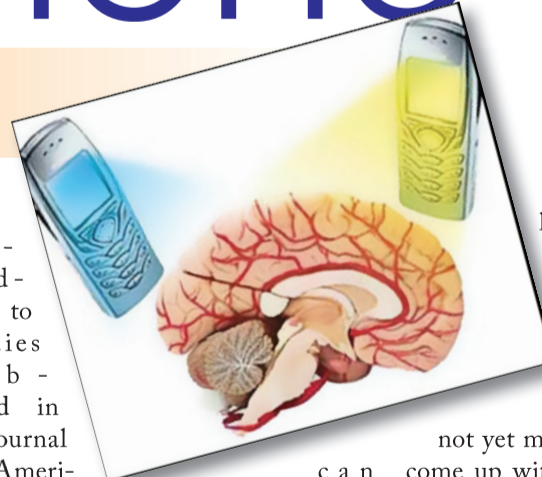
be compared to the exposure humans get while talking on the cellular phone.

Whether the radiations are harmful or not exposure level to microwaves can be decreased by limiting the time you spend on phone, by using land-line, by switching off cell phone when not in use, and by using speaker phone or ear piece.

Although it remains a controversy whether cell phone radiations are harmful or

not yet more research findings have come up with positive results and rejected the myths of serious harmful effects regarding the wireless phone usage.

So if you have minutes available, don't think before you speak, you can call your friends and relatives without any fear or harm.



# DARGAH HAZRATBAL

## AN EPITOME OF FAITH

Raunaq Zahoor

Hundreds of people come to pay their obeisance at Dargah Hazratbal each day. Some have a special prayer others come to pay homage to this magnificent shrine. Yet, there are many who come here to spend a day with their family.

Kashmiri Muslims consider Hazratbal shrine as one of the most revered shrines of Kashmir. This is because of the respect they have for their beloved prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.), whose relic is preserved here. Huge crowds from different places are drawn to this shrine on the festivals. People from different sects and far off villages come here on such occasions.

With such a scenic location who would not like to spend a day in the lap of this shrine? Hazratbal shrine is usually flocked by families on Sundays and holidays.

According to a security personnel employed in the shrine more than 20,000 people come to offer prayers on Fridays and around 1000 people visit the shrine on other days. The primary reason that attracts people to this shrine is faith. They come here when they are in grief.



They come here when they have to celebrate. A middle aged woman Rafiqa says, "A few years back my son was very ill, every one said that he was going to die. I came here and prayed for his health and with the blessings of Allah he became hale and hearty within days."

The trend of tying nuptial knots has picked up over the years. The two families come with the would be bride and

groom to celebrate and seek blessings.

The people who live around find themselves lucky. Those who work around feel they are blessed. Hilal Ahmed Dar, who takes people on a ride on his shikara says that he is fortunate enough to be in front of the shrine and that he takes devotees on a ride on his shikara. Not only the shikara owners but the shopkeepers around also feel the

same. Ghulam Nabi sells his bakery out side the shrine. He says, "I consider my self blessed and I cannot earn more anywhere else than what I earn here in front of this sacred shrine." At the same time he expressed unhappiness because government is going to remove his shop in the next demolition drive. According to him government officials say that it would be easier to manage crowds if the shop is demolished.

Other than the locals tourists from different states of India and other foreign countries also visit the shrine. This becomes another source of livelihood for the people of Hazratbal. Whether they earn any thing or not they consider themselves privileged to be near the shrine always. People of Kashmir have an undying faith in this shrine.

The following verse from Kashmiri poetry tells it all:

Hazratbal kai boen shehjaras ,  
Wan sarkaras,  
Ummatik zaar.

(Under the shady Chinars of Hazratbal,  
I will narrate the woes of ummat to the master.)

## OUTGOING STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP PRESENTATIONS

Benish Ali

Srinagar, April 10: The students of MERC 4th semester made their internship presentations on 8th and 10th of April, 2008. The presentations were made in front of the HOD MERC and the faculty. Students of 3rd semester were also present there.

The students had to undergo a 21 day internship as a part of the course. The students displayed their proficiencies in different forms of media- print and broadcast. They had interned with different reputed local, national and international media organizations.

The organizations they worked with are: Mohammad Numan- NDTV, Srinagar Bureau, Abdullah Danish- PRO

office, KU, Shahana Butt- Press TV ( A newly born international channel), Sameer-ul-Hassan- Daily Greater Kashmir, Mudasir and Bilal- Daily Kashmir Images, Shazia- Magazine Kashmir Life, Maroosha- Indian Express, Mehraj- Indian Express, Shahid- BBC radio, Imtiyaz- Radio Kashmir, Khurshed Yousuf- Daily Kashmir Images, Danish Nabi- Daily Greater Kashmir, Sana Altaf- Kashmir Newline, Javed Parray- Radio Kashmir, Tasim Zahid and Arifa- Hindustan Times( Online Version), Sumaya Qureshi- Indian Express, Aliya- Hindustan Times, Srinagar Bureau and Sadaf Bushra- Indain Express.

Many of them had been able to prove themselves and secured good



placements. Maroosha's story 'Conflict between Mother and Son' had appeared in 35 editions of Indian Express all over India. Shahana Butt is the only female reporter of any International TV channel from the valley.

The students shared their experi-

ences of first hand reporting. They talked about what they learnt in the field and how their studies came in hand at times. They were evaluated by the MERC faculty. The students of 3rd semester who were present in the audience learnt from the experiences of their seniors.

# THE FUTURE OF CRICKET IN PAKISTAN!

Waheed Mirza

Over the past few years, Indian sub continent has emerged as the most happening cricketing venue in the world of cricket. No parallels can be drawn with the popularity of this game in the region. Not only does this game attract legions of fans to grounds it also generates 80% of revenue. Besides India and Sri Lanka, Pakistan forms a vital cog in terms of viewer-ship and revenue generation and has been a breeding place for some of the world's most dominating cricketers.

But, security concerns in the region have put a big question mark on future of cricket in the country. The political instability and barrage of suicide attacks in Pakistan have forced various foreign teams to cancel their tours-virtually marking the isolation of Pakistan from world cricket. Major teams like Australia, India, South Africa have refused to travel to Pakistan citing security concerns. The Champion's trophy was relocated from Pakistan to South Africa resulting in huge financial loss to Pakistan cricket board and barring

Pakistani fans from watching any major cricket event in their homeland.

Sidelining all the security fears the Srilankan team dared and gestured to play test cricket in Pakistan but had to pay a heavy price, their cavalcade on its way to Gaddafi stadium Lahore was attacked by heavily armed militants, injuring 8 cricketers shocking cricket fraternities all over the world. The belief that cricketers will never be targeted by militants has dissipated after this attack.

The game of cricket will never be the same again courtesy to this unprecedented attack. Pakistan is now officially being declared unsafe to play cricket. It has resulted in heavy financial losses and more importantly injuring Pakistan's cricketing status in the world.

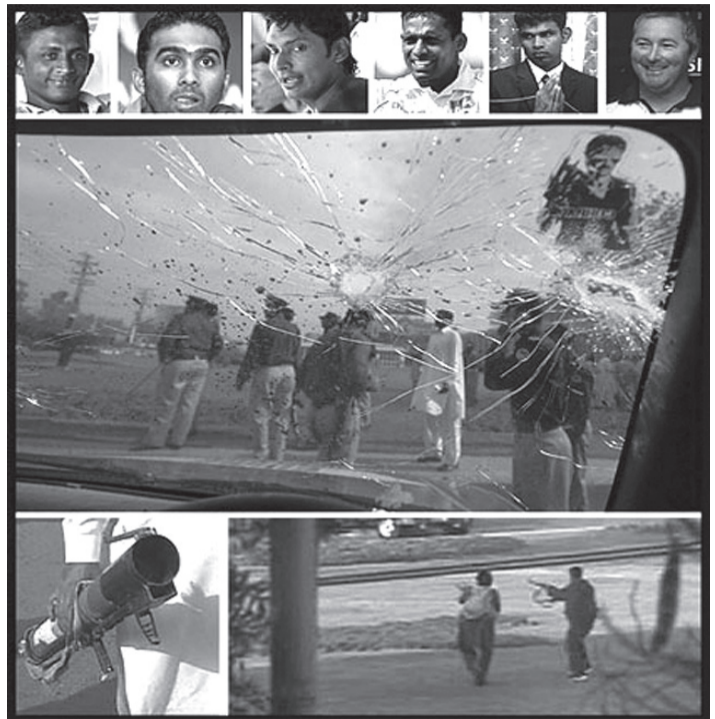
The Pakistan cricket board has plethora of problems on its plate.

To its credit PCB is trying its level best to work out ways to get Pakistan play its home matches at neutral venues. Abu Dhabi is going to be one of those venues. Pakistan's home one day series against Australia will be played at Sheikh Zayed

stadium. England is tipped

off to be a strong contender to host majority of Pakistan's home series matches. England and Wales cricket board have already offered some of its grounds to the PCB. It's believed cities strongly populated with Pakistani citizens will provide much needed fan base to cheer Pakistan cricket team. Pakistan is left with no option but to play at neutral venues though the move is going to hit Pakistan cricket badly in the long run.

Pakistan has to share revenue with the countries that will host its home matches plus there will be serious problem in finding sponsors while playing at neutral venues. This will not help the cause to resurrect financial conditions of the PCB. Pakistani team will be deprived of home conditions. Also, support of home fans will be missed very badly, die hard fans have to travel to other countries to watch their team



play and spend lots of money and precious time. The stringent laws pertaining to get visa in countries like England makes it even more problematic exercise.

With no international cricket going to be played in Pakistan in near future and kids being deprived of watching their stars in action on home turf, they might not get lured to play the game. The first class cricket will also be affected big time as focus of authorities will be pronouncedly shifted to organize matches at neutral venues.

There seems no respite for Pakistan cricket in near future. Pakistan has to be at others mercy to take their cricket forward. The future looks bleak but we have seen Pakistan team rising from ashes on numerous occasions; hope the same happens this time also.

## Shabby sports infrastructure in Kashmir

Rafiq Ahmed Wani throws some light at the sorry state of sporting facilities in Kashmir

Kashmir is not only known for its natural beauty and hospitality, but also for the exceptional talent which Kashmiri people have. They are exhibiting it not only in the field of art, handicrafts, but also in the field of sports.

J&K after a gap of many years was given the honour to host the prestigious Santosh trophy. Bakshi stadium, lone football stadium in the valley, was to host most of the matches. For that purpose many steps were taken to improve the condition of the ground and its turf. A handsome amount of money was spent for that purpose, but the condition of the ground deteriorated only after few matches were played there and the matches were shifted to Kashmir University grounds.

Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket stadium, the

only cricket stadium in valley also lacks many facilities like indoor practice facilities, gym etc for the players. Only limited players have access to play cricket in the stadium. Every cricket player has a dream to bowl and bat on the turf so that he can nourish his talent properly.

There is so much of raw talent available in other districts of valley that can easily represent State at the national and international level. "Kashmir has plenty of talent but that needs to be utilized properly. We lack basic facilities and infrastructure. So, the people from far-off places have to be content with matting cricket only. The need of hour is to have proper turf wickets in each district." said Javaid Ahmed, a cricket player.

Last year, the President of Jammu and Kashmir cricket association Dr. Farooq

Abdullah announced that two new stadiums will be made one at Jammu and the other at Srinagar. Till date nothing has been done in this direction.

"We hardly get six months for playing cricket. The cricketing activities come to standstill in the winter season. To remain in touch with cricket in winter season we need indoor practicing facilities" said Parminder Singh, a cricket player. He added that a player's body has to bear a lot of burden therefore a gym is needed to stay fit.

Kashmiri youth have a passion for sports like cricket and football. It can be seen from the fact that the youth throng to places like S.P.College, T.R.C, Polo ground etc for practice. If an empirical eye takes a look at these young guys playing, it will definitely say "what a talent".

The condition of most of the grounds

in valley is in shambles due to the negligence of the authorities. Tourist Reception Centre ground which has given birth to many great players, has been damaged with exhibitions, fairs and political speeches organized in this ground each year. The story of polo ground is no different. A lot needs to be done to improve the conditions of the ground.

If this is the condition of the main sporting venues situated in Kashmir, one can simply imagine the fate of others.

The lone indoor stadium in valley, is under the occupation of security forces "We find it very difficult to go for practice there as we have to face lot of problems due to the presence of security personnel, which effects our performance" said Bilal Ahmed (name changed), a player.

Even after lacking infrastructure, two players Eshfaq Ahmed and Mehraj-u-Din Wadoo from Kashmir have made roads to the national football team and budding cricketers from valley like Abid Nabi had the honor of bowling the first delivery of Indian Cricket league (ICL) tournament. When these players have been able to prove there metal, others can follow suit if provided with proper facilities.

# KASHMIR ALL SET TO BE A POLYTHENE FREE ZONE

Mehmooda Bashir

Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) is planning to organize a clear polythene drive in and around Srinagar within one month. In half a page long advertisement published in one of the local dailies, SMC has asked people to refrain from using polythene and also announced serious action against those found using or trading polythene. However, it has also announced reward for any individual, organization or institution, which will collect one ton of polythene and hand it over to SMC. "A medal, a shawl and a certificate will be awarded to the person/organization /institution by Municipal Corporation", disclosed Farooq Renzu, Municipal Commissioner, while talking to MERC TIMES. Appealing to the polythene traders and dealers, Renzu said, "Kashmiris have sacrificed Shahoos industries for the sake of some animals. Likewise, we have sacrificed fur

industries for cats and rendered about two lakh people unemployed. We appeal polythene manufactures /dealers to close their establishments for the sake of Kashmiris". He also insisted upon student to play their role in this mission of polythene free Kashmir

Meanwhile, acting in the same direction Jammu and Kashmir State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) through advertisements in local newspapers is spreading awareness among the common mass about deleterious effects of polythene, and benefits of using bio-degradable carry bags. SPCB also organized a workshop at SKICC wherein people were informed about various harmful effects of using polythene and benefits

of the bio-degradable material.

Moving a step further, Jammu and Kashmir Horticulture Department has procured 10,000 biodegradable bags which were imported by Agro industries Development Corporation from an Italian firm. The Horticulture Department uses loads of polythene bags to raise as well as sell plants. "These bags are composed of Organic compound derived from the starch of potatoes and corn. The soil fertility will not be affected on decomposition of these bags", said Sonali Kumar, Principle Secretary Agriculture Production Department after handing over these bags to the department at a function.

Reportedly, Kashmir Traders and Manufacturer's Federation (KTMF), in a decision announced that they would avoid the use of 125 and 250

gram capacity polythene carry bags. These two capacities form hefty quantity of polythene waste.

Green Dream, a team of young boys and girls is active in bringing awareness among people about various environmental hazards resulting from polythene usage. Talking to MERC TIMES, one of the founding members of the team, Khurram Wani said, "It is very wonderful if polythene is banned, we will get a chance to revive our recyclable paper industry, willow basket industries and cloth bags". Ban on polythene would be beneficial to the valley and its people in more ways than one. "It will help us in improving our economy, besides creating eco-friendly environment", he added

Pertinent to mention that as per SRO 182, polythene is a banned item. However, under the law like this, what would be the quantum of punishment for a person found using or trading polythene, remains a moot point.



Kashmir University Council Meet



Hon'ble Vice chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Riyaz Punjabi signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maltepe University at Istanbul in Turkey



2 day J&K IT conclave organised by EMMRC and MERC in collaboration with NASSCOM

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