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KASHMIR CENTRAL

A KZINE INITIATIVE

**UT Administration
took calculated risks,
facilitated Muharram
processions**

**This
Shift Is
The Real
Thing**



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KASHMIR

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SAHAB IS NEVER AVAILABLE

The bell rings repeatedly but there is no one to pick up the phone. You keep dialing the number, but no one attends to the call. We largely get this feedback on any discussion regarding connecting to government offices on the landline numbers. In the offices of the Secretaries to the Government, calls made on landline are answered. The standard response is – Boss is in a meeting. The call is then disconnected.

Media persons often need to talk to officers for their viewpoint regarding a story. A news report is regarded incomplete if you don't have the version of the government functionary – who is a character in your news report mostly for adverse reasons.

A major problem faced by media persons is that the officer concerned does not receive your call on his/her mobile number. You try speaking on the landline, but there is no one to receive the call.

My colleague Sheikh Sameer was doing a story for the current edition on change of the examination season from October/ November to March/ April. He wanted to speak to some concerned official regarding the merits and drawbacks of this decision by the government. He repeatedly dialed the landline number of the office of the Chairman of the Board of school education, SSRB, Secretary to the Government and other offices.

None of the above offices answered the call. It seems that the phones have been provided to government departments only to make outgoing calls. To receive the calls is seemingly not their mandate.

Official apathy is unfortunately on the surge despite serious attempts at the highest level for an efficient administration. Upon discussing this problem, one finds that there is consensus among people that claims about providing transparent and efficient administration are more rhetorical than practical.

It will perhaps take years to clean the rot in the system. One wonders whether the government shall have to invoke Article 265 and Article 311 Clause A(c) of the Constitution to deal with delinquent government officers.

Bashir Assad

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UT Administration took calculated risks,
facilitated Muharram processions

This Shift Is The Real Thing

by Bashir Assad



The LG Administration focused on what truly is the essence of good governance. One, foresight and clarity. Second, strategy and management

▼

The Muharram procession this year presented a different picture than what we have been accustomed to for long.

Till yesterday, it was beyond imagination that the government would ever allow the mourners to carry out peaceful processions across Kashmir valley. One could not imagine that the Administration would not only allow smooth Muharram processions but also facilitate and provide logistics to the people who participated in processions.

THE SAD PAST

▼

For decades, the J&K government would impose harsh restrictions in place in all Shia dominated areas to ensure a peaceful Muharram procession. Police and the security forces would opt for excessive measures to disperse the processions. The unwarranted restrictions and use of brute force would invite the wrath of the protesting mourners. They would engage in pitched battles with the police and security forces.

Then the aftermath of the procession. The use of excessive force would result in injuries to hundreds of protesters. Hundreds more were put under preventive custody. No regime whatsoever dared to allow Muharram processions. There is no denying the fact

The New Dawn is a much-used cliché. In this context, it fits. For the first time, the Administration took calculated risks and allowed the Moharram processions in all Shia-dominated areas, particularly in Srinagar and Budgam districts.

that unscrupulous elements would mix among the peaceful mourners for political motive to create law and order problems. But the fact remains that the majority of the people would come out to participate in processions purely on the bases of their faith and unflinching love for the Imams.

For days together, the situation in Kashmir would remain grim. The peaceful mourners would feel sad and suffocated by the harsh measures. Their religious sentiments were hurt for not being allowed to peacefully take out the Moharram procession. Still carrying the anger, they would come out to pelt stones on the security forces.

Then there was the other aspect to the aftermath of the harsh restrictions. Senior government officers, particularly





the Deputy Commissioners and the District Superintendents of Police (DSPs) would go for photo-ops with the community and religious leaders to falsely project that the situation is normal. This would only add salt to the injuries of the aggrieved Shia community and would fan the alienation.

THE NEW DAWN

The New Dawn is a much-used cliché. In this context, it fits. For the first time, the Administration took calculated risks and allowed the Muharram processions in all Shia-dominated areas, particularly in Srinagar and Budgam districts. While keeping a close vigil on the procession and not allowing unscrupulous elements to hijack the events, the administration did a commendable job in facilitating the Muharram procession on the designated routes.

This was largely possible because of the fact that the government agencies had done excellent homework in isolating the trouble mongers. This template should have been adopted decades ago

It is a matter of immense relief that there were not many attempts to sabotage the peaceful procession. This was largely possible because of the fact that the government agencies had done excellent homework in isolating the trouble mongers.

This template should have been adopted decades ago. This is exactly how the previous regimes should have facilitated the Muharram processions. It is a universal phenomenon that to do away with the fears, you need to squarely face them. It turns out that the fears were small, only their shadows were huge.

However, the so-called popular regimes never bothered to come out of the fears and face the reality. Their loftily-placed advisors in police and civil administration always advised them against granting permission for the Muharram processions.

Breaking the tired precedent set by the so-called popular regimes, the LG Administration chose to think new and allowed Muharram processions all across Kashmir valley. This administration too had fears of eruption of unruly elements. But the LG Administration focused on what truly is the essence of good governance. One, foresight and clarity. Second, strategy and management.

Those advisers and officers who did not allow these processions in the past should bow their heads in shame for mismanaging the otherwise simple tasks.

While keeping a close vigil on the procession and not allowing unscrupulous elements to hijack the events, the administration did a commendable job in facilitating the Muharram procession on designated routes



Mirwaiz Omer Farooq can be asked to focus more on spreading the true message of Islam rather than indulging in the rhetoric of political separatism

Release Mirwaiz Omer Farooq

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Now that the government has successfully facilitated the Muharram processions, it should immediately release Mirwaiz Omer Farooq from the continued detention. Senior political leader Sajad Lone rightly tweeted recently “@MirwaizKashmir has stuck to

I agree that this move is a double-edged sword for the UT Administration and also for Mirwaiz. Both need to walk the tightrope to end the stalemate

utterances which are moderate and represent the true essence of Islam. He has religious duties. His continued incarceration is a crime against him and against

all those whom he inspires at a religious level. Sajad continued, “Humble appeal to @AmitShah sahib and @manojsinha_ sahib to please ensure that He is

released as soon as possible. He has himself been a victim of violence. Let it be known. There r many wars in Kashmir. And in our real war he is an unapologetic moderate.”

I agree. Mirwaiz Kashmir himself has been a victim of violence. As a moderate religious icon, he too is fighting a war. His incarceration should end soon. Channels of communication should be opened with him, asking him not to indulge in any kind of activity which can vitiate the peaceful environment.

The state needs to allow the space to the moderates who represent the true essence of

Islam. They are the Messengers of peace and harmony for the larger community. Mirwaiz Omer Farooq can be asked to focus more on spreading the true message of Islam rather than indulging in the rhetoric of political separatism.

According to highly-placed sources, the government is willing to end the incarceration of Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, provided he conducts himself as befits his exalted position

The Mirwaiz should also bear in mind that his religious duties are far more encompassing. Particularly at a time when the extremist interpretations of Islam are mainstreamed, he is duty-bound as the religious leader to strengthen the true essence of Islam and not allow the extremist elements to hijack it.

I agree that this move is a double-edged sword for the UT Administration and also for Mirwaiz. Both need to walk the tightrope to end the stalemate.

According to highly-placed sources, the government is willing to end the incarceration of Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, provided he conducts himself as befits his exalted position. There are reports that India and Pakistan are again engaged in Track2 diplomacy to break the ice of hostility.

The UT Administration must supplement these efforts by reaching out to the moderate voices of Kashmir. Bureaucrat-turned-politician-turned-bureaucrat Shah Faisal had said soon after his release from preventive custody in 2020 that there are only two options left. “You have to be either a separatist or a stooge”. The Administration needs to move beyond. The Administration needs to give the option to the people premised on rationality, reason and logic. The Kashmiris are an intelligent and shrewd race. In the new winds that are blowing, they shall not miss the opportunity.



**Make Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
A People's Movement**

Maximizing The Impact

**Involve Kashmir Civil Society
in Celebrations**

by **Bisma Nazir**



The nation is observing “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav” since March 2021. This is the 75-week countdown to our 75th Independence Day on August 15, 2023. It is befitting that a host of events and programs involving the people have been made part of the celebrations.



Recently, the Prime Minister called for hoisting national flag in every household across the country with the ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ campaign. There has been mixed response to the call. The Opposition parties targeted the ruling BJP for what they called the “hijacking of the national flag”. Accusations and counter accusations occupied the headlines in the national media. As the Independence Day drew close, the voices for and against grew louder.

The initial thrust of the ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ campaign was perhaps for Kashmir. It

has wrapped up the entire nation in fervour. The Tiranga has been zestfully hoisted on housetops across the country. In addition, from rickshaws and auto-rickshaws to tempos, cars, buses and trucks, all Indians are proudly displaying their love for the national flag.

The campaign is primarily symbolic, and symbolic gestures

are very important in the context of Kashmir. For the last two years, the government institutions – particularly the Military establishment – has spearheaded the campaign for hoisting the Tricolour at all major instillations which have historic, strategic or cultural significance for Kashmir. This is a major shift.

HOW THE BIZARRE WAS NORMALIZED

Till recently, militants, OGWs and their separatist associates would indulge with massive

symbolism by raising Pakistan’s national flag on its Independence Day, viz August 14. They would observe August 15, India’s Independence Day, as black day.

Their explosive utterances on Pakistan’s Independence Day had a significant impact on young minds across the length and breadth of Kashmir valley. Pakistan’s flag would be visible in every nook and corner. There was no serious attempt on the part of the government to take action against these brazen illegitimate acts. Raising the Pakistani flag in Kashmir was normalized. A section of youth started identifying with that flag.

Post abrogation of article 370 situation changed and those who indulged in unlawful activities came under scanner and heard of them were booked under seditious laws. The crackdown on antinational elements saw a steep decline in celebrating Pakistan Independence Day. No there are no call for observing the Independence Day of India as black day and not many people dare to raise Pakistani flag.

THE SYMBOLISM IS IMPORTANT

The symbolic gesture of erecting the Tricolor at almost all important instillations, in government offices and autonomous bodies marks a shift in Kashmir’s political bible.

It is now the Tricolor which flies high.

That said, what is perhaps strategically unwarranted is the thrust of the military and para military forces on the installation of the Tricolor here and there. The patriotism and nationalism of the security forces is beyond question. There is absolutely no doubt that the Tricolor flies high because of the supreme sacrifices of the security forces of India.

What I am advocating is the higher involvement of the civil society in the greater visibility of the Tricolour in Kashmir. Rather than leading the campaign of hoisting the Tricolor in every nook and corner of Kashmir valley, the security forces should have encouraged the Kashmir civil society to take the charge.

We are aware that in some parts of Kashmir, particularly in the north, the civilian population have enthusiastically participated in the Har Ghar Tiranga Program. The jubilation is not the same in other parts of Kashmir valley. It is mostly the security forces who are involved in the campaign. Public participation is not what it should have been.

The historical Lal Chowk in Srinagar, of course, has become the hub of Tricolor hoisting events. Whether it is BJP or some NGOs, all are within their rights to show their love and affection towards the national flag. What was unlawful and



The symbolic gesture of erecting the Tricolor at almost all important instillations, in government offices and autonomous bodies marks a shift in Kashmir's political bible. It is now the Tricolor which flies high

illegitimate was the hoisting of the Pakistani flag at the historic Clock Tower at Lal Chowk in Srinagar.

For greater involvement of the civil society with the Tricolour, schools and the Higher Education Department should have been associated closely with the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav program. It would have been appropriate to enthuse the children about the Tricolour and make them aware of the significance of participation in the Independence Day celebrations.





INVOLVE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, SCHOOLS

As of now, the involvement of the school management, the teachers and the students is restricted only to the events held to mark August 15 and January 26. The schools are directed to issue orders that the teachers and children must be present in their respective educational institutions on the morning of August 15 for the flag hoisting ceremony. The compliance is nearly 100%.

We do not need to elaborate on whether it is out of love or fear of the state that teachers

and students comply with the directions to celebrate the major national days. The fact is that the Tricolour has been proudly hoisted in Kashmir for the last three years.

What would have actually worked much would have been the involvement of the School Education Department in the entire program, instead of seeking their involvement in just the event on August 15.

Complete involvement of school children by raising their passion for a patriotic

outlook shall be strategically significant for Kashmir. It shall incentivize love for the nation, and will help in changing the collective mindset.

We have still one year left for the culmination of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav campaign. It shall be appropriate if the Education Department is closely involved in the overall celebrations. This shall go a long way in de-radicalization of the vulnerable young minds.



Complete involvement of school children by raising their passion for a patriotic outlook shall be strategically significant for Kashmir. It shall incentivize love for the nation, and will help in changing the collective mindset

Rajouri SSP, DDC Chairman express concern regarding drug abuse in the area

The High That Kills

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by **Mareaya Fayaz**

The movie *The Basketball Diaries*, one of my favourites, tells the story of high school basketball star who under pressure develops an appetite for heroin. The addiction snatches his dreams and hopes. The basketball court gets replaced with dirty and mean streets where the once star player and his friends scrounge, steal and prostitute themselves for drugs.

I remember the first time I watched the movie *Udta Punjab*, which showcased the problem



Rajouri police organises seminar for drug abuse at Nowshera

of drug abuse among the youth of Punjab. It showed a rock star, played by Shahid Kapoor, endorsing drugs. These movies

reflect the truth. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been battling these truths for some years.



District Police Office, Rajouri holding an awareness lecture on drug abuse in Lamberi school

Jammu and Kashmir is facing the brunt of narco-terrorism. JK Police, the Army, the para military forces – all of them have declared war over drugs. But fighting this war is difficult for them because of the high level of involvement of people. There is also lack of support from people, who wish to earn easy money by helping the drug lords. Kashmir Central has highlighted the abuse of narcotics in the area of Kashmir. I decided to write on the problem of narcotic abuse in the area of Pir Panjal. It is a matter of alarm that drug abuse in this area is increasing.

Speaking to me about the problem of drug abuse, SSP Rajouri Mr Aslam Chowdhary said that this year, 15 cases have been registered regarding drug abuse. The recoveries that have been made include 5-6 kilograms heroin, 300 tablets, 4 kilograms bhang, about 80 kilograms of other drugs and

Falling prey to drug addiction is not limited to a particular class or gender. People from rich as well as poor families fall prey to drugs. They are both suppliers and users

Rs 2 lakh in cash from the drug peddlers.

EFFORTS TO TRACE BACKWARD, FORWARD LINKAGES

The SSP informed that last year, 24 cases of drug abuse had been registered in the area under his jurisdiction. Mr Chowdhary informed that the police face more problems in areas near LOC namely Nowshera and Naam. But the problem is not restricted to these areas. The police receive complaints from Rajouri main city and Manjakote regarding drug peddling.



SSP Rajouri Mohd. Aslam Chowdhary

Mr Chowdhary said there is possibility that these drugs are brought from across the LOC. Last year, police had filed a case where the supplier was

supplying drugs into Punjab. He explained that after the police catch a peddler, the objective is to identify the forward and backward links in the trade – where they are coming from, and where they shall be supplied.

Mr Chowdhary informed that police have been able to trace the backward links in some cases, but forward links are difficult to track. He added that deliver drugs to users in low quantities, whereby it becomes difficult to register the case. SSP Chowdhary said that recently, a background link was found but the person is absconding, so the police is looking for him. JKP has launched a helpline to help the people who are suffering from drug addiction. The SSP said that the police have declared a zero tolerance policy against drugs.

When asked about the rehabilitation centers, the SSP said that one center has been just started by the administration. Earlier, there was no center for drug de-addiction in Rajouri. A ward had been allocated for drug de-addiction in the district hospital, but no Psychiatrist was posted there. Now a Psychiatrist has also been posted.

‘PROBLEM HAS TENDENCY TO INCREASE’

SSP Chowdhary said that no death has been reported in Rajouri caused by substance abuse. He said that the scale



People get lured into the drugs business because they think that they are getting a huge amount of money for little work. They do not realize the damage they are doing to the society, and that the law will catch up with them

of drug abuse is low, but the problem exists and has a tendency to increase. He said that when the police catch drug addict, efforts are made to involve his or her family. The police said that the support of the family is sought so that the police may be able to draw the person out of the vicious cycle.

The SSP said that most peddlers are drug addicts. A problem faced by the police is that it is difficult to keep such peddlers in custody. He

informed that these persons get fits if they don't get their supply of drugs. This may lead to their death in custody, and then the police are accused of custodial killing.

The SSP said that a trend has been witnessed among drugs users. As soon as they are unable to get money from the family for drugs, they start stealing. Mr Chowdhary discussed a recent case where they arrested a youth for stealing money through an ATM using someone else's card. H was a drug addict and used to spend all the stolen money on the purchase of drugs.

The SSP said that falling prey to drug addiction is not limited to a particular class or gender. People from rich as well as poor families fall prey to drugs. They are both suppliers and users. He said that men as well as women are found involved in drug abuse, and in the supply of drugs.

The SSP informed that recently, police arrested a man named Haroon Rashid for supplying drugs with help of his wife. Both are drug addicts too. They have been arrested. The SSP said that people get lured into the drugs business because they think that they are getting a huge amount of money for little work. They do not realize the damage they are doing to the society, and that the law will catch up with them. The youth get addicted to drugs due to peer pressure or because they think it is stylish and trendy to consume drugs. Bringing them back from drug abuse is difficult but not impossible, said the SSP.

Advocate Chowdhary Naseem Liaqat Says Police Don't File Technically Sound Cases Under NDPS Act, Accused Get Acquitted Easily

DDC CHAIRMAN RAJOURI DISSATISFIED WITH POLICE ROLE IN FIGHTING DRUG ABUSE

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DDC chairman Adv. Naseem Liaqat addressing a rally on drug abuse

spoke to District Development Council (DDC) Chairman Rajouri, Advocate Chowdhary Naseem Liaquat on this issue. Mr Liaquat said that police are not working responsibly and efficiently in fighting drug abuse. He said that when the police file a challan under The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, they deliberately leave many lacunas so that the accused can get away.

Mr Liaquat said that cases registered under NDPS Act have to be technically sound. In many cases, the police do not have the training to minutely analyze the offense and register the case properly. As a result, the accused are able to secure acquittal.



DDC Chairman Ch. Naseem Liaquat

The DDC Chairman highlighted that if the police register a case which is technically sound, conviction rates will increase. This will act as a deterrent. It will send the right message to the society, and will lead to lower cases of drug abuse. Mr Liaquat expressed regret that for the sake of convenience,

Police are not working responsibly and efficiently in fighting drug abuse. He said that when the police file a challan under The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, they deliberately leave many lacunas so that the accused can get away.



An awareness rally on child protection and drugs abuse organised by the District Institute of Education and Training, Rajouri



Social Welfare Department under the campaign 'national drug demand reduction campaign.' organised a nukkad natak to sensitise people about drug abuse

police don't go into the details regarding a case.

Mr Liaqat also accused the police of not tracing the sources of drugs supply. He said that proper identification of the source is very important part of the investigation. The DDC Chairman highlighted that the public must also play a positive and pro-active role to battle the problem of drug addiction. He said that people must constantly engage with the youth so that they are aware of the bad influence of drugs. He said that involving the youth in sports activities was a highly meaningful way of keeping them occupied and away from the scourge of drugs.

The DDC Chairman said that the area faces a huge problem of unemployment. This is one of the reasons why the youth turn towards drugs, he said. Mr Liaqat emphasized that parents play a major role in bringing back the youth from the disease of addiction. He said that it was very important that parents are counseled about the problem of drug addiction.

Police should be given special training to combat drug menace. A special wing of police should be created and trained to deal with these issues. They should also be trained regarding the technicalities of filing these cases

'HIGH CONVICTION RATE, HIGHER DETERRENT FOR DRUG PEDDLERS'

Talking about the rehabilitation of the youth who are addicted to drugs, Mr Liaqat said that recently, he met the DIG to discuss the importance of setting up rehabilitation centers for the recovery of such patients. "The police have a very important role to play in stopping the menace of drug abuse. Police should be given special training to combat drug menace. A special wing of police should be created and trained to deal with these issues. They should also be trained regarding the technicalities of filing these cases. There is 100 per cent likelihood of conviction if the

police file the case properly. Only then it shall have a deterrent effect," said Mr Liaqat.

He added that it was unfortunate that currently, there is 95% acquittal rate in these cases. "This is the reason that when a peddler is arrested, he knows that after spending some time in jail, he shall be out soon. If the police file a strong case against him under the NDPS Act, he may not be acquitted. If the investigation is technically sound, it is not easy to get acquittal. So the main role is that of the police. Easy money is one of the reasons for people to get into the business of drugs. Another challenge is that since they know they shall be acquitted soon, they continue to indulge in drug peddling," said the DDC Chairman.

Shift In School Academic Calendar In Kashmir Offers Both Benefits And Challenges

Change of Gear

by **Sheikh Sameer**

The School Education Department is all set to shift the academic session of Kashmir to the March-to-March cycle. The Education Department has put all its

machinery to work out to work on the new template and resolve the challenges it may encounter in starting the session in March.

The Higher Education Department had earlier shifted the academic session

to July, to get it at par with the national academic calendar. The School Education Department is determined to adopt the uniform academic session. This is not an easy job, like comparatively for the Higher Education Department.

The process of shifting the academic session to March was initiated after the J&K Chief Secretary (CS) Dr Arun Kumar Mehta said in April this year that Jammu and Kashmir will fully implement the National Education Policy (NEP-2020) from the current academic session. He also announced that the UT will adopt the uniform academic calendar synchronized to the national academic calendar.



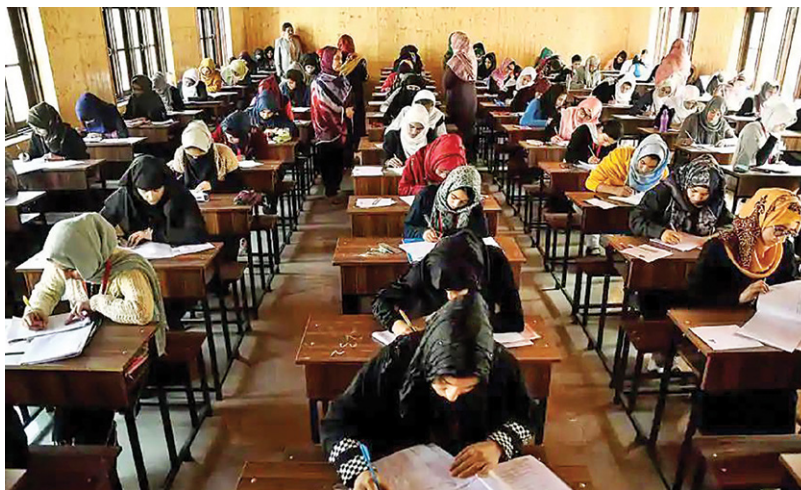
DIFFERENT CLIMACTIC REGIONS

Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory is comprised of two geographical divisions which are climatically opposed. Jammu region is extremely hot in summer. Kashmir valley is extremely cold in winter. Given the different climatic zones in Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu region follows the March-to-March academic cycle. Kashmir used to follow the November-to-November academic cycle.

The Board of School Education conducts annual examinations of the same class in two different academic cycles. The toppers of Class 10 and 12 are also different for both regions.

Mohammad Aariz, a Class 11 student shared his confusion with Kashmir central. “Jammu and Kashmir is one union territory. So why should we have two different toppers in any particular class or subject stream?” he questioned. Aariz said that a sizable number of students are agreeable that if the uniform academic calendar is adopted, J&K UT will have a single topper, who will represent the entire region and not a particular division.

In this regard, a committee was constituted by the School Education Department to suggest measures and also the modus-operandi on the basis of which the government would make an official announcement for shifting exams to March. The committee has enlisted



the concerns raised in the past as well as during the previous regimes which had initiated a process for shifting to the March session of exams. The decision could not be implemented due to the geographical disadvantage faced in some areas in Kashmir and also in some winter zones of Jammu.

‘CHANGE COMES WITH MERITS, DEMERITS’

Jaffer Ahmad, the owner of a private school, said that the decision of the School Education Department to shift the academic session can't be called a cent percent good step. “Whenever there is a change, it has both advantages and disadvantages. This time the move has created doubts among the students as they had been preparing for the annual exams, which they expected would be held in December 2022. If the session is shifted to March, the examination will be conducted in March 2023. We teachers have to teach the students, no

matter where and how. I know that many of us support the move,” said Jaffer.

A teacher engaged in a coaching centre in Anantnag said that most of his colleagues have covered the entire syllabus for the students. “November onwards, we are used to teaching new students. Shifting the session to March may have negative impact for a season on the coaching centre. I wonder whether the owner shall reduce our salary, because teaching at the centre is the only source of income for some staff members,” said this gentleman who did not want to reveal his name.

Kashmir Central repeatedly tried to connect with top officers of the School Education Department to understand the merits and demerits of shifting the academic session, but they remained out of reach. We hope that the move towards a uniform academic calendar becomes a new start to synchronize the academic cycle of Kashmir with the mainland.

Problems Faced By Kashmiri Students In Moving Outside Valley For Education, Or For Seeking Admission To Professional Colleges

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'Uniform Academic Calendar Shall Help Us'

School students highlight that they face problems when they seek to move to Jammu or other regions in the country for higher studies. Shahid Hussain told Kashmir Central, "My father is a government employee. In 2008, he took me with him to Jammu



when he got transferred there. It was November, and I had just

cleared the annual examination for Class 7. We went to Jammu



for seeking admission in the next class. My father visited so many schools in Jammu in late November for seeking my admission. Each school refused to admit me, because their current session was going on, and it would conclude in March next year. I had to wait for five long months to seek admission in Class 8 in Jammu.”

Shahid recalls that during these five months, he studied all the subjects at length and topped the class. “After two years, my father was transferred back to Kashmir. It was March. I had passed Class 9. We came to Kashmir, but the session here had started in November the previous year. I took admission in a school in Kashmir, but the class had completed nearly half the syllabus. I struggled to catch up. At the end of the year, my performance was below average. If at that time the uniform academic session had been adopted in Jammu and Kashmir, I would not have suffered in Class 10,” said Shahid.

There are many areas in Kashmir which remain nearly cut off from Kashmir during winter to heavy snowfall. The School Education Department should has some definite roadmap to synchronize the new academic calendar in these areas

MAY BENEFIT STUDENTS SEEKING ADMISSION TO PROFESSIONAL COURSES

Students who wish to join professional courses after Class 12 also have to wait for many months for competitive entrance examinations. They pass their final examinations in November, but have to wait for six months to appear in the professional entrance examination, which wastes precious time.

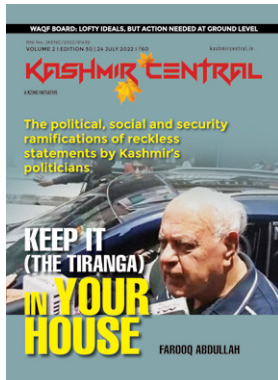
Shifting the academic session to March has many merits for the students of the Kashmir valley. But at the same

time, there are many areas in Kashmir which remain nearly cut off from Kashmir for five to six months in year due to heavy snowfall. These include Keran, Machail, Gurez, Karnah and some parts of the Chenab valley like Dachan, Marwah and Warwan. These areas too usually remain cut off from the valley or their respective district headquarters. Due to high snowfall in these regions, road connectivity remains suspended. If the School Education Department has some definite roadmap to synchronize the academic calendar in these areas with the rest of the Union Territory, it shall be useful.

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