

# KASHMIR OBSERVER<sup>TM</sup>

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P3 CITY

## CANCER CASES SHOW ALARMING RISE IN KASHMIR

In a worrisome trend, Kashmir's leading tertiary care hospital Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) has recorded over 1100 cases of cancer in the first

P5 RAMAZAN

## THE MONTH OF BLESSING

Fasting in one form or the other does exist in almost all the religions. However, fasting or 'Roza' as practiced by Muslims is an elaborate process of self-purification. The Qur'an says, "O ye who believe! Fasting is

P7 STATE

## 2 FORMER MLAS FROM J&K TO JOIN AAP TOMORROW

In a major political development, two former MLAs from Jammu & Kashmir are likely to join Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led by Arvind Kejriwal in New



**6<sup>TH</sup> RAMZAN**

Iftar TODAY	Sehri TOMORROW
6:59	4:43
FIQAH HANAFIYA	
7:06	4:43
FIQAH JAFARIYA	

**Widom Quote!**

We design our lives through the power of choices

-Richard Bach

### NEWS DIGEST

**VDC Member's Son Shoots Self Dead**  
 SRINAGAR: A Village Defence Committee (VDC) member's son on Thursday shot himself dead with his father's rifle in Murrah sector of Buziaz in Poonch district, officials said. Around 9:30 am Thursday, Gulzar Ahmed picked the 303 rifle of his father Mohammad. [More on P6](#)

**Arms Recovered Along IB In Jammu: BSF**  
 JAMMU: Border Security Forces (BSF) on Thursday recovered an Ak-47 Rifle, two made in Italy pistols and ammunition at Akhnoor International Border, officials said. "A special search operation of BSF Jammu was. [More on P6](#)

**Notorious Thief Booked Under PSA**  
 SRINAGAR: Police in north Kashmir's Kupwara district have booked a notorious thief under public safety act (PSA) after obtaining necessary sanction from the authorities, a spokesperson said Thursday. Mudasir Ahmad Lone of Mughalpora Kupwara. [More on P6](#)

**Cop Injured In Qazigund Accident Succumbs**  
 SRINAGAR: A policeman injured in a road accident in Qazigund area along Jammu-Srinagar national highway five days ago, succumbed at a hospital here on Thursday morning, officials said. Officials said that policeman Shabir Ahmad Bhat son of Ali Muhammad Bhat, a resident of Karlo Kund was fatally injured after a truck (HP38D-3595) collided with his. [More on P6](#)

## Army Firing Injures Two Civilians In Handwara



KO File Photo

**Zaid Bin Shabir**  
 SRINAGAR: Two civilians sustained gunshot injuries on Thursday in what army described 'accidental discharge of weapons' during an altercation with worshippers outside a Masjid in Handwara town of Kupwara district. The altercation, according to the eyewitnesses, started when the worshippers raised objections over soldiers of 21 RR clicking their pictures and recording videos outside the Jamia Jadedee on Thursday afternoon. The devotees, they said,

were preparing for Zuhr prayers when the soldiers arrived there. "Many devotees saw soldiers clicking their pictures and videos from the entrance of the Masjid. They objected to the army's action and confronted them. This was the time when the verbal dual turned ugly and soldiers loaded their rifles and shot at and injured two youngsters," an eyewitness, wishing not to be named, due to fear of reprisal from army, told Kashmir Observer. The two youth identified as Abdul Ahad Mir from Rajwar and Mujeeb. [More on P6](#)

**Punjab Resident Shot At In Pulwama**  
 Unidentified militants on Thursday shot at and injured a labourer from Punjab in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Sonu Sharma, the helper of a poultry-carrying vehicle, was shot in the right leg by the militants, the officials said. A resident of Pathankot in Punjab, Sharma was immediately. [More on P6](#)

**Militants Escape After Brief Encounter In Shopian**  
 After a brief exchange of fire last evening, the militants have managed to give slip to the government forces in Haripora Imansahib area of South Kashmir's Shopian district. An official said that a joint. [More on P6](#)

## Onus On Pak To Create Environment For Engagement: India

**Press Trust Of India**  
 New Delhi: India on Thursday said it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan while asserting that the onus is on Islamabad to create an environment free of terror and hostility for such engagement. Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said this in Rajya Sabha when asked about media reports stating that the adviser to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan backed the resumption of bilateral trade ties with India. "The government's

consistent position has been that India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan and is committed to addressing issues, if any, bilaterally and peacefully in an atmosphere free of terror, hostility and violence," Muraleedharan said. "The onus is on Pakistan to create such a conducive atmosphere," he added. The ties between India and Pakistan came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot. [More on P6](#)

## Imran Khan Loses Court Battle, Faces No-Trust Vote On Saturday

Trans Asia News

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled on Thursday that Prime Minister Imran Khan's move to dissolve parliament was unconstitutional and called for lawmakers to return in two days, a decision that could spell the end of his premiership. The no confidence vote against Prime Minister Khan will now be held on Saturday. If Imran Khan loses, he will be the first Prime Minister to be removed through a no-trust vote. Two other Prime Ministers against whom a no-confidence motion was called, had resigned before the vote, but former cricket star Khan had refused to step down, insisting that he would "play till the last ball". His opponents had garnered the 172 votes needed to oust him in the 342-seat house, after several members of his own party and a key coalition partner defected. But Khan dissolved Parliament on Sunday and set the stage for early elections, accusing the opposition of working with the United States to remove him from power for pursuing an independent foreign policy. The opposition claimed Khan violated the constitution



**THIS IS THE UNFORTUNATE FACT** about Pakistani politics – the political issues, which should be settled in the parliament are instead brought to the Supreme Court to settle."

and took their case to the country's top court. The Supreme Court ordered for the session of the National Assembly to reconvene on Saturday at 10am, saying that the session cannot be adjourned without the conclusion of the no-trust motion against Prime Minister Khan. The chief justice said the verdict was announced with a unanimous agreement of

on Thursday and foreign exchange reserves tumbling. When opposition parties united against Khan last week to push for the no-confidence motion, the deputy speaker of parliament, a member of Khan's party, threw out the motion, ruling it was part of a foreign conspiracy and unconstitutional. Khan said Washington wants him gone because of what he describes as his independent foreign policy, which often favors China and Russia. Khan has also been a strident critic of Washington's war on terror and was criticized for a visit to Moscow on Feb. 24, hours after Russian tanks crossed into Ukraine. The U.S. State Department has denied any involvement in Pakistan's internal politics. After the no-confidence motion was thrown out, Khan dissolved the parliament and went on national TV to announce early elections. The 69-year-old Khan came to power in 2018 after rallying the country behind his vision of a corruption-free, prosperous nation respected on the world stage. But it appears that the firebrand nationalist's fame and charisma may not be enough to keep him. [More on P6](#)

## NIA Raids 11 Locations In Kashmir Valley

**Press Trust Of India**  
 SRINAGAR: The National Investigation Agency conducted searches at nearly a dozen places linked to the Resistance Front (TRF) militant group in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, days after its announced cash rewards of Rs 10 lakh each on information leading to the arrest of its four cadres. The searches were carried out at multiple locations in Srinagar, Baramulla, Pulwama, Budgam and Kulgam districts in connection with a case related to radicalising, recruiting and motivating the youth to effect violent activities by TRF commander Sajad Gul and others, a spokesperson of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said. The spokesperson said the locations searched included the house of active militant Basit Ahmad Dar, against whom the NIA. [More on P6](#)

## ED Grills Omar For Five Hours In J&K Bank Case

**NC Calls It 'Vicious Vilification'**  
**Press Trust Of India**  
 New Delhi: The ED questioned NC leader Omar Abdullah on Thursday in connection with the purchase of a building by J&K Bank some 12 years ago when he was Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, a move the party termed a "political exercise" ahead of the Assembly elections in the union territory. After spending more than five hours at the ED office here in response to summons sent last week, Abdullah told reporters that he had not been accused of anything and that he had "answered them as much as I could". He would further help them "if they need me", he added. According to officials, the case pertains to the purchase of a building by the J&K Bank, in which the government has 68 per cent equity, at Bandra Kurla in 2010. A property measuring around 65,000 square feet was acquired at a cost of Rs 172 crores. Sources said the board of directors of the bank had set up a two-member committee headed by its chairman Haseeb Drabu which recommended the purchase of the property, in which another leading bank was also interested. The purchase was approved by the bank board, and the chief minister had no say in the matter, the sources added. While Abdullah refused to divulge details about his questioning by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the National Conference (NC) slammed the move as a "vicious vilification" and "fishing expedition" ahead of the Assembly elections expected to be held later this year in Jammu and Kashmir. "There was a time when elections were announced by the Election Commission, but now, it seems that elections are announced by the ED," the party alleged in a statement, which also said that the ED's action was another case of misuse of investigative agencies by the central government. According to the sources, Abdullah. [More on P6](#)



## J&K Moving In Direction Of Positive Progress: LG

**Observer News Service**  
 JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Thursday that the Union Territory was moving forward in the direction of positive progress with the spirit of strong service nurtured by national values and public consciousness. Sinha made these remarks while speaking at the National Health Festival for Divyangjan, organized by Special Olympics Bharat J&K, to honour specially-abled sportspersons at the Jammu University, an official spokesperson said Thursday. The LG, he said, observed that under the leadership of the PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji, Divyangjan have been granted their due rights to live a dignified and virtuous life. "Before 2015, all the laws in our country were aimed at somehow connecting the

specially-abled people with the programs of social welfare. A new social consciousness emerged after 2015 wherein focus shifted to bestowing Divyangjan their due rights and not just benefits under social welfare measures," Sinha said. "During the same time, Accessible India Campaign turned into a mass movement creating accessible infrastructure for specially-abled, in government and private buildings, railway stations, airports, schools and colleges," he added. According to the spokesperson, the LG highlighted the unprecedented work being done keeping in mind the needs and aspirations of all the sections of the society and said the UT of J&K is moving forward in the direction of positive progress with the spirit of strong service nurtured by national values and public consciousness. "Jammu and Kashmir government is. [More on P6](#)

## Police Wants Entire J&K Under CCTV Surveillance

**184 Cameras To Be Installed Across Valley, 218 In Jammu In First Phase**  
**Agencies**  
 Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is mulling to cover entire Union Territory of J&K under round the clock Close Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance to keep an eye on the anti-national elements and for the "efficient law and order management." The police headquarters of J&K have floated tenders for UT-wide CCTV integrated network system with a primary focus on procuring hi-resolution cameras having facilities of recognising face, automatic number plate, colour unidentified objects and stone pelting. The draft proposal of CCTV Integrated Network program framed by the J&K police, reads that the UT of J&K is the northern most region of India and it shares National Borders with Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and international border with Pakistan. Samba etc.," the proposal reads. "It has also set up a Police Control Room (PCR) in Srinagar and Jammu city. With the growing needs and urge to maintain law & order in the UT, PHQ felt a need to create a holistic and integrated CCTV Camera network. The UT Wide CCTV Surveillance Project envisages creation of an integrated network of GIS based CCTV cameras connected with Zonal Command Control Centers (Z3Cs) and District Command Control Center (D3C) for an efficient management of law & order situation in the UT." The draft proposal reads that the project is focused on building CCTV infrastructure with proposed solutions of general surveillance, Automatic Number Plate Recognition System (ANPR), Facial Recognition System (FRS) and Command Center etc. "The key components of the project are CCTV. [More on P6](#)



"The UT is in constant threat of militancy and insurgency activities for a very long time. The PHQ is primarily responsible to manage Law and order situation in the UT. PHQ has accordingly undertaken several initiatives in the past, to enhance the surveillance systems. In one of such initiative, PHQ has installed CCTV cameras at various cities of UT, like Kashmir, Jammu and

## J&K To Adopt Uniform Academic Calendar From This Year

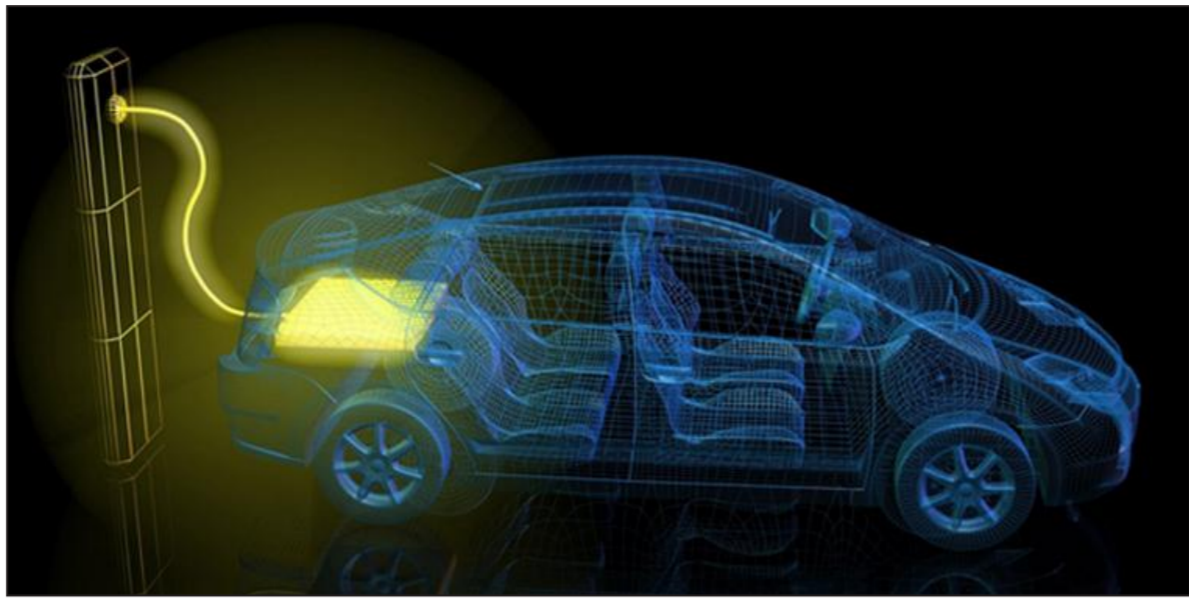
**All Colleges To Obtain NAAC Accreditation, NEP To Be Implemented Fully: CS Mehta**  
**Observer News Service**  
 Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir will fully implement the National Education Policy (NEP) from the current academic session while the four year undergraduate programme as per UGC guidelines would be introduced in all the colleges of the Union Territory, officials said Thursday. The decision in this regard was taken unanimously in a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, to review and discuss modalities for implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesperson said Thursday. The meeting, he said, also decided that the centralized admission test CUET would be mandatory for all admissions in J&K from the next academic session. "It will also move to a uniform academic calendar which in turn will be synchronized the national academic calendar. In addition, all higher education institutions would move towards progressively greater autonomy," he said. According to the spokesperson, the meeting had a thorough exchange of ideas on steps to be taken for implementation of this ambitious nationwide policy in J&K. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Higher Education, Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary, School Education, B. K. Singh, Vice Chancellors of various universities of the UT and other senior officers of Higher. [More on P6](#)

Hizmet: Kashmir's Very Own Food Delivery Service

Muneeb Nageeb

Srinagar- In mainland India Zomato and Swiggy might be the best food delivery apps, but in Kashmir a local app 'Hizmet' is making a name for itself. The Hizmet app took its first order on 12th August 2020, on the first day of its launch...

hizmet food delivery advertisement with logo and details about the app's services and delivery time.



IIT Develops Tech To Standardise Electric Vehicles For Indian Drive Cycles

Press Trust Of India

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, have developed a one-of-its kind technology that rates the motors and batteries of Electric Vehicles (EVs) based on Indian drive-cycles. According to officials, the Electric Vehicles currently available in the market do not take into account the different climatic conditions in India...

the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) right now are considering creating standard drive-cycles for Indian conditions," said Praveen Kumar, Professor, Department of Electronics and Electrical Engineering, IIT Guwahati. "Currently, no OEM uses this technology and they have been requesting the drive-cycle data of Indian vehicles. This research hopes to create better and more efficient drivetrains based on different regions. This is also beneficial for start-ups. This research aims to reduce emissions and reduce fuel consumption," Kumar added.

the EV market and help in levelling the playing field. The other primary benefit of this entire exercise is to prepare the next generation of technocrats that are ready for an excellent career in EV technology anywhere in the world," Kumar said. The institute's team intends to extend the research to commercial vehicles working with OEMs so that they can manufacture more efficient drive trains that suit the different climates of India better.

Table with 6 columns: S.No, Name, City, District, State, and Remarks. Lists various candidates and their details for a government tender.

Advertisement for the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education, BRANCH OFFICE SOPORE, regarding lost certificates and candidates.

Advertisement for the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education, BRANCH OFFICE MAMGAM, regarding lost certificates and candidates.

Advertisement for the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education, BRANCH OFFICE MAMGAM, regarding lost certificates and candidates.

Public Notice regarding school records for a candidate named Umar Rashid, dated 01-07-2014.

Advertisement for YARDIMCI MULTI-VENTURE, dealing with clothing and home appliances at wholesale rates.

Advertisement for IOX MOBILE STORE, offering all types of mobile and mobile accessories.

Advertisement for TECH WORLD, offering mobile and electronic accessories.

ASF ENTERPRISES advertisement for sale and service of computers, laptops, printers, and other electronics.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir advertisement for the Office of the Executive Engineer JS-PHE Deptt. Rural Water Supply Division, Ganderalbal/Sgr.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir advertisement for the Office of the Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Bandipora, CORRIGENDUM.

Large advertisement from the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Office of the Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Ganderalbal, regarding a tender for Civilworks (upto Rs.2.50 Crores).



Schools Force Parents To Buy Uniforms At Selected Shops

Agencies

Srinagar: Some private schools in Srinagar allegedly force parents to buy uniforms from selected shops.

Parents can be seen buying school uniforms from designated shops near the city center and other shops across Srinagar city.

Parents also allege the designated shops that sell school uniforms flout norms. "The other day I purchased a coat, shirt and sweater for my class 3rd child from a shop at Regal Chowk.

Jammu Kashmir Students Association alleges that there is a nexus between some selected shopkeepers and private schools. Parents have been directed to purchase summer uniforms from specific private shops.

The Association said that they are being informed that schools do this to earn commission.

Parents allege despite government orders, some schools are continuing with the practice. "The practice is against the instructions. Authorities should monitor such practices and initiate action against them."

Pertinently, the Education Department had repeatedly directed private schools to stop forcing the parents and students to buy uniforms and books from particular shops or schools itself. (KNT)

Gram Sabha Held Across Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In connection with the celebrations of National Panchayati Raj Day to be held on 24th of April, a series of special Gram Sabhas were held in different Panchayati halqas and Blocks of District Srinagar.

The Gram Sabhas were conducted in Panzarin A and Panzarin B in Block Qamarwari, Khimber, Syedpora, Faqir Gujree A, Faqir Gujree B in Harwan Block.

Similarly, Gram Sabhas were also held in Lasjan A, Soiteng and Nowgam A in Block Srinagar, while in Block Khonmoh of the District Gram Sabhas were conducted in Balhama A, Balhama B, Khonmoh A, Khonmoh B.

A large number of people actively participated in the Gram Sabhas, during which agenda points along with other issues were discussed in detail and focus was laid on the developmental activities of respective Panchayati Halqa.



POLES APART: Despite erecting new electric poles, the old poles are still standing their ground in Hazratbal, Srinagar.

QUARTER ONE 2022

Cancer Cases Show Alarming Rise In Kashmir

Agencies

Srinagar: In a worrisome trend, Kashmir's leading tertiary care hospital Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) has recorded over 1100 cases of cancer in the first quarter of ensuing year.

The medicos at the Radiation Oncology department of the Institute admit that the cancer cases have shown a steep rise in Kashmir adding that in men, lung cancer is the most prominent one while women are fast falling prey to breast cancer. The doctors at the institute termed the growing cancer rate as a "cause of great concern."

Figures revealed, against last year's total patient load of 4800, SKIMS received 1110 cancer cases in the first three months (Jan 1 to March 31) of 2022, highest in recent times.

Dr. Fir Afroz, Head of department Radiation Oncology at SKIMS said that

out of the total cases received at the Institute, Lung cancer was found prominent among men while breast cancer was seen on the rise among women.

She said that smoking is one of the primary reasons for cancer among males. "Family history, obesity, age are among the factors responsible for the cancer cases," Dr Afroz said.

She, however, said that one of the positive changes that has happened in the valley in the past few years is that people are getting aware about the disease. "We have a high inflow of such patients who come forward to get themselves treated. People have overcome their fear of getting treated which is a good sign," Dr. Afroz said, adding that "early detection of the disease helps provide timely treatment, which ultimately can help save the precious life."

As per Union Health Ministry's figures, Jammu Kashmir has reported an estimated 39041 cancer cases, of which

12675 were recorded in 2019, 13012 in 2020 and 13354 in 2021.

"Cancer is a multi-dimensional disease and the risk factors inter alia include ageing population, sedentary lifestyle, use of tobacco products, unhealthy diet and air pollution. The number of cancer cases due to water and industrial pollution is not available," the ministry's note reads.

Dr Afroz said that the actual rise in cancer cases could be found at the end of the year after drawing comparison with the last year. "I urge patients having symptoms of cancer to come forward as early treatment can prevent the disease from spreading further and then help save a life," she said, adding that at the Institute there is a quality treatment available as far as Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy is concerned. "Upgradation of the infrastructure is a continuous process," Dr Afroz said. (KNO)

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
PDD: 0194-2450213
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
CAPD: 18001807011
SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
BIJHERA: 01932-228243
PAMPORE: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

Sgr-Jammu highway - ( Open )
Mughal Road - ( Closed )
Srinagar- Leh - ( Open )



HIJRI CALENDAR
06 Ramazan
1443

PRAYERS

FAJR 4: 43
ZUHR 12:34
ASR 5:06
Magrib 6:59
ISHA 8: 21

This Day In History

- 1848 - 1st battle at Gioto: Sardinia-Piemonte beats Austrians
1848 - Battle at Xaquixaguana, Peru: Pedro de la Gasca beats Gonzalo Pizarro
1866 - Italy and Prussia ally against Austria-Hungary.
1898 - Battle of Atbara River, Anglo-Egyptian forces crush 6,000 Sudanese
1902 - Russia and China sign the Convention of Evacuation under which Russia agrees to evacuate Manchuria within 18 months
1902 - Demonstration organised by socialists in Belgium as people demand better education, living conditions, the right to strike and universal male suffrage result in a riot and some deaths
1904 - Great Britain and France establish their Entente Cordiale, a technical treaty settling long-standing disagreements over Morocco, Egypt, Africa, and the Pacific
1908 - H. H. Asquith succeeds Henry Campbell-Bannerman as British Prime Minister
1913 - Opening of China's 1st parliament takes place in Peking (now Beijing)
1914 - US & Colombia sign a treaty concerning Panama Canal Zone
1916 - Norway approves active & passive female suffrage
1920 - LONGA soccer team forms in Tilburg
1929 - Indian Independence Movement: At the Delhi Central Assembly, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt handouts and bombs to court arrest.
1943 - U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, in an attempt to check inflation, freezes wages and prices, prohibits workers from changing jobs unless the war effort would be aided thereby, and bars rate increases to common carriers and public utilities.
1946 - League of Nations assembles for last time.
1947 - Largest recorded sunspot (7,000) observed
1948 - Soen Nakagawa & Nyogen Senzaki (Zen teachers) meet in SF
1952 - US President Harry Truman seizes steel mills to avert a strike
1960 - Neth & Germany sign accord concerning war casualties
1960 - US Senate passes Civil Rights Bill with measures against discriminatory voting practices
1964 - Unmanned Gemini 1 launched
1965 - India & Pakistan forces engage in a border fight
1966 - OAO 1, 1st orbiting astronomical observatory, launched
1966 - Time publishes its "Is God Dead" issue - its first issue without an image
1968 - Czechoslovakia Cernik government forms
1968 - New socialist constitution of East Germany takes effect
1974 - Discovery Island opens
1977 - Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin resigns
1985 - Amdahl releases UTS/IV, 1st mainframe Unix
1985 - India files suit against Union Carbide over Bhopal disaster
1990 - New Democracy wins the national election in Greece.
1991 - Major league umpires & baseball reach a 4-year agreement
1991 - Michael Landon announces he has inoperable cancer of the pancreas

From KO Archives

Leisure A No Longer A Pleasure For Kashmir Youth

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The youth in Kashmir are today severely handicapped when it comes to spending leisure time in an enriching and meaningful way, a Kashmir Observer report has found out.

The older generation had a better time in its youth than today's younger lot, who despite the myriad diversions are disposal, feels anxious and impatient at what it describes as severely shrinking space for recreation.

Evidently television, internet cafes and snooker clubs are no match for the colourful fairs at Badamwari, the acrobatics of an Afsar Khan at Edges or the antics of magicians in open grounds of which only memories exist in the minds of elders.

What the youth find today seem to be missing is the kind of active participation their parents and grandparents had by being associated with dramatic clubs, literary societies or sports bodies.

The first ingredients of living satisfying life - the manner of spending leisure time- appears to be a gift that youth in Kashmir today have lost or never acquired in first place. (Kashmir Observer, 08 April, 2005)

انجمنیت اچھل
مضمون درخواست منجانب: عبدالرشید کھوکھرو ولد غلام محمد کھوکھرو ساکنہ اچھل دہ گاہہ
بعض حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ تحت ایش آ آء 294 بجین ڈپارٹمنٹ و ٹیچنگ جونیورسٹی
شانیہ بانو داندلیب جان اوارڈ ان پیدائش

انجمنیت اچھل
مضمون درخواست منجانب: فردوس احمد دارل غلام محمد ڈاسراکنہ کراٹر گڑھ
بعض حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ تحت ایش آ آء 294 بجین ڈپارٹمنٹ و ٹیچنگ جونیورسٹی
اشتیہار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

انجمنیت دیگام با اجلاس نایب تحصیلدار دیگام
مضمون درخواست منجانب: زاہد علی وسپیل علی پیران علی محمد پال ساکنہ گنورہ تحصیل ضلع نشت ناگ
بعض حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ
اشتیہار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

انجمنیت اچھل
مضمون درخواست منجانب: غلام الدین غلام شاہ ولد غلام شاہ کاندھل صاحب اچھل تحصیل
بعض حصول SC سرٹیفکیٹ تحت ایش آ آء 294 بجین ڈپارٹمنٹ و ٹیچنگ جونیورسٹی
اشتیہار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

انجمنیت اچھل
مضمون درخواست منجانب: عبدالرحیم کمار ولد غلام محمد کمار ساکنہ ہر دھ پورہ
بعض حصول SC سرٹیفکیٹ تحت ایش آ آء 294 بجین ڈپارٹمنٹ و ٹیچنگ جونیورسٹی
اشتیہار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

انجمنیت ربیع پورہ با اجلاس غلام علی الدین صاحب درجہ اول
مضمون درخواست منجانب: مسماہ حسن بانو بیوہ عزیز الرحمان خان ساکنہ ربیع پورہ تحصیل مٹل
بعض حصول ڈیپٹی سٹیٹس سرٹیفکیٹ
اشتیہار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

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# Anganwadi Workers: Denied and Dismissed?

Haris Zargar

**H**undreds of Anganwadi and accredited social health activist (Asha) workers – India's front-line community personnel who have spearheaded the country's fight against malnutrition and the Covid-19 pandemic – are facing retaliation charges and dismissals for their protests for better wages and work benefits.

Nearly 1 000 Anganwadi workers and volunteers in Delhi have been dismissed, while more than 3 000 others have been issued show-cause notices for their participation in the 39-day strike demanding regularisation of their jobs and the implementation of government service rules so workers can get retirement benefits and medical insurance.

Considered "honorary workers", Anganwadi workers and helpers have been protesting in the national capital since 31 January after two demonstrations – on 7 September 2021 and 6 January – failed to persuade state authorities to make them government employees. The most recent protest was suspended on 9 March after Delhi's lieutenant governor invoked the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), which prohibits any employee strike for the next six months.

The Anganwadi workers who have been issued notices or whose services have been terminated are devastated, since so many families rely entirely on their earnings for survival. "All these terminations are illegal without any hearing. Without any actions, the workers were terminated for participating in the strike," said Shivani Kaul, president of the Delhi State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers' Union, which spearheaded the strikes. Kaul also pointed out that the act can only be imposed on government employees. "Clearly, this step is completely unconstitutional and illegal," she said.

On 14 March, the union appealed the termination at the high court in Delhi, seeking immediate reinstatement with wages. In the petition, the union stated that its strike was called off after the government prohibited it. The workers were asked to report back to work immediately and to sign apology letters saying they would not strike in the future.

In its response, the Delhi government told the court that the workers who were terminated from services had refused to come back even after being asked to. It said it would not terminate any more Anganwadi workers or helpers.

The union said that its fight would continue even after receiving threatening letters and suspension notices, and accused the authorities of disrespecting Anganwadi employees. Fifteen Anganwadi workers were also detained in the capital after protesting the termination notices sent to their colleagues.

At present, Anganwadi workers receive a monthly honorarium of about R1 800 and helpers receive R930. They want about R4 800 a month for workers and R3 800 for helpers. In response to the strike, the Delhi government announced on 14 February an increase in pay for Anganwadi workers to about R2 440 and R1 309 for helpers from 1 March. The striking workers declared this inadequate and said the protests are meant to draw attention to their working conditions. They vowed to continue the strike until their concerns are addressed.



## Nationwide resentment

On 15 March, hundreds of Anganwadi, Asha and midday meal workers from Haryana, Delhi and Punjab held a protest near the Indian Parliament for a wage increase. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions led the protest backed by the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers, the Midday Meal Workers Federation of India and the All India Coordination Committee of Asha Workers.

In the neighbouring north Indian state of Haryana, the administration terminated 600 workers for demanding an increase in their honorarium. More than 40 000 Anganwadi workers and helpers in Haryana had been protesting since 8 December, but the strike was also suspended after the state authorities invoked the ESMA.

Workers in Haryana have been demanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi honour a commitment made in September 2018 to raise the monthly honorarium for Anganwadi workers by about R288 and helpers by R144, along with getting other government employee benefits.

In the south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, the Anganwadi workers have also been staging state-wide protests demanding the implementation of a minimum wage and payment of allowances. Many Anganwadi and Asha workers were detained for attempting to submit a memorandum of their demands to authorities. On 29 March, hundreds of Anganwadi workers held protests in Madurai city and in the northern city of Ludhiana.

## A resilient workforce

Employed under the government's Integrated Child Development Scheme, India's 2.5-million-strong Anganwadi and Asha workforce are community workers who serve vulnerable sectors of society, catering to the education and health needs of children under six. They collect data on children's growth and education, and distribute rations to pregnant women, while also providing them with information about vaccinations, healthcare and sanitation.

Anganwadi was launched in 1975 to combat child hunger and malnutrition. The Ashas are trained women's community health activists created under the National Rural Health Mission to mobilise the community to use existing health services. Working in close association with each other and other frontline workers such as the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, the Ashas and Anganwadi largely consist of

women workers. They are often divorcees, single mothers or widows who earn an honorarium. They are not entitled to a salary. Spread across the country, their honorarium differs depending on the state, though the component sanctioned by the union government is common to all. They often come from the community they serve and are highly politically aware and unionised, despite the odds.

When the Covid-19 pandemic put a strain on health facilities, Anganwadi workers led door-to-door check-ups for Covid symptoms and distributed medicines with their fellow Ashas. They were especially critical in fighting the pandemic in the rural areas, helping people deal with the virus and its aftermath. These high-risk responsibilities were in addition to their everyday tasks, including providing meals for women and children, mass immunisation and building links between the government and the community.

While the government imposed a nationwide lockdown, Anganwadi workers and Ashas were still expected to work, despite limited transport. Many of them were not adequately equipped to work in the field. Others were not properly trained for their new responsibilities. Despite their contact with possibly infected people, they were expected to function without masks or sanitisers in a virus-stricken environment.

"Ashas and Anganwadi workers have been going to extreme lengths to ensure that the households they serve are able to access state entitlements, raising the question of why their entitlements remain unrecognised," writes Ayesha Pattnaik, a researcher at an Indian agency working on rural poverty alleviation. "While these workers have been building strong unions with defined collective voices, protests by Ashas and Anganwadi workers across states have been met with police brutality." She adds that criminalising dissent has meant that the space to claim their rights is shrinking.

Scholar Suchita Krishnaprasad says the rural women whom the Anganwadi and Asha workers serve are not powerful enough to nudge policymakers to extend decent working conditions to these frontline health workers.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer*

*The author is a Journalist. The article was first published by New Frame*

## KO VIEW

### Tourists are back

**W**ith the third wave abating across India, tourist arrivals in Kashmir have accelerated in recent weeks. According to the official estimate, the arrivals are set to reach a 10-year high this year. Since January alone, more than 340,000 tourists have come. In March, around 1.8 lakh tourists arrived which is an unprecedented number over the last so many years. One of the biggest draws for the tourists is the Tulip Garden, Asia's largest, and also the resorts like Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Dal lake. Most of the tourists visited Gulmarg where the hotels remain booked ever since January. Similarly, the tourist spots like Pahalgam are seeing the rush. But it is Gulmarg which is the go to place. This is because Gulmarg has received most of the publicity. Prospects for tourism are getting better by the day.

But the excessive focus on fewer resorts are drawing tourists away from other equally scenic places, some of them like Aharbal, Yusmarg, Tosamaidan, Gurez, historic old city in Srinagar have only recently found a prominent place on the tourist map of Kashmir. These places need development of tourist infrastructure and also a wider publicity for people to visit. The Tourism department has said that an advertising campaign across major Indian cities and the opening of new destinations were attracting more tourists.

Tourism, one of the mainstays of the Kashmir economy, is one of the sectors that has been hit the hardest. There is a large section of people who have largely been without employment over the last two and a half years. Their savings have already been depleted. For example, the transporters; the drivers and conductors were among the worst-hit. This includes also the people associated with tourism. In 2021, many cases of suicides and suicide attempts took place as a result. The major cause of suicide attempts was financial distress in the families caused by the turmoil of the preceding two years and also by the extended successive lockdowns, two of them the result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here's hoping that with the abating of the pandemic, the economic situation would return to normal, both in the country as well as in Kashmir. This alone will prevent further misery.

Tourism sector forms 6.8 percent of Kashmir's GDP and employs 2 million people. The sector has the potential to shore up our beleaguered economy. Here's hoping that things improve from hereon. The waning pandemic wave is once again creating conditions for unhindered tourism in the Valley. This is also the hope of the people associated with the tourist sector. They hope there is no fourth Covid wave so that the tourists continue pouring into Kashmir and help resuscitate the economy and generate jobs.

## OTHER OPINION

### Double trouble

**T**he Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act provides for the biggest welfare spending scheme by the Government of India. A pre-announced wage rate is paid under the scheme for labour performed in creating assets. The wage rate varies from state to state, depending upon prevailing labour market conditions. The recent revision in wages under the scheme for 2022-23 shows the MGNREGA wage rate to be below the minimum wage for similar unskilled work in almost every state. There has been an additional announcement that fresh grants under the scheme released for each state would be done only after the completion of an audit to check the money utilized and the work done. The official reason cited for this gap relates to viewing MGNREGA jobs as being sought as a last resort when regular jobs are unavailable. The Centre does not want people to become dependent on the MGNREGA. The idea is not to make MGNREGA jobs the most preferred. The audit requirement is obvious and justified on the grounds of preventing the misuse of funds.

These announcements will have implications for states and their labour markets. First, consider the wage gap. In tight labour markets, say, in Maharashtra or Kerala, the actual wage rate, as opposed to the minimum, will tend to increase. However, this natural rise will be tempered by the existence of a de facto minimum wage, which is the MGNREGA wage rate. In other words, rising wage rates will compel employers to hold on to wages as much as possible by forcing labour to fall back on the MGNREGA. In weak labour markets, the state's minimum wage would come under pressure to be reduced further as the opportunity cost of workers would be the MGNREGA wage rate, a trend that would reduce the wage gap. In both cases, the average rural wage would be lower than what it would have been if the wage gap had not been there. The second implication is about the auditing of funds and performance. While this is laudable in ensuring that public funds are not wasted, it might also create a conflict of political interests in a federal system. States with Opposition governments might feel that the audit process is slow and too complicated, thereby leading to a delay in the release of the next round of funds. States that misuse funds or are terribly inefficient in their use ought to be hauled up. It is not clear that such identification of the laggards would be done in an acceptable fashion. The increase in political quibbling would have its own economic costs.

*Telegraph India*

**They were especially critical in fighting the pandemic in the rural areas, helping people deal with the virus and its aftermath. These high-risk responsibilities were in addition to their everyday tasks, including providing meals for women and children, mass immunisation and building links between the government and the community**



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## KAS, JEE and NEET Obsession

**L**IFE in Jammu and Kashmir is narrowly conceived, particularly in the case of students and parents. Well, it is not their fault; when the main motive of life is to earn money by hook or by crook, parents deliberately and their children voluntarily or involuntarily choose that way that can give them money in heaps. KAS and NEET are two ways that have become the trademarks of learning. In fact, such is the impact of these two things that other professions and occupations have taken a back seat. Recently, social media, electronic media and print media were full of success stories, regarding KAS and NEET qualifiers.

Yes, it is a moment of happiness that we produce good bureaucrats and doctors. But the main thing is that is life all about qualifying an examination or is it about knowing the world and yourselves?

In the present context, this line of demarcation has blurred a lot. Those students who have no inclinations towards these professions are called useless. Those students who are called useless, follow their own whims. They want to do something adventurous that can pacify their nerves. They don't want to be in a race of cut throat competition. They live the way they find life.

Our educational system never

takes individual differences into account. From the beginning, we are taught that we are all going to become doctors, engineers, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, etc. We are never taught that the main aim of life is to know one's life. When a person knows their worth, he or she opts a profession or an occupation according to his or her liking and necessity. However, in the present world, it is seen that the majority of people engaged in different professions are misfits. If someone wants to opt any profession or occupation, he or she is forced to prefer that profession that is not suitable to them. In this way, the menace of the educational system is to blame. It is

this that produces narrow mindedness in our society.

In short, there should be a broad consensus on what the real meaning of life is. After knowing this, there should be pondering over different professions and their needs. Knowing all these things will enable us to respect every profession. We will be in a position not to give unnecessary hype to those things that are like others. William Bill Gates, Ellison, Jack Ma, Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Warren Buffet, etc are some examples.

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## MINDFUL FRIDAYS

# Ramazan for Mental Health: Fasting as a Means of Developing Self-control



“ Self-control necessitates willpower and tenacity, which are essential factors in completing tasks and goals when they get difficult rather than leaving the task midway. Fasting, which by its very nature challenges people to abstain from eating food for extended periods of time, is one of the most powerful exercises in willpower and steadfastness, which together translate to self-control. And self-control is essential for success

Wasim Kakroo

Allah says in Qur'an: "Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for those before you, that you may develop self-restraint" (Qur'an 2:183).

The first instruction by Allah to Muslims in Qur'an about fasting conveys the fundamental wisdom behind why we should fast and that is to achieve a sense of self-restraint, which in other terms means self-control.

Self-control is a basic tenet in many faiths, and it's also one of the most important predictors of anybody's long-term success. Most people find it difficult to leave a single meal even occasionally, much less for a month. However, studies show that self-control (e.g., practiced through fasting) has long-term implications. One study has shown that when young children were given an appealing toy or piece of candy and told not to touch it until sometime later, those who showed the most self-control by waiting for the prescribed time were found

to have a better set of executive functioning skills 14 years later. Executive functioning is a term used to describe higher order cognitive abilities such as problem solving, good decision-making, and the ability to switch from one task to another. We as psychologists believe that self-control, one facet of emotional intelligence, plays a larger role in long-term life success of an individual than even IQ.

#### WHAT ROLE DOES SELF-CONTROL HAVE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN LIFE?

Self-control necessitates willpower and tenacity, which are essential factors in completing tasks and goals when they get difficult rather than leaving the task midway. Fasting, which by its very nature challenges people to abstain from eating food for extended periods of time, is one of the most powerful exercises in willpower and steadfastness, which together translate to self-control. And self-control is essential for success.

Weight loss, cell regeneration, slower ageing, and prevention of

chronic diseases like diabetes and Alzheimer's are all well-known and investigated physical benefits of fasting. However, common people know less about psychological benefits of fasting, despite research pointing to a variety of beneficial effects on mental health, including:

1. Improved mood – people reported feeling more accomplished, rewarded, proud, and in control after fasting for many hours, indicating a boost in self-esteem and sense of success. These effects are caused in part by a raise in specific hormones while fasting, as well as the pleasure felt after completing a difficult activity, which serves as a powerful feel-good agent on the brain.
2. Lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression – fasting leads to production of brain proteins that imitate the actions of anti-depressant drugs, lowering stress, anxiety, and depression levels. Fasting has been suggested by professionals as a treatment for depression and other mood disorders due to

the significant improvement in anxiety that was seen in those patients who fasted.

3. Enhanced vigilance and alertness – contrary to popular belief, fasting does not promote irritability or tiredness. Instead, people who fast appear to benefit from improved vigilance and alertness. Food is converted into glucose by our bodies, and too much of it causes sluggishness and tiredness, which most individuals experience shortly after eating. Fasting helps the body regulate glucose levels, which reduces sluggishness and increases alertness.
4. Improved memory – the key to a healthier memory is better attention. Remembering where you put your keys is more a function of how well you pay attention in the first place than of how forgetful you are. As a result, fasting may be used to treat inattention. Fasting improves memory by regenerating cells in the hippocampus, the brain's

memory centre, and so acts as a "spring cleaning" for the brain, resulting in improved cognitive functioning.

5. Improved sleep quality - People who fast notice a considerable improvement in the quality of their sleep, which obviously is linked to improvement in mood. In psychology, sleep is often referred to as a "wonder medicine." Many elements of psychological and physical health improve for people who sleep the optimum number of hours daily.

For many people, fasting is difficult – denying ourselves of food is one of the most difficult things we can do. Fasting, on the other hand, is commanded by Islam with a clear indication of the benefits we may obtain – self-control, which ultimately leads to greater awareness of God and thus we are benefitted both psychologically as well as spiritually.

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## Ramazan: The Month of Blessing

Professor M. Aslam

Fasting in one form or the other does exist in almost all the religions. However, fasting or 'Roza' as practiced by Muslims is an elaborate process of self-purification.

The Qur'an says, "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint (Qur'an, A - Baqara, 2:183.)

The month of fasting or Ramazan involves a wide range of responsibilities on the part of those who observe fasting.

Normally the fast should not affect the daily avocations, and it should not be a pretext for neglecting normal duties. Islam never approves, much less demands, of keeping vigil during the whole night and passing the following day in sleep and indolence. Fast means a greater effort to perform all the usual duties and something else, more prayers and more charity, and all this in the absence of food and drink. Fasting should make one remember the hunger and starvation of the poor and develop empathy for the deprived people. It is an opportunity to experience hunger so that people will understand the pain of the hungry and will go forward to help them. Ramazan fasting is also an exercise in self-discipline. For those who are chain smokers or who nibble food constantly, or drink coffee every hour, it is a good way to break the habit.



“ Of the greatest advantages of fasting in the month of Ramazan is that its true observance inculcates in a person a habit of speaking the truth- a commodity that is becoming very rare nowadays

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

The human body consists of physical, emotional, biological and spiritual parts. A balanced mix of these can lead to excellence. The fasting during the month of Ramazan orients the observer to the

art of balancing the spiritual essentials with other parts. It helps curb the animalistic tendencies originating from the stomach, in full. It is an effective tool for sobering of a mind and reconstruction of our spiritual faculties.

#### HEALTHCARE BENEFITS

There are a number of healthcare benefits, which originate from the month of fasting. The basic among them being that Allah does not encourage overeating, the root-cause of many diseases.

Ramazan fasting is a sentinel against disease, provided the fast follows the strict dietary rule: eat is categorically stated, "...Eat and drink, but waste not by excess, for Allah loves not wasters." (Al-Qur'an, 7:31). We also have additional

prayers prescribed after the dinner during the month of Ramazan. According to one estimate, using a calorie counter, the amount of calories burnt during the special night prayer of Ramazan (tarawih) amounted to 200 calories. It is stated that this form of prayer as well as the five daily-prescribed prayers use all the muscles and joints and can be considered a mild form of exercise in terms of calorie output.

#### CONCEPTS OF HOSPITALITY, NEIGHBORHOOD AND CHARITY

The concepts of hospitality, neighborhood and charity are important virtues apart from self-purification, which the month of Ramazan is expected to imbibe among the followers of Islam. The Prophet had said, "Those who become happy on hearing the sound of the footsteps of a guest, God will forgive their sins". It is thus a great incentive to practice the concept of hospitality.

The practice of the concept of neighborhood is equally important. It has wider connotations than its literal meaning. The Prophet had said, "One should behave decently with the whole of humanity and foremost among them is your neighbour." If one connects it with the concept of fasting, an immediate implication is that a true Muslim cannot see any human being hungry, even if it means having to sacrifice 'iftar' and to continue fasting for the next day. Similarly, a true Muslim cannot see a human

being in pain or misery. It applies to both one's immediate neighborhood as well as humanity at large. What we are witnessing around us in the name of Islam is not Islam. In essence Islam in general and 'roza' in particular teaches a person to address human concerns and values.

On charity it is said that if one gives say a charity of rupees ten during the month of Ramazan, he will get 70 times more blessings in return. This is a great motivation and in reality an average middle class Muslims do follow this more meticulously than others. The rich on the other hand do it for the sake of fame & name. A Muslim is also expected to take stock of his personal wealth both cash and kind, every year and calculate 'Zakat' which is to be earmarked for distribution among the poor and needy.

Of the greatest advantages of fasting in the month of Ramazan is that its true observance inculcates in a person a habit of speaking the truth- a commodity that is becoming very rare nowadays. If a person speaks the truth, practices the concept of hospitality and neighborhood and gives charity as advocated above, he will certainly be entitled to God's blessings and protection, which we all need so desperately in these modern times.

The writer is a Sociologist and has served as Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU. He can be reached at: profaslam10@gmail.com





