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Kashmir Observer wishes its readers a happy and prosperous Eid-ul-fitr. KO offices shall remain closed on account of Eid for two days and the next issue will hit the stands on April 03.
-Managing Editor

Eid-ul-fitr Being Celebrated Today

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Eid-ul-fitr will be celebrated in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday as the crescent for Shawwal month was sighted in the region, marking the culmination of the holy month of Ramadan.

Grand Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam on Sunday evening said that enough witnesses for the sighting of Shawwal moon have been received from across J&K, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

He said that Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on March 31, across Jammu and Kashmir.

He also extended greetings to the Muslim Ummah, especially to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "May this auspicious occasion bring with it a lot of joy, happiness, peace and prosperity for all of us," he said.

The Grand Mufti said people should



remember the less privileged sections of the society while celebrating Eid on Monday.

"I request the imams to also make special supplications for the victims of violence in Palestine during Eid prayers," he added.

Eid-ul-Fitr in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was celebrated | [More on P6](#)

LG, CM Greet People

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha has greeted the people on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr.

In his message the Lieutenant Governor has said, "On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, I extend my warm greetings and good wishes to all."

He said that Eid-ul-Fitr marks the end of the period of fasting, prayer and charity during the pious month of Ramzan and an important occasion for festivities, all-round joy and togetherness. It strengthens our faith in oneness, compassion and brotherhood.

"May Eid-ul-Fitr this year usher in peace, prosperity and happiness for all."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday extended warm greetings to people of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr and said the festival is a true reflection of J&K's rich tradition of communal harmony.

Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the culmination of the fasting month of Ramzan, will be celebrated in J&K on Monday.

In his message, the chief minister highlighted the significance of Eid as a divine blessing following the month of fasting and devotion.

He emphasized that Eid is an occasion to | [More on P6](#)

No Eid Prayers At Eidgah Srinagar

The Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board Chairperson, Dr. Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, announced that Eid prayers will not be held at the historic Eidgah in Srinagar this year due to ongoing construction work.

Andrabi, however, said arrangements have been made for congregational prayers at Hazratbal Shrine and other shrines, mosques across Jammu and Kashmir. "The biggest congregation will be at Hazratbal Shrine. All arrangements have been completed by the Waqf Board in coordination | [More on P6](#)

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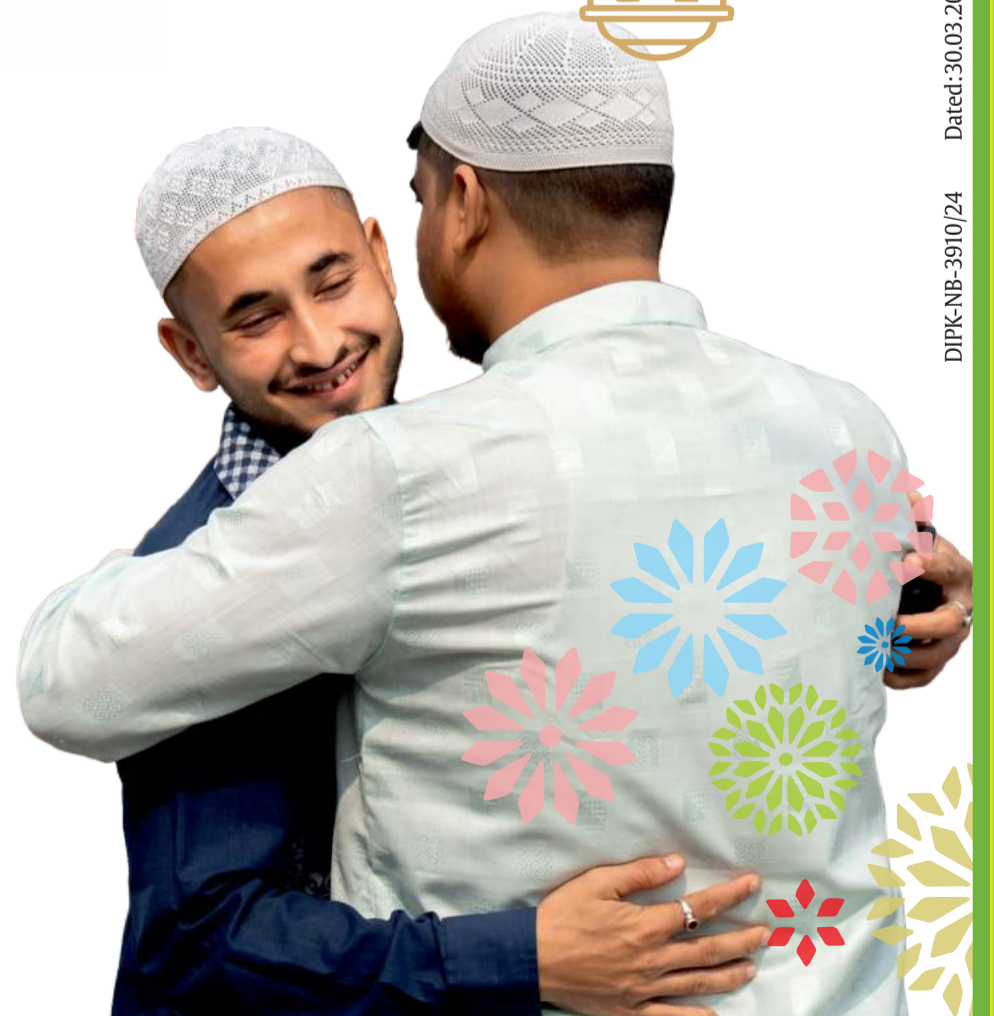
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Critical Thinking Is More Important Than Ever. How Can I Improve My Skills

The Conversation

There is a Fox News headline that goes like this:
Transgender female runner who beat 14,000 women at London Marathon offers to give medal back
Read about the event elsewhere and it turns out the athlete was also beaten by thousands of people and it was a participation medal. While the Fox News headline is true, it is framed to potentially elicit a negative reaction.
Misinformation is on the rise. We're told we need to think critically when we read things online, but how can we recognise such situations? And what does it mean to think critically anyway?

What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is based on the idea that if all ideas are equal, then all ideas are worthless. Without this assumption, there can be nothing to be critical of.
When we think critically, we focus on the quality of our reasoning and the factors that can influence it. In other words, thinking critically primarily means being critical of your own thinking.
Importantly, critical thinking is not strongly correlated with intelligence. While some believe intelligence is basically fixed (though there is debate around this), we can learn to think critically.
Other factors being equal, there's also no evidence thinking critically is an innate ability. In fact, we have evidence critical thinking can be improved as a skill in itself, and it is transferrable to other contexts.

The tools of argumentation

Many factors can affect the quality of your thinking. They include things like cognitive biases (systemic thinking errors), prior beliefs, prejudices and worldviews, framing effects, and how much you know about the subject.
To understand the quality of our reasoning, we can use the concepts and language of



argumentation. People often think "arguments" are about conflicting views. A better way to understand argumentation is to view it as a way of making our thinking visible and accessible to each other.
Arguments contain premises, those things we think are true about the world, and conclusions, which is where we end up in our thinking. Moving from premises to conclusions is called inferring, and it is the quality of these inferences that is the concern of critical thinking.

For example, if I offer the premises
P1: All Gronks are green
P2: Fred is a Gronk
Then you have already inferred the conclusion
C: Fred is green
You don't even need to know what a Gronk is to make that inference.
All our rational judgements and decisions are made up of chains of inferences. Constructing, evaluating and identifying types of arguments is the core business of critical thinking.

How can we improve our critical thinking skills?

To help us get better at it, we can understand critical thinking in three main ways. First, we can see critical thinking as a subject we can learn. In this subject, we study how arguments work and how our reasoning can be influenced or improved. We also learn what makes for good thinking by using ideas like accuracy, clarity, relevance, depth and more. These are what we value in good thinking. By learning this, we start to think about how we think, not just what we think about. Second, we improve our critical thinking by using what we've learned in real situations. This helps us build important thinking skills like analysing, justifying, evaluating and explaining.
Third, we can also think of critical thinking as a habit or attitude – something we choose to practice in our everyday lives. This means being curious, open-minded and willing to question things instead of just accepting them. It also means being aware of our own biases and trying to be fair and honest in how we think. When we put all three of these together, we become better thinkers – not just in

educational contexts, but in life. Practical steps to improving critical thinking Since critical thinking centres on the giving and taking of reasons, practising this is a step towards improvement. There are some useful ways to do this.

1. Make reasoning – rather than conclusions – the basis of your discussions with others. When asking for someone's opinion, inquire as to why they think that. And offer your thinking to others. Making our thinking visible leads to deep and meaningful conversations in which we can test each other's thinking and develop the virtues of open-mindedness and curiosity.

2. Always assess the credibility of information based on its source and with a reflection on your own biases. The processes of our thinking can shape information as we receive it, just as much as the source can in providing it. This develops the virtues of carefulness and humility.

3. Keep the fundamental question of critical inquiry in mind. The most important question in critical thinking is: "how do we know?". Continually testing the quality of your inquiry – and therefore thinking – is key. Focusing on this question gives us practice in applying the values of inquiry and develops virtues such as persistence and resilience.

You are not alone!

Reasoning is best understood as a social competence: we reason with and towards each other. Indeed, to be called reasonable is a social compliment.
It's only when we have to think with others that we really test the quality of our thinking. It's easy to convince yourself about something, but when you play in the arena of public reasoning, the bar is much higher. So, be the reasonable person in the room. That doesn't mean everyone has to come around to your way of thinking. But it does mean everyone will get closer to the truth because of you.

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Dignified Farewell

Transforming Kashmir's Final Rides

In Kashmir, it is a painful irony that the departed, who leave behind a lifetime of earnings, are often transported to their final resting place in load carriers – vehicles they would never have used for commuting while alive. This stark contrast raises a profound question: shouldn't every soul be granted a dignified farewell, just as they lived with dignity? It is time to ensure that the last journey of our loved ones reflects the respect and honor they deserve.
Since launching a dedicated funeral service in Islamabad in 2014, Mother Helpage now invites you to donate generously to provide these services for Srinagar, Budgam, and Baramulla.



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Ramzan Fruit Sales In Kashmir Cross Rs 167 Cr

Watermelon Retains The Top Spot



KO file photo by Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: This Ramadan, Kashmir saw record-breaking fruit consumption, with sales crossing Rs 167 crore as people stocked up on dates, watermelons, bananas, and other fruits for Iftar.

According to the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers-Cum-Dealers Union, Srinagar's Parimpora fruit mandi remained abuzz throughout the holy month, witnessing a surge in demand compared to last year when concerns over chemically treated watermelons had dampened sales.

Watermelon emerged as the top choice, with 60 truckloads arriving daily, each valued at approximately Rs 4 lakh. This brought the total watermelon

sales to around Rs 72 crore. Bananas also saw a sharp rise in demand, with 30 truckloads arriving daily, generating sales worth Rs 65 crore.

Dates, a staple for breaking the fast, were in high demand, with varieties like Mejdool, Ajwa, and Kalmi dominating the market. The total date consumption was estimated between Rs 25 crore and Rs 30 crore.

"This is also a record. People have consumed a variety of dates including Mejdool, Ajwa, Kalmi, and others in large quantities this Ramadan," said Basheer Ahmed Bashir, president of the Union.

Other fruits, including melons, grapes, and papayas, also saw steady demand. Around 30 truckloads | More on P6

PM Package Employees To Get Equal Benefits: LG

Says Govt Committed To Return Of KPs To Valley

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday assured that PM Package employees in Jammu and Kashmir would receive the same benefits as other government employees in the Union Territory. Speaking at the 'Navreh Samaroh' organized by the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha at Amphalla, Jammu, he emphasized the government's commitment to addressing their concerns.

"Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that all benefits available to



J&K government employees are extended to PM Package employees as well," Sinha said, reaffirming the

administration's support. The Lieutenant Governor also reiterated the central government's commitment

to the dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley, stating that efforts were underway | More on P6

Train To Run From Katra Temporarily

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The much-anticipated Vande Bharat Express will begin operations from Katra on April 19, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced. Originally intended to run between Jammu and Srinagar, the train will temporarily start from Katra due to ongoing renovation work at Jammu railway station.

Addressing concerns over the launch location, Dr. Singh clarified, "Some people have questioned why the inauguration is happening in Katra. Let me clarify that the train is meant to run from Jammu to Srinagar, but since Jammu railway station is under renovation, it will temporarily operate from Katra."

In addition to launching the train service, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also review the progress of the Chenab Bridge, the world's highest railway bridge and a crucial part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project. The bridge is expected to significantly enhance connectivity and boost economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Vande Bharat Express is set to reduce | More on P6

Urges People To Promote Unity

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to rise above narrow considerations and promote unity. Attending an event to mark the 453rd Prakash Utsav of Goswami Guru Nabha Dass Maharaj, the lieutenant governor

highlighted the "eternal relevance" of his teachings and immense contribution to "our composite culture". Guru Nabha Dass guided humanity to live an honest, truthful and virtuous life, Sinha said.

"Through his works, the revered sage

not only inspired society towards the path of devotion but also revitalised Indian civilisation and culture, re-instilling self-confidence in society," he said.

"Guru Nabha Dass emphasised awakening and unity in society, advocating that the feeling of | More on P6

Our Festivals Show Unity In Diversity: PM

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that various festivals being celebrated today and to be observed in the coming days are a pointer to the spirit of unity pervading India's diversity and asked people to continue to strengthen this feeling.

In his monthly Mann ki Baat broadcast, he said various states are celebrating their traditional new year on Sunday and many others will be celebrating in the coming days.

"Today the festival of Ugadi is being celebrated with great fervour in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana. Today itself, Gudi Padwa is being celebrated in Maharashtra. In our country full of diversity, during the next few days, in different states, 'Rongali Bihu' will be celebrated in Assam, 'Poila Boishakh' in Bengal, 'Navreh' in Kashmir. Similarly, between 13th and 15th April, there will be joyous celebration of festivals in different parts of the country," he said.

There is an atmosphere of excitement about this too and the festival of Eid is also there,



Modi added.

Noting that the coming month is of festivals and of festivities, the prime minister extended his greetings to the people of the country.

"These festivals of ours may be in different regions, but they show how unity is woven into the diversity of India. We have to keep reinforcing this spirit of unity, on our way ahead," the Prime Minister said. He noted that summer vacation in schools will also fall in a few weeks and said the long days of summer are a time for students to develop new hobbies and polish their skills.

He urged those offering various activities for students to use the hashtag of

"myholidays" and students and parents to share their experiences with "holidaymemories" hashtag.

In his address, Modi stressed on the "catch the rain" campaign and asserted over 11 billion cubic metre water has been saved in the last seven to eight years through such practices.

"By conserving raindrops, we can save a lot of water from getting wasted.

Over the last few years, under this campaign, unprecedented tasks related to water conservation have been undertaken in many parts of the country. I will give you an interesting figure. During the last 7-8 years, | More on P6

J&K Bank Sets Digital Record 9.54 Cr Transactions, Rs 13,900 Cr In 6 Days

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Bank has set a new benchmark in digital banking by processing a record-breaking 9.54 crore transactions worth 13,900 crores in just six days leading up to Eid. This achievement, spanning its digital platforms, has earned widespread praise from businesses and customers across the valley, further cementing JK Bank's reputation as a leader in digital financial services.

Ashraf Sultan, Proprietor of Azka Namkeen, highlighted the bank's efficiency during the festive rush. "Eid is the busiest time for us, and JK Bank's digital services handled the surge exceptionally well. Our UPI transactions were processed instantly, ensuring a hassle-free experience for customers. This is the kind of banking reliability we need," he said.

Sameer Mushtaq from Anantnag echoed similar sentiments. "In the past, festive seasons meant delays in digital payments, but this Eid was different.



JK Bank's mPay and UPI services worked flawlessly, making transactions quick and effortless. They have truly revolutionized banking in Jammu & Kashmir."

Traders also acknowledged the seamless experience provided by the bank. Irfan Sofi of Sofi Electronics in Sopore said, "With such a high volume of transactions, one would expect glitches, but JK Bank ensured a smooth experience. The digital infrastructure held strong, proving that they are the backbone of the valley's financial ecosystem."

A staggering 3.07 crore transactions amounting to 5,383 crores were processed through the bank's mPay Delight+ platform, while its UPI services recorded 6.07 crore instant payments worth 4,563 crores. | More on P6

Property Transfers Among Blood Relatives Govt Issues Notification To Remit Stamp Duty

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has notified the waiver of stamp duty on property transfers through gift deeds among blood relatives in the Union Territory, with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announcing that the exemption will take effect from April 1.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on March 7 announced in its Budget the exemption of stamp duty on property transfers within blood relations, aiming to

streamline transactions and reduce legal disputes.

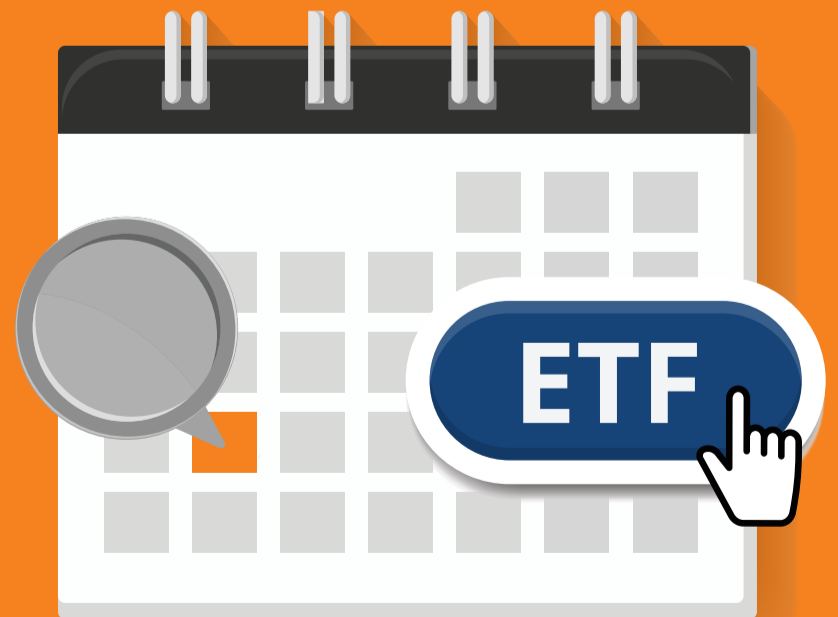
"In exercise of the powers conferred under the Stamp Act, the government, being satisfied that it is necessary in the public interest, hereby remits the stamp duty in respect of transfer of property by virtue of gift deed within blood relations," Principal Secretary of the Finance Department, Santosh D Vaidya, said in notification.

Vaidya, who issued the notification to give effect to the Chief Minister's Budget announcement, | More on P6

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Undue Academic Delays

Who's responsible when decisions and proposals don't get executed in time. Students suffer at Kashmir University's South Campus. Make education equitable and accessible.

Ummar Jamal

The decision to introduce the BBA-LLB program at Kashmir University's South Campus was made in February 2023 during the university's 55th Academic Council meeting. While the proposal received approval in principle, there has been no concrete progress in its implementation.

For students from Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama, and Shopian, this program could have been a game-changer, saving them from the long and exhausting commute to Srinagar or the need to seek admission outside Kashmir. However, nearly two years have passed, and the South Campus remains without a law program. This delay is unjustified and demands immediate intervention to prevent further disruption to students' aspirations.

Who Is Responsible for the Delay?

Despite nearly two years passing since the approval, there has been no significant development regarding the course's launch. This suggests either inefficiency or a deliberate lack of priority given to the course. A few months ago, I heard from some university officials that everything was in apple-pie order for the introduction of the law course at South Campus and that it was only a matter of days before it would be launched. However, I am unsure what transpired thereafter, as no headway has been made since, and the process remains at a standstill.

The university administration must provide clear answers, as their prolonged inaction has left students frustrated. This delay raises serious concerns about the efficiency of decision-making within the institution.

Recently, in response to a query by MLA Bijbehara, Dr. Bashir Veeri, it was stated in the Legislative Assembly that "modalities and necessary arrangements" were being made for introducing the BBA-LLB course among others. However, no clear timeline or progress report has been shared with the public.

Why the BBA-LLB Course is Crucial for South Kashmir

The introduction of the BBA-LLB course at South Campus would have far-reaching benefits, particularly for students in South Kashmir. The districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam, and Shopian have a combined population of 2,329,830, with Anantnag at 1,078,692, Pulwama at 560,440, Kulgam at 424,483, and Shopian at 266,215. Despite this large population, students from these districts, if interested in law, have to either travel long distances to Kashmir University's main campus or seek admission outside the region, often at significant financial costs.

A local law program at the South Campus would make legal education more accessible and affordable, particularly for students from economically weaker backgrounds. Many families in South Kashmir struggle to afford relocation expenses. Introducing this course at the South Campus would significantly reduce these financial burdens. Moreover, having a dedicated law faculty in South Kashmir would encourage more students to pursue legal careers and thereby



All three government universities and seven private law colleges in Jammu and Kashmir offer BA.LL.B courses. Introducing the BBA.LL.B course at the South Campus would provide students with more academic choices, catering to those interested in both business and law. This expansion would enhance career opportunities, diversify legal education, and align with evolving professional demands, ensuring a broader and more flexible learning experience for aspiring law students in the region

strengthen the legal profession in the region.

Moreover, Kashmir University's main campus is already overburdened with law students, making it difficult to maintain an optimal student-faculty ratio. Establishing a law faculty at the South Campus would help alleviate this pressure, ensuring smaller class sizes, better faculty-student interaction, and improved teaching quality and academic performance.

According to Schedule III, Rule 11, Clause 17, Part 4 of the Bar Council of India Rules, the teacher-student ratio for law courses must be 1:40. However, this standard is not strictly followed in many law institutions across Jammu and Kashmir due to high student intake.

Currently, Jammu and Kashmir has three government universities and seven private law colleges offering LLB and BA.LL.B programs. These include the University of Kashmir, University of Jammu, and Central University of Kashmir, along with private institutions such as Kashmir Law College, Vitasta School of Law and Humanities, KCEF Law College, and Sopore Law College in the Kashmir division. In the Jammu division, law colleges include KC Law College, Dogra Law College, and Ashoka Law College.

Despite the availability of these institutions, overcrowding remains a significant issue, leading to a failure in maintaining the prescribed teacher-student ratio. Introducing a BBA-LLB course at South Campus would help distribute the student load, making it easier to uphold Bar Council guidelines and enhance the overall quality of legal education in the region.

All three government universities and seven private law colleges in Jammu and Kashmir of

fer BA.LL.B courses. Introducing the BBA.LL.B course at the South Campus would provide students with more academic choices, catering to those interested in both business and law. This expansion would enhance career opportunities, diversify legal education, and align with evolving professional demands, ensuring a broader and more flexible learning experience for aspiring law students in the region.

Conclusion

Given the unjustified delay, immediate steps must be taken to fast-track the introduction of the BBA-LLB course at South Campus. The university administration should publicly announce a clear timeline for its launch, setting a firm deadline to ensure that all necessary arrangements are completed within a defined period. To prevent further setbacks, the recruitment process for both permanent and guest faculty should begin in advance, ensuring that staffing is in place before the course commences. The administration can no longer afford to offer excuses—legal education must be made accessible to every deserving student in the region. It is time to deliver on promises and make education truly accessible for all students of South Kashmir.

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

The author is National President of J&K Students Association and Kashmir based columnist. He tweets at ummar_jamal and can be reached at umarjama1968@gmail.com

KO VIEW

Festivity With Responsibility

After a holy month of fasting and worship, Eid-ul-Fitr has come as an ultimate award for the faithful who go hungry from sunup to sundown in line with God's command. So, the celebration is in order. Over the last few days, a familiar scene played out in the Valley: Srinagar roads were choked by traffic jams and an unprecedented rush of shoppers, busy buying mutton, chicken, bakery and new clothes. The shopping has brought cheer to the faces of the business community, who have been witnessing a prolonged slowdown in business. An unending stream of consumers has pushed up the sales. Despite the turmoil of the past more than three decades, the markets in Kashmir have never been robbed of the sheen during Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha celebrations.

Such festivity is an integral part of the day. On this day, whatever our individual circumstances, joy is guaranteed. This is not the joy in the routine sense but one which is spiritually uplifting and exhilarating. It is the one that comes from a sense of accomplishment of one's religious obligation and the anticipation of God's forgiveness.

But while Eid is about spiritual fulfilment and the awakening, it is also about our obligation towards our society. More so, in Kashmir where we not only inherit the tragic fallout of the turmoil over the past three decades but also continue to live this reality, with thousands among us who have lost so much.

Now when Eid is upon us and God is showering His faithful with his blessings, we can hardly afford to be forgetful in our joy. We shouldn't give way to an unbridled consumerism that was on display in an all-out shopping binge across the Valley. We cannot be bereft of the concern for the poor and the people who have suffered the most. It is incumbent upon us as a community that while we celebrate Eid we also remember them and contribute in a material way to lessen their misery.

That said, more than an occasion of joy, Eid in Kashmir is a time for reflection. And of mourning too, for the thousands who have died in recent decades. The festival is about spiritual renewal and a sense of fulfilment. It is a very solemn occasion for individual and collective reflection and remembrance. It is also about our obligation towards our society.

On March 28, 2025, life changed dramatically for the people of Mandalay; at 12:50 PM local time, the ground beneath Myanmar's second-largest city shook violently. A powerful magnitude 7.7 earthquake tore through a 200-kilometer stretch of the Sagaing Fault. In less than ninety seconds, buildings crumbled, roads split open, and panic spread like wildfire. Just eleven minutes later, a magnitude 6.4 aftershock jolted the region again, adding to the devastation. This devastation is related to the tectonic story of this region, which connects most regions in South and Southeast Asia to one another. The northward motion of the Indian Plate continues to build strain at the plate margins where it interacts with the Eurasian Plate. Kashmir is part of this convergence belt, which is why we are directly connected to this devastation and must learn from it. While smaller aftershocks have continued since, this event serves as a grim reminder of the power earthquakes wield — and the lessons they carry for other regions, especially Kashmir.

The scale of devastation witnessed in Myanmar is not unfolding yet because of the non-openness of the current administration. And our estimates suggest that the hazards have turned into disasters because the ground was not prepared for the incoming devastation, which is painful and reminds us that similar devastation can recur in Kashmir like in the 2005 Muzaffarabad earthquake where we lost over 80,000 lives.

The Sagaing Fault is a major right-lateral strike-slip fault that slices through Myanmar and extends into the Andaman Sea. With a displacement rate of 18 mm per year, it's a ticking time bomb. Historically, this fault has been responsible for at least six powerful earthquakes — all magnitude 7 or greater — between 1930 and 1956. These events claimed hundreds of lives, triggered landslides, and left cities in ruin. Though Myanmar has experienced relative seismic calm in recent decades, the recent earthquake reminds us that silence along a fault does not mean safety — it may simply mean stress is quietly building beneath the surface.

Kashmir faces a strikingly similar threat. The northeastern margin of the Indian Plate is colliding with the Eurasian Plate, forming the towering Himalayas. This immense geological force is not just responsible for breathtaking peaks — it fuels a network of active faults, each capable of unleashing catastrophic earthquakes.

The tragedy in Myanmar underscores an urgent truth: regions like Kashmir must prepare for future

The Tectonic Link

What Myanmar's Earthquake Teaches Kashmir

Afroz Shah



earthquakes by addressing both structural integrity and engineering advancements. Active faults beneath our feet are constantly accumulating strain, and when this energy is released, only well-prepared societies can minimize the devastation. Building a seismic-resilient society demands a multi-faceted approach that combines robust infrastructure, innovative engineering solutions, and informed public readiness.

For Kashmir, Myanmar's experience must serve as a stark reminder that proactive measures are essential. Strengthening infrastructure requires enforcing stricter building codes that mandate earthquake-resistant designs. Critical structures such as schools, hospitals, and emergency response centers must be constructed or retrofitted using advanced engineering techniques like base isolation, flexible founda-

tions, and energy-absorbing materials. Bridges, dams, and transportation networks must be evaluated and reinforced to ensure they remain functional in the aftermath of strong tremors.

Equally important is improving emergency preparedness and raising public awareness. Communities must be educated on evacuation protocols, safe shelter practices, and basic first aid to respond swiftly and effectively when the earth shakes. Emergency services must be equipped with rapid response plans to minimize casualties and deliver aid efficiently.

The earth's restless forces do not recognize borders, and Myanmar's heartbreak today could easily become Kashmir's tragedy tomorrow. By investing in resilient infrastructure, embracing advanced engineering solutions, and fostering a culture of prepared-

Equally important is improving emergency preparedness and raising public awareness. Communities must be educated on evacuation protocols, safe shelter practices, and basic first aid to respond swiftly and effectively when the earth shakes

ness, we can transform disaster risk into survival — and safeguard lives in the face of inevitable seismic events.

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 National Geographic Explorer and Sr. Assistant Professor, Structural Geology

Goodbye Ramazan!

Bilal Ahmad Khanday

Ramazan, the month of blessings and mercy bid us farewell, but we must not forget its message. This blessed month serves as a training period, preparing us for the rest of the year. It instills in us virtues and keeps us away from vices, which are detrimental to being true Muslims. It teaches us how to live our lives according to the standards set by the Holy Quran and the unparalleled injunctions of the Last Prophet of Islam.

This month not only brings us closer to our Lord but also strengthens our bonds with fellow human beings. It makes us feel their pain, share in their joys and happiness, and teaches us the principles of sharing and caring. It nurtures within us the qualities of sympathy and empathy and prepares us for the universal message of equality, justice, fraternity, patience, sobriety, and other noble virtues.

Although the Holy Quran clearly speaks of the obligation of fasting, it is the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who teaches us the intricacies of fasting—its conditions, dos, and don'ts—through his traditions. He himself demonstrated its universal significance by observing fasts strictly and regularly. He is, after all, the true role model, as affirmed by the Quran:

Laqad kana lakum fi Rasoolil-lahi uswatun hasanah

(Indeed, in the Prophet is the best role model for you.)

This role model was not confined to just this month but remained exemplary throughout the year. Do we find even a single instance in his blessed life where he deviated from the enjoined path—the path of righteousness, which the Quran calls Sirat al-Mustaqeem (The Straight Path)? If we truly believe that he is our role model, how can we then forget his message, which is universal in both character and application? How is it possible that we knowingly stray from the path that leads to ultimate bliss and



AFTER RAMAZAN, IT SHOULD NOT BE THE CASE THAT THE MONTH ITSELF WOULD SEARCH FOR THOSE WHO THRONGED mosques and shrines daily, abandoning their businesses, offices, and even hospitals. It should not be that the month would issue a "missing persons" notice for those who exhibited piety at home, in markets, and in public. It should not be that the month would wonder where the charitable souls, who once eagerly donated and supported the needy, have disappeared

emancipation? This raises a critical question: Do we truly consider him our role model, or is our faith not as firm as it should be? If our faith were strong, we would not repeatedly veer away from the path of salvation and eternal bliss. Now, coming to the farewell message of this holy month, I

must admit that I would not have written a single line had I not come across a Facebook post from a virtual friend. It struck my mind at the right time and place, compelling me to pen down my thoughts on the essence of this month and its message.

Every day, we come across nu-

merous articles in newspapers, weeklies, and social media platforms about Ramazan. The message is clear, but I wish to convey it through a short story, or rather an incident:

A Muslim once traveled in a hired car with a Japanese driver. During their conversation, the

Muslim started listing the virtues that Ramazan instills in believers, hoping to impress the driver with the message of the month. After he finished, the Japanese man, out of curiosity, asked, "So you Muslims uphold these good qualities only during this month, but we Japanese have these qualities ingrained in our very being. They are inseparable from us." He continued, "Are you allowed to cheat during other months? Can you lie, deceive, slander, hate, or assassinate someone's character outside of Ramazan?"

The Muslim was left speechless. However, this conversation stayed with him, prompting him to change his perspective, conduct, and behavior.

This story speaks volumes

about the true message of Ramazan: to reform ourselves, eliminate evil traits, cultivate virtue, exemplify godliness, and uproot satanic tendencies once and for all. It teaches us to bring forth righteousness even in the most challenging environments—just as Moses was nurtured in Pharaoh's home and yet emerged as a beacon of truth, and as Hussain's virtues triumphed over Yazeed's tyranny.

After Ramazan, it should not be the case that the month itself would search for those who thronged mosques and shrines daily, abandoning their businesses, offices, and even hospitals. It should not be that the month would issue a "missing persons" notice for those who exhibited piety at home, in markets, and in public. It should not be that the month would wonder where the charitable souls, who once eagerly donated and supported the needy, have disappeared. Nor should it be that the God-consciousness displayed during Ramazan vanishes like a passing breeze once the month is over.

The universal message of Ramazan is clear: the grafting of virtue over vice, good over evil, and godliness over satanic inclinations.

To illustrate this point further, let us recall the historical story of Pharaoh and Moses. Moses was raised in Pharaoh's palace, yet he stood against his tyranny. This analogy applies to us as well—we must cultivate righteousness within ourselves, even when surrounded by negativity. In an esoteric sense, Moses symbolizes virtue and piety, which lead us to our Lord, while Pharaoh represents arrogance and sin, which prevent us from embracing truth.

Thus, the simple and clear message of Ramazan is that falsehood—whether we call it Pharaoh, Yazeed, or Satan—must bow before the truth, represented by Moses, Hussain, and ultimately, our Lord. As the Holy Quran declares:

"Say: Truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Indeed, falsehood is bound to perish." (17:81)

Sunnah Acts of Eid-Al-Fitr

Amaliah

While Eid is a day of celebration and joy, it is also a day of worship and we can attain extra rewards by fulfilling the sunnah acts that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed on this day. Here are some good deeds as per the sunnah, that you can perform to enhance your Eid day.

1. Perform ghusl

Perform the ritual bath before going for Eid prayer. Maintaining cleanliness is not just important for health and hygiene purposes. When we make sincere intention to perform ghusl for the sake of Allah (SWT), it also helps purify our hearts and cleanse our souls.

Abu Malik at-Ash'ari reported:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Cleanliness is half of faith. (Muslim)

2. Wear your best clothes for the Eid prayer

Eid-al-Fitr is a very special gift from Allah (SWT) after a month of fasting and worship and we can show our gratitude for receiving such a wonderful gift by wearing our best clothes which are clean and modest. Contrary to popular belief, they don't have to be brand new!

Imam an-Nasafi says in Kanz ad-Daqa'iq: "The Sunnah is to wear one's best clothes on Eid."

3. Eat breakfast before the Eid prayer

It is sunnah to eat some-



thing, even if it is just dates, before leaving for Eid prayer as it signals the end of fasting and a day of rejoicing.

Narrated Anas bin Malik: "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) never proceeded (for the prayer) on the Day of Eid-ul-Fitr unless he had eaten some dates." Anas also nar-

rated: "The Prophet (ﷺ) used to eat odd number of dates." (Bukhari)

4. Take two different routes going to and from the Eid prayer

Narrated Jabir (RA): "On an 'Eid day, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would return

by a different road from the one he had taken when going out (for the 'Eid prayer)." (Bukhari)

There is great reward for every step taken when returning from the prayer as well as when coming to it.

Abu Huraira reported: "The Messenger of Allah

(ﷺ) said, "He who purified himself in his house, and then he walked to one of the houses of Allah for the sake of performing a Fard (obligatory act) out of the Fara'id (obligatory acts) of Allah, both his steps (would be significant) as one of them would obliterate his sin and

the second one would raise his status." (Muslim)

5. Recite the Takbeerat

It is recommended to recite the Eid Takbeer from the night of Eid up until the Eid prayer. On the way to the masjid, takbeerat should be recited softly.

The Eid Takbeer is:
Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar.
La Ilaaha Illallahu Wallahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar wa Lilla-hil Hamd

"Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great there is no god but Allah, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, and to Allah be praise."

You can also read our article on How to pray Eid Salah.

6. Congratulate each other and give Eid greetings

Spread the joy of Eid and greet everyone by shaking hands and embracing fellow Muslims after Eid salah. You can also sprinkle a dose of generosity by passing out candy for children at the mosque and giving gifts to family and friends.

It was narrated by Jubayr ibn Nufayr (ra), that the Sahabah (ra) used to greet each other on the day of Eid with: "Taqabbal Allaahu Minnaa Wa Minka", which means 'May Allah accept (the fast and worship) from us and from you'. (Fathul-Bari)

May this day be a source of blessings and peace for us all and May Allah (SWT) grant us a blessed Ramadan and a joyous Eid!

SKUAST-K Advances Internationalization Goals with Global Strategic Collaborations at APAIE 2025

A delegation from Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), led by Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir A. Ganai, showcased the SKUAST-K's Academic offerings at annual Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) -2025 held from March 24th to 28th, 2025, at India International Convention & Expo Centre YASHOBHOOI, New Delhi. This international Platform was hosted in India for the first time

which focused on fostering international education and collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region. The event brought together around 360 prestigious academic institutions from around the globe, including 60 top-ranked universities from India. Notably, SKUAST-K was the only Agricultural University representing India's agricultural educational opportunities, depicting its commitment to internationalization and academic excellence. On the opening day 24th March, SKUAST-K delegation



headed by Director Education Prof. M Altaf Bhat, accompanied by Associate Director Education Prof. Mohammad Anwar Bhat engaged in the Austria India Cooperation Forum (AICF) matchmaking sessions, organized by the Austrian Embassy

and Study in India (Ministry of Education, Government of India). This forum, hosted by the Austrian Ambassador, further exemplified SKUAST-K's proactive approach in seeking international partnerships and exploring collaboration opportunities with Austrian academic and Research institutions. A key outcome of this participation was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Asia Pacific University, Malaysia. This MoU aims to facilitate collaboration

in various areas of mutual interest, promising enriching opportunities for students and faculty from both institutions. Moreover, the SKUAST-K team made significant progress toward establishing future partnerships, finalizing collaborations with Massey University and SIT University, both located in New Zealand. These agreements are set to enhance joint initiatives in research, student exchanges, and academic programs. The successful participation

in the APAIE Capacity-Building Masterclass, the Austria India Co-operation Forum, and interactive sessions with the Slovakian delegation highlights a significant advancement of SKUAST-K in enhancing its global presence. The recently established partnerships with Asia Pacific University, Massey University New Zealand, and SIT University are expected to yield substantial academic and research benefits, contributing to the advancement of agricultural education on a global scale.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1 & 3

Eid-ul-fitr Being

on Sunday, March 30. Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated on the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal, marking the culmination of month-long Ramazan when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk.

Eid ul-Fitr is also known as a festival of charity and gratitude that brings deep spiritual awakening for its followers.

One of the five pillars of Islam is Zakat that means charity and on this day followers believe in giving money, food, clothes and other items of necessity to the poor. In fact, many Muslims give Zakat before offering Eid prayers.

LG, CM Greet

express gratitude to the Almighty and to cherish the spirit of togetherness and compassion fostered during Ramazan.

"Eid is a time when people come together to celebrate the blessings of Ramadan, strengthening the bonds of community and reinforcing the values of mutual respect and brotherhood. It is a time to share happiness, extend kindness and support those in need," Abdullah said.

The chief minister said that the festival is a true reflection of Jammu and Kashmir's rich tradition of communal harmony, shared heritage and cultural inclusivity, strengthening the fabric of unity and peace.

On this occasion, he prayed for peace, progress and prosperity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir and for all those celebrating Eid across the world.

No Eid Prayers

with line departments," she stated. The Eidgah in Srinagar has traditionally been a central venue for large Eid gatherings. However, in recent years, these congregations have been affected by security concerns and adverse weather conditions.

Earlier, Dr. Andrabi chaired a high-level meeting with administration representatives on Wednesday to review preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr, Juma-tul-Vida, and Lailat-ul-Qadr. The meeting focused on ensuring comprehensive arrangements at shrines and mosques during these significant religious occasions.

A detailed facilitation plan was discussed, and Dr. Andrabi directed

the Waqf Board management to coordinate closely with all relevant departments to ensure a smooth experience for worshippers. "Our belief in cooperation has led to successful management in the past, and we are committed to providing fault-free facilitation during these festival days. Public cooperation is our strength," she emphasized.

Dr. Andrabi also extended her gratitude to the department heads for their support in making these special events successful. Authorities have assured that all necessary measures are in place to accommodate worshippers at designated locations across the J&K. Earlier during the day, Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid had announced that Kashmir's chief cleric and Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq will deliver the sermon during Eid-ul-Fitr prayers at historic Eidgah of Srinagar.

"As per Islamic tradition, the Eid-ul-Fitr congregational prayers will be offered at the historic Eidgah Srinagar at 10 am," the Auqaf said in a statement.

The Auqaf had expressed hope that the authorities will not create obstacles and will facilitate the smooth conduct of Eid prayers at Eidgah, respecting the religious sentiments and rights of people.

It strongly urged that no attempt should be made to disallow the prayers, as witnessed recently on Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida, which caused widespread resentment among people.

Mirwaiz, who is chairman of the Auqaf, visited Eidgah Srinagar to review the arrangements and ground conditions on Sunday.

Ramzan Fruit

of melons, each worth Rs 5 lakh, were supplied daily, while papayas saw 10 truckloads arriving per day, each valued at Rs 3 lakh.

Despite moderate temperatures, watermelons remained the most sought-after fruit, with shipments arriving mainly from Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. Traders attributed its popularity to affordability and its refreshing nature, making it a staple at Iftar gatherings across the Valley. (inputs from KNS)

Govt Issues

said this exemption is subject to the

production of any two documents by both the transferor and transferee (as a proof).

"For the purpose of this notification, blood relations include father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother, grandson, and granddaughter," the notification said.

It said notification is applicable from April 1.

The Chief Minister, sharing the notification on his social media handle X, said, "As a reform measure aimed at public convenience and as announced in the 2025 budget, the notification for remission of stamp duty on gift deeds within blood relations has been issued. Starting April 1, such land transfers among close family members will attract zero stamp duty in Jammu & Kashmir."

"During the Budget speech, he said "to promote ease of transactions and reduce legal disputes over property transfers, I propose a reform in the stamp duty structure for gift transactions among blood relatives."

He highlighted that currently, stamp duty for such transactions ranges from 3 per cent to 7 per cent, discouraging formal registration.

"To address this, I propose reducing the stamp duty on property gifted to blood relatives to zero, benefiting families by encouraging legal documentation and reducing inheritance disputes. This initiative will provide financial relief, ensure transparency, and streamline property transfers in Jammu & Kashmir," he added.

PM Package Employees

to create a conducive environment for their rehabilitation.

Addressing the gathering, Sinha called upon the younger generation to celebrate the nine days of Navratri as Nari Shakti Utsav, advocating for equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life.

Praising the contributions of the Kashmiri Pandit community in Jammu and Kashmir's growth and nation-building, Sinha highlighted their deep spiritual and cultural roots in the region. He also lauded the efforts of the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha and other organizations in preserving and promoting their heritage.

Emphasizing unity and diversity, the Lieutenant Governor urged people to rise above differences and

strengthen the social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir.

The event was attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, former DGP Kuldeep Khoda, Kashmiri Pandit Sabha President K K Khosa, senior Vice President Deepak Dhar, other office-bearers, senior officials, and prominent citizens.

Urges People

brotherhood should unite the entire society. He also believed that compassion in every human being should lead to service," he added.

Sinha reiterated his call for people to rise above narrow considerations and promote human unity.

The progressive teachings of Guru Nabha Dass aimed to create an ideal community without divisions or discrimination to strengthen social equity, the lieutenant governor added.

Train To Run

travel time between Jammu and Srinagar, providing a modern and efficient rail service for the region. Once the renovation of Jammu railway station is complete, the train will resume its originally planned route.

Our Festivals Show

over 11 billion cubic metres of water has been conserved through newly built tanks, ponds and other water recharge structures," Modi said.

"You must now be wondering how much 11 billion cubic metres of water is? You must have seen the pictures of the water that gets accumulated in the Bhakra Nangal dam. This water forms the Govind Sagar lake. The length of this lake is more than 90 kilometres. Even in this lake, not more than 9-10 billion cubic metres of water can be conserved," he said.

And the people of the country, through their tiny efforts, have managed to conserve 11 billion cubic metres of water, Modi said, lauding such efforts.

The prime minister urged people to join such efforts at the community level.

Noting that along with fitness, keeping a count is also becoming a habit, Modi cited the example of people keeping a count of the number of steps taken in a day, of the number of calories eaten in a day and of the number of calories burnt.

"Amidst all these counts, another

countdown is about to begin. The countdown to the International Yoga Day. Now less than 100 days are left for Yoga Day. If you have not yet included yoga in your life, do it now - it is not too late yet," he said.

Noting that the first International Yoga Day was celebrated 10 years ago on June 21, 2015, Modi said now this day has taken the shape of a grand festival of yoga.

"This is such a priceless gift from India to humanity, which is going to be very useful for future generations. The theme of Yoga Day 2025 has been kept as 'Yoga for One Earth One Health'. That is, we wish to make the whole world healthy through yoga," the Prime Minister said.

Modi said it is a matter of pride for all the people that today the curiosity about yoga and traditional medicine is rising, all over the world.

A large number of youths are adopting yoga and Ayurveda as an excellent medium for wellness, he asserted.

"For example, there is a South American country, Chile. Ayurveda is rapidly becoming popular there. Last year, during my visit to Brazil, I met the President of Chile. We had a lot of discussions about the popularity of Ayurveda," he said.

"I have come to know about a team named 'Somos India'. In Spanish, it means 'We are India'. This team has been promoting yoga and Ayurveda for almost a decade. Their focus is on treatment as well as educational programmes.

"They are also getting information related to Yog and Ayurveda translated into the Spanish language," he said.

Highlighting the importance of staying connected with one's roots, Modi said, "When we stay connected to our roots, no matter how big the storm, it cannot uproot us."

Just imagine, about 200 years ago, many people from India went to Mauritius as indentured labourers and nobody knew what would happen next but with the passage of time, they settled there, he said.

They carved a niche for themselves in Mauritius and preserved their heritage and remained connected to their roots, he said.

"Mauritius is not the only such example. Last year when I went to Guyana, the Chhotaal performance there impressed me a lot," the PM

recalled.

Noting that some flowers beautify the house, some dissolve in perfume and spread fragrance everywhere, Modi talked about another journey of flowers.

"You certainly must have heard about Mahua flowers. People of our villages and especially the tribal community know very well about its importance. The journey of Mahua flowers in many parts of the country has now embarked upon a new path. Cookies are being made from Mahua flowers in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh," he said.

These cookies are becoming very popular due to the efforts of four sisters of Rajakhoh village, Modi pointed out.

Talking about the Krishna Kamal flowers found in large numbers around the Statue of Unity in Ekta Nagar, Modi said these flowers have become the centre of attraction in Arogya Van, Ekta Nursery, Vishwa Van and Miyawaki forest of Ekta Nagar.

9.54 Cr Transactions

The remaining volumes were managed through ATMs, Kiosk Banking, and other digital channels.

Despite handling three times the normal transaction volume, JK Bank maintained 100% platform availability during peak periods, successfully processing over 13,000 transactions per minute without a single service disruption.

A senior executive at JK Bank attributed this success to the bank's commitment to technological advancement. "Our unwavering dedication to seamless digital banking is reflected in these remarkable numbers. The trust our customers place in us drives our continuous investment in technology. While breaking records with 9.54 crore transactions worth 13,900 crores is significant, our true achievement lies in delivering flawless services round the clock. Our teams worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth and festive experience for our customers," the executive said.

JK Bank's robust digital infrastructure has not only facilitated effortless transactions but has also significantly contributed to the region's digital economy, making this Eid a truly cashless and convenient celebration for its customers.



28th year OF PUBLICATION

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OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

THE OTHER SIDE **INKISHAF** VOX POP UNRAVEL KASHMIR

Congress Questions BJP Over Security Situation In Jammu Region

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Congress party launched a scathing attack on the BJP-led central government, questioning Home Minister Amit Shah over the worsening security situation in the Jammu region and the lack of a clear timeline for restoring Jammu & Kashmir's statehood.

Speaking at a joint press conference held at the party headquarters, senior JKPC leaders, including Raman Bhalla, Working President of JKPC, former MP Ch Lal Singh, Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma, Ex-MLC Ved Mahajan, District President Kathua Pankaj Dogra, Chief Media Coordinator Neeraj Gupta, and Spokespersons Kapil Singh and Sahil Sharma, lambasted the government for its failure to maintain law and order, particularly in Jammu post-2019.

Ch Lal Singh emphasized that Kathua, once among the most peaceful districts in the region, is now severely affected by militancy, leaving people in the border and Pahari regions in fear. He dismissed the Modi government's security claims as misleading, stating that law and order were significantly better before 2019 when J&K was a full-fledged state.

He further stated that the security situation is at its worst in the district, and people feel deeply insecure. The BJP-led government and the Centre must answer for this failure, especially given that all administrative control is in their hands under the UT system. He also highlighted an acute shortage of police personnel, disbanding of police outposts, and a weakened security network. He demanded the immediate recruitment of local youth in the police force to strengthen security and intelligence networks.

Raman Bhalla criticized the BJP for its utter failure in maintaining security in Jammu, which has deteriorated significantly under the Union Terri-

tory setup. He said the central government makes tall claims about normalcy, but the ground reality contradicts them. He further stated that the entire Jammu region is disturbed due to the Centre's weak policies. The BJP cannot justify how the situation has worsened under its rule, particularly after J&K was downgraded to a UT. It seems their priority was gaining control over the region's resources rather than ensuring security and stability.

Congress leaders also condemned the BJP's inaction in addressing unemployment and workers' grievances, despite thousands of vacancies in government departments. They alleged that the BJP has failed to regularize daily wagers, casual workers, and contractual employees while continuing to exploit Jammu and Kashmir's resources.

Ravinder Sharma, Chief Spokesperson of JKPC, called out the BJP for spreading misleading narratives about its handling of terrorism. He stated that the BJP wants to take credit for controlling terrorism, but the reality is the opposite. The situation has worsened, and instead of engaging political parties and elected representatives in the decision-making process, the Centre continues to act unilaterally.

He further accused the BJP of running J&K through remote control from the Centre, denying power to the elected government even after six months of elections. He stated that the Congress will not allow the BJP to govern through proxy while escaping responsibility. The party will hold them accountable for the deteriorating security situation and expose their duplicity.

Congress leaders reaffirmed their support for security forces in combating terrorism and paid tributes to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives. However, they emphasized that the Centre must take all political stakeholders into confidence to devise a more effective security strategy.

J&K Tourism Department Announces Spring Festival

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Department has officially announced the Spring Festival 2025, a week-long extravaganza scheduled from April 5 to 13, blending natural beauty, cultural heritage, and local traditions. This annual festival will highlight Kashmir's mesmerizing spring blooms, including Almond Blossoms, Wild Tulips, Cherry Blossoms, and Mustard Fields, along with an array of vibrant cultural events.

The festival will commence with the Almond Blossom Festival at Badamwari and in Pampore/Yousmarg on April 5, followed by the Wild Tulips & Mustard Festival at Pampore on April 8. On April 12, the Cherry Blossom Festival will be celebrated, and the festivities will

conclude with the Baisakhi Celebration at Zabarwan Park on April 13. Visitors can indulge in traditional music, captivating cultural performances, authentic Kashmiri cuisine, and exquisite handicrafts, making the event a unique experience showcasing the valley's natural grandeur and rich traditions.

The Tourism Department has designed a diverse program aimed at attracting both domestic and international tourists, offering an immersive journey through Kashmir's breathtaking spring landscapes. Local residents and tourists are encouraged to take part in the celebrations at various scenic locations across the valley. Detailed schedules and event-related updates will be accessible on the J&K Tourism Department's official website and social media platforms.

DC Poonch Inspects Progress Of Work On NH144-A



Observer News Service

POONCH: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal today conducted a thorough inspection of the ongoing work on the Bhatadhurian to Poonch stretch of National Highway NH144-A along with the Bhaturia-Sanjote tunnel project.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by SDM Surankote, Ferooz Khan, SDM Mendhar, Imran Kataria, as well as officials from the Border Roads Organization (BRO), revenue department and other concerned executive agencies.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed several crucial aspects, including land acquisition issues related to the highway's alignment and the

progress of construction at vital sites i.e; tunnel, various culverts, retaining and breast walls. The Deputy Commissioner instructed the executive agencies to expedite the construction of roads and also maintain the highest engineering standard, as this project is important in enhancing the regional connectivity and development of the area.

In addition to the highway inspection, the Deputy Commissioner paid a visit to the Dundhak Mandir, where he offered prayers and evaluated the facilities and overall maintenance of the mandir.

This inspection highlights the administration's commitment to advancing the vital projects and ensuring the progress of NH144 road for the betterment of the region.

KATHUA ENCOUNTER

Jitendra Singh Announces Jobs, Monetary Compensation For Kin Of Cops

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Sunday visited the families of Jaswant Singh and Balwinder Singh, two policemen who were killed during an encounter in Kathua district, and announced government jobs for their next of kin.

Singh also announced financial aid up to Rs 70 lakh per family and a memorial gate each from the MP fund.

Visiting the families in Londi and Kanna Chak, the minister said the policemen's wives will get a government job each under SRO provisions. "In addition to these immediate measures, a proposal will be moved to rename government schools after the martyrs as a lasting tribute to their sacrifice," he said.

Singh was in Odisha at the time of the encounter in which two policemen from his parliamentary constituency were killed.

He visited their families before heading to Majalta in Udhampur district, where he will lay the foundation stone for a new bridge.



"This project aims to enhance connectivity and improve infrastructure in the region, reflecting the government's commitment to development and public welfare," he said.

Singh said the country was grateful to its security forces as he paid his tributes to the fallen men.

"Two sons of Kathua district were martyrs... I came here to offer my condolences to their families. These are families who have not only defended the motherland for generations but have also made great sacrifices," he

told reporters. "One such family had even received the Victoria Cross for bravery during the British era," he said.

"Jaswant's wife is an MA-BEd, and Balwinder's wife has completed her 12th grade. Suitable jobs will be provided accordingly."

"As a Member of Parliament, I announce the construction of memorials for both martyrs. Additionally, as has been done before, some schools will be named in their honour, we will propose it," he said.

LG Visits Hospital, Enquires About Health Of Cops Injured

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday visited the Government Medical College Hospital in Jammu and enquired about the health of the police personnel injured in an encounter with terrorists in Kathua district earlier this week.

Four police personnel and two terrorists -- believed to be affiliated with Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad -- were killed in the encounter in a remote forested area of Safiyan on March 27. Three policemen were also injured in the gunfight.

A team of senior doctors briefed Sinha on the health of Subdivisional Police Officer (Border, Kathua) Dheeraj



Katoch and Special Police Officer Bharat Jallohra and the medical procedures being followed, officials said.

The lieutenant governor also met family members of the injured policemen and assured them of all possible

assistance. He directed the hospital administration to ensure the best possible treatment for the speedy recovery of the personnel. The other injured police official is undergoing treatment in a Kathua hospital.

J&K Bank Enhances Pilgrim Services

Observer News Service

JAMMU: On the eve of Navratri, J&K Bank reinforced its commitment to facilitating pilgrims by establishing a Special Counter at its Business Unit in Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan (SMVDB). The counter will provide fresh cash currency and note exchange facilities to devotees visiting the revered shrine.

CEO of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), Anshul Garg (IAS), and the Bank's MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee, jointly inaugurated the Fresh Cash/Note Exchange Counter today in the presence of Zonal Head (Udhampur) Vinay Gupta, SDM Bhawan Vikas Anand, Tehsildar Mukesh Thappa, officials from the Shrine Board and police, as well as Head Pandit Gopal Sharma, Branch Head Vishal Sharma and devotees from across the country.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO SMVDSB Anshul Garg lauded J&K Bank's efforts in offering seamless banking services to the Shrine Board, its employees, and the large number of pilgrims visiting the holy site. He also commended the Bank's role in ensuring state-of-the-art financial services



along the pilgrimage route. Welcoming the dignitaries, Bank's MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee expressed gratitude for the Shrine Board's continued trust and patronage. He reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to delivering the best banking services to the Shrine Board, pilgrims and the local community.

"Our longstanding presence at the Bhawan since the formation of SMVD Board reflects our dedication to serving the shrine and its devotees. This special counter will further ease currency exchange and cash availability, ensuring a smooth experience for pilgrims," he said.

Highlighting the Bank's robust infrastructure along the pilgrimage route, he added, "With three branches and nine

ATMs from Katra to the Bhawan, J&K Bank remains steadfast in providing convenient banking services to lakhs of devotees. Our dedicated team also assists the Shrine Board in managing public offerings and cash collections, ensuring efficient financial operations."

Prior to the inauguration on the auspicious occasion of the first Navratra, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee, along with Zonal Head (Udhampur) Vinay Gupta and branch staff, performed Pooja within the premises, seeking blessings for the initiative.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Zonal Head Vinay Gupta, who expressed gratitude to all dignitaries and stakeholders for their support in enhancing banking services for pilgrims at the holy shrine.

Javed Rana Greets People On Navratri

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Minister for Jal Shakti and Forests, Javed Ahmed Rana, extended greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the first day of Navratri.

In his message, the Minister said that this festival inspires us to adopt the principles of honesty, truthfulness and

righteousness in our lives.

The Minister added that we should resolve ourselves to celebrate the triumph of good over evil, binding all communities in the true sense of brotherhood.

The nine day festival holds

great meaning and has a long history of being celebrated across the country, marking the victory of light over darkness.

The Minister prayed for peace and prosperity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.



Leaders Extend Warm Eid-ul-Fitr Greetings

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, extended warm greetings to the people on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr.

In his message, Div Com said the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr teaches gratitude to the Almighty, encourages helping the destitute and poor, and strengthens the social fabric. He prayed for communal harmony and brotherhood among communities to share happiness together. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, has conveyed his warmest wishes to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Dr. Bilal, in his message, extended good wishes to the people on this joyous occasion, marking the end of the month-long fasting (Roza) of Ramadan. He emphasized that Eid-ul-Fitr symbolizes the importance of charitable deeds, including giving Zakat to the poor and needy, and engaging in humanitarian acts.

He highlighted that the festival spreads love, compassion, and affection among fellow human beings. While celebrating the completion of Ramadan, he urged people to uphold the spirit of charity, cooperation, and compassion throughout the year.

In a heartfelt message to

"Eid-ul-Fitr is a time for reflection and community bonding. May this festival inspire us all to embrace compassion and togetherness, fostering strong ties within our community"

the residents of Srinagar, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Owais Ahmed, conveyed his best wishes on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Highlighting the significance of the festival, Dr. Owais remarked, "Eid-ul-Fitr is a time for reflection and community bonding. May this festival inspire us all to embrace compassion and togetherness, fostering strong ties within our community."

To ensure a joyful and clean environment for the celebrations, the SMC has initiated several measures, including cleaning drives, improved waste management, and an uninterrupted water supply for residents.

"We are committed to providing a clean and welcoming atmosphere for everyone to enjoy their celebrations without concern," he added.

On this auspicious day, Dr. Owais wished all citizens a blessed celebration filled with happiness, peace, and prosperity.

J&K Students Association Extends Eid greetings

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Students Association on Sunday extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, praying for peace, prosperity, and harmony in the Union Territory.

In a statement, the National Convenor of the Association, Nasir Khuehami, emphasized that Eid-ul-Fitr is not just a celebration but a significant occasion that highlights the values of peace, unity, and truthfulness. He noted that the festival marks the culmination of the holy month of Ramadan, a period of fasting observed for self-discipline, reflection, and devotion to Almighty Allah.

"The essence of Eid-ul-Fitr lies in expressing gratitude to Allah for granting us the strength to observe the month-long fast and in reaffirming our commitment to truth, sincerity, self-control, and patience," he said.

He prayed for the well-being of Jammu and Kashmir, urging people to embrace the spirit of generosity, charity, and social responsibility.

He called on individuals to support the underprivileged, particularly orphans, the economically downtrodden, and those in need.

Khuehami also stressed the importance of celebrating Eid with simplicity, in line with Islamic teachings that discourage extravagance. "Allah commands us not to indulge in excess, for He dislikes wastefulness. Let this Eid be a time for spiritual reflection, social solidarity, and a renewed commitment to communal harmony," he stated.

He further highlighted that the festival marks the culmination of the holy month of Ramadan, a period of fasting observed for self-discipline, reflection, and devotion to Almighty Allah.

"The essence of Eid-ul-Fitr lies in expressing gratitude to Allah for granting us the strength to observe the month-long fast and in reaffirming our commitment to truth, sincerity, self-control, and patience," he said.

He prayed for the well-being of Jammu and Kashmir, urging people to embrace the spirit of generosity, charity, and social responsibility.

Ban On Sale & Use of Firecrackers In Sopore

Observer News Service

SOPORE: The Office of the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Sopore has issued an order prohibiting the sale, purchase, and use of firecrackers within the sub-district. The decision has been taken in view of increasing concerns over environmental pollution, public safety, and health hazards caused by firecracker use.

Exercising powers under Section 163 of BNSS 2023, the ADM has strictly banned all types of firecrackers and similar items

in the region. Any violation of this directive will result in fines and confiscation of firecrackers, as per relevant laws.

Additionally, the order prohibits the use of loudspeakers by vendors, particularly near religious institutions, hospitals, government offices, and congested market areas.

The enforcement of the order has been entrusted to Tehsildars and their police counterparts, who will conduct regular inspections and awareness campaigns to ensure compliance, it added.

Sad Demise



With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of Manzoor Ahmad Reshi R/o Shivpora Srinagar S/o Late Abdul Rehman Reshi who departed for the heavenly abode on Sunday, 30th March 2025. May Almighty Allah grant him Jannat-ul-Firdous. Mourning will be held for three days only at their present residence.

Bereaved

Waseem Ahmad Reshi (Son)
Riyaz Ahmed Mir (Son in Law)
Mushtaq Ahmad Reshi (Brother)
Rouf Ahmad Reshi (Brother)
Shabir Ahmad Reshi (Brother)
Showkat Ahmad Butt (Brother in Law)

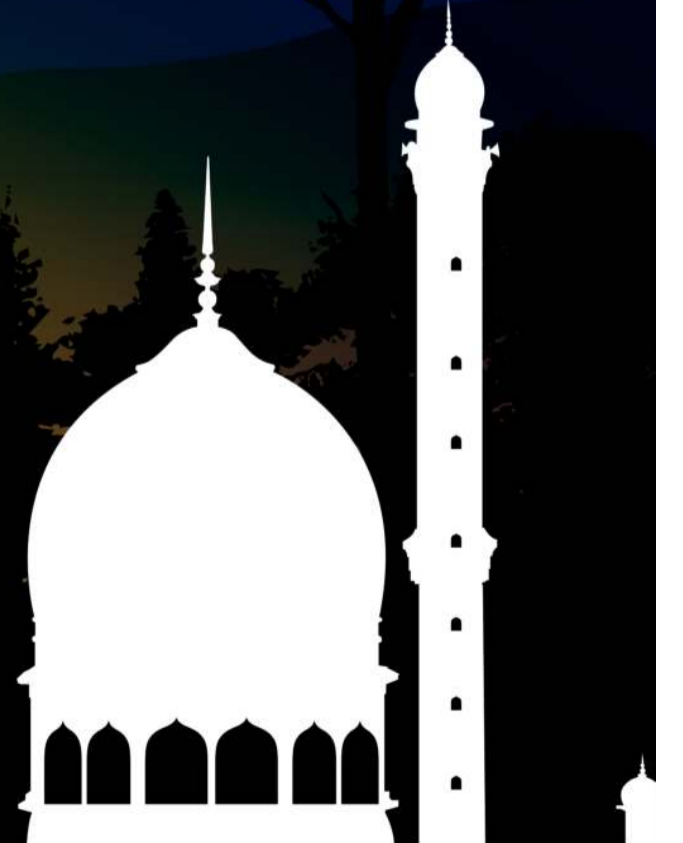


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