

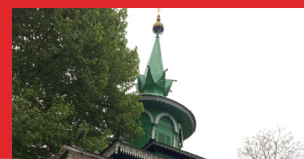


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THE Echo



CHANGE OF GUARD

Prof Mushtaq Siddiqi takes over as Vice Chancellor of IUST

ECHO DESK

Former Professor of Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Prof (Dr) Mushtaq Ahmad Siddiqi was appointed as Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on May 12.

Prof Siddiqi, who has earlier served as Vice Chancellor Designate and Project Director, Trans-World Muslim University project for around three years, took over from Prof A R Trag after being shortlisted by the search committee among 16 aspirants to present his vision of the university before the Chancellor, IUST, and J&K Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti.

While welcoming Prof Siddiqi, Prof Trag briefed him about the

functioning and developmental plans of the varsity. He said under Prof Siddiqi's leadership, "the university will scale newer heights of academic excellence".

Prof Siddiqi has been appointed for the coveted post for a period of three years. His name was recommended by a panel comprising Prof Amitabh Mattoo, Advisor to CM, Dr V S Chauhan, Member University Grants Council, Prof Jalees Ahmad Khan Tareen, former

Under his leadership, the university will scale newer heights of academic excellence

Vice Chancellor University of Kashmir, and Dr G N Qazi, Vice Chancellor Jamia Hamdard University.

After assuming the charge, Prof Siddiqi held a round of interaction sessions with university officials, faculty and students so as to chalk out future plans for the betterment of the institution. Prof Siddiqi has come a long way in his academic journey. Born on June 15, 1955, he did his schooling from MP Higher Secondary School, Bagh-i-Dilawar Khan, Srinagar.

With completion of his doctorate from Jammu University in 1979, Prof Siddiqi became the youngest PhD awardee at that time. Later, he did his post-doctorate from School of Medicine, Chiba University Tokyo, Japan, in 1983. He was also selected for post-doctorate fellowship at



IUST Vice Chancellor, Prof Mushtaq A Siddiqi, flanked by former Vice Chancellor, Prof A R Trag / IUST PHOTO

Ministry of Science, Art and Culture, Government of Japan, from 1981 to 1983. Prof Siddiqi discharged his duties as Professor at SKIMS, Soura, from 1998 to 2012. At SKIMS, he served as Centre Coordinator Advanced Centre for Genetic Diseases from 2004 to 2012, Chairman

and Head Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine from 2003 to 2012, and Head, Central Laboratory Medicine and Clinical Biochemistry from 1990 to 2003. Besides, he has been a visiting scientist and professor at universities in Japan and Germany.

Kashmir theatre struggles for existence

'Youth not fond of this medium'

UFAQ FATIMA

Theatre, which once would be the sole source of entertainment in Kashmir, is now battling for survival, courtesy changing habits of audience. Even as theatre is struggling hard to make a comeback in the Valley, it has failed to reconnect with people, especially youth.

Curtains were drawn over theatre in Kashmir following the outbreak of militancy in early 1990s. "We usually portray the contemporary reality of the society. However, after militancy erupted here, the practice involved risk of life, both for artists and public," recalls Muhammad Amin Bhat, president, Kashmir Theatre Federation.

"Being a conflict region, theatre here became a soft target, while performances suffered a great deal," he reveals.

Bhat, a noted playwright, who has directed popular plays like 'Tchal', 'White Paper' and 'Identity Card', has been closely associated with Kashmir's



Folk musicians performing ahead of a Kashmiri play, Paether, in Tagore Hall, Srinagar, earlier this year /MUZAMIL MATTOO /IUST.

Theatre is the only platform where we can promote our dying Kashmiri culture and language

theatre. "What I have experienced over the years is that this art not

only develops one intellectually but artistically too," he observes.

Till 1970s, theatre would influence hearts and minds of Kashmiris, and formed an intrinsic part of Kashmiri culture. It would highlight contemporary issues of the society that were performed creatively in many art forms like 'Band Pather'. However, later this institution of expression

The young generation of Kashmir is not inclined towards this form of art, for they lack the sense of pride towards their own culture and tradition

witnessed a gradual decline. Dearth of artists too badly affected the theatre after most of the performers made their way to electronic media for better income, security and sustenance. This made theatre less interesting and more vulnerable.

As per artists, since youngsters are not fond of theatre, it is unlikely to regain its sheen. "The young generation of Kashmir is not inclined towards this form of art, for they lack the sense of pride towards their own culture and tradition, and feel apologetic towards it," says Bhat, who has bagged National Academy award

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FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Kashmir theatre

for his play 'Tchal'. He adds that an intellectual mindset of performing and appreciating this art is yet to prevail in Kashmir.

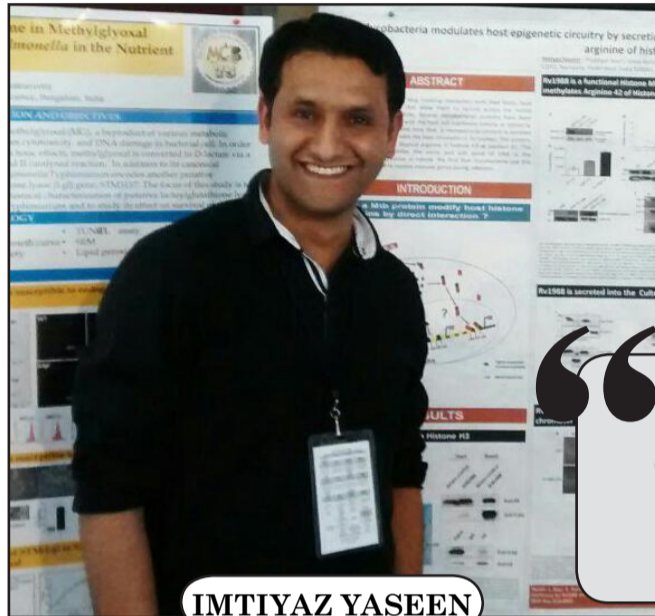
Closure of Tagore Hall, which once was the sole platform for artists in Kashmir, was the final blow to theatre. After Tagore Hall was reopened over a decade later, it was assumed that this medium was reborn in the Valley, which, however, did not prove to be more than a myth. Artists believe that attempts made to revive the theatre are failing owing to "low participation of people". They say serious efforts need to be made on part of the government as well as private agencies to preserve this medium. Prominent artist, Ayash Arif, says, Cultural Academy, non-governmental organisations and government ought to work together to revive the theatre in Kashmir with the help of new technology and better equipments.

"Theatre is the only platform, where we can promote our dying Kashmiri culture and language that can be achieved by the collective efforts of representatives of theatre. We also need to provide better opportunity to new talent coming forward from different regions of Kashmir," says Arif.

Muhammad Ashraf Tak, Chief Editor, Cultural Academy Kashmir, stresses on proper implementation of schemes for the "promotion of folk and ancient theatre" that were launched by the academy recently during a three-day workshop on 'Skill Development and Play Script' in Srinagar in November, 2015. "Theatre is a rich part of our culture and we are making efforts to promote it," Tak adds.

It is believed that art makes a nation vibrant and wise, and dying art symbolises death of minds. Similarly, theatre reflects the intellectual class of society, hence it needs to be preserved with priority.

Young Kashmiri scientist discovers TB cure



IMTIYAZ YASEEN

SHERFUN NISA

Setting an example for budding scientists in Kashmir, a research scholar from Kulgam has discovered a crucial protein, RV1988, which can help in diagnosis and possible cure of Tuberculosis.

Imtiyaz Yaseen, 29, is presently working on the project as part of his PhD thesis at Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD), Hyderabad.

"I feel pleased and contended for providing at least a ray of hope to people, who are suffering from Tuberculosis," shares Imtiyaz.

Talking about RV1988, Imtiyaz says, the protein secreted by a micro-organism, Mycobacterium Tuberculosis, can produce a therapy for Tuberculosis, which, he says, shall be cost-effective.

Elaborating further, he says, Mycobacterium Tuberculosis,

which causes Tuberculosis, also releases a protein that reduces body's ability to respond to the infection. "By targeting this particular protein, we can produce drugs, which can cure the disease," explains Imtiyaz.

The discovery has been widely hailed by scientific community. Dr Shaiq, a physician, says, RV1988 can prove to be useful in anti-Tubercular treatment. "Tuberculosis is one of the major infectious diseases in the developing world. And then, resistance among various infectious microbial species to different anti-microbial drugs is a grave issue. We are concerned about the infections due to Multi-drug Resistance (MDR) micro-organisms," he notes. "So any discovery with regard to proper diagnosis or treat-

"Tuberculosis is one of the major infectious diseases in the developing world. So any discovery with regard to proper diagnosis or treatment of the disease will definitely help"

ment of the disease will definitely be of great help to people," he adds. As a child, Imtiyaz wished to be a doctor, but his keen interest in research led him opt for Biochemistry. "During the last few decades of the 20th century, Biochemistry achieved tremendous success in explaining life processes. And now almost all areas of the life sciences from Botany to Medicine to Genetics are engaged in biochemical research," opines Imtiyaz.

Imtiyaz gives credit of his success to his uncle, Dr Nazir Ahmad Dar, who serves as Assistant Professor in department of Biochemistry at University of Kashmir. "It's only because of him I stand where I am today," shares Imtiyaz.

Imtiyaz did his schooling from Hanfia Institute, Arreh Kulgam. Later, he joined Jamia Millia Islamia, Dehli, for pursuing higher studies.

Imtiyaz intends to pursue post-doctoral fellowship abroad after completing his doctorate. He also aspires to set up his own Molecular Biology laboratory for the convenience of people.

Now kids extract sand from River Jhelum

MUDASIR BHAT

While sand extraction of River Jhelum has generated employment among youth of Awantipora in Pulwama district, it has concurrently given rise to child labour in the region. Many children and teenagers are leaving their studies mid-way to take up the job of sand extraction and support their families.

Earlier the task was carried out by fishermen community, who, since ages, have been extracting sand to earn livelihood. However, nowadays, even school going children are taking keen interest in this labour, which, in turn, has hampered their education.

Ask them what makes them do so at the cost of their studies, they cite poor financial conditions of their families. "Poverty and



Teenagers extracting sand from River Jhelum at Awantipora.
MUDASIR BHAT/IUST

unemployment compel us to drop out from schools and take up sand extraction," says a minor pleading anonymity. He adds that he earns Rs 500 to 600 a

day, "which is sufficient for me to survive".

Another boy, Suhail Ahmad Sheikh, who is 15 years old, says, since the economic condi-

tion of his family was not stable, "I had no option but to give up my education". "We are 10 family members. My father was not able to fulfil even the basic needs of our family, then how could he have fulfilled my educational needs?" he asks.

Talking to this reporter, Bashir Ahmad Mir, father of a school dropout, says, devastating floods of 2014 badly affected them, "due to which I as family head could not fulfil the needs of my family". "That is why, like other

poor families, I had to let my son take up sand extraction," he says.

A sociologist at University of

"Poverty and unemployment compel us to drop out from schools and take up sand extraction"

Kashmir laments, despite that child labour is illegal, many people are exploiting their children for earning livelihood, which ultimately gives rise to illiteracy and ignorance among youth and school going children. "Government and private organisations need to take initiatives against this social evil, and make sure that the life and career of these youth is secured," he adds.

'IUST has modified role to play'

Coming from a family of educationists, he was inspired to pursue higher education. At the age of 24, he became the youngest PhD awardee before pursuing his post-doctorate. He has served many universities so far in one capacity or the other. Now as Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Science and Technology, he believes, the aim of any university should be to produce employable graduates. In an interview with The Echo reporter, Zubair Amin, Prof Mushtaq Siddiqi talks at length about the current scenario and future plans of the varsity.

PIC/ RIAZ BHAT/IUST



Prof Mushtaq A. Siddiqi.

You have worked in various educational institutions outside. How different you feel to work now in IUST?

Educational institutions, whether they are in third world countries or advanced countries, have a common mandate nowadays, and that is to change the society. Giving away of the degrees, be it graduate, post graduate or doctoral degrees, is one of the primary responsibilities of any educational institution. However, during the past two decades, the universities have started taking up a new role, which is to change the structure of the society, to understand what its demands are, and try to address them effectively. I believe, whether I have worked in European universities or now I am working in Islamic University of Science and Technology, the role is still relevant. That can be achieved only by producing employable graduates. European universities or North American universities have shown the way, and hopefully third world universities will also align themselves to this new role.

You became the youngest PhD awardee in 1979, when not many people would pursue higher education in the Valley. What was your inspiration?

I come from a family of educationists. My father was a principal and my grandfather was a professor. So my inspiration came from my family that was oriented to go for higher education. My other inspiration was that I was scientifically oriented right from the beginning. I was trying to pursue Applied Science, where I could develop something for the society.

The university has completed a decade of its existence. Do you think it has attained the level of excellence that it should have during this period?

I should not say the level of excellence, rather the level of development it has attained is fairly satisfactory. Universities do not actually achieve the level of excellence during a decade's time. If you look at the major universities of Europe and United States, they have established themselves as centres of excellence even after 50 years of their existence. So, therefore, whatever level of development this university has achieved over a period of 11 years is fairly satisfactory. But now it is the time that we consolidate some of the departments, which have a potential of growing into the centres of excellence that will be probably the mandate of a Vice Chancellor like me. We shall consolidate those departments where we find the faculty has a potential to develop into a centre of excellence, and the infrastructure is also appropriate. It is not necessary that whole university can turn into a centre of excellence, but it is important that we brand some of the departments as centre of excellence. And I believe, the department of Food Technology and Business School of this university have a strong potential to become a centres of excellence. My attempt will be to develop two or three departments into centres of excellence by substantiating them with good human resource.

As Vice Chancellor, what challenges, do you think, you shall face in bringing this institution at par with other universities?

Any university in the world, even the leading universities like Harvard and Yales, is faced with challenges. IUST itself is a challenge because it is a budding university. This also gives you an advantage, for young and budding universities can be moulded very easily into a better system. So I definitely find it as a challenge, however these challenges are achievable and hopefully this university will be moulded into a centre of excellence.

Since the university, as of now, has only 16 departments and 3 schools, can we expect some new courses in near future?

Of course. Within one and a half month only we have already added two more schools. One is School of Sciences, which will offer two new courses, that is, Masters in Physics and Masters in Chemistry. Then we have also created a School of Health Sciences, under which we have now integrated three nursing colleges. One will be at Awantipora, another will be at Charar-i-Sharief and third will be most likely at Kupwara.

The fee structure of this institution is enormous in comparison to other universities. Does the institution provide the provisions of scholarships?

Personally I have a socialistic bent of mind and not a capitalistic one. Had it been up to me, I would not charge any student with the tuition fee. But it is the compulsion for university because we do not have many resources. State government does not provide enough funding. The Wakf Board, which was the promoter of this university, does not fund sufficiently.

Majority of the university faculty is working on contractual basis. Do you have any plan of recruiting more people permanently in near future?

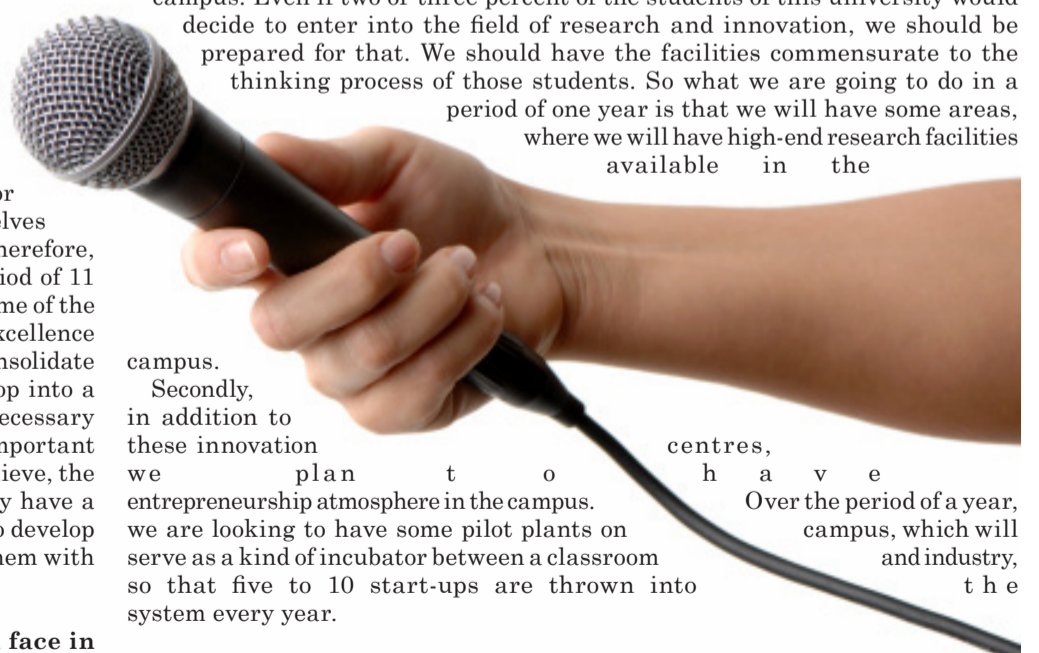
Yes. I do agree. This ratio of contractual and permanent faculty here is 70:30. I want to reverse it, but it all depends upon how many resources we are being provided with. But even otherwise, whatever limited resources we have, we will still be able to reverse this equation of 70:30.

Although the university is in progressing stage, there is a demand from students for better facilities and infrastructure. What steps are you taking to meet these demands?

We are working to make it a residential campus. We are going to build up one more girls' hostel on the same platform where the existing girls' hostel has been constructed. And then, we don't have many co-curricular activities in the campus due to lack of facilities. Shortly we will have a cricket stadium and many more activities, for I am taking it up with state sports and youth affairs department. They are going to fund it.

Any other future plan for the varsity?

As I said, universities today have two or three newer roles than what the conventional universities used to have. We are also pacing IUST into that new modified role. That means, at least some students of this university should take up research. So, the future plan is to create an atmosphere of research in the campus. Even if two or three percent of the students of this university would decide to enter into the field of research and innovation, we should be prepared for that. We should have the facilities commensurate to the thinking process of those students. So what we are going to do in a period of one year is that we will have some areas, where we will have high-end research facilities available in the



campus.

Secondly, in addition to these innovation we plan to have entrepreneurship atmosphere in the campus. Over the period of a year, we are looking to have some pilot plants on campus, which will serve as a kind of incubator between a classroom and industry, so that five to 10 start-ups are thrown into the system every year.

What message would you give to staff, faculty and students of IUST?

My message is that I am one of you. I am student centric. Let us all put our thought process and energies together to make the best use of the training inside the university. And once our students are outside the university, they are the ambassadors of development, entrepreneurship, high-end innovation and research. Students have to be the beneficiary of all of our efforts. And in turn, our faculty and non-faculty staff will always become the beneficiary of that system.

IUST celebrates National Technology Day

VALLEY YOUTH
NEXT TO NONE:
ENV MIN

SAJID ALI

Stating that "Valley youth stand next to none", Minister of Forest, Ecology and Environment, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, said they had the potential to excel in every sphere, "be it commerce, arts or science and technology".

Speaking at the inaugural session of National Technology Day at Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on May 11, Mir said technology provides myriad opportunities to youth, "which they should explore and utilise".

Mir, who was chief guest on the occasion, assured the then Vice Chancellor of IUST, Prof A R Trag, for "every possible support" for the development of the university.

Speaking at the session, Minister of Industries and Commerce, Syed Farooq Andrabi, stressed on youth to "invest more time in education" than any other thing.



FORMER VICE CHANCELLOR, IUST, PROF A R TRAG ADDRESSING FACULTY AND STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM ON MAY 11, 2016.
PIC / SYED KAISER ANDRABI/IUST

"Technology provides myriad opportunities to youth, which they should explore and utilise"

Andrabi, who was guest of honour at the event, emphasised on providing good infrastructure to students in the university. "Proper development of roads, buildings and libraries, and free Wi-Fi access to students in the varsity is the need of the hour," he said. On the occasion, he provided Rs five lakh from his MLA fund to the university.

Earlier, welcoming the guests, Prof Trag, said the university has shown "tremendous development" in the field of science and technology, and has become "country's fastest developing university".

"Be it Ministry of Higher Education, University Grants Commission, National Assessment and Accredita-

tion Council or All India Council of Technical Education, this university is being commended by one and all for its achievements in such a short span of time," he said.

He further said already a lot has been done for the development of the varsity, "and now more has to be done". "I request Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to address the issues related to the varsity on priority, especially because this university was the dream of late Mufti Muhammad Syed," he said.

Professor Rajendra Bhal from Centre for Applied Research in Electronics, Indian Institutes of Technology, Delhi, Prof G M Bhat from Applied Science and Technology, University of Kashmir, and Dr Majid Koul, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, IUST, were the resourcepersons for technical sessions.

Various topics, like SONAR (Sound Navigation and Ranging) technology, technological innovations in Kashmir and digital manufacturing of robotics, were discussed in the technical sessions. Later, the higher secondary school students were given a tour of the laboratories of IUST.

DJMC observes Press Freedom Day

ZUBAIR AMIN

Department of Journalism and Mass communication (DJMC), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), observed 'World Press freedom Day' on May 3.

The department organised a formal session discussing various issues pertaining to press freedom and its status in Jammu and Kashmir. Faculty members and students also shared their experiences with regard to curbs on press freedom in Kashmir.

Head of the department, Dr Ruheela Hassan, deliberated on the history of press regulations in the state. She said curbs on media and threats to journalists were not new to the Valley. "Be it the tenures of Maharajas, Sheikh Abdullah, Ghulam Muhammad Bakshi or Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, media in Kashmir has never breathed in free air," she said.

"The press in Kashmir always had to make extra efforts to survive and grow, but unfortunately their struggle is not well documented," she said and added that no law favouring press freedom and encouraging its role has been framed yet.

Assistant Professor and Editor, DJMC, Dr Rabia Noor said, in traditional news outlets, journalists many a time have to struggle between professional ethics and survival. She suggested students to explore the alternate sources of media as well. "This is the age where you no longer need to work as subordinates. After gaining sufficient experience in media organisations, you can set up your own ventures, especially in online media," she told students.

The session was concluded with a quiz programme on general knowledge and current affairs.

DJMC HOLDS WORKSHOP ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

ZUBAIR AMIN/ SAJID ALI

To sensitize budding journalists towards disaster preparedness, a day-long workshop on 'Disaster Preparedness and Role of Media' was held at Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on April 21. The workshop was organised by Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC), IUST, in collaboration with Human Welfare Voluntary Organisation, and Centre for Law and Development Policy (CLDP).

The workshop was attended by students and faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, and resource persons from media organisations and non-governmental organisations. The workshop aimed at enhancing the capabilities of students in managing and mitigating the impact of natural and human-induced disasters.

Speaking on the occasion, Head, DJMC, Dr Ruheela Hassan, said the role of media was not limited to post-disaster scenario, but was required in pre-disaster times as well.

"Journalists need to be trained regularly on disaster preparedness to enhance their understanding of key disaster terms and scale of the hazards. And this workshop was one such step in that direction," she said.

She added that journalists should use the barrel of pen and camera "to push the policy makers to 'developmentize' disaster risk management".

The PowerPoint presentations by resource persons were followed by panel discussion and question answer session, wherein journalists enlightened students with their experiences of handling recent disasters in the state. They advised students to be equipped with the necessary knowledge about disaster scenario, "so that you can report about the disasters from all perspectives, be it gender, economy, vulnerability, health, security, privacy or any issue."

Associate Professor, IMPA, Dr G M Dar, said, disasters affect lives of people directly as well as indirectly. "Not a single person remains unaffected by the disasters. They not only cause loss of life and shelter, but also lead to scarcity of food and outbreak of diseases besides disturbing socio-economic activities," he said.

The panelists hailed the efforts of local media in highlighting the role of citizens in rescue operations. They, however, added that there were certain things, "which go unreported".

Assistant Professor, DJMC, Shazia Yousuf, said there was a dire need to bring in the element of gender in the mainstream reporting. "We need to look at stories and issues through the lens of gender



ROLE OF MEDIA IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS BEING DISCUSSED AT ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ON APRIL 21, 2016.
PIC / MUZAMIL MATOO/IUST

in Kashmir, for our's is a conservative and patriarchal society, and women here have been taught to keep quiet," she said. "They will never come out to talk about their issues. Journalists have to make an extra effort to penetrate that silence," she added.

Senior Editor, *Greater Kashmir*, Mehmood-ur-Rashid said disaster and conflict were inter-related. "When a disaster hits a state that is already hit by some conflict, the political perspectives influence

important issues," he said.

Sharing his experience of 2014 floods, Correspondent, *The Hindu*, Peerzada Ashiq said, journalists need to keep hope afloat while reporting a disaster "instead of focusing on numbers".

Other resource persons included Ishfaq Mattoo of Jammu and Kashmir Association for Social Workers, Shafat N Ahmad of CLDP and Dr Fozia Qazi, Head, department of Mathematics, IUST.

CAMPUS TALENT

IR student documents Kunan Poshpora horror

SHERFUN NISA

As a child, she was never fond of writing. Yet she ended up writing a book. She, however, always wanted to be the voice of unheard. Perhaps this is what inspired her to write.

Ifrah Butt, who is currently pursuing her Masters in International Relations (IR) at Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), has penned down the agony of *Kunan Poshpora* survivors. Along with her four co-authors, Ifrah has documented a book, *'Do You Remember Kunan Poshpora?'*—published by Delhi-based Zubaan Publishers. The book stems from the five Kashmiri female activists' effort in re-opening the Kunan Poshpora mass-rape case.

"We should document our memory, for it is the only weapon we have. If we tend to forget our memory, we will never reach to a logical conclusion," Ifrah asserts.

Since her childhood, Ifrah aspired to be a social worker. "I never wanted to be a doctor or an engineer unlike many of my age. I didn't want to be a writer either. Rather I wished to be a social worker and human rights activist," shares Ifrah.

After completion of Bachelors in Social Work, Ifrah joined Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS), a city-based human rights group, as an intern in 2013. Besides, she was assigned to write reports in her Bachelors that polished her writing skills.

One of the motives for Ifrah behind co-authoring the book on Kunan Poshpora case was to show the world that Kashmir women for past 60 years not only live in a patriarchal society, but also confront the violence. "South Asian women are considered weak in political issue representation. We need to let the world

know that there is a political representation of women in Kashmir," deems Ifrah.

The university staff has supported Ifrah in her journey, "especially the IR department". "I get whole-hearted support from them. Words of encouragement are pouring from every side," says Ifrah.

Hailing from Indra Nagar in Srinagar, Ifrah mostly writes about women issues. She is further preparing to write on domestic violence and its impact on children. Ifrah believes that writing skills are there somewhere in a person, "and you have to discover them by you own".



"We should document our memory, for it is the only weapon we have"

Conflict-hit kids suffer from PTSD

Amid restrictions, a paramilitary official stopping a child from riding his cycle outside his home at Nawa Kadal, Srinagar.

SADAF AIJAZ

Only a few months back, Aamir (name changed), a young bus conductor of Noor Bagh, Srinagar, lost his job owing to his irritable behaviour. He would lose his calm even over the pettiest of issues. People found him the toughest person to deal with.

Aamir's weird behaviour was the outcome of lack of fatherly love. He lost his father at a tender age of four in a conflict-related incident. He was taken care of by his mother and maternal uncles. With the passage of time, however, Aamir developed severe irritability, which only grew along with him. He lost his concentration and thereby left his studies midway.

Aamir's uncles describe him as the "toughest boy" of his age, while his cousins grew up well. Some months ago, when things went out of control, his mother decided to help her son out at any cost. She took him to several doctors before someone suggested to her to approach a psychiatrist at Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar. There he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and treated for four months. And now, Aamir seems all energetic, dedicated and a polite person.

Aamir is not the lone case of PTSD in Kashmir. Hundreds of children suffer from PTSD—a clinical syndrome with fairly well-

defined emotional, behavioral, cognitive, social and physical symptoms.

"PTSD is a mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event either by experiencing it or witnessing it. Its symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety and uncontrollable thoughts about the event," explains Dr Arshad Hussain, Associate Professor, Psychiatry, GMC. "PTSD sometimes leads to work related issues and even the breakdown of relationships," he adds.

In Kashmir, more than two decades of violence has exposed all age-groups to scenes of cross-firing, homes being destroyed and loved ones being killed. One of the most vulnerable of these groups is children, which is also validated by research. Several of these children have suffered from episodes of loss of consciousness, reported irritability or outbursts of anger. Many of them lose interest and joy in life, while some develop stammering and bedwetting.

Dr Hussain says, most of the PTSD cases in Kashmir are related to conflict. "There are hundreds of such cases, with children and women forming the major patient chunk.

"PTSD is a mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event either by experiencing it or witnessing it. Its symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety and uncontrollable thoughts about the event"

Conflict can be of any type; it can be within a family or a society," he says.

Aamir's problem, as per Dr Hussain, had grown constantly and could have been treated earlier had he received proper psychiatric treatment at initial stage.

"Though he is overcoming most of his problems, it will take him some time to recover completely. Recurrences are common, so we have to watch such patients for longer time," he says.

Talking to this reporter, Aamir recalls the days, when he was not able to sleep properly—a common complaint in PTSD patients. To overcome this problem, he took first sleeping tablets. And when those did not work, he switched to other drugs. "My studies too suffered as I was not able to concentrate. Then I left studies and tried to earn for my family," says Aamir, adding that, however, he is happy that he has overcome that stage.

The World Health Organisation has specific guidelines for mental health in emergencies and disasters, which could be a guideline for Kashmir as well. It stresses on helping to normalise life, and making available the information needed to heal and overcome negative effects.

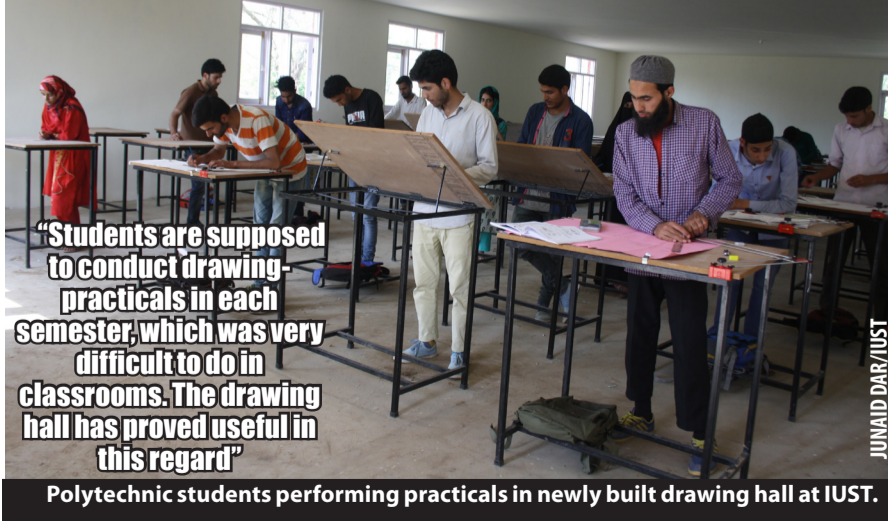
Polytechnic students get drawing hall

MUDASIR BHAT/ IMTIYAZ PANDOW/ AQIB NAIK

To help Polytechnic students learn the intricacies of engineering drawing, a newly constructed drawing hall was inaugurated by Prof A R Trag, former Vice Chancellor, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), on May 10.

The hall with a seating capacity of 60 students has been proposed particularly for the Government Polytechnic College, IUST. "The drawing hall spreads over the area of 60x30 running feet (RFT) with advertising cost of Rs 57.17 lakh and allotted cost of Rs 43.04 lakh," said Shafat Hussain Quadimi, Executive Engineer,

ASSETS OF IUST



"Students are supposed to conduct drawing-practicals in each semester, which was very difficult to do in classrooms. The drawing hall has proved useful in this regard"

Polytechnic students performing practicals in newly built drawing hall at IUST.

IUST.

Head, Polytechnic department, Sajad Ahmad Khan, said, every engineering college has got the facility of drawing hall, which is quite different from classrooms. "Students are supposed to conduct drawing-practicals in each semester, which was very difficult to do in classrooms. The drawing hall has proved useful in this regard," he said. Talking to *The Echo*, students expressed their gratitude to the university for making the facility available to them. "Previously, we used to do drawing-practicals in classroom, and the images we would draw would be haphazard. But now, in drawing hall, we are able to draw perfect images," said Himayun Ahmad Mir, a Polytechnic student.

Another student, Aaqib Bashir, said, earlier they used to do practicals in the drawing hall of B.Tech department. "But sometimes it was not available for us, which would make our work suffer," he added.

CAMPUS ROUND-UP

IUST holds plantation drive

Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) held a plantation drive in the campus on March 29. Around 2000 saplings of various species were planted that mostly included Cypress, Abelia, Scoria and Tulip. The drive was run with the slogan 'Let's join hands together for a better cause, go green and plant a tree.'

Former Vice Chancellor, IUST, Prof AR Trag, kick-started the drive by planting a Tulip tree. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Trag underlined the benefits of afforestation. "We should plant more and more trees to regain the lost greenery," he said.

He added that the university shall continue such plantation drives in future "to cover the unused land in the campus". "I request the faculty and students to not only plant a tree but also strive to take care of the planted saplings," he said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of staffers and students participated in the drive. Talking to The Echo, Prof K A Tarzan, Dean Students Welfare, IUST, said one should plant a tree at least once in his life. He also referred to the famous saying of Sufi saint Hazrat Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani, 'Ann Posh Tell, Yelli Wan Posh', which means life shall last as long as forests last.



Bangladeshi journos interact with DJMC, CIR students

Senior journalists from Bangladesh emphasised that local media in Kashmir can play an important role in "highlighting the cause of Kashmir", especially through social media.

"We came to know about the 2010 summer uprising in Kashmir through social networking sites like Facebook that provided links to news stories," said Dr M D Saimum Parvez, Senior Lecturer, North-South University, Dhaka, adding that it is difficult for authorities to regulate social media.

Dr Parvez, who was accompanied by Amrita Parvez, senior news presenter, Masaranga Television, Dhaka, interacted with students and faculty from department of Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC) and Centre for International Relations (CIR), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on April 25.

Dr Parvez further talked about the coverage of Kashmir issue in Bangladeshi media, and about how media can bring change in the present situation of Kashmir.

Media should redefine its role: Shujaat Bhukhari

Stating that media sets the agenda that forms public opinion, senior journalist and Editor-in-Chief, Rising Kashmir, Dr Shujaat Bhukhari, said journalists should work responsibly and that their first loyalty should be towards people.

Delivering a lecture on 'Role of Media in Shaping Socio-Political Opinion', organised by Centre for International Relations, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on May 19, Bhukhari said media influences the mindset of people, "thus it should play a positive role".

"They ought to work objectively, be it in case of Kashmir issue or Indo-Pak relations, only then the ground reality will change," he said. Talking about local media in Kashmir, he said, it is falling in the trap of "vested interests", and should report problems of a common Kashmiri.



JORDANIAN NOVELIST STRESSES ON LEARNING ARABIC

Noted Arabic writer and literary critic, and faculty at University of Jordan, Dr Sana'a Al-Shalan, suggested to language experts to translate popular Kashmiri short stories and poems into Arabic, "so that Arabs would understand writings and thoughts of Kashmiri people".

Delivering a lecture on Arabic language and fiction on April 4, she said Arabic language was more about cultural civilization than speaking. Dr Sana'a also encouraged students to learn Arabic language.

The lecture, which was organised by department of Arabic Language and Literature, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), was attended by faculty of Arabic department, and students from various departments.

'WATER WAR BETWEEN INDIA, PAK DANGEROUS'

Cultural Anthropologist, Dr Mona Bhan, said the water war between India and Pakistan was "more dangerous" than the LoC war between the two countries. Delivering a lecture on 'Politics of Water between India and Pakistan', organised by Center of International Relations, IUST, on June 13, Dr Mona said such crisis could lead to human-induced disasters like September 2014 floods of Kashmir.

Dr Mona, who serves as Associate Professor at DePaul University, USA, deliberated on the strategy of Indo-Pak waters and gravity of the issue. Talking about the construction of dams in Kashmir, she said, India was building dams only to strengthen its position over the Valley. "It, however, can lead to immobility and non-connectivity. Building dams in Kashmir is less about development and more about the ideology," she said.

'US spreading terrorism in Muslim world'

Noted political scientist, Prof Noor Ahmad Baba, said the biggest challenge prevalent in the Middle East was sectarian clashes, "which West has given rise to for their political benefits".

Prof Baba, who serves as Coordinator of Political Science department at Central University of Kashmir, delivered a lecture on 'Contemporary Middle East Evolution, Issues and Challenges', organised by department of Islamic Studies, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) on April 4.

He blamed the United States of America (USA) for "spreading terrorism in Muslim countries". "West invaded Iraq, Libya, Syria and other Muslim countries, and destabilized the Islamic world," he said.

Journalism students visit newspaper offices



Students of Journalism and Mass Communication visited national and local newspaper organisations to get acquainted with differences between the functioning of the two. The second semester students visited the bureau office of The Tribune, located at Jahangir Chowk, Srinagar, and Rising Kashmir at Press Enclave on May 17.

Students were taught working of various sections of a newspaper organisation, like news room, editorial room, advertising section and administration department.

The students interacted with senior correspondents and reporters in both the organisations. Journalists shared their reporting experiences with students, and provided them with practical tips on news gathering, idea generation, meeting deadlines and cultivation of sources. They also talked about their respective beats and gravity of each.

The students expressed their contentment over the visit. "We got to learn the things practically that we have learnt in our classroom," said Mukhtar Ahmad Dar, a Journalism student.

DJMC visits Legislative Assembly

The department of Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC), Islamic University of Science and Technology, visited the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on June 14. The students, who were accompanied by faculty, were given the insights about the working environment of the Assembly. The students also attended a question-answer session and a general proceeding.

After the sessions were over, students interacted with MLA Khan-yaar, Ali Muhammad Sagar. Responding to a student's question, he said, the role of opposition was crucial in the Assembly, "for it always helps the ruling party to work for the interests of people".

"If some government policies are not people centric, we raise a question over them, and compel them (government) to amend the policies in the interest of people," he told students.

Sudhir Nair interacts with Journalism students

The department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), organised an interaction session for its students with Bollywood film-maker Sudhir Nair, on April 20.

During his interaction with students, he talked about his experiences and his new film project in Kashmir. "Earlier, I used to see Kashmir merely as a scenic location for films. But after interacting with locals on my first visit, I found Kashmir completely different from the narration we had in Mumbai about it," he said.

He also talked about the technical and commercial aspects of Bollywood films. He said Bollywood was more commercially-oriented and there "things are made larger than life".



NYLA KHAN DELIVERS LECTURE ON POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

Renowned academic and visiting Professor at University of Oklahoma, USA, Dr Nyla Ali Khan, delivered an extensive lecture on 'Postcolonial Studies' at Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), on June 16. The lecture was organised by Department of English Language and Literature, IUST. Dr Nyla touched upon various topics ranging from cultural hegemony of the West to a need for a counter discourse to challenge the western notion of the East. She said Kashmiris have failed to develop a "shared cultural and historical legacy that would enable them to fashion a cultural alterity to that of ultra-right wing Indian and Pakistani nationalist ones".

IUST ORGANISES BLOOD DONATION CAMP

Health Centre of Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) organised a day-long blood donation camp in collaboration with Humanity Welfare Organisation Helpline (HWOH) at IUST campus on May 12. The camp was thrown open by Prof A R Trag, former Vice Chancellor, IUST, and Javed Ahmad Tak, Chairman, HWOH. A large number of students and faculty members participated in the camp voluntarily, "so as to help save precious lives".

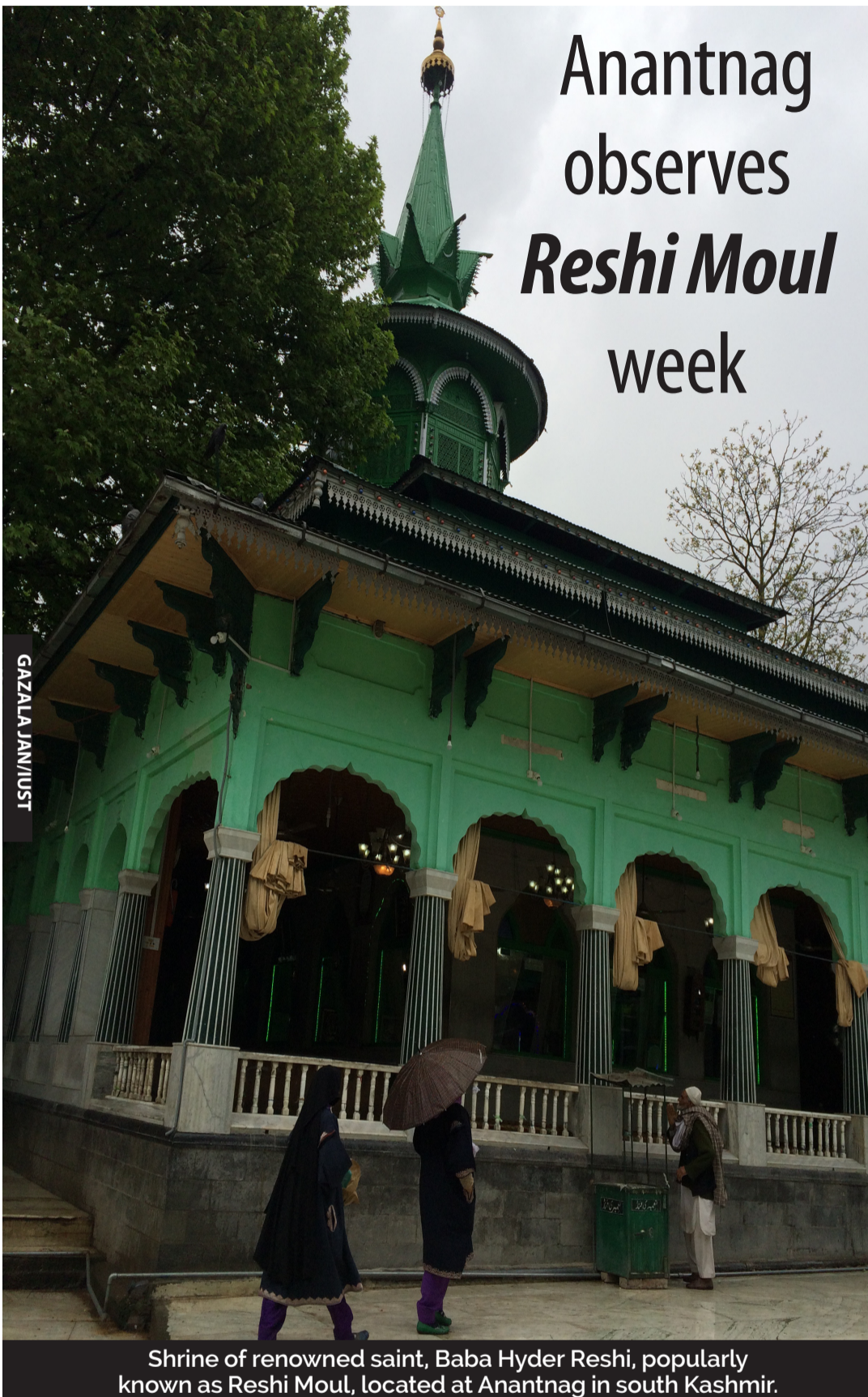
"It is a proud moment for us that our students and faculty members are passionate about donating blood," said Prof Trag, adding that hospitals are facing dearth of blood units, which results in distress among patients.

While talking to The Echo, Medical Consultant, IUST, Dr Zahida Rasool appreciated the volunteers for donating blood. "The blood will be provided to the hospitals lying on the national highway from Pampore to Anantnag to cater to the needs in emergency cases," she added.

Compiled by UFAQ FATIMA, ABID HUSSAIN, IMTIYAZ PANDOW and MUDASIR BHAT

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Anantnag observes *Reshi Moul* week



GAZALA JAN/JUST

Shrine of renowned saint, Baba Hyder Reshi, popularly known as Reshi Moul, located at Anantnag in south Kashmir.

GAZALA JAN

South Kashmir's Anantnag district is known for a custom, wherein people abstain themselves from flesh eating for a week. The custom is observed as a mark of respect to renowned saint, Baba Hyder Reshi, popularly known as *Reshi Moul* or *Harda Reshi*, who would not consume meat.

Anantnag being the birthplace of Baba Reshi houses a shrine named after him, which is located in Mohalla Reshi Bazaar. The shrine is being visited by Muslims as well as Hindus.

Mohalla president, Muhammad Yaseen, refers to Baba Reshi as a religious person, who preferred to be monastic. "He lived a very simple life. He did not eat meat either. He had devoted himself completely to contemplation and prayers of Almighty Allah," he says.

People of Anantnag refrain themselves from eating meat from 27th of the Islamic month Zeekat till 3rd Dhu'l-Hijjah as an honour to Baba Reshi. "His enthusiasts observe this week with dedication. On third day, people from various places visit the shrine. They light candles and offer prayers for the whole night," says Abdul Rashid Wani, a local.

On last day of Zeekat, people of Anantnag host a special function, in which they prepare various varieties of vegetable meals for the people who visit the shrine.

Baba Reshi is regarded as one of the greatest Islamic saints, who lived amidst hardships and avoided every comfort in life. "He preferred religious life over married life, and preferred to serve religion more than anything else," says Yaseen.

Baba Reshi was born on 29th Rajab, 909 Hijri (January 17, 1504 AD) in the village Dantar of district Anantnag in the house of one Sheikh Abdullah, a black smith. He spent his whole life in the service of people.

"He always guided people towards the right path, and taught them the value of religion and humanity, and the message of Allah," opines Maulana Nissar Ahmad Sheikh, an Islamic scholar.

"His spiritual guide had been Hazrat Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom, from whom he is said to have received religious and spiritual education," he adds.

The saint is said to have passed away in 976 Hijri (1568 AD) at the age of 67 years in deep meditation. His body is enshrined along with 21 of his disciples in his tomb.

"He lived a very simple life. He did not eat meat either. He had devoted himself completely to contemplation and prayers of Almighty Allah"



The university should come up with more post-graduate courses, like MA in Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and so on.

Syed Amjid, International Relations (Fourth semester) student

The university must start research programmes in each course, so that students need not join outside universities for pursuing higher studies.

Juniad Ahmad Dar, Journalism and Mass Communication (Second semester) student

Separate time for sports activities should be allotted to students, and that should also be mentioned in the timetable.

Mudasir Ahmad Sofi, MCA (Second semester) student

The SRTC bus stand that lies on the mountain slope should be shifted to the university campus, for it is quite tedious to travel down the slope.

Obiad Sayeed, MBA (Second semester) student

Classrooms or huts should not be constructed very far from the departments, as a lot of time is wasted in walking between the two.

Owias Ahmad, Civil Engineering (Second semester) student

There should be a proper dress code for students pursuing professional courses in the university.

Rayees Ahmad, MBA (Second semester) student

student

All students should be provided with transport/hostel facilities, which is not the case at present.

Rameez Reyaz, Civil Engineering (Sixth semester) student

The Echo should devote a separate page to opinions of students.

Danish Abid, Civil Engineering (Second semester) student

As told to MUKHTAR DAR and ASHIQ HUSSAIN MIR

A devotee performing ablution, a means to attain purification ahead of prayers, at Jamia Masjid, Srinagar.



A Sahar Khan (drummer) waking up people of his locality for Sahoor (mid-night meals) in Ramadan. Even in this era of technology, this tradition is followed in many parts of the world, where people still rely more on this human alarm than on alarm clocks.

Snacks displayed for sale at a shop in Maharaja Bazaar, Srinagar. The sale of snacks picks up across the Valley during Ramadan.



Children reciting Holy Qur'an during Ramadan at a Darasgah (religious school) in Reshipora, Awantipora. The Holy book was revealed in the month of Ramadan.



People purchasing fresh dates during Ramadan at famous Maharaja Bazaar in Srinagar. Since the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to break his fast with fresh dates, these hold a huge significance for fasting Muslims.



Islamic preacher addressing a gathering of devotees on Shab-e-Qadr (the night of decree) at a mosque in Awantipora. Shab-e-Qadr, during which initial verses of the Holy Quran were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), falls on one of the odd nights of the last 10 days of Ramadan.

Ramadan in Kashmir

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. During this month, Muslims around the world abstain from consuming food. Ramadan, however, means much more than merely fasting. It is more about purifying the soul, devoting oneself to the worship of Almighty, and practicing self-discipline and sacrifice. In Kashmir too, where Muslim community forms majority of the population, the Holy month is observed with religious fervour. From dawn to dusk, people remain engaged in prayers and other religious activities.

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY UFAQ FATIMA, BHAT MUDASIR, IMTIYAZ PANDOW AND AABID HUSSAIN.