

EDITORIAL

CHOOSING PEACE

n a powerful show of unity and resilience, the Kashmir Valley echoed with resounding slogans against terrorism as people from all walks of life came together to denounce violence and advocate for peace. The rallying cry came not only from security forces and political leaders but more significantly from the common people-youth, students, teachers, traders, and elders-who have long borne the brunt of unrest and instability. The public gatherings, held across various districts including Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama, and Baramulla, witnessed an overwhelming turnout, with citizens waving placards reading "Say No to Terror," "Peace is Our Right," and "Kashmir Wants Development, Not Destruction.

The rising participation of youth in these anti-terror campaigns marks a major shift in the narrative of the region. For years, the Valley has been marred by terrorism and ideological extremism, but recent efforts by the government, civil society, and security forces to restore normalcy are bearing fruit. Young voices, once drowned in fear, are now leading the charge, calling for an end to bloodshed and demanding a future filled with education, employment, and

One of the most symbolic moments came when hundreds of students from various colleges marched through the streets of Srinagar holding the Indian National Flag and chanting slogans like "We want pens, not guns" and "Terrorism will not break us." The spirit of the youth was further amplified by cultural performances, street plays, and poetry recitations aimed at raising awareness and promoting the values of peace, harmony, and coexistence.

Local religious leaders, community elders, and women's groups also joined the movement, urging families to guide their children away from radical influences and destructive ideologies. Many mothers were seen holding photos of their children lost to terrorism, calling upon others to protect their families from the same fate.

The events have been widely supported by law enforcement agencies and local administration, who ensured peaceful and safe conduct of the rallies. Jammu and Kashmir Police officials not only provided security but also participated in the events, symbolizing solidarity with the people. "This is a moment of transformation. We stand with the youth of Kashmir in their aspiration for peace," said a senior police official in Baramulla

Importantly, the rallies and awareness drives are part of a broader initiative supported by both state and central governments to counter radicalization and promote mainstream integration. Skill development programs, youth empowerment workshops, and mental health support systems are being actively introduced to engage the youth constructively and keep them away from harmful influences.

The Valley's strong and clear rejection of terrorism is a testament to the people's longing for peace. These voices, rising louder than ever before, show that the winds of change are sweeping through Kashmir. With continued support, inclusive development, and unwavering determination, the dream of a peaceful and prosperous Valley may finally become a

The message from the Valley is now unmistakable: Kashmir belongs to its people, not to terror. And its people

'Wings Across the World: Protecting Migratory Birds Together'

NEHA JAMWAL AND ARTI SHARMA **Migratory Birds**

Migratory birds are exceptional species that undertake remarkable journeys in order to nest, forage or flee hostile environmental conditions from one area or habitat to another during the year. Thousands of kilometres may be covered by these migrations, which frequently follow well-travelled flyways that birds have been using for millennia. About 20% of bird species are thought to be migratory, and their yearly travels result in a redistribution of bird diversity that drastically alters the composition of avian communities around the planet. From nectivorous hummingbirds, which weigh only a few grams, to carnivorous raptors, which may weigh up to three orders of magnitude more, these birds can fly short distances or make incredibly long expeditions around the world.

After the winter season begins in most parts of the northern hemisphere each year, many bird species fly southward to overwinter, returning to their home regions in the spring. The itineraries of migratory birds are generally unpredictable. The northern and southern hemispheres are connected by certain international routes, which typically run north-south.In addition to other considerations like the destination's physical features and weather patterns, the energy cost of migration drives these birds to choose the quickest and shortest route. They primarily prefer rivers, waterways, mountain ranges and coasts. Specifically, these routes are referred to as the "FLYWAYS OF BIRD MIGRATION." Around the world, migrating birds use nine different flyways, with the Indian subcontinent encountering the 'Central Asian Flyway." Between the Indian Ocean and the Arctic, it covers the majority of Eurasia.

India, which is home to a wide variety of organisms and rich biodiversity, is also a preferred location for migrating birds. According to a WWF analysis, India harbours over 1349 of the 2274 migratory bird species worldwide, accounting for roughly 59.32% of the total migratory bird population.

Migratory Birds in Jammu and Kashmir

In the northern crown of India lies a realm that poets have long struggled to capture in mere words, Jammu and Kashmir, where nature whispers in verses and the mountains sing ancient songs. It is not merely a place, but a living poem, a dream embroidered in snow and sunlight depicting magnificent symphony of seasons. As a gateway to the entering migratory bird population, Jammu and





ing numerous migratory birds species from

across the globe annually. Despite these inter-

nationally acknowledged wetlands and lakes,

many other water bodies and reservoirs serve

as over-wintering grounds for a plethora of

As notified by the Forest Department in 1981, wetland status has been attributed to Gharana, Sangral, Pargwal, Kukrian and Nanga reserves. Except Gharana wetland in RS Pura, others are vying for attention because of their ongoing decline as a result of human atrocities. Gharana wetland is a declared International Bird Area, by Birdlife International and Bombay Natural History Society and more stress is laid on it to upgradeits status while the others await attention from the stakeholders. About 96 species of migratory birds have been reported to visit the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and their extent and number varies from wet.

land to wetland. These birds include; Cormorants, Egrets, Storks, Spoonbills, Teal, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Pochards, Buzzard, Egyptian vulture, Sandpiper, Tern, Swallows, Wagtails, etc.

Wings in Peril: The Decline of Migratory

Migratory birds are essential for the health of ecosystems. They spread seeds over great distances, pollinate plants and regulate insect populations. The condition of the environments along their flyways is reflected in their migrations, which also serve as ecological indicators. They remind us of the interdependence of nature by bridging nations and civilizations.

Despite harbouring immense biodiversity, these wetlands and other reservoirs have witnessed serious decline in migratory bird species population that is a measure of overall ecosystem health and is flashing red warning signs. The most important threats being:

▶ Climate Change: As a result of rising greenhouse gas emissions, precipitation has significantly decreased, temperatures have changed and extreme weather events have occurred. These factors have a significant impact on the timing and availability of food resources, which has worsened the situation of wetlands. Birds' migratory patterns have probably also been disturbed by this.

▶ Growing population: As the population

results in illegal encroachment.

Extensive changes in land use and growing development initiatives

▶ Over-exploitation: The population of migrating birds has been significantly diminished due to illegal hunting, poachingand trap-

Non-sustainable levels of fishing and grazing: Overharvesting causes a shortage of food supplies (fish), which causes migrating birds to modify their arrival destinations. However, overgrazing has also caused their nesting and sheltering areas to be disrupted.

▶ Habitat Loss due to increased agricultural activities: Due to population growth and rising food demands, migratory bird habitat has been lost as a result of unlawful encroachment and conversion of marsh land into agricultur-

▶ Pollution: Increased usage of pesticides and insecticides, has greatly affected the bird population by leaking or running off into marsh water. Furthermore, ongoing human activities like washing vehicles and clothing, illegal sand mining and driving across wetlands are likely to disturb/stress/frighten migratory birds, who will then make it difficult to live there and fly to far-off places.

The Fate of Migratory Birds Amid Human Exploitation

Once the ageless representations of liberty, tenacity and the passing of the seasons. migratory birds are now among the most vulnerable to the unquenchable human desire for territory, riches and authority. As we clear every forest, drain every marsh and occupy every shoreline, we are destroying the unseen paths they have travelled for thousands of years. The sky-paths that are etched into instinct and steered by the stars are disappearing at an alarming rate. Many migratory species could go extinct throughout our lifetimes if habitat destruction, pollution, climate change and illicit hunting keep up their current rate. Not only will we lose birds, but we will also lose the stories they shared across continents, the beauty they bring to our seasons and the equilibrium they preserved in our

If we actnow to protect flyways, restore habitats and enforce conservation laws, we can still change their fate. The future of migratory birds lies in our hands.

"The question still remains: Will we choose silence or will we fight to keep the skies alive with wings?"

(The writers are from Department of Zoology, University of Jammu)

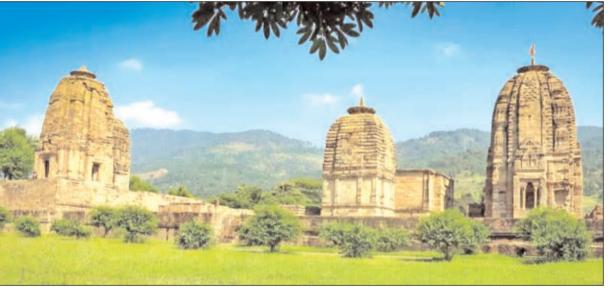
Krimchi Temples: Where History and Legends Live Together and earthen pots, further cementing the

idden away in the serene foothills of the Shivalik range Llies Krimchi, a small, picturesque village in the Udhampur district of Jammu & Kashmir. Located just 12 km from Udhampur City and around 60 km from Jammu, Krimchi offers a compelling blend of mythology, spirituality, and architectural marvel. At its heart stands the Krimchi Temple Complex, locally known as the Pandav Temples, a cluster of ancient Hindu shrines believed to date back to the 8th-9th century AD.

A Journey Through Time

Tucked amidst lush green fields and flowing streams, Krimchi feels like a place lost in time. The peaceful setting and spiritual aura of this place immediately strike a chord with visitors. As per local tradition and ancient lore, the village was once known as "Kunti Nagar," named after Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas from the Mahabharata.

Legend says that the Pandavas, during their 13-year exile, spent some time in this region and, in gratitude to the divine, built temples dedicated to deities



like Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, Goddess Parvati, and Lord Ganesha. These beliefs lend a mythic quality to the place, attracting not only tourists but also pilgrims seeking blessings from the divine heroes of the epic.

The Architectural Marvel

The Krimchi temple complex consists of seven templesfour large ones facing the east and three smaller ones facing the west. The main temple, standing around 50 feet high, is the most elaborately designed, adorned with intricate carvings and stonework that depict

scenes from Hindu mythology and celestial motifs. This temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, stands as a spiritual and architectural centerpiece.

According to Padma Shri awardee Prof. Shiv Nirmohi, these temples were constructed in the Nagara style of

North Indian architecture, blended with elements of Kashmiri design. Some even suggest a Greek or Central Asian influence in the abstract carvings and pillar motifs. Temples are numbered for easy identification, with Temple No. 3 being the oldest and Temple No. 1 considered the most

The use of locally sourced stone, massive pillars, and symbolic stone sculptures reflects the creativity and engineering brilliance of the era. The architecture resembles temples found in places like Chamba, Bhubaneswar, and armour pointing to a time of vibrant cultural exchange.

Cultural and Spiritual Relevance

Beyond its artistic value, the Krimchi temple complex holds immense spiritual significance. Locals believe that the blessings of the Pandavas still linger in the area, and visiting these temples brings peace, merit, and divine protection. Festivals and fairs are held here, drawing crowds from nearby towns and villages.

Archaeological excavations in the past unearthed stone idols, iron arrowheads.

historical richness of this site. While the Archaeological Survey of India has worked to preserve the complex, there have also been appeals to declare Krimchi as a UNESCO World Heritage

Getting There

Reaching Krimchi is convenient via road. From Jammu, a scenic 1.5-2-hour drive takes you through Suplai Morh, past the Command Hospital and Birma Bridge, finally leading to the temple complex. For travelers coming from Udhampur, the journey is a short 30-

Conclusion

The Krimchi Temples stand today as a silent yet powerful testament to India's mythological past, artistic heritage, and spiritual depth. Whether you're a devotee, a history enthusiast, or a seeker of quietude, Krimchi offers a rare glimpse into a world where the divine and the earthly beautifully converge. In the whisper of the wind, the rustle of leaves, and the quiet strength of stone, Krimchi continues to tell a story waiting to be heard.

ogri Satellite A Voice l Silenced: The Imperative for a Channel

■ MOHD YASEEN -ndia's linguistic richness is often presented as a reflection of its civilizational depth. With 22 official languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and hundreds of dialects spoken across its vast geography, the country has long taken pride in promoting linguistic plurality. However, the reality often falls short of this ideal. One of the most glaring examples of this is the absence of a dedicated Doordarshan satellite channel for Dogri, a classical language spoken by nearly 2.6 million people, primarily in the Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Several regional languages with smaller speaker populations already have exclusive Doordarshan channels. These include languages like Mizo, Manipuri, and Santali. Dogri, on the other hand, continues to appear only in scattered segments within general programming. This lack of consistent visibility is not just unfair, it highlights a pattern of institutional neglect towards Dogri and its speakers.

Dogri belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family and has a long-standing literary and cultural tradition. In 2003, it was officially included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The language is known for its rich oral heritage including folklore, poetry, theatre, and folk songs. Dogri literature expresses the everyday life and cultural

values of the Duggar region. The Dogra community has made significant contributions to India's armed forces, administrative services, and cultural landscape. Yet, they remain without a dedicated media platform to represent their language and heritage.

The demand for a Dogri satellite channel is based not only on cultural pride but also on social, demographic, and national importance. According to the 2011 Census, nearly 26 lakh people list Dogri as their mother tongue, with the majority residing in the Jammu region. However, Dogri is also spoken in parts of Himachal Pradesh, especially in Chamba and Kangra, and in Punjab's Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur districts. Additionally, Dogri-speaking populations can be found across the border in Pakistan, especially in regions like Sialkot, Zafarwal, and Shakargarh. This widespread usage makes Dogri a regional language of broader significance and deserving of a dedicated satel-

By contrast, DD Mizoram, DD Sikkim, and DD Arunachal Pradesh serve languages with far fewer speakers. Mizo, for instance, had just over 8.25 lakh speakers according to the same census. Yet, Doordarshan established a full-fledged channel for the Mizo language. This brings up an important question. If smaller language groups are given full media representation, why not Dogri?

This cannot be explained simply as an administrative oversight. It points toward a deeper issue of selective priorities within the national broadcasting framework. Consider DD Kashir, a Doordarshan channel created to broadcast to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It has functioned largely as a Kashmiri language channel. While promoting Kashmiri is important, using a single channel to represent a diverse region like Jammu and Kashmir is inadequate. Jammu is home to a variety of languages including Dogri, Gojri, Pahari, and Punjabi, none of which receive regular or proportional coverage on the channel.

Jammu and Kashmir has a unique identity in India, with two capitals-Jammu in winter and Srinagar in summer. This arrangement reflects the region's diversity and dual character. However, media representation has not kept pace with this diversity. State-run broadcasters have failed to mirror the cultural and linguistic variety that defines the region.

The situation is made more urgent by the challenges facing the Jammu region today. In recent years, issues like radicalization, drug abuse, border insecurity, and youth alienation have increasingly affected the area. In such a context, a media platform that communicates in the local language is not only culturally important but socially necessary. A dedicated Dogri channel can promote unity,

provide trustworthy information, and support a stronger sense of identity

within the national mainstream There is also a strategic angle to this demand. As mentioned earlier, Dogri is spoken in parts of Pakistan as well. A Dogri satellite channel could serve as a valuable soft power tool, promoting India's democratic values and cultural diversity to populations across the border that share a linguistic and cultural background with those in Jammu. It can help strengthen people-to-people ties and counter misinformation through positive storytelling.

In addition, a Dogri channel can play a major role in preserving regional languages that are at risk due to globalization. Languages need more than just daily use to survive. They must be part of education, media, public life, and cultural production. When young people see news, entertainment, and debates in their own language, they build a stronger connection to their roots. Without such representation, the younger generation may drift away from their linguistic heritage.

The Jammu region has a vibrant cultural community, especially in theatre, music, poetry, and folk arts. A dedicated Dogri channel would offer a platform for local artists, writers, technicians, and content creators. It would not only preserve tradition but also offer employment and professional opportunities to those working in the creative fields.

Adding to this call, Janak Khajuria, General Secretary of the Doordarshan Approved Drama Artist Association. stated, "Our long pending demand of a satellite Duggar channel for the Jammu region is essential to protect, promote and develop the rich cultural heritage. art, and languages of Duggar land in general, and to ensure the welfare of the artists' fraternity in particular." This reflects the strong sentiment shared by the region's cultural community and highlights the urgent need for institutional support.

There is also economic potential. A Dogri satellite channel can showcase the tourism appeal of the Jammu region to national and global audience. Destinations like Vaishno Devi, Patnitop, Sanasar, Shiv Khori, and Bhaderwah are already known for their scenic and spiritual value. A media platform focused on local culture and landscapes could help boost tourism and provide new livelihood options for local com-

Some have suggested that DD Kashir should be made more inclusive by offering scheduled time slots for Dogri, Gojri, and Pahari content. However, this model has already been tested and has not produced meaningful representation. In contrast, other multilingual states such as Goa, Tripura, and Puducherry have implemented strategies to offer equal airtime to their languages. A similar approach can and

should be adopted in Jammu and

Kashmir. The problem is not with technology or infrastructure. Doordarshan already has the necessary systems in place. What is missing is a clear policy and commitment to fairness. Without this, Dogri will continue to be overshadowed in its own homeland. Language is not just a tool for communication. It is a symbol of identity, history, and hope. A platform for Dogri is long overdue.

It is important to note that Jammu is also home to a range of related languages including Gojri, Bhaderwahi, Kishtwari, Mirpuri, Poonchi, Sheeraji, and Muzaffarabadi. Each of these has its cultural roots in Jammu and a viewership that extends across regions. A dedicated Dogri channel could also provide space for content in these languages, reflecting the true multilingual character of the

As India moves forward in the digital age and approaches its 78th year of independence, the creation of a Dogri satellite channel is a necessary and meaningful step. It would recognize and honour the identity of an entire region and support the cultural aspirations of its people.

The demand for a Duggar channel is not simply a regional issue. It is a national commitment to diversity and justice.

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