Eid Prayers Offered, Stone Pelting in Old City

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Srinagar: Hundreds of thousands of Muslims across Kashmir offered Eid-ul-Fitr prayers Friday, marking the culmination of holy fasting month of Ramzan.

Largest Eid congregation prayers were offered at Eidgah grounds in old city where prayers were followed by protests against the detention of Kashmirs head

priest, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, who was barred by authorities from offering special prayers.

Thousands assembled at Hazratbal shrine where Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and other top ruling party leaders, including National Conference patron Farooq Abdullah, offered prayers.

Celebrations were marred by violence in some parts of the old city after groups of youth clashed with security force personnel after Eid prayers.

Police had to resort to tear gas shelling and baton charge to restore order in Eidgah, Safakadal and adjoining areas resulting in minor injuries to few protestors, said eye witnesses.

Protesters raising pro-independence slogans were agitated at the house arrest of Mirwaiz and Syed Ali Geelani.

Earlier dressed in their best, men, women and children made a beeline to the nearest Eidgah and mosque to offer Eid prayers as a mark of thanksgiving to Allah.

The fasting month of Ramzan came to an end Thursday evening after the sighting of Shawwal moon.

The largest congregation for Eid prayers was held at Eidgah in the downtown city. However, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq was not allowed to deliver the customary sermon in

his capacity as the head priest of Kashmir and had been put under house arrest on Thursday at his Nigeen residence. Nearly one lakh people are estimated to have offered prayers at Eidgah. Mirwaiz later addressed the gathering over phone.

The second largest congregation was at Hazratbal where officials said more than 60,000 faithful offered Eid prayers.

Reports of Eid prayers were also received from in all major mosques and Eidgahs in other districts of Kashmir Valley and Ladakh region.

Thousands of people offered prayers at Baramulla, Anantnag, Shopian, Kulgam, Ganderbal, Budgam, Pulwama and Kupwara districts, the reports said.

Children in fancy dresses made their way to gardens and parks in the city soon after the prayers. Youth burst crackers to celebrate the occasion.

Meanwhile, authorities on Thursday continued the restrictions over the movement of separatist leaders including chairmen of both factions Hurriyat Conference chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, JKLF Chairman Mohamad Yasin Malik and Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) chairman Shabir Ahmad Shah, National Front Chairman Nayeem Ahmad Khan and others.

Geelani also addressed gathering of Eidgah Sopore over phone. (KNS)

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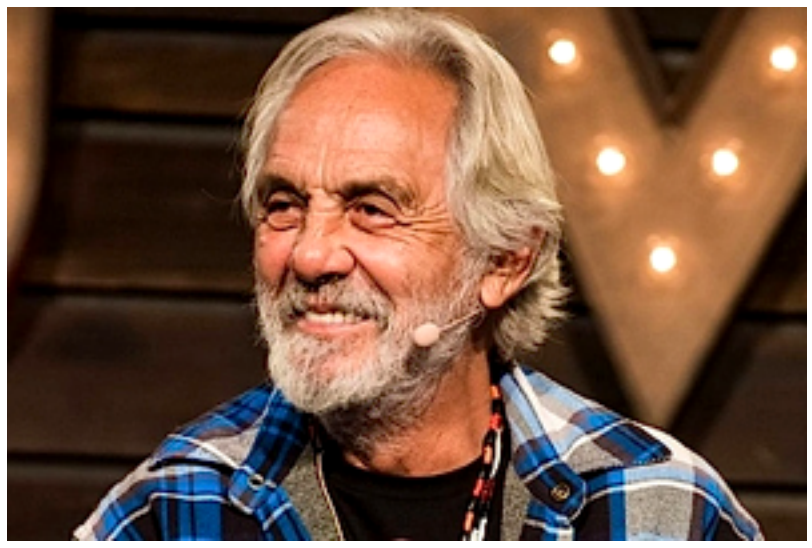

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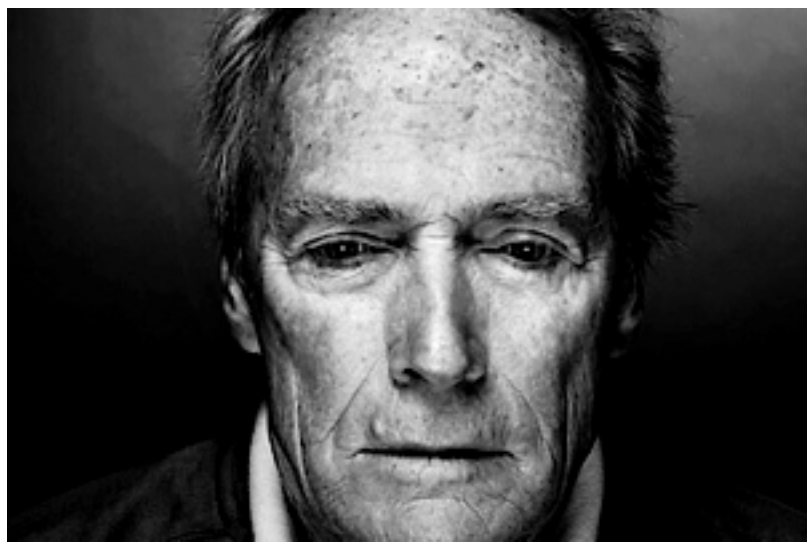

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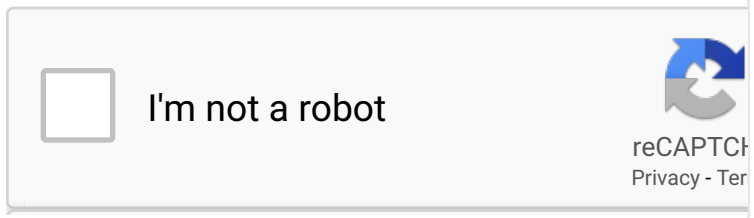

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