



The Telegraph

calcutta, india

Today's Edition

| Saturday , April 3 , 2010 |

Front Page > Story

email this page Print this page

IN TODAY'S PAPER

- Front Page
- Nation
- Calcutta
- Bengal
- Opinion
- International
- Business
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Sudoku
- Sudoku New **BETA**
- Crossword
- Jumble
- Gallery
- Horse Racing
- Press Releases
- Travel

WEEKLY FEATURES

- 7days
- Graphiti
- Knowhow
- Jobs
- Telekids
- Careergraph
- Personal TT**

CITIES AND REGIONS

- Metro
- North Bengal
- Northeast
- Jharkhand

SEARCH

Search

ARCHIVES

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- About Us
- Advertise
- Feedback
- Contact Us

Calcutta Weather

Temperature
 Min : 27.3°C (+3)
 Max : 36.3°C (+0)

Relative Humidity:

Max : 92% Min : 52%

Sunrise : 5:31 AM

Sunset : 5:48 PM

Today

Mainly clear sky.
Maximum temperature likely to be around 36°C.

Jesus Kashmir ‘tomb’ draws tourists

MUZAFFAR RAINA



The Rozabal shrine. (AFP)

Srinagar, April 2: Troubled Kashmir has not seen many western tourists over the past few years, but a small nondescript shrine in Rozabal locality here continues to quietly attract inquisitive visitors from abroad.

Rozabal is the shrine of medieval Muslim saint Yus Asaf, but several alternative theories floated in the West describe it as a tomb of Jesus Christ. Such was the popularity that its caretakers were forced to close the shrine for Western tourists some three years ago, lest it

“hurt local sensitivities”.

Some believe Jesus survived crucifixion, travelled to Kashmir, adopted the name of Yus Asaf and is buried at Rozabal. The shrine has of late found mention in the *Lonely Planet* guide — a bible for most tourists — leading to renewed interest in the West.

“Some people from Europe claim it is the grave of Hazrat Issa (Jesus) and they had approached us with a request to open it and take DNA and other samples. But we have turned down their requests,” said Mohammad Amin Ringshawl, the shrine’s caretaker.

Ringshawl said the management had locked the sanctum sanctorum some years ago and it is opened on rare occasions only for locals.

In Kashmir, there are no takers for such theories, barring a few hundred strong Ahmadiya Muslims — one of the reasons they are treated as heretics by mainstream Islam.

The interest in Kashmir first arose in 1887 when Russian anthropologist Nicholas Notovic, in his *Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*, claimed he had seen documents in Ladakh’s Hemis monastery describing Jesus’s years from 12 to 30 BCE in India.

Of late, a flood of literature, including a *Da Vinci Code*-type potboiler called *The Rozabal Line* by Ashwin Sanghi, and documentaries have led to renewed interest.

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আমার আনন্দবাজারের
বিশেষ নিবেদন

আমার
কলকাতা

ফ্যাশন, অফ স্ক্রিন, নিশিঠেক
 এই শহর, জীবন যৌবন,
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