



UNEMPLOYMENT



JK RANKS FIRST IN UNEMPLOYMENT

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MERC TIMES



HECTIC CONSTRUCTION OF JAHANGIR CHOWK- RAMBAGH FLYOVER

The flyover was constructed for the reduction of traffic mess but at the same time it has become headache for the people .

● **Muneer**

While the construction of Jahangir Chowk to Rambagh flyover is going on at rapid pace, at the same time, it is creating a lot of inconvenience for the citizens of the valley particularly for the Srinagarites.

“This flyover is not being constructed for the benefits of the local populace or to overcome the traffic mess but it is solely done for the smooth movement of VIP cavalcade from airport to city –centre”, said Rafiq Ahmad(47), one of the shopkeeper whose shop is located on this route.

The worst part of this flyover construction is the emergence of health problems. “We are fac-

ing huge health problems like coughing, lung-infection, throat infection etc. due to the dust coming from the rubble that is littered on the road”, said Mushtaq Ahmad(40), whose house is a stone’s throw from the construction site.

Dr. Showkat , a medico said “we are being



penalised for nothing. If such projects are done in western countries, the health and other standards are seriously considered but here the situation is vice-versa. If this continues the people of Srinagar will be indulged in acute health problems.”

While the higher officials of ERA (Economic Reconstruction Agency), the prime facie agency that is implementing the project could not be approached for immediate comments but one of the low profile official working with the ERA, who wished not to named said, “it is true that the fly over is creating a lot of problems, may it be the traffic problem or the health problem, but we are not responsible for that. It is the government who had to take the action, he added”.

BATWINA : VILLAGE OF ‘OLDEST’ CHINARS

● **RAMEEZ AHMAD**

Green carpet is covering the beautiful land of Kashmir. Flowers are decorating the paradise and trees are making shades for living creatures. Everything right now gives the glimpse of summer season. Chinar, the state tree of J&K is at its bloom. People love to sit under its cool shadow and enjoy the “BOONI SHEHJAAR”. The majestic tree is found in every place of Kashmir to tell the beautiful stories of past.

Some 15 kilometers away from district headquarters Ganderbal, village Batwina has many oldest chinars in her lap. There is also a miraculous chinar tree with a unique feature of having an evergreen branch while other branches are following the seasonal colour scheme. Batwina has witnessed many great mystics who propagated the message of Almighty Allah like Sheikh Noor Ud Din Noorani{RA} and Mir Shah Syed Ahmad kirmani{RA}. “It is said that Mir Shah Syed Ahmad kirmani{RA} stayed here for a long time and he meditated under the miraculous chinar and also propagated the message of Islam to the general public”, said Ghulam Mohammad, a local resident. Locals believe that the sufi saint had touched the evergreen branch of the chinar, that’s why it doesn’t wither. “Decades before, the branch was destroyed by strong winds, but now there is a new branch at the same place”, he added. “people in past used to hang the miraculous chinar leaves in their houses to avoid difficulties” said Peer Morifat Farooqi.

chinar trees has decreased. Need of the hour is to preserve this majestic tree. If we don’t, the day is not far-off when the tree will be seen no where in the land of Kashmir.

KASHMIR SUMMER TOURISM FESTIVAL 2014 Marks revival of tourism

● **Tasir Khan**

Kashmir is regarded as one of the beautiful tourist destinations in the world but due to the disturbance in the valley during past few decades, the inflow of tourists got slow. Even domestic tourists feared to visit the valley. Now when the situation in the valley starts coming back on track, the rush of the tourists is heading towards Valley.

In this context of promoting tourism in valley, the Department of tourism had organised many promotional events both at the state level as well as at international level.

In one such event organised by Tourism Department of Kashmir, it was a nine day “Kashmir Summer Tourism Festival 2014” from 21 June to 29 June. It was inaugurated by minister of Tourism Ghulam Ahmad Mir with an aim to revive tourism in the state. “Kashmir Summer festival is being organised with the aim to bring the Tourism

sector on the revival path. We hope the festival will be a big success for tourism boom as the weather conditions in the valley are pleasant as compared to the rising temperature elsewhere” Mir Said.

“Tourists would be able to experience the local culture and traditions during the festival. Due to the improved situation in the valley, Kashmir has experienced a huge increase in tourist inflow and it is expected that there will be more increase of tourists this year.” Minister of Tourism said.

Besides recreational facilities, various government departments have set up stalls showcasing handicrafts, handloom products, as well as the art and culture of the valley. “Different tourist related activities will be carried out at various tourism spots with focus to highlight adventure, golf, river and eco-tourism in the valley. Events like paragliding, rock climbing, kid’s festival and Kashmiri Idol has also been organised” he added.

MIDNIGHT DUMPING AT GANDERBAL



●Afshan Rashid.

One sight is common in most localities, from posh civil lines to the lanes and by lanes of the old city, is of scattered and stinking garbage.

District Ganderbal 21 km's towards north from Srinagar is known for its beautiful landscapes and famous tourist destinations which are turning into a midnight dumping yard. Ganderbal lacks dumping yard; There is no proper method or procedure through which dumping of waste materials could be executed.

"we are trying to dump the wastes at those sites which require land filling because the District lacks a proper dumping yard and there is no waste treatment plant," said, Shafaqat, Executive officer Municipal Committee Ganderbal (MCG).

The main chowk of Ganderbal divides into 2 ways one leading to Sonamarag and Naranagh and the other to Manasbal and Khir Bhawani. Both the ways present a dirty view at the very beginning. The road sides are covered with heaps of garbage. Not only does it look ugly but it also poses a serious health risk and adds to environmental pollution. The authorities at time burn the waste material due to which heavy smoke accumulates in the air which causes inconvenience to the people in the vicinity.

"Whenever the breeze blows, it brings along the bad smell from the garbage heaps. The smoke spreads all over and it becomes difficult to breath properly," said, Farooq Mir, who runs a cloth Shop in the main chowk just 1mile away from the illegal dumping site.

Dumping of garbage on road sides and residential areas is increasing day by day and it seems that the authorities are in hibernation.

"The waste is on the road side because right now we don't have a place to dump it; As soon as we identify a place, the waste material will be cleaned," said, Executive officer MCG

Inordinate delay in the clearance of garbage, particularly from the main roads is causing sever inconvenience to public and tourists also. All though the Municipal Committee Ganderbal has installed dust bins but they are very less in number.

"Every day while going to my work, I have to pass through the dustbins placed along the roadside near Mini Secretariat, where you can see the garbage lying outside, smelling bad, which to my surprise have been full since the day they have been installed," said, Shamasdeen, a fourth class employee in R&B department.

The authorities claim that they are trying their best to educate people about house-hold waste management processes but their efforts will be waste-less until people develop civic sense.

JK Ranks First in Unemployment

●Altaf Hussain

According to the "Annual Employment and Unemployment Survey Report for 2012-13" released by Labour Bureau under Union Ministry of Labor and Employment, J&K has the unemployment rate of 10% which is highest in comparison to other North Indian States. The state has nearly 6 lakh unemployed youth registered with the employment department in order to get job.

The registration is done on a voluntary basis and is not mandatory and hence the actual numbers are expected to be higher. "In Jan 2013, the government registered unemployed youth with 'employment exchange', which reported 5 lakh unemployed youth. Since the job notices and application forms are available online for submission, I keep tally of youth without work", said Bilal Ahmed Bhat, who runs an internet café in Budgam. "Most often pass-outs from different fields are daily seen here in my café to get their forms submit for job opportunity," he further added.



The gravity of situation can be assessed by the number of aspirants appearing in the recruitment test conducted by SSB for 80,000 posts, in which 3 lakh aspirants appeared. "Unemployment will continue to evolve unless there is a systematic approach to cope with it. Many administrative units are having acute shortage of staff as recently being figured out 1360 posts falling vacant at SKIMS. Same is the case in other components of administration like education department which has 22894 vacant posts." Mudasir Ali, a post-graduate student stated, while expressing anguish.

During last assembly elections, NC, in its manifesto had promised to eradicate unemployment, especially among the educated youth with high qualification who are the worst-affected, but the failure to accomplish explains the rationale behind the alienation of voters during recent parliamentary elections and hence a major reason that led to the downfall NC led government.

Unemployment is detrimental, liable for giving rise to social evils like drug addiction, burglary, attempting suicides etc. Common approach to such a problem is that government should work out a sustainable solution at base level rather than letting the problem snowball.

SECOND KASHMIR TOURISM FESTIVAL COMMENCES

● **Arshie Qureshi**

Planned for boosting tourism industry in the valley, the Second Annual “Kashmir Tourism Festival” was inaugurated by Minister for Tourism Ghulam Ahmad Mir along with Director Tourism, Talaat Parevez on June 21 at Kashmir Haat. This nine day long festival offers a showcase for different tourism related activities and services like paragliding, river rafting, musical concert and golf at various spots around the valley. The festival is being organized by the Tourism Department in collaboration with the Department of Handicrafts.

Mir went around the stalls to review the arrangements and interacted with the artisans. He praised the positive feedback that the festival had received last year and expressed his desire to continue organizing such festivals in coming years. Speaking to people present at the venue regarding the potential of tourism industry which is an impetus to the state economy, he said “Tourism has always been the backbone of state economy and a means of livelihood for thousands. With the improvement in conditions in the valley, there has been a huge influx of tourists from all over the world who, in addition to visiting the Valley for the Mughal



Gardens and splendid health resorts, want to learn more about the place and culture. We aim at making their experience more luxuriant and delightful by adding fresh features like adventure sports, cyber gaming and shopping sprees.” He also stressed the need for involving youth in such programs.

The Festival is also a celebration of art and culture through the stalls set up by Department of Handicrafts and Craft Development Institute at Kashmir Haat from where people will be able to purchase the indigenous goods. Speaking about the schemes for promoting the handicraft and handloom products of valley and the measures to protect and promote the world famous forms of craft, Khursheed Ahmad Ganaie said “Despite having a large number of showrooms outside the valley, we are looking forward to opening up more emporia to provide the artisans with better marketing facilities. We have already forwarded the proposal for establishment of one such emporium at Indore.”

ELECTRONIC RECEIPTS: HANDLE WITH CARE

● **Anayat Sultan**

Next time you visit an ATM or a grocery store, be careful while handling the receipt generated by the automatic teller machine or the thermal printers used in the grocery stores as the receipt generated contains Bisphenol A (BPA) which is very harmful for the health.

A research conducted by the Chemical department of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University Aurangabad says that the paper used is coated with BPA to print a design on the paper.

The research says that the chemical gets absorbed into the skin and transferred to the digestive tract by touching the mouth thereby causing various diseases like cancer, obesity, diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases. The research further states that if paper remains in hand for more than five seconds, 1 microgram BPA remains trapped in the skin of fingers and if the hands are sweaty, the process increases by 10 times. Keeping it in hands for more than 10 hours, 71 mg BPA enters

the body.

Earlier a research on this subject was also conducted by a non-profit organisation Environmental Working Group (EWG) in 2010 which also stated the same. “BPA has been a concern of ours, other organizations and the public at large for at least a decade or so,” said Alex Formuzis, a spokesman for the EWG. “While we maintain that the focus for policymakers should be removing BPA from food packaging first, we also want to show that BPA is used virtually in everything. BPA can even be used in a shopping bag, mixing with the produce you bought.” As a result of this research, the American government banned the use of this paper and anyone who is found to be using this paper is fined.

The paper is also used in malls, petrol pumps, bus tickets and lotteries as it is more convenient and cheap. The health experts advise that the hands should be washed before eating something as this chemical can prove dangerous especially for children because their immune system is not that strong as compared to the adults.

FEMALE FOETICIDE: AN UNFORGIVING TRUTH

● **Gazanfar Afroz**

Female foeticide is the act of aborting a fetus because it is female. This is a major social problem in India and has a multitude of reasons behind it. Kashmir is no exception when it comes to this heinous crime. In Kashmir alone the number of cases of female foeticide is rising with every passing day. “Girls are unfortunately considered as a burden and a liability for the society”, says Nyla Ali, a doctor. The reasons for high number of incidence of female foeticide in Jammu and Kashmir include a deep rooted tradition of preferring sons. Some facts related to the female foeticide are due to the biased attitude towards women. Although many laws have been brought up but still there is no decline in such cases. The problem lies not with the laws but with the loopholes within these laws which is misused by miscreants. Saving the girl child hence becomes absolutely important as in the long run man cannot strive alone. It is a disgrace

for all of us if the birth of girl child is considered as a bad investment in future. She is considered to be consumer rather than a producer. Changing sex ratios among children are going to have a lasting impact on population dynamics in India, as most of today's births will survive for more than 60 years. The declining sex ratio is warning signal for the state government to wake up. The caution should be taken seriously; we are leading towards a crisis situation.

Islam prohibits female infanticide. This is considered a serious crime of murder. Islam not only prohibits female infanticide, but it forbids all types of infanticide, irrespective of whether the infant is a male or female. Humans would have to pay a very heavy price if this menace continues in our society. Being the civilized citizens, it is our duty to raise voice against the killing of a girl child. Women are the bearers of next generation, killing them would be a self destructive weapon for whole of mankind. It is our primary duty as well as concern to come forward to stop this menace.

LEH CELEBRATES WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

●Ghulam murtaza

On the 5th of June, Leh celebrated world environment day. This year to keep the people aware and sensitize them on the importance of clean environment to protect the nature and Earth, young drukpa association celebrated the day by holding cleanliness drive in the leh town and the adjoining areas upto choglamsar.

The day is celebrated every year to identify the issues related to environment so that measures and steps should be taken from environment getting further deteriorated. As Ladakh witnesses a special biodiversity, so to keep this mountainous area away from the hazards of environmental issues, Ladakhi people are being awared on the day.

Young students of the drukpa school participated in the cleanliness drive, by cleaning the streets of Leh town from main city to choglamsar that covers a distance of 2 km.

“Ladakhi’s have witnessed the natural disaster in 2010 flash floods that took away



hundreds of lives, so as to avoid such further incidents in future, necessary steps should be taken to protect our environment,” Official of young drukpa association said.

The young drukpa association has contributed in protecting the environment by taking the initiative like plantation drive and padyatra by picking smallest garbage in the ways so as stating that every one can contribute a little to save our environment and our nature.

Ladakh is witnessing a large amount of tourists and to keep the region clean from the environmental issues, the local administration in a friendly way is trying to consult tourists to be environment friendly and to do less harm to the biodiversity the region. Ladakh region has set a distinction by banning polythene in the both districts via leh and kargil.

PHONE SCAM GANGS ON PROWL

●Ishan Fazili

An unknown gang of phishing fraudsters with no connection with one of the leading telecom company Airtel are making fake lottery calls to people trying to trap them in the fraud lucky draws.

According to locals, hoax calls are spreading like fire, fraudsters are asking for account numbers which has come in the wake of increasing number of complaints.

“These fraudsters tell the exact details of customer’s phone number like last recharge date, registered name in the company, balance left in phone to entice people that further helps them to gain trust of the customer.” a local, Nahid Shafi said.

In the morning hours on Sunday, Nahid received a call from an unknown number, what had come next after receiving the call was, he was told that he had won 3 lac rupees in lottery and his number was arbitrarily selected by the company.

“The caller introduced himself as Rohit Agarwal, the assistant manager of Airtel Mumbai, where the airtel Sims are launched. He said that the main office of Airtel was in Mumbai,” he said.

Another local Ishfaq Nabi informed that he too was asked for his account number that must have the facility of internet banking. He was also asked to go to a local recharge shop and ask him to recharge 1000 rupees on the two numbers provided by the caller.

“We will give you an activation

number and password that are used to account Airtel money power and by these numbers, the money will be transferred to your account within twenty minutes. All you have to do is to go and recharge the said numbers and not mention anything to the dealer about our offer because in many cases dealers deceive the customers,” Ishfaq added.

Adding to surprise, the recording saved by a customer Sameer Ahmad who also got the same call from the same number reveals that the caller had mentioned technical quotes and was much aware of the company’s rules and regulations.

He had also said that the call was transferred from Airtel Srinagar. He had asked Ahmad the same thing as was asked to others. He was told that he will be given Airtel Company’s transaction number, internet number and some password and after noting them he should recharge 1000 rupees on the particular numbers.

The caller had asked customers to stay online till the process ends. He had claimed that the number he was calling from was an interne number. However, authorities informed that number “+9184474732703” was a different telecom provider company and do not belong to Airtel anywhere in the country.

When contacted senior team leader Kashmir, Airtel Shazia Nabi, she said that she will be taking the issue to higher authorities to take necessary actions. She admitted that such prank calls were complained to them as well but a long time before.

KASHMIR UNIVERSITY VC’S CRICKET TOURNEY BEGINS

●IDREES AHMAD

3rd Vice chancellors T20cricket tournament started at university. VC, Professor A M Shah inaugurated this tournament, Along with Chief Proctor Farooq A Khan and director physical education and sports B A Khan were also present on inaugural ceremony.

Speaking on occasion A M Shah said that these kinds of events contribute to the development of society. “There is some shortage of funds in physical and sports department, but this problem will not be any more in future” he further added.

This tournamrnt is of open type and any team of Kashmir can participate. Physical education and sports department spokesperson said about 40 teams are expected to take part in this tourney, 20 teams have already been registered and numbers are likely to increase.

Inaugural match was played between FCC Ishbar and Srinagar Gym Khanna. Gym Khanna batted first and scored 198 for 6. Imtiyaz was highest scorer with 58 runs. chasing the target FCC Ishbar were bundled out for 94runs, Owais took 5 wickets ffor Srinager Gym Khanna. Srinagar GK won by 104

Last two editions of VC’s crickets tournament were success. This tourney will bring forth new talent and sports lovers are always keenly waiting for these kinds of events.

LUMINARIES ACCENTUATE THE NEED FOR MORAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

● **Toib Ganie**

Moral education is considered to be a pre-requisite for overall maturity and development of students. But today's schooling falls short of moral education and ignores ethos and ethical development in students. There has been loud hue and cry from different sections of the society for last couple of weeks, to bring moral education in schools.

Recently a gathering took place at Shiekhulalam Hall in district Budgam where moral education was more emphasized than various other subjects taught at school level. It was made mandatory for every school in the district, it was further beaten that all countries of the world should provide moral education to students. The event was attended by some prominent personalities including Aga Rohullah, MLA Budgam, Prof. Syed Razza, a well known poet and other masses as well.

During the event, some nourishing statements were made by Aga Rohullah stressing the need of students being taught "Moral principles, cultural ethics, humanistic ethics, and developmental ethics, because they are to build a firm base for strong nation and objective state." Also speaking at the event, Prof. Razza said in his poetic way "they are blossoms about to come out as flowers let them grow within the light of education." He embraced that parents are also accountable to children's moral education; hence they must direct them towards knowing their values of others. "For those youngsters whose parents teach them good values will reinforce their learning, and those who lack such guidance at home, moral education in school is even more crucial." he added.

The function went all through the day and different concerns were brought into vision but most stressed topic was pertaining to moral education. The day ended up with the conclusion that there shouldn't be emphasis on academic excellence only but schools should also focus on moral education to ensure that all the children's grow up with right ideologies.

UNABATED USE OF POLYTHENE IN VALLEY

● **Moosa Hayaat**

Despite the implementation of ban by the authorities on the harmful polythene bags, it is still used in the Srinagar city. Though several shops and stores have replaced polythene bags with paper bags, however, the usage of hazardous polythene is still prevalent across the city.

High court had ordered strict prohibition on usage of polythene bags in Srinagar city particularly around hospitals and tourist resorts. Though citizens had welcomed this step by the high court but the ban is not being taken seriously and polythene is still used unabatedly in the city. No one is concerned about the huge threat that polythene usage poses to the environment of the valley.

The officials in Srinagar Municipal Corporation said that they always make efforts to stop the usage of polythene in city. They said that they need peoples co-operation in dealing with this usage of polythene

in Srinagar.

"People must understand the hazards of polythene bags. They should try to understand how harmful polythene is to our environment. They should reject it and report it immediately to us" said an official at Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

State government had also passed an SRO in 2008 for the ban on polythene usage. The state government enforced an absolute ban on the usage of the poly bags to make the state free from the hazardous stuff.

He further said, "We take an immediate action against any person who we find using polythene. We fine them and seize the polythene. We do our best so that polythene usage is banned in city. We request everyone to raise their voice against it, particularly youth and students who can contribute a lot in this regard. They should make others aware of the harmful stuff. Moreover, if people see any one selling or buying commodities in polythene bags they should inform us about it."



PAVEMENTS ENCROACHED : NO SPACE FOR PEDESTRIANS

● **Junaid Rafiq**

The encroachment of footpaths by the street vendors and by the shopkeepers is a serious problem that the pedestrians in Srinagar face, especially at the crowded places like at the commercial hub of the city, Lal Chowk and its adjoining areas.

The pavement starting from the residency road leading up to the Jehangir Chowk has little or no space left for the pedestrians as the space have been occupied by the vendors who had set up their stalls. The same thing has been done by the shopkeepers, as they spread their goods on the footpath thus occupying the space which is supposed to be path for pedestrians.

This Encroachment of the footpaths

has made the movement of people as well as the movement of traffic difficult, which results in frequent traffic jams in the city centre as people are forced to walk on the roads through huge rush of vehicles which poses a big risk to their life.

Due to the vendors putting up their stalls all over the pavement the pedestrians are forced to walk on the road "On Amira Kadal bridge the vendors have put up their stalls on both sides of the road which makes people to walk on the road through a huge rush of vehicles which puts their life at stake." said Jeelani Hassan, a college student from Nishat.

Meanwhile the vendors cite livelihood issue as the main reason for putting up their stalls on footpaths. "We are ready to move some other place to sell our goods if space is provided by the government"

said Bashir Ahmad, a local vendor. When asked about the inconvenience the pedestrians are facing. He replied "to some extent it does create some difficulty for the people, but we are helpless".

Despite clear instructions by the government that no footpath encroachments or roadside showcasing should be allowed, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) is unable to rein in the roadside vendors due to which the city is witnessing a chaotic scene.

Though the SMC officials are aware about the encroachments, no permanent action is being taken against the offenders. Pertinently Lal Chowk being the popular shopping spots in the Srinagar and the inability of the authorities to remove street vendors casts a big doubt over their overall efficiency.

WHERE IS MY MOM?

● **Khalid bashir**

Crèches are witnessing mushroom growth in Kashmir experts revealed here on Monday. “No doubt kids remain there for hours, far away from their mothers lap. We were lucky enough to be nourished even by grandmothers. Mothers care is natural that a crèche can never deliver,” the experts said.

They further said that earlier, joint family system was more prevalent in the society. The male persons will be working and the female person will be taking care of the family and children. But in today’s competitive world, relations, neighbours, friends have become secondary. With more and more women joining the workforce, day care centers are sharing a mothers responsibility in bringing up children.

Observing all this, the errand of mercy I was handed only one day gave me many sleepless nights and I mustered courage to altercation with my elder department at home about sending our little kids to crèche. And they retorted

perhaps exhausted after day’s exhaustion at their respective elite jobs and posing of my question like a typical journalist made them a bit incandescent.

A clinical psychologist, who works at G.B Panth Hospital says that it is essential for a child to attend a play school to enhance the socialization and communicative skills. He also added teachers should not pressurize kids to write a lot as their muscles are not ready for the task before they are three plus. They can only introduce colouring to improve muscle power and concentration skills.

However the commercialization of the education system has started disturbing even the children at tender age.

Due to rising demand they tend to admit more children than their capacity without any watch from a monitoring body.

“A parents attention can never match that of a teacher”. When children are sent to preschool early they are starved of parental affection. The tender age would be the right

time for the parents to improve simple manners and whatever is needed for their children in the future” this is what my another aunt who perhaps chose to be house wife after marriage.

Children who are brought up in the absence of parents as well as grand-parents experience a huge void in their life which they as well as their parents are often unaware of.

They do not have space in today’s nuclear families. In such families, the charge of children is usually handed over to crèches or play schools and sometimes to house maids.

Parents who are unable to spare time for kids send them to play schools.

My cousins, are enrolled in one of the crèches of Srinagar area in which my twin cousins Taha and Taaban spend the day with 20 other children in their class.

Every morning their mother packs a hamper, including diapers, wipes clothes and food and leaves them in the mini omni van, where they were loaded as if little innocent lambs in the wolves car.

River Sindh losing glory

● **Nisar Dharma**

It is shameful that the majestic river Sindh has been encroached by its guardians. The river which flows through the valley of Kangan is shrinking day by day due to unabated residential and commercial infrastructure constructions by politicians, bureaucrats and religious clerics.

It is ironical that the State Minister for Forests and Environment has constructed two residential quarters on the banks of the river, followed by a residential house that belongs to a Retd. IGP Kashmir, near Wussan, Kangan. The others, advisors and doctors, have deteriorated the health of the river by following the suit and have constructed houses in the middle of the Sindh. They seem much interested in their personal health without caring for the long term effects on the general health of the population as well as the river itself. Leading from the front is their boss, the Ex-Union



Health Minister, Mr. Gh. Nabi Azad who has fenced a big plot of land on the opposite bank.

In another most shameful act and a disgrace to our conscience, the highest religious clerk, Grad Mufti, Mufti Bashir-u-Din, without giving any heed to the position he enjoys, has got built a big villa on the riverside and happens to be a neighbor of the State Forest Minister and the Retd. IGP, Kashmir.

“Gone are the days when the loud murmur of the Sindh

would wake me up at the midnight; it is silent now!”, lamented the local resident of Kangan, Ab Jabbar Wani.

Mohammad Ashraf Rather, a local school teacher shares his experience with a jubilant note, “It used to be so big and area and the banks were open to everyone. It was a common hobby to go to the banks during late hours of day for walk or rest”. But with a dropped face admits that nothing has left there for new generations to enjoy. He urged that the

NGOs and media should come forward to highlight the issue and help in preserving, what he calls, ‘The Gem’.

It is unfortunate that Sindh which is an incarnation of natural beauty and supports tourism, feeds agriculture as well as three power generation projects, is dying a silent death due to govt. apathy and bureaucratic rigidity. The politicians and bureaucrats are so whimsical and bold that the Supreme Court orders do not seem to bother them.

This presents only a glimpse of the degrading health of the river. Such activities are going on throughout its length and breadth. The river Sindh is a part and parcel of life for the locals and have almost everything associated with it. It is also connecting link between us and our colorful cultural heritage. It is therefore the need of hour to present a bold face to the slumbering authorities and miscreant Babus and put an effort to recover the lost glory of the Sindh.

WILLOW WORK IN VALE OF KASHMIR



●Ubaid jeelani

Wicker willow locally known as “veer kanil” in Kashmir is the best known representative of family salicaceae. Wicker is the name commonly given to one year old sticks that result from the willow prune. Generally it is grown in cool, fertile, irrigated lands as it requires large quantity of water, though it can withstand cold winter frost.

Willow is used to make charming quaint objects ranging from shopping baskets and lamp shades to tables and chairs all generally inexpensive, to increase their life span unvarnished products should be chiseled and frequently sprayed with water particularly in dry climate to prevent them from brittle.

According to traders, because of the never ending demand willow work, beautifully designed different willow products have given real crown images, not only in local markets but in India and foreign countries as well.

Ghulam Nabi Shakhsaz, an elderly willow work trader (kanil in Kashmiri) from Hazratbal said, “we have been doing this business for a century with a brand name of “Crown Willow Works” as first willow manufacturers of Kashmir. With best service to our

traders and end-users, we are famous in Kashmir and all over India for best willow products with good prices.”

There are handful of traders who claim that with the introduction of new plastic or metallic well decorated furniture, the demand for willow furniture has drastically decreased.

Majority of traders say that though the modern, well decorated furniture has dominated the market but still these have not succeeded in replacing this traditional symbol of Kashmir.

Willow weaving is one of the oldest crafts in the world which still holds imagination of the primitive as well as advanced man. When we talk about unemployment, sound economy and utilization of available man power in gainful activities, diminishing local tradition only add salt to the injury. What could have proved to be a strong viable option for upbringing the standards of life in Kashmir and carving out employment for the unemployed has been successfully ignored from the scene. For achieving self sustainability, no society can afford to sideline the existing economic trends embedded in tradition. We better start exploring and exploiting the tradition for the sake of our own success.

Air India FC Mumbai lifts first ever Kashmir Invitational Cup

●Zafar Aafaq

Final of first ever Invitational Cup played at Bakhshi Stadium Srinagar on June 10, 2014 played between ONGC Football Club and Air India Football Club Mumbai resulted in victory of Air India Football Club Mumbai.

The match started at 4:35 pm local time. ONGC made an impressive start which benefited them with a lead of 1-0. Kelash Patel of ONGC posted the ball into goal post with a beautiful kick at the fifth minute of first half. Players of Air India made several efforts to make an equalizer but ONGC defending arsenal resisted all the efforts of opposition. First half ended with ONGC leading with 1-0.

In the second half, Air India Football Club Mumbai showed a lot of improvement and grabbed the opportunities that came their way. At the 18th minute of 2nd half Air India got a penalty which Andy Opera converted into goal. This way Air India made a recovery in the final match. Vivek Singh posted the ball into goal post at 23rd minute of 2nd half and Air India lead the match by 2-0. The goal by Vivek Singh was also the last goal of match.

In this way Air India Football Club Mumbai won the match with 2-0 and emerged as champions of first ever Invitational Cup.

On this occasion Minister for Health and Medical Education, Jammu and Kashmir Taj Mohi-Ud-Din distributed the prize and rewards among the participating players. Raman Bhalla Minister for Youth Services & Sports of Jammu and Kashmir was also present as guest of honour.

At least 5000 football spectators were present in the stadium to watch the final match of first ever invitational Cup. This tournament was organized by Jammu and Kashmir State Sports Council in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir Football Association. Six teams participated in this tournament out of which three teams were from outside the state.



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