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MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

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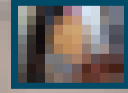
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KANDAR WAAN: A DYING LEGACY



Photo Credits | Nazir Gillo

❖ Ubaid Jeelani

Srinagar: For a long time the mornings in every Kashmiri household started with going out and buying hot, freshly baked Tsot and lavasa (varieties of local breads). It is usually a family business. But, being less lucrative and involving health hazards, the old bakers are shifting from their family occupation of baking breads.

The tradition of bakery has been one of the longest running professions of native bakers and bread has been the first choice of locals as their first meal along with salted tea. The bread is made by placing dough rolls placed in tandoor for some time. One can find at least one traditional bakery shop in every locality.

Scores of bakery shops are now winding up; reason being the amount of tough work involved. The children of bakers take up other jobs after completing their education rather than baking roti's which they consider is "cumbersome".

Farhan Qadir, a restaurant owner says, "I have converted my bakery shop into a restaurant because I don't want my children to take this profession owing some health concerns related to this profession. It is not that I was earning less but the culture in Kashmir is changing and I don't want my children to be seen as backward class citizens."

Whereas Farhan willingly shifted from

the occupation, Bilal Sofi, a bakery shop owner from Hazratbal, is satisfied with his work but is apprehensive that his children might not continue with the same.

"I am always busy in the morning hours making Tsot and hot lavasas. I enjoy listening to my customers, discussing various issues concerning them; from politics to day today issues. These side talks have become part of kandar waan (bakery shop) folklore." Says Bilal.

"I am afraid that this profession may not last long as the culture in Kashmir is changing. My son hardly seems to be interested in taking up this profession" he added.

Bilal is currently assisted by his wife, Fatima in preparing the breads, who while talking to MERC Times said, "I take the center stage and I am assigned with the duty of pulling out roti, lavasas and tsochvor from the oven. I also collect the money from the customers" says Bilal's wife, Fatima.

These bakers make special breads on Fridays and on some special festivals like Baqer Khani/Katlam, Kulcha, Ghee Tori and Rooth etc.

Apart from Social stigma and health hazards, the frequent customer complaints about the rising prices of traditional bread is another big reason, forcing traditional bakers to quit this job and look for new avenues, phrase local bakers of the valley.

CHINAR BAGH IN DECAYING STATE

❖ Sarvat Nabi

Srinagar : The Heritage Chinar Bagh near Dalgate continues to be in a dilapidated state even though seven months have already passed since September 2014 floods hit valley.

The magnitude of damage caused by floods is still evident as ticket kiosks, playing carts, and swings are uprooted. The grass layer is hardly visible as silt and mud has coated the entire ground beneath.

"The entire park is in total mess. For the kids, the park used to be a playing spot as the authorities had installed swings, stair-slides and many other playful things but they all were uprooted in the deluge," says Rayees Ahmed, a local.

"Doors and bridges are partially damaged and the piers of some connecting bridges are missing. Musical fountain, the specialty of the park (a fountain which started and stopped on the music) in the park has been damaged. The whole lighting and wire system is also nonfunctional," he added.

Farooq Ahmed Shala, President Chinar Bagh House



Photo Credits | Sarwat Nabi

Boat Association in conversation to MERC Times said, "Since 2011, the Department of Tourism was managing the park and it was totally renovated. Music-fountain swings, kiosks, LCDs were installed here but everything was destroyed in the flood," he said.

Reportedly the local Tehsildar has already surveyed the damage but nothing has been done so far.

Director Tourism, Farooq Ahmad Shah while commenting on the issue, said, "We acknowledge the amount of damage caused by floods, we have now issued tenders for the revitalization of the park." "The park will be renovated and restored soon." He added.

BOOM BARRICADES TO MAN KU GATES

❖ Marouf Gazi

Srinagar: The authorities at Kashmir University have decided to install semi-automatic boom barricades at the main gates to restrict unnecessary vehicular traffic.

According to the university authorities, the move has been taken to curb the growing traffic flow and intrusion of outsiders into the campus which later hampers the free movement of students inside the university.

“Despite a huge patrolling of guards on the main gates, most of the vehicles roaming inside the campus do not possess a proper ‘vehicle passes’ and somehow hoodwink the ‘gate patrolling party’ everyday; I hope electronic barricades will end this mess” Pervaiz Ahmad, a PG student said.

Even though, University has a procedure to issue a ‘vehicle passes’ to regulate the traffic, but every day ‘unidentified’ faces are being seen inside the campus which not only disturbs the learning atmosphere here, but also tends to increase the flow of traffic, blame the students.

“I see many people sitting idle here or wander-



Illustration

ing around and showing off their cars or bikes”, said Bisma, a KU student.

Chief Proctor Naseer Iqbal, who is also in charge of this project, while talking to MERC TIMES said, “The campus sometimes gives a feel of LalChowk, and to counter this, the university had no option other than to install electronic boom barricades to restrict the influx of vehicles within the university. For this, we have issued the tenders/ Quotations and also have placed the orders. By May 15, these gates would have been installed” Iqbal said.

Via this tender based system, the university has placed the orders directly with a manufacturing company: R. K engineers, New Delhi.

In reply to our question, if ‘vehicle passes’ system will be removed, Iqbal said, “the system of ‘vehicle passes’ will end, instead chips would be installed in the vehicles”.

“Though it’s more expensive, it would be a one-time investment”, he added.

KU PAYS TRIBUTE TO IQBAL



the state which include Marghoob Banhali, Hameed Naseem Rafiabadi and Mushtaq Kashmiri, who spoke about Dr. Iqbal on the occasion.

Prof. Bashir Ahmad Nahvi, chairman of the institute, read out the essays written by different authors on the life of Dr. Iqbal. The seminar was attended by large number of students, Scholar’s, and professors.

The seminar mainly focused on “relevance of Iqbal’s philosophy to current times”. Speakers talked about Dr. Iqbal’s contribution to poetry, social science and religion through his poetry.

“Allama Iqbal’s poetry has in it, what will help us in tackling the issues that the humanity is facing right now” Commented, Naseem Rafiabadi.

In the concluding speech of the seminar, Prof. Bashir Ahmad Nahvi said that the basic motive to organize Iqbal Day in the varsity is to cultivate an interest among educated youth in Iqbal’s poetry and philosophy..

Prof. Nahvi termed Iqbal as a “politician”, “intellectual”, and emphasized on the need of understanding Iqbal’s philosophy.

❖ Yasir Gaffar

Srinagar: A one day seminar was organized on 21st April by Iqbal Institute of Culture and Philosophy, in connection with Iqbal Day celebrations at Gandhi Bhavan auditorium of Kashmir University.

Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University, Prof. Khurshid I Andrabi presided over the function.

Among others, there were famous literary figures of

REFLECTIONS...

MERC TIMES CARTOON



DOG MENACE INSIDE KASHMIR UNIVERSITY/Marouf Gazi

RE-STARTING WITH ART

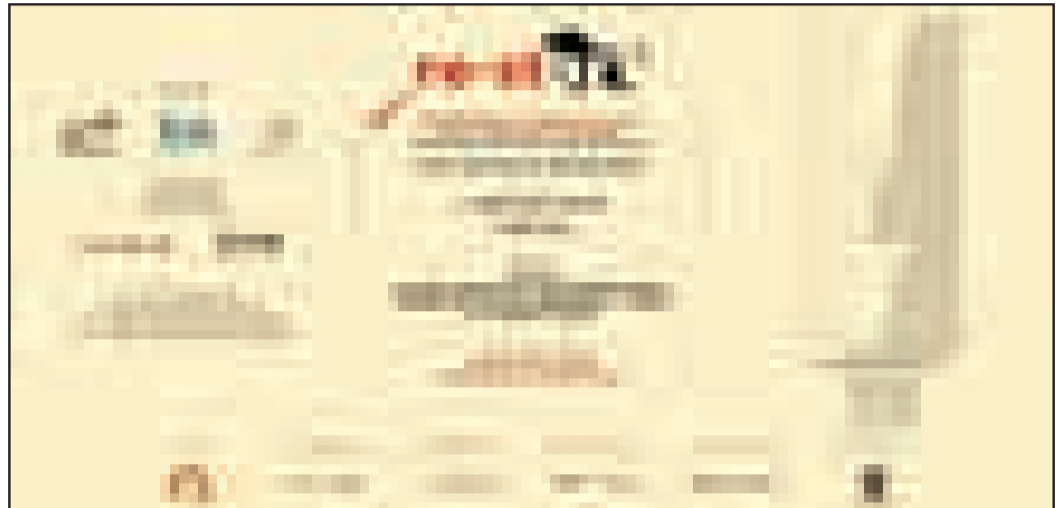
❖ Tasir Khan

Srinagar: In an effort to contribute monetary assistance to flood victims of September last year, the valley and New Delhi based artists jointly organized a fund raising event “Re-Start”, through their artistic work auctions from 11th April to 11th of May at New Delhi.

The opening day saw a huge inflow of visitors with a musical performance by the renowned band, ‘Highway 61’ as an attraction. It also witnessed a total of 6 lakh rupees raised during silent auction.

Showcasing the artworks from famous artists like Masood Hussain, Veer Munshi, Rajinder Tiku Re-Start, has been organized by Loudbeetle, an event management company and Kashmir Art Quest, art curators based in Delhi, in association with Engendered, Apart from raising funds, the event is expected to provide an insight into the contemporary art practices in Kashmir.

“More than 80 percent of the profits from the



event will be donated to the flood recovery process,” said one of the organizers.

Apart from being a fund raiser, the organizers are also looking forward to the event as providing an exposure to the local artists at a national level.

“We see sporadic representation of Kashmiri

art off and on, however re-start will be one of the first consolidated exhibitions showing this volume of contemporary art from Kashmir, making this one of the more unique and ambitious project,” Mujtaba Rizvi, Managing Director of Kashmir Art Quest, said.

‘DURBAR’ TO MOVE BACK



❖ Rafia Rahim

Srinagar : ‘Darbaar Move’ or the bi-annual exercise of shifting the secretariat and other government offices from winter capital to summer capital is underway. This time the ‘move’ is towards the summer capital, Srinagar.

The Civil Secretariat and other offices are closing in Jammu on 25th April and will re-open in Srinagar on May 5. This time, over 100 vehicles are ferrying official records and Government staff to the Valley. To ensure the hassle-free transfer of official records, National Highway has been thrown open for only Kashmir-bound vehicles for April 25, 26.

Apart from civilian movement, military convoys too won’t be allowed to ply on Highway during this course, said one of the senior traffic department official.”

Chief Secretary, Iqbal Khanday while talking to MERC TIMES said, “Sufficient number of cranes, mobile workshop, mobile medical teams and ambulances would be available all along the Srinagar-Jammu Highway during these transit days.”

‘Darbaar move’ is a 143-year-old practice, started by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1872 to keep balance between extreme weather conditions in Jammu during summers and harsh winters in valley during winters.

GUJARAT MODEL WILL REVITALIZE KASHMIR: HOTELIERS

❖ MERC NEWS DESK

Srinagar: Kashmir hoteliers club has demanded the ‘boosting package’ for tourism industry in Kashmir on the pattern of Gujarat model, in the backdrop of new government’s initiative of boosting and promoting the tourism industry all over the India.

The meeting held in Srinagar, said that the “new government must give first priority to the ravaged infrastructure of tourism industry in valley and must provide soft loans to the tourism partners who became victims of September floods in last year.”

“The tourism business in valley came on standstill because of obvious reasons of floods. Now we have big expectations from this new government who seem to be quite serious about the revitalizing the tourism sector in valley” Said by the leading businessmen of the valley and chairman Kashmir hoteliers club, Mushtaq Chaaya who chaired the meeting as well.

Chaaya also demanded the reduction in power tariffs and in entry tax at the Lakhapur entrance point.

A memorandum was prepared which is to be submitted to chief minister mufti Mohammad sayyid, who has retained the tourism minister portfolio with him, which included the damage assessment, grievances & demands from the hoteliers associations, the meeting said.

WOMEN PUSHING TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE

❖ Arshie Qureshi

Srinagar : At the time when youngsters are enthusiastic about becoming a doctor, a teacher or any 'well reputed' office holder, some women are daring to choose the unconventional fields of work; to work for the greater good of self-reliance of women here in Kashmir.

At the age of 12, Yasmeena learnt the skill of cutting and tailoring from his father, Amjad Asgar, who wanted her daughter to just focus on studies. But, by just watching his father teaching other young men, she imbibed the techniques afar.

"He saw how keen I was and finally he began teaching me," says the 29-year-

says Bushra, who initiates to provide free training to local women.

Bushra herself is a graduate in Biotechnology and is planning to join the masters' program and most of the girls she trains are college going students.

Two more women, Ulfat and Rihana, in their early thirties, have also rented a small space in nearby Lal Bazaar, where they train other women at a nominal fee of Rs 200 per month.

For them tailoring is a serious mode of earning livelihood. They primarily joined the profession to support their family monetarily.

Rihana, a resident of Hawal, learnt cutting and tailoring from a nearby bou-



old Yasmeena, who in later attained the formal training in cutting and tailoring in Bangalore, India. On her return, she began training local girls for free at her residence in Lal Bazar and trained about 22 aspiring women during next 5 years.

"The shortage of resources doesn't let me train a batch of more than 4 girls at a time" says Yasmeena. One of her trainees, Uzma Anjum, 21, is an arts graduate and by training herself, she claimed has been able to make enough money for herself.

Unlike Uzma, two other women, Bushra and Arshie, both in their early twenties have taken to the profession only to train other women and help them attain self-reliance, while being able to continue their studies at the same time.

"Ours is just an effort to enable women to earn at least for themselves"

tique, which charged her Rs 1500 as admission fee and a monthly charge of Rs 500.

"That amount is not affordable for a lot of women, So we decided to keep our fee low and affordable to encourage women to come here and learn."

For these enthusiasts, No matter what the reasons for stepping into this field may be, the inspirational thing about these women is that they do not earn for themselves, but with the little available to them are striving hard to encourage other women to learn some skills and make themselves self-reliant.

In this field, all need is an ordinary sewing machine that costs anything between Rs 1200- 6000 and a room to set up their own business. Choosing a way to earn for themselves enables them to be financially sound and take charge of their career path, they believe.

TAEKWONDO CAMP FOR GIRLS



❖ Nelofar Jahan

Srinagar: Kashmir Taekwondo Association organized a training camp at Baramulla to teach self-defense to girls on April, 30. The camp aimed at teaching the techniques of combating rising incidents of crime against women in Kashmir.

The Camp, set up in Tangmarg area of Baramulla district, encouraged many girls in rural areas of the Valley to participate with more than 30 girls from different schools showing keen interest to take part in the training sessions at the camp.

"The girls, these days, should not be dependent on others. They should learn to protect themselves. They should know techniques of self-defense" said, one of the participant.

I was given an opportunity to play for the nation; I want to reach up to the international level. I have won a silver medal today; someday I will win gold," said Asiya Javeed, another participant at the camp.

Coach and trainer, Shuja Shah, taught Korean martial art Taekwondo to the girls, in which heavy emphasis is given on kicks.

According to the organizers, the prime motive of this camp was to make the girls tough and teach them techniques of self-defense to protect them.

"We know that girls are unsafe and they should be taught self-defense, that is why I want to teach taekwondo and martial arts to these girls. Every girl should learn martial art, because it is the need of the hour," said Shah.

The girls present on the camp, said they were happy that such a training session was being held in their area because earlier such camps were organized only in Srinagar.

SEP FLOODS STINGS VALLEY APICULTURE

❖ Nazir Gillo

Srinagar: The devastating floods of September have left the apiculture industry badly damaged with about 3,985 bee colonies washed away completely in the valley.

According to Agriculture departments damage assessment survey, of the formerly available 34192 bee colonies, about 3985 colonies were leaved completely damaged by the September floods in the valley.

With about 2300 bee colonies downrightly devastated in single district, the summer capital tops the damage list with about 1.84 crore monetary loss suffered to bee colonies.

In Anantnag district, 500 bee colonies out of 9313 suffered the widespread destruction and the remaining 8813 suffered the infrastructural and monetary loss of 1.24 crores with incessant rains and low temperature continues to sore honey production in the district.

Most of the bee colonies that spared the destruction of floods were migrated to Jammu by agriculture department due to incessant rains and dip in weather



conditions, which according to them, badly affects the honey production and bee colonies.

Similarly in Bandipora, Baramulla, Budgam, Ganderbal and Kulgam, the number of bee colonies which suffered the complete destruction were 400, 250, 260, 140 and 135 respectively which amounts the total loss of 1.82 crores.

Although, not any bee colony(ies) were destroyed in Kupwara and Pulwama districts but around 7000 bee colonies lost their honey in these two districts due to rains and precipitation with a loss of Rs 39.37 lakhs and 35.35 lakhs respectively.

Many bee keepers are now reconvening the remains of hives; those were destroyed by the floods. They demand that fair compensation should be given to them, so that they restore the damage caused by floods.

“We were expecting a good production this year but the catastrophe shattered our business, which now seems will take an undue length of time to restore the regular work unless a reasonable compensation is given to us” Abdul Hameed, a local bee keeper said.

SHAWARMA: REIGNS FOOD OUTLETS

❖ Murtaza Fazily

Srinagar : Shawarma, an arab snack, having its origin in Turkey and mainly served in gulf states, is now ruling the food centres and restaurants of Kashmir. The delicacy is becoming very popular among locals, especially youth’s in valley.

Shawarma, made from shreds of grilled chicken or meat pieces rolled in local bread (Lawasa), is one of the most common snacks enjoyed by the Kashmiris. The meat is piled up in boneless slices in a cylinder shape around a large central skewer rotated over a vertical grill. Number of Shawarma huts have bloomed up in city, over the last few years especially in areas, like Lal Chowk, Karan Nagar, Sanat Nagar and Raj Bagh.

Mohammad Muneer, a businessman, while tasting a Shawarma says, “It’s not just about food, it’s a very profitable business in valley where you can earn handsome bucks if you can manage it well.”

“It also provides a good number of employment opportunity to the locals, to earn some money from this popular business” he added.

Fast food outlets serving Shawarma as their main snack have also come up in the vicinity of the Kashmir university. Shawarma Hut, a restaurant located opposite NIT Hazratbal, is offering Shawarma as their main dish.

“The restaurant has been running suc-



Photo Credits | Suhaib

cessfully for the last three years, the daily income that we generate is around 20,000 rupees. Around 100 customers approximately visit our restaurant every day and most of them are youth” says Mohammad Lateef, Manager of Shawarma Hut.

“The food is delicious, tasty, healthy and above all it rejoices our friendship, as most of our friends come here on weekends” says Faizan Bhat, an Engineering Student.

Apart from the flavour and fame, Shawarma is also a rich source of protein as it is made from the chicken meat.

“I prefer it because it suits my pocket. I just have to spend a 100 bucks and I can enjoy a world famous food. It’s not just about fame that brings me to come here but the food is really rich in protein and after having it I don’t need to have anything else till evening as it completes the calorie content of my body,” said Nawaz Ali a university student.

“Shavings are cut off the block of meat for serving, and the remainder of the block of meat is kept heated on the rotating spit, it’s more an art rather than a food for me” Vikas, one of the Chefs’ of the restaurant near NIT said.

PEOPLE DECRY INFILATED BILLS BY PDD

❖ Nisar Dharma

Srinagar: The Power Development Department (PDD) here is reportedly threatening local consumers with disconnection if they do not clear their bills even though many people are yet to recapture from devastating floods of September.

Scores of residents from Hazuri Bagh, Raj Bagh, Shopian, Baramulla and Kulgam areas alleged that PDD officials barged into their homes and had heated arguments with them. The residents said that they were given a deadline to clear their bills or else the electricity supply will be disconnected permanently.

“I have been asked to clear my bills or else face disconnection, since floods my business has been totally shut and as such I have not been able to pay the bills”, says Fayaz Ahmad, a resident of Abi Guzar, Srinagar.

“At a time when people are still struggling with post flood trauma, they do not expect another worry in shape of unavailability of electricity. Why doesn't PDD first ask the major defaulters to clear their bills?” asked a resident of Kursoo, Rajbagh.

With snow affecting the electricity transmission for a number of days in this month, the locals here expect some relaxation in their pending bills given the difficult situation, the valley witnessed since last year.

Chief Engineer, PDD Bashir Ahmad Khan, while speaking to MERC Times, said that his department is trying to recover all the dues from the locals as well as commercial establishments owing the scale of pending arrears going up every passing month.

It is pertinent to mention that majority of the areas in the Valley have a snappy electricity schedule even though bills are paid in full by most of the

residents.

According to PDD's own statistical data, around 55 crores of unpaid bills are unstirred in the name of dozens of political offices, industries, security forces, government apartments, official ministerial residences and leisure enterprises like golf courses.

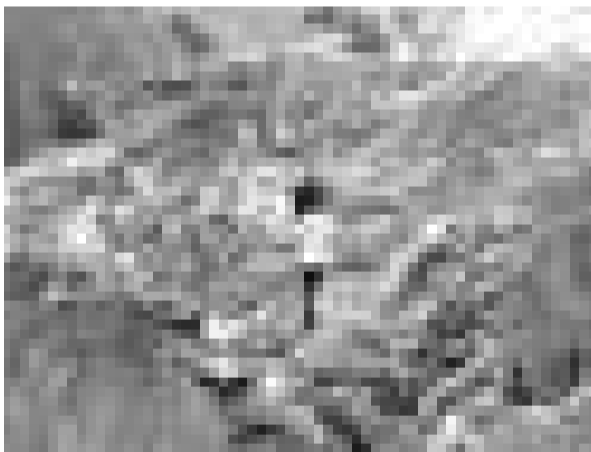
Rather than taking measures to recover the huge bills from such establishments, PDD officials, without any official notice or circular, are looking for ways to disconnect electricity to locals on pretext of unpaid bills that amount to a few thousands only, ask the locals.

Pertinently, the Jammu and Kashmir Government's various departments owe over Rs 1200 crore in arrears to the Power Development Department of the state, a figure that is three times more than the arrears pending against the domestic and commercial users.

CANAL BREACH TRIGGERS FLOOD SCARE IN GBL

❖ Idrees Ahmad

Srinagar: Panic gripped Beehama village of Ganderbal District on Saturday after a high intensity landslide which led to a breach in the Sind extension canal, causing flood fear among the villagers. The landslide also damaged many trees besides washing away a large area of agricultural land in the hamlet.



Mohammad sultan, a local while recalling the horror, said “At around 10 am on Saturday, I heard a loud noise, i was terrified after I saw a huge mass of debris and water skidding down the hillock behind my house.”

The breach in the extension canal inundated the village at several places. According to the locals, the youth working in tandem with the police “showed courage” as they closed the breach in time, thus preventing further damage.

Nabla Bano, a local resident said, “We are very grateful to the local youth and police as they saved us from disaster”.

District Development Commissioner, Ganderbal, Showkat Ajaz while assuring the restoration of the embankment of the extension canal, said, “I am personally monitoring the situation and our administration is working day and night to put every possible effort in order to keep the residents safe and repair

damage done by havoc.

Pertinently, the breach has led to the water shortage in several areas of Ganderbal and Srinagar district's, as the said canal feeds the Rangil water treatment plant which in turn provides water to several areas of Srinagar and Ganderbal district. People living in these areas have been constantly complaining about shortage of water since the breach in the canal.

Yasir, a Kashmir University student who lives on a rented house in Habbak area of Srinagar said, “Since the landslide, we are facing huge shortage of water, which causes many difficulties in our daily normal life.”

Meanwhile, Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control department (I&FC) Ganderbal, Aijaz Shafi while assuring the restoration of the canal, said, “We have started repair of canal and we are trying our best to repair the canal as soon as possible.”

DRIVERS ON STRIKE, COMMUTERS SUFFER

❖ Irshad Khan

Srinagar: Ghulam Mohammad Dar, an elderly in his 80's from Dadaompura village of District Budgam works at a provisional store here in Sarai Bala. He uses the sumo service (local Taxi service) for his daily commute from Chadoora to Srinagar and back. But on Thursday, he had had a tough time in an overloaded mini bus and had to “suffer a lot” as the sumo drivers of Chadoora called for a ‘bandh’ for the second consecutive day. The drivers were demanding for a permanent sumo stand at Jehangir Chowk.

“It's very tough. I used to take the sumo daily, but today I couldn't find one. Now I can't even have a seat in the bus as they are occupied from Batamaloo to Jehangir Chowk,” Dar says.

The ‘bandh’ also turned out to be a source of inconvenience for many college and university students.

“I travel on a sumo from Chadoora to Srinagar everyday as it saves a lot of time. Today I may probably miss my first class since the minibus took a lot of time to reach Srinagar,” says Irfan, a college student as he de-boarded from a minibus at Jahangir Chowk

The President, Chadoora Sumo Driver's Association, Abdul Rehman Khan, while defending the ‘bandh’ call said, “We don't have a proper sumo-stand at Jehangir Chowk while the drivers of other areas have a permanent stand of their own. Besides, the traffic police officials are always after us without any reason and don't allow us to stop for the passengers near the fly over. We are compelled to protest. This is the only way out.”

Superintendent of Traffic Police Srinagar, Haseeb-ur-Rehman cited traffic regulations as a reason to “disperse” the halting passenger taxis.

“We can't allow traffic jams at the cost of the sumo drivers waiting for passengers. There are certain traffic regulations that are to be followed. The drivers should understand that”, Rehman says.

Meanwhile, Abdul Rehman is pinning hopes on the Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Chadoora, Javaid Mustafa Mir for his intervention into the matter.

“Our MLA, Javaid Sahab is currently on Umrah. We will talk to him on the issue on his return. I hope he solves our problem”, Khan says.

Pertinently, the Sumo Drivers Association, Chadoora, has been demanding a permanent stand in Srinagar in the past as well.

TOBACCO SALE CONTINUES UNABATEDLY AROUND BANNED PREMISES

Photo Credits|Suhaib



❖ Junaid Rafiq

Srinagar: In defiance of law, tobacco products are being openly sold around educational and Health institutions in valley, with administration turning blind eye towards this and not taking any cognizance of it.

As per the Section 6 of "Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution" (COTPA) Act 2003, there is a ban on the sale of tobacco to minors under 18 and prohibition on sale of tobacco products within 100 yards of educational institutions and a mandatory sign board in this regard should be displayed prominently near the main gate and on the boundary wall of the school or an institution.

While speaking to MERC times the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Farooq Ahmad Lone denied having any specific information about the violation of law and said, "No such complaint has reached us, but we will make sure that the ban is implemented."

"We will try to install sign boards outside all educational institutions," he added.

On the base of anonymity, a Shopkeeper in Lal Chowk, said, "tobacco stuff is being openly sold in the city centre. It's not possible to stop the sale of tobacco products. A large part of our daily earning comes from this."

"If I stop selling cigarettes, my competitor would not. That alone means losing customers," he added.

Pointing to the lack of enforcing bodies, the principal of a leading school at Lal chowk, Srinagar, said "We have always strived to get these stalls closed, but unfortunately we lack active enforcement agencies."

Despite being selected as a 'Model District' for tobacco control by the state government eight years back, Srinagar has recorded highest number of violations from March to July last year.

Crime Branch Srinagar recorded nearly 3000 cases of violation of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products in the five months.

2-DAY FOOTBALL FEST IN GANDERBAL

❖ MERC NEWS DESK

Ganderbal: Ganderbal Football Association (GFA) in collaboration with Ganderbal United Football Club (GUFC) is going to organize a 2-day football festival in Qamariya Ground, Ganderbal from 3rd of May.

Bashir Ahmad, president GFA, While talking to MERC TIMES said, "We organize football festival every year and this year it is going to be a huge event as we will include more clubs of Ganderbal in this year's festival."

First day of festival will be designated for special coaching skills in which Ganderbal's renowned coach; Muzamill Mohammad, who has done

scheduled for freestyle football competition, in which players will showcase their freestyle football skills, one of the organizer member said.

According to organizers, 30 clubs had already registered for football festival and more teams are expected to participate in the festival.

Suhail Ahmad, Manager at GUFC, said, "We got good response from football teams and festival is going to be a success."

"Budding football players are very excited to participate in the football festival. Football players are seen practicing freestyle football skills" He said.

Zeeshan, an amateur footballer



his coaching course in Brazil, will impart coaching skills to the budding footballers of the valley.

"I am very happy that GFA is organizing such event which boosts and promotes football in Ganderbal." Muzamill said.

Second day of the festival is

said "I was waiting for this GFA festival and I am all set to participate in this festival."

GFA invites all interested players and clubs of Ganderbal to register for football festival at GFA office Ganderbal, one of the organizers said.

