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# MERC TIMES



**MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**

**END OF AN  
ERA!**



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# Shujaat Bukhari laid to rest

## Condemnations pour in

Mirza Sharafat/Sadaf Masoodi  
BARAMULLA

A pale of gloom descended into the village of Kreeri as thousands of people cutting across ideological divides thronged to pay last respect to the slain veteran Journalist, Syed Shujaat Bukhari, editor-in-chief Rising Kashmir at his residence.

Bukhari along with his two security guards was killed by three unidentified bike borne gunmen outside his office at press colony, Srinagar when he was leaving to attend an Iftaar party. His body was brought to Kreeri, his ancestral village, from Srinagar on Thursday evening.

Among those who participated in Bukhari's funeral were former chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah, chairman of Jammu and Kashmir liberation front Mohammad Yasin Malik, other politicians and number of poets, writers and television personalities.

Amid the tears and cries at the funeral procession, one question kept resonating- Who killed Shujaat? Why was he killed? A woman broke down while speaking, "Rain is an indication that Almighty is sad and angry. He was such a humble, loving person and

a good journalist. Why would anyone want to kill him? Who can even think of that?"

Bukhari is survived by his wife and two children who are studying in 9th and 10th class.

While the coffin was being shouldered to graveyard, huge number of mourners swelled and participated in last rites of Bukhari.

"This is our son, a village's son instead, and this is gruelling for all of us" said Mohammad Sammad Mir with moist eyes. "Bukhari made us proud, he was always a helping hand with humble character" Ghulam Rasool Zargar said while walking in the procession. Media students and emerging reporters of valley also expressed grief, as Bukhari remained a mentor of all media students.

Tributes continued to pour in over social media as Bukhari's assassination has sent shock waves not only to the local journalistic fraternity but several top political leaders and editors took to social media to deplore the tragedy and condemn the tragic death.

The Editors Guild of India, an association of journalists, and human rights body Amnesty also condemned the assassination on Twitter.

"The Editors Guild of India

unequivocally condemns the assassination of Rising Kashmir Editor Shujaat Bukhari. This is a grave attack on press freedom and democratic voices," the Editors Guild said.

Amnesty India tweeted, "We're deeply dismayed to hear about the killing of Shujaat Bukhari, editor of @RisingKashmir. He was a brave and outspoken voice for justice and equality in Jammu and Kashmir."

Bukhari earlier served as a Bureau Chief of The Hindu. Holding Masters in Journalism from Ateneo de Manila University, he was a fellow of Asian Centre for Journalism, Singapore.

He also had received World Press Institute (WPI) USA fellowship and Asian Centre for Journalism Singapore fellowship.

Bukhari also served as president of Adbee Markaz Kamraz, the biggest and oldest cultural and literary organization of Valley.

Bukhari was among 19 other journalists who were abducted by a militant group in 1996.

Bukhari had survived another deadly attack in 2006 when he was abducted by two men who drove him several kilometres away from the city. However, when one of them tried to shoot him the gun jammed and he managed to escape.

# Largest medical institution in Kashmir forces patients to share beds



Sheikh Arsh  
SRINAGAR

Patients at 'Emergency Ward' of Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura continue to share the beds over the years thus plunging them to face the miseries.

In the overcrowded ward of Emergency, there are hardly any checks over the entrance of attendants; the presence of large number of attendants always caused a large problem.

Paying a visit to the hospitals casualty reveals that at least 6 patients are seen in the corridor which often become an obstacle for patients especially when a patient is taken in and vice versa.

On Monday, Maryam Begum of central Kashmir's Budgam district brought her 8-year-old son, suffering from stomach pain to the hospital but he shared the bed with an elderly patient.

"We don't know who is suffering from which disease. There is a chance of catching infection and the ward remains busy throughout the day. There has to be a separate bed for every patient, unfortunately problem is same here as it was five years back," said Maryam.

Dr Shifa Deva, Medical Superintendent SKIMS admitted that the space between beds is essential to save patients from infections, proposing an extension of causality block which will be done within three months.

"The work on the newly inaugurated 250-bed Inpatient Department (IPD) block has started and it is expected to ease the burden on the hospital," he said.



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# 25 Cr Hospital project in shambles

5 years on, Chanapora's sub-district hospital awaits inauguration, doctors

Aarif Shah  
SRINAGAR

A 50-bedded sub-district hospital in Chanapora has turned into a dispensary due to inadequate staff and lack of basic facilities. Five years after its construction, the hospital still awaits a formal inauguration.

"The hospital was a 25 crore project, but it is lying in shambles due to official apathy," said Umar Gora, a local pharmacist.

According to locals, the hospital operates out of the ground floor and lacks basic medical facilities. "It has medical equipment and doctors available for dental treatment, but lacks all other basic facilities and doctors," they claimed.

They also complained that the hospital has fixed working hours and is closed on Sundays. "Although it was supposed to provide 24/7 service, there is no round the clock service available. It operates more like a school from 10 am to 4 pm," said Sakeena Bano, a local resident.

Tabasum Yaqoob, a patient said, "Once I received a deep cut in my hand, but when my family rushed me to the hospital, they denied treatment to me as they claimed that the working hours were over."

Another patient, Tariq Khan, said that a proper hospital seemed like a distant dream. "We have been waiting for five years now. We cannot go either to private hospitals because their fees burn a hole in one's pocket or to government hospitals as they are located too far away from Chanapora."

According to locals, when they asked ministers for help, they were given the cold shoulder. "The People's Democratic Party (PDP) refused to help us saying that they could not intervene since it was a National Conference (NC) project," they said.

"Senior PDP leader and former minister Altaf Bukhari told us that had we voted for him, he would have helped us out," said Bano. They have also appealed to the Governor N N Vohra to take up the matter in his hands after he promised to complete all pending projects in the valley.

When contacted, Srinagar Chief Medical Officer (CMS), Dr Talat Jabeen, told MERC Times that turning the dispensary into a proper hospital was the job of the "higher authorities". "We try and send as many faculty members as possible but we have received no order for up-gradation and currently this is only a Primary Health Center (PHC)," she said.



# Anantnag residents aghast over illegal encroachments

Afshan mir  
ANANTNAG

Residents of Anantnag are completely dejected against district administration for failing in to rein the illegal cab stands, haphazard parking, and encroachment by shopkeepers, causing a nuisance to the public.

Locals said that there are three major passenger cab stands that are operating illegally within the town thus occupying roads. The traffic mess caused by them the commuters.

Bashir Ahmad, a local said, "There is no proper parking in the town, as cab drivers have occupied space at various places, forcing people to park by roadsides".

He added that shopkeepers lay their stuff occupying almost half of the road, choking the main road link. The huge presence of street vendors is giving tough time to commuters as they stand wherever they please.

According to residents, dozens of vehicles



are lined up on the road creating a bottleneck. On the other hand, the hawkers and shopkeepers are adding their bit to cause inconvenience to the general public.

Encroachment on the vital road links to two major hospitals in the town, the district hospital in Janglat Mandi and the Maternity and Child Care hospital in Sherbagh has made people suffer.

Locals added that ambulances from the hospitals have to navigate through roads congested and clogged with traffic, parked vehicles and the spread out merchandise of the shopkeepers as well as the hawkers.

"It seems district administration is non-existent and everyone is doing whatever he likes to do. The administration needs to wake

up to do their job," the locals added.

Mohammad Younis Malik, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag said that steps were being taken on both short term and long term basis to de-congest the town.

"We are taking a string of measures. Our major focus is on the long-term remedies to work towards a greater Anantnag," he added.

Malik said that apart from frequent drives to ensure temporary relief the administration has created Detailed Project Reports (DPR's) on how to de-congest the major bottlenecks in the town.

"The population has ballooned, the traffic flow into the town from other areas is huge and there are around six to seven hundred street vendors in the town," he said, adding that "While taking necessary measures rehabilitation of people has also to be taken into consideration."

He added that parking slots have been identified and plans are being devised to manage the ever-growing traffic in the town. Hopefully, the effects will be visible on the ground should.

## Apollo Medskills provides employment avenues to valley youth



Obaid Bashir  
SRINAGAR

More than three hundred youngsters from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir are being registered by Apollo for their training and placements.

Having excelled in the field of healthcare, Appollo medskill have taken an initiative to empower the youth of Jammu And Kashmir State by providing training and placement

services within the country.

Last year, J&K Government, through State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM), signed MoUs worth Rs 120.99 crore with three agencies which include Apollo Medskills, Surya Wires Ltd and Manpower Group Services India Ltd whose core purpose was enhance skills and expose youth to the various health

care job cultures in the country.

As per program youths from all over the state are sent to the training centres located at different states of the country, from where they undergo the training of 3-6 months.

Counselor head Appollo Medskills J&K, Arsalan Waheed said, "Graduates are trained for 3 to 6 months at different prime locations in the center that are selected from the preliminary counseling sessions"

Waseem Raja, Assistant Manager

operations said "We not only provide job opportunities but we also take care of all the necessary accommodation within the training period, it is a Government initiative and we feel proud to be the part of this program"

"We happen to be a part of one of the most volatile place in the country which is why there is a huge lack of job opportunities in our state but after registering myself with this employment program I feel very confident about my career now" said, Najma khan who had signed for the program.

"I am an Arts graduate but unfortunately past three years especially 2016 has been very disturbing for all the people living in the state, with less job opportunities I felt depressed for all these years but now I can see my career taking a new turn towards new opportunities" said another student.

Upon talking to the recruits they said, we will like to see more of such schemes in future for the youth of Kashmir as they are very beneficial for us.

## Uri's Banali hamlet without basic facilities

Schools without teaching staff, roads without transport facility



Insha Rani  
BARAMULLA

Village Banali, located in tehsil Boniyar in north Kashmir is facing a number of problems. No transport facility is available there.

The village has got only one primary school and that too in a dilapidated condition with broken windows, doors and floor. "Only two local teachers are available to teach 150 students in just three classrooms". The village remains cut-off for more than three months from tehsil headquarters during winters. There is no medical facility," said Mohammad Issaq, a local.

The village has got at least 350 houses most of them belonging to Gujjars and Pahari speaking people.

"Despite living in 21st century, there is no health center in the village. Authorities have forced us to live like primitive people", said another local.

"Patients have to suffer a lot especially during winters when the village remains cut-off from rest of the tehsil," he added.

The villagers are very fed up with the system. They want authorities to take their problems into consideration so that they would be able to meet their basic needs as soon as possible. The locals also said that the unavailability of local transport has made their life miserable and they are forced to walk for miles to fetch goods of daily use.

Sajad Shafi, the representative of MLA Uri told MERC Times that they visited the village last month and is working for its development.

"A health center and basic transport facility would be provided to the village within two months. And the matter would be taken up seriously by the authorities," he said.

## Dargah boatmen decry official apathy

Rooh Yaseen Shah  
SRINAGAR

Water pollution and official apathy have put the livelihoods of boatmen in the Dal Lake under threat. Local boatmen who ply the waters of the lake near the famous Hazratbal shrine said that the discharge of sewage into the lake and the slow pace of weed removal were keeping tourists away.

"Dumping of sewage and plastic, and excessive weed growth especially algae has stripped the lake of its natural beauty," said Riyaz Ahmad, a boatman. "It's affecting our livelihood as the number of tourists visiting Dal has been steadily decreasing."

At least 40 boatmen in the area depend on the lake for their livelihood. They claimed that the government's order restricting their movement to a small area

within the lake has further added to their miseries. "We are unable to move to other 'cleaner' areas and earn enough to put food on the table," said Ahmad.

"I had to borrow money off my neighbor to buy medicine for my wife," said Ghulam Rasool, another boatman who has been rowing a shikara for the past 52 years.

"The lake has lost its charm. There was a time when we used to ferry water from the lake to use in our day-to-day activities but now it is unthinkable," he added.

"The officials of Lakes and Water Ways Development Authority (LAWDA) recently visited the location and took stock of the situation, but we have not seen anything major happening on the ground," claimed Rasool.

When contacted, the LAWDA authorities said that the process of weed removing was underway and working at a great progress.



# Swimming lessons for locals to help rescue ops during floods

Schnian Meer  
SRINAGAR

**W**ith a view to rescue people in emergencies like flood situation in Kashmir, a local from Srinagar's Downtown area has started to impart swimming lessons to people at Nigeen Water Sports centre here.

Riyaz Wani, 41, a licensed swimmer started teaching swimming to people after the floods ravaged Kashmir.

"After floods people are much interested towards swimming as they realized the importance of swimming when flood came as threat in their lives," Riyaz said.

After 2014 floods, Riyaz had sought help from Director Tourism, Mehmood Shah to allow him use Nigeen Water Sports centre and its infrastructure for the initiative.

"We are provided with all possible facilities from Director Tourism and we took an initiative of bringing small school children for basic swimming as children love to play with water at picnic spots,"

Riyaz Wani and his colleague Abid Amin have trained 500 students in 2018 so far and are hopeful many more turn up to learn swimming.

Swimming, a sport considered to be one of the most professional and popular across



the globe. The sport is less recognized in Kashmir where the need of trained swimmers is the need of an hour.

"According to the experts there are only five per cent of people who know swimming in Kashmir whereas it could have been 60 percent, as Valley is rich in water resources," said Riyaz.

He not only provides training to people to prepare them for swimming as a sport but for self-defense and unpredictable future as well.

"As a sport we cannot go for swimming, we need to have professionals here to give them training for swimming as a sport," I get hundreds of calls every day from people for swimming classes, as people feel threat to their lives and they don't want to be dependent on others," he said.

He gives training to people in Dal Lake side using life-saving jackets as the pool is too small to accommodate large people

He further adds that there should be at least four swimming pools in the state and some experts to handle them as there are only six trained instructors in the state.

People from all age groups attend swimming classes from Riyaz and due to non-availability of a female swim trainer, Riyaz's group trains girls of 3rd to 4th standard only.

## Streetlights defunct at Balgarden

Residents appeal SMC Commissioner

Sheikh Ahsaan  
SRINAGAR

**R**esidents of Narsing garh, Balgarden on Sunday complained that the streetlights installed in the area by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) were not functioning.

A delegation from the area said that some of the lights have gone out of order and the concerned SMC officials have failed to replace them.

"A streetlight in our lane is not working for the past many months, yet nobody from the SMC has visited the area to replace it. In absence of streetlights we are not able to go to Masjid in evening and morning," said Farhaan Ahmad, a local.

Another resident Irshad expressing displeasure said that despite repeated correspondence to SMC, none from the department visited our area to fix these defunct lights.

The residents appealed the SMC Commissioner to depute a team for replacing the lights at an earliest.

## Seminar on Hepatitis held at Arhama college shopian

Shahid Bashir  
SHOPIAN

**A**wareness programme was organized by the health department, district Shopian and District Surveillance Unit Shopian in collaboration with SBGM nursing college Arhama Shopian held here today. The programme was inaugurated by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shopian, Parvaiz Sajad Ganie.

Among others the programme was attended by Chief Medical officer, Shopian, Abdul Rashid, Gastroenterologist Dr Hakeem Mohammad Shafi, Block Medical Officers, Doctors, district officers, students from various educational

institutions and other concerned.

On the occasion experts said, "The aim of the seminar is to raise awareness among doctors on the urgency for treating the diseases. Awareness on the importance to treat the disease is vital in reducing contraction cases among the public."

ADC said that government has also carried out screening process for the public and found that there is an increase in the numbers of individuals affected by Hepatitis and remedial steps have been taken. He stressed on the need of ensuring vaccination of babies.

ADC, also advised community members to practice healthy lifestyles and avoid any activity that pose risks for them to contract the disease.



## Jehlum tributary chokes of pollution

Tahil Ali  
SRINAGAR

Jehlum tributary, "Soner kol" is choking due to garbage dumping and sewage into it. Soner kol is major tributary of Jehlum that was used for bathing and performing ablution, in olden days.

The tributary flows through chattabal, Nawabazar, Zaldagar areas of Srinagar city.

The heavy silt and solid wastes are clearly seen through the waters.

Locals blame authorities for destruction of this rivulet as concerned authorities haven't taken enough measures to locate a proper dumping site for garbage.

"The authorities themselves have directed to discharge the drains into the rivulet. Its not our mistake we are compelled to do it," said a local resident from nawabazar.

Locals also said that the foul smell emanating from the rivulet has caused health problems in the locality

"The unbearable smell emanating from the rivulet causes severe health problems here. We are not able to sit around and do our work," said a local shopkeeper at chattabal. Adding," we have complained the concerned authorities so many times but they have not taken any necessary steps".

"At times we used to bath in this rivulet, also perform wudu by this water but now we are not able to stand around the rivulet because of pollution and garbage in this rivulet," said a local resident at zaldagar.

When asked concerned official of Flood and Irrigation Department about this issue he blamed the locals for throwing the garbage into the rivulet.

"The locals throw the garbage into the rivulet and we dont have enough staff to control them," he said.

## 'Craft centered education the way forward: Ganie'

Youth Urged to Benefit From Job Oriented Schemes

Syed Mudawar  
SRINAGAR

Khurshid Ahmad Ganai, Advisor to Governor emphasised upon the youth to take advantage of the immense resources and schemes launched by the government to accelerate economic growth hereon Saturday.

Asking them to explore opportunities in traditional skills and new age technologies as "both are relevant and equally capable of generating sustainable livelihood."

He said it is the endeavour of Governor's Administration to provide access to quality skill training at the local levels through short term courses as well as long term training.

The Advisor was addressing students at valedictory function of two day 'Skill Development Art and Craft Mela,' organized by Government College for Women, MA Road in collaboration with Buddha Art and Painting Studio to commemorate 150th birth anniversary of Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi.

The aim of organizing Mela was to provide an environment to flourish purposeful creative activity, to demonstrate the students' mastery in aesthetics and to display fine arts and amazing crafts made by experts and students.

"Craft-centered education creates a balance between theory and monotonous learning through creative stimulation and self-expression," he said.

Craft-centered education creates a balance between theory and monotonous learning through creative stimulation and self-expression

## Educatus Expo 2018 organized at SKICC Srinagar

Mehvish Dilshad  
SRINAGAR

A career counseling exhibition was organized at SKICC Srinagar on 23-24 th of the june

With the key objective of counseling the students for the higher education and helping them to take admission in the colleges and universities throughout the world

A large number of students from the different parts of the city were present in the seminar

"I am very interested in exploring the new opportunities for my education, two of my friends have already applied for the admission outside the country and am looking for my options," says Syed Jibraan



We have a closure with a number of universities and colleges throughout the world, we basically do the counseling of the students for the higher education and we always come up with a good response said,

Zarkha Global Education & HR consultant.

"It's very good to see students coming to this event for the career counseling purpose, so far we have got a very good response from the students, It's a very good platform that Educatus is providing for the students to interact with the different universities, this year more than 30000 students are going to the universities and colleges outside the state out of which 10000 students have already applied for Pradhan Mantri Yojna" said Mehraan Reshi ( Higher

Education Counselor )  
Representatives of different universities from the country were also present there; who directly interacted with students about new courses, subjects etc.

# A local NGO, Athrout, opens dialysis center in Srinagar

‘Have procured advanced technology for quality healthcare’

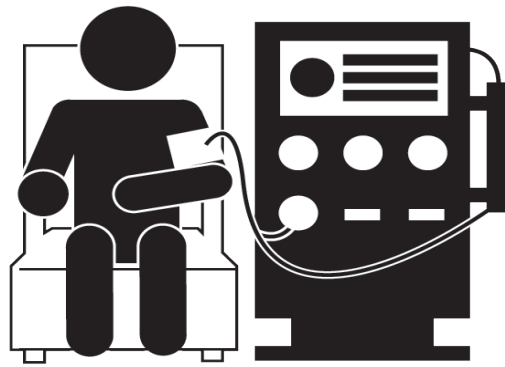
Abid Aleem  
SRINAGAR

A local NGO Athrout, has opened a charitable trust where it offered services to chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients at the “affordable rates” in Kashmir.

Presently these patients are mostly dependent on the private facilities, where each session of dialysis would cost between Rs 2000 to Rs 3000 per session.

“The opening of the Athrout’s dialysis center in heart of Srinagar in Nawakadal will be a huge respite for these patients. They can avail the facility at around Rs 900 per session. Moreover, the center will offer facility ‘absolutely free of cost to poor patients.’ The rates are the lowest as compared to any dialysis center in Kashmir,” according to members of Athrout.

Speaking about inspiration behind the initiative, Bashir Nadwi, chairman Athrout said, “Once, during our routine verification



of a case, we came across a patient who had sold his huge and luxurious house to fund his dialysis. His condition was such that the family approached us for charity so that they could keep their patient alive. This prompted us to do something for these patients.” “We have been funding around 60 patients for dialysis already,” he said.

Athrout members said that, the center was committed to not just providing a facility for the CKD patients but improving the quality health care. “It has been seen that many

dialysis centers compromise with either duration of dialysis or other parameters.

“Our equipment is designed in such a way that ensures patients get exactly the same dialysis as has been prescribed by their doctor and for the same duration,” said Dr Rashid Fazli, a member of Athrout.

This procedure is usually carried out as long as a person lives or till they get a kidney transplant.

Athrout, known for its interventions towards helping poor and needy with the tagline as “The Helping Hand” has set up the center through donations from its members and general public.

The office bearers of the organisation said that the need for setting up an affordable dialysis center was shared with members and masses a year ago which resulted in overwhelming support. “Everyone contributed wholeheartedly to the cause, in cash and kind,” Nadwi said.

The center has eight dialysis machines, and will be able to register around 50 patients for dialysis.

## Heavy rains lash parts of kashmir



Ubaid Gul  
SRINAGAR

Tuesday morning in the valley witnessed a heavy rainfall for at least more than 3 hours. The heavy downpour created a panic in the Srinagar city and its adjoining areas where people were seen rushing towards

the safer places.

Majority of roads were blocked due to faulty drainage system and most of the people were seen taking shelter at various places due to heavy rains. Main City roads like Maulana Azad Road and Residency Road were also water-logged, bringing traffic movement to halt.

Meanwhile, the residents of Maharaja Gunj area alleged that the water-logging indicates the administrative failure of building poor drainage system. Despite the major government offices around the area there is no response towards the problems faced by the people, said the local resident. “Our PHE department is nearby & our D.C office is close to our vicinity but still no official cares about the plight of people,” said another local resident.

“We had already submitted a letter in D.C office regarding the nasty drainage system but drainage system is same as it was before,” another added. After speaking to MERC TIMES DC Srinagar Syed Abid Rasheed told that “The administration is taking the matter into consideration and would sort out it as soon as possible.”