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**Dal interiors
face negligence,
locals aghast**

Commuters suffer due to lack of public transport in city



“To reach my coaching institute I have to travel by foot sometimes as it has become difficult to get a bus during the daytime”

Afshan Mir
Srinagar

Commuters and students from various areas allege that due to the inadequate number of passenger vehicles on Parimpora-Pantha-Chowk Bypass here, they have to face the difficulties to reach their destinations.

The angry commuters blamed the transport department for their sufferings and threatened to block highway if the demand would not be fulfilled within a week.

Footboard travel and overcrowding in buses, especially during the peak hours is an everyday experience.

Sohail Ahmad, a resident of Bemina said that despite residing on the highway, it is very difficult for him to get a vehicle to board.

He said that district administration has totally neglected this area and has neglected them for last five months.

“If we get any vehicle they are overloaded by the passengers,” he added.

A group of students from Bemina told MERC Times that they are unable to reach the coaching centers on time and due to that they miss couple of classes daily.

They said that authorities should wake up from deep slumber and ensure more passenger buses in the area during morning hours.

Moreover, the shortage of bus services has hit commuters who are completely dependent on public transport.

Saima Iqbal, a student from Tangpora area of Srinagar said that she has to wait for one and half hour daily to board a bus.

“To reach my coaching institute I have to travel by foot sometimes as it has become difficult to get a bus during the daytime”, Iqbal added.

Patients outside SKIMS hospital Bemina also complained of inadequate transport in the area.

However RTO Srinagar, Sheikh Manzoor told MERC Times that the allegations of the students and commuters are baseless.

“We have adequate passenger buses from Pantha Chowk-Parimpora”, adding, “We will still review the transports system there. I will call the concerned transport companies and the matter would be solved as soon as possible.”

Illegal car parking unchecked in Lal Chowk

“Will start a massive drive against illegal car parking” SMC commissioner



Shahid Bashir
Srinagar

In Srinagar’s commercial hub Lal Chowk, which remains jam-packed throughout the day with people and vehicles, illegal parking remains unchecked causing inconvenience to pedestrian and vehicular movement.

Hundreds of cars can be seen parked illegally from Polo Ground to Amera Kadal, at Budshah Chowk and Exhibition Road, right under the government’s nose.

“The requirement is ever-increasing, it is always more than what we think. When we plan for the car parking, we also have to think about the pedestrian space which is choked by cars parked illegally,” said Adil Ahmad, a local student.

“We have seen traffic police and Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) officials charging fine to poor vendors who sell either fruits or clothes to feed their poor families but officials turn mute spectators on

the issue of illegal parking in front of influential shops of the city,” he added.

Shoppers usually park their cars in front of the shops where they buy things, a large number of vehicles can be seen parked illegally in front of many well-known shops especially some of the ice-cream shops of Lal Chowk.

Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Khurshed Ahmad Sanaie, acknowledged that illegal parking on roads is a big challenge in the commercial hub.

“There are some mechanized parking slots in Lal chowk and its adjacent areas but space is not being used by people as it should be because they want to park their cars for free on roads”.

“In upcoming days we will start a massive drive against illegal car parking in the commercial hub Lal chowk to get rid of this mess”, he further added.

He informed that they are working with Traffic Police Srinagar to take measures to prevent illegal parking on roads in the city.

Crowd witnesses football match under floodlights



Syed Mudawa
Srinagar

The capital city witnessed the first ever football match under floodlights here on June 30. The 15,000 capacity stadium was developed in 2014. An exhibition playing match between Stars XI and JK Stars XI took place at Astro Turf football ground, TRC Srinagar.

The match was inaugurated by the Advisors to the Governor, K. Vijay Kumar, Khursheed Ahmad Ganai, Skandan Kumar and Chief Secretary, BVR Subramanyam. The advisors were accompanied by DC Srinagar Shahid Iqbal and

other senior and civil officers.

“This is a very big opportunity for us to showcase our talent”, said a local player, Yasir Rasheed, adding more such facilities should be created so that the youth have more options for displaying their sporting talent.

DC Srinagar while talking to MERC TIMES said that he interacted with the young players and urged them to take the benefit of the opportunity being provided to them by government”.

Meanwhile the Advisors interacted with the young students as well as the players urging them to play their role in bringing back the momentum of sports across the state.

Dal interiors face negligence, locals aghast

Rooh Yaseen
Srinagar

The relocation of the inhabitants of Kankuch area of Dal lake who were relocated to the suburbs of the lake has left the area in marshy condition.

Locals allege that the authorities are responsible for the deteriorating condition of the area citing negligence on part of authorities which has resulted in plethora of problems for them.

“Earlier before relocation, the inhabitants of Kankuch used to clean up the waters and people could commute through the area easily. Since the relocation the waters have become murky and it has become practically impossible to move through the area as there is no one to look after the cleanliness of the area,” Ghulam Nabi Bota, a local resident shared.

The marshy waters are creating problems for the inhabitants whose livelihood is generated by

commuting through the area in Dal Lake. Locals share that the area used to be a water route for their boats carrying vegetables and fodder but due to the negligence, the centuries old water way has been blocked.

People in the vicinity of the area also complained of the threat of infections and diseases due to foul smell that the accumulating dirt has caused. Gulzar Ahmad Bota, another resident complained that the authorities are unmoved by the problems arising out of the contaminated water around. “Our children are getting ill day in and day out due to the prevailing condition of Lake but nobody is taking up the responsibility.”

Vice Chairperson Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA), Sajad Hussain Ganai ensured that the department would take immediate cognizance of the account of the people and would do the needful. “Please provide us with further details and we will start the work as soon as possible.”



Chairman NCSK visits Kashmir, meets sanitation associates

Mirza Sharafat
Srinagar

Chairman National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), Manhar Valji Bhai Zala visited the state of Jammu and Kashmir on June 24 to meet the sanitation staff and ground associates. He reviewed the progress of Municipal Corporation and reviewed rehabilitation schemes intended for sanitation associates.

“It has been a visit for the first time by any authority” said G.M. Solina, a representative of Safai Karamcharis in Srinagar.

Many of the sanitation associates expressed their anger as they alleged very few of the rehabilitation schemes have been really implemented for their welfare in the state.

While talking to reporter of MERC TIMES, a group of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) employees hoped to observe a distinguishable change in the forthcoming days for their subordinate ground workers.

Officers too welcomed the visit of NCSK that



they believe to be a good omen for ground staff. “We have always worked for the welfare of sanitation associates yet there are issues, but we will always look forward with a positive sight to work hard for the welfare of our Safai Karamcharis,” said Syed Nissar, one of Unit Officers in the Corporation.

Meanwhile during the visit of NCSK, the office of Municipal Corporation was thronged by staffers and ground workers to put forward their grievances. Chairman NCSK accompanied by high level officials from NCSK heard their issues and promised for their redressal.

Governor inaugurates second phase of Jehangir Chowk-Rambagh flyover

Move hailed by public for speedy completion of this junction

Abid Aleem
Srinagar

To mitigate the sufferings of the motorists the Governor Satya Pal Malik inaugurated the second portion of Jehangir Chowk-Alochi Bagh of the Jehangir Chowk- Rambagh flyover here on June 30.

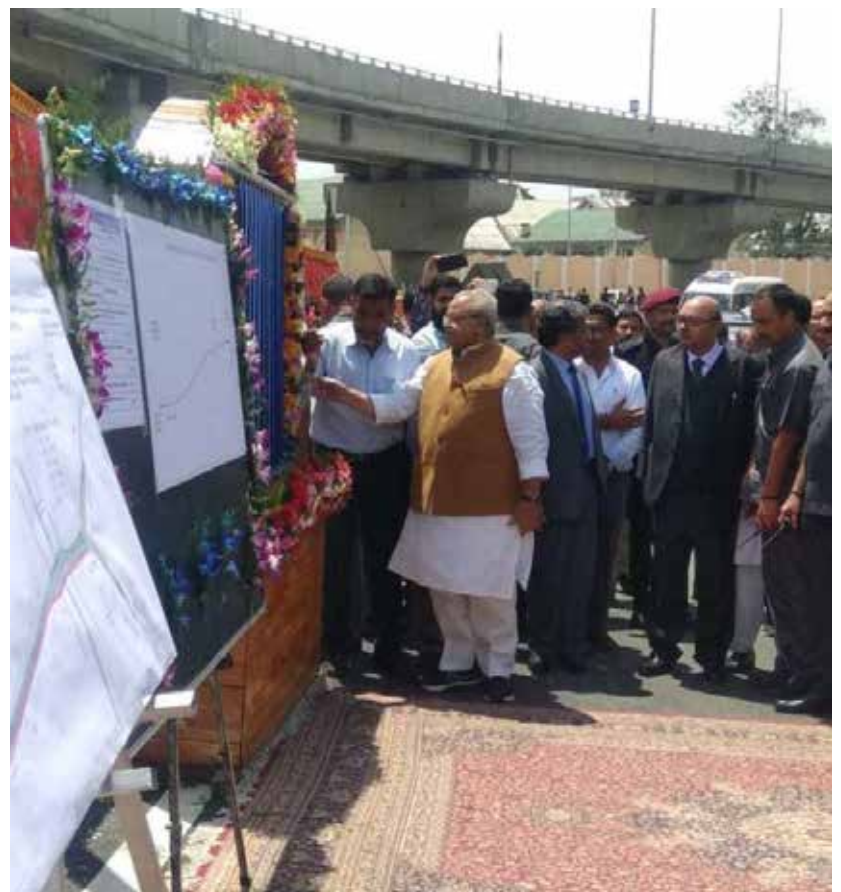
Soon after assuming the office on 21 August 2018 as the Governor of J&K state Satya Pal Malik held detailed meetings with all department heads and impressed upon the administration to work in coordination to pace the left over developmental works of public importance and meet deadlines. The Governor stressed upon the agencies to speed up the final phase of work and ensure its completion before July 30 as the deadline.

Khurshid Ahmed Ganai, K. Skandan- Advisors to Governor; Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation; Sheikh Imran, Deputy Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation;

BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Umang Narula, Financial Commissioner to Governor; Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary Planning, Development and Monitoring; Baseer Khan, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar and various senior officers were present on the occasion.

While congratulating the executing agencies the Governor said, “The completion of this portion of 1.38 km of Jehangir Chowk-Rambagh flyover will decongest traffic and considerably reduce travel time from airport to the city centre and vice-versa, besides providing relief to the business community across the busy stretch between Jehangir Chowk and Rambagh.”

Sharafat Hussain, a commuter said, “I could feel the administration is working very hard in the present Governor rule as frequent meetings are being held by the Governor himself to assess the progress on works.”





KU holds Marathon for specially challenged

Mir Tanveer,

Kashmir University's (KU), Department of Students' Welfare (DSW) organised a Marathon for specially challenged people in the campus here on 27th June.

The Marathon which was flaged off by Vice Chancellor (VC), Prof Talat Ahmad and Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir started at Maulana Rumi Gate and culminated at Gandhi Bhawan Auditorium of the varsity.

The marathon aimed at creating awareness among masses about the issues faced by them. Around 50 specially abled students from various departments of the University and from several other institutions participated in the Marathon.

During an interaction with one of the participants, Asif Matoo said, "This is a good initiative taken by DSW for specially challenged people as these types of events are rarely organized . I am feeling very enthusiastic about the event taking place in the

university being as a participant."

Prof Talat said, "Such events boost the morale of the specially challenged people and brings a sports aptitude in them towards co-curricular activities. These types of events give them a chance to show their talent and potential in sports too. We all should actively take part in such events by encouraging them."

The culmination of the Marathon was followed by distribution of awards and participation certificates amongst them at Gandhi Bhawan Auditorium.

Week-Long Workshop On MOOC Concludes At KU



Tahil Ali
Srinagar

University of Kashmir (KU) on 24 June.

Seven day workshop on 'MOOCs e-content Development and Open Educational Resources' concluded here at UGC-Human Resources Development Centre (HRDC),

A total of 43 in-service faculty members belonging to various colleges and universities of the Jammu and Kashmir state attended the workshop.

Highlighting the role of university in promoting Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and e-content generation, Vice-Chancellor, University

of Kashmir Prof. Talat Ahmad said, "Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and e-content generation contribute significantly towards grooming creative thinking and innovative learning among the students and at the same time help the faculty to update their knowledge and skills through such faculty development programs."

He urged faculty members of various colleges and universities to serve as agents of change and harness constructive ideals among young learners.

Director HRDC, Prof. Shabir Ahmad Bhat elaborated upon the intended learning outcomes behind the workshop and need for everyone to have an access to open education because there has been a paradigm shift in academics.

"The main objective of the workshop was to sensitize the teaching faculty of colleges and universities about the advantages

of e-learning and to encourage them towards planning, designing, developing, delivering and implementing MOOCs so that they can keep pace with digital revolution," he said.

Meanwhile, Prof. Talat Ahmad distributed the certificates among the participants of the workshop.



Sopore residents complain against garbage dumping



Insha Rani
Sopore

The garbage collection point setup by Municipal Council (MC) Sopore in front of government offices here poses serious health hazards to the locals and commuters alike. MC Sopore has setup the garbage collection point in front of three main government offices which include Additional Deputy Commissioner's (ADC's) office, Police Station and Revenue office.

Objecting to the unhygienic conditions in front of the offices, locals complained that they have to suffer a lot due to the foul smell and garbage.

"The foul smell from the garbage irritates us and our customers due to which we have to

suffer a lot", said Mohammad Zahid, a local shopkeeper.

The shopkeeper told MERC Times since the local administration does not carry out regular cleaning, the garbage remains uncollected for weeks together.

"The situation has worsened now, since the local administration has failed to remove the garbage for the past three weeks. Foul smell emanates from the rotting garbage," said Nadeem Ahmad, a local resident.

"We have taken this issue to the notice of the officials on several occasions but no action has been taken yet", he added.

When contacted, Executive Officer MC Sopore, Ghulam Rasool Shah said: "We will remove the garbage collection point in next two to three days."



Schnian meer
Pulwama

Increase of illegal sumo-taxi stands in different parts of south Kashmir's Pulwama town is triggering traffic jam.

A number of illegal sumo-taxi stands have been established in Pulwama town. Around 50 vehicles running on Pulwama-Rahmoo, Pulwama- Gusoo and Pulwama-Wahibugh routes are being parked on roadsides in Dalipora area of Murran Chowk.

The residents alleged that the

concerned authorities are well aware about the increase of the sumo-taxi stands on roadsides in Pulwama town but they turn blind eye to the issue because they receive commission on daily basis from the taxi drivers. They said that the Municipal Committee Pulwama keep patrolling through the area in a recovery van but don't bother to take any action against the drivers.

Another unregistered sumo-taxi stand has been established on Pulwama-Srinagar road near Murran Chowk which stations almost 30 vehicles. The residents and commuters alleged that the stand is the root cause of traffic jam on half a kilometer stretch from Murran Chowk to mian Chowk Pulwama.

When contacted the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Pulwama, Mukhtar Ahmad Sofi said, "We are already thinking to shift all the stands to Drunu area of Pulwama."

Illegal sumo stands irking smooth vehicular movement

Heavy rain lashes Srinagar, SMC starts dewatering

Wajeaha Ali

Srinagar:

The process of dewatering has been started by Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) in the past 24 hours by pressing into the services both mobile and stationed pumps across the city, particularly at the vulnerable points.

Khurshid Ahmad Sanai, SMC Commissioner on June 12 took an audit of de-watering exercise in the city after areas inundated due to unprecedented showers over the past one day. Accompanied by SE Drainage, Executive Engineer Left River Works, Executive Engineer Right River Works, Executive Engineer Mechanical Division, Chief Sanitation Officer, AEEs and other officials, the SMC Commissioner visited various places including Regal Chowk, Jehangir Chowk, Lalchowk, Magarmal Bagh and Batamaloo.

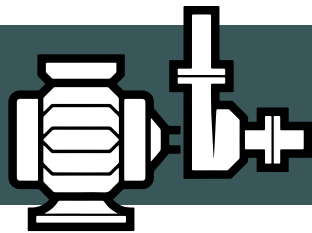
He passed on directions to the concerned team to keep dewatering stations in full operational mode round the clock and keep the standby diesel/generator sets in a state of readiness at the permanent dewatering stations.

“We are doing de-watering to the best of our abilities. Our men and machines are working constantly to ensure no civilian faces any inconvenience due to the rain water,” said Sanai.

The SMC has in place 80 pumping stations and 115 mobile pumping units. Besides this, SMC has put in place sucker machines and high pressure mobile dewatering units for quick disposal. The SMC has

prioritized areas and all those places where there are reports of submergence will be attended first.

“Major areas facing water logging have already been attended to,” added Sanai.



SMC has in place 80 pumping stations and 115 mobile pumping units. Besides this, SMC has put in place sucker machines and high pressure mobile dewatering units for quick disposal

Dog menace at Bagh-e-Mehtab

Ubaid Gul

Srinagar

Residents of Bagh-e-Mehtab staged a protest against SMC (Srinagar Municipal Corporation).

Locals complained that dog menace is on rise due to the secondary site of garbage.

“I can’t send my children to school alone,” said Abina Sadiq, a local resident. Nazir Wani, another local resident said “We can’t dare to come out from houses until someone is accompanying us.”

Chief Sanitation Officer Syed Nissar. While talking to MERC Times said, “We are actually looking for other secondary site. It is still in process. Inshallah we will solve this issue as soon as possible.”



Shaam-e-Ghazal held at KU

Sheikh Arsh
Srinagar

An event “Shaam-e-Ghazal” was organised by Urdu department, University of Kashmir here, at Ibn-e-Khaldoon auditorium, in the backdrop of a weeklong book fair here on June 21.

Kifayat Fahim, a Kashmiri classical singer, who is also an alumni of Urdu department enthralled the audience with his melodious singing.

A day long seminar on “The future

of Urdu journalism in Jammu and Kashmir” was also organised here by National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), where role of Urdu journalism in Kashmir was emphasized.

Eminent poets, broadcasters and journalists including BBC correspondent Riyaz Masroor and former Director Radio Kashmir, Srinagar Syed Humayun Qaisar participated in the seminar.

“Ghazal is the legacy of Urdu literature which covers diverse

topics ranging from love to politics. Events like these are pivotal in reviving Urdu language with which our identity is attached”, said Dr Mushtaq Haider, Assistant Professor Department of Urdu, University of Kashmir.

Speaking about the contributions of Kifayat Fahim, he said that the ghazal singer has been a student of Department of Urdu, KU. “Kifayat Sahab has been a brilliant student of Urdu and apart from being a renowned contemporary ghazal

singer, he is an excellent Urdu poet”.

The program culminated with Mehfil-e-afsaana in which eminent Urdu writers read their short stories.

“It was soothing to listen to the ghazal from legendary poets like Ghalib and Mir in the magical voice of Kifayat sahab. During the times when students like me are occupied with mundane academic routine, such events rejuvenate the sweet literary essence of Urdu language among us”, said Fazil Buchh, a student of Kashmir University.

VC distributes prizes among winners of Shaan-e-Ramadan

Kashmir University talent Hunt-2019 poster unveiled

Aarif Shah
Srinagar

Kashmir University (KU) distributed prizes among the winners of Ramadan festival which took place from 28th to 30th May this year during the month of Ramadan. The Prize distribution ceremony was held at Gandhi Bhawan, University of Kashmir here on June 28. The event was organised by the Department of Students Welfare (DSW), KU.

Vice Chancellor KU, Prof Talat Ahmad who was Chief Guest of the occasion in his speech congratulated participants and the organizers for organizing such events. “I congratulate everyone from teachers to non teaching staff, from students to scholars for enabling the varsity to achieve A+ grade in recent NAAC visit. It’s a collective effort of everyone, I couldn’t have done it alone.”

He further expressed gratitude over the 53rd rank of Kashmir University in the National ranking. Prof. Talat said, “It’s a milestone to achieve 53rd rank out of 4,000 University across India despite the given situations in the valley. We have to work hard to improve it further.”



Registrar KU, Dr. Nissar Ahmad Mir who was the guest of honour on the occasion expressed his gratitude on being part of the prize distribution ceremony of Shaan e Ramadan.

Speaking on the performance of University in the recently concluded NAAC visit by UGC, he said it. “It gives me immense happiness to see Kashmir University prosper.”

While welcoming the guests, Dean Students Welfare Prof. Raies Qadri presented momentos.

Department of Student Welfare also unveiled a poster of “KU Talent Hunt” for which registrations are open now under which various events including poetry, extempore,

debate, elocution, quiz, drama, skit, fine arts, folk music, western light music, Islamic calligraphy, nasheed, qawali and much more would be held.

Prof. Talat distributed prizes among the winners of various categories of Shaan- e- Ramadan. Basharat Hussain from Degree College Tral, Towseef Shabaan from Department of Arabic, KU, and Adil Akram from Government Degree College Pulwama bagged 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes respectively in Azaan competition.

In Husne Qirat competition Tanveer Ahmad Bhat of Department from Arabic, KU, Mohammad Ismail Wani from Department of Persia

and Umar Hameed bagged 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes respectively.

In Husne Naat competition Sameer Ahmad Shah of Amar Singh College, Heena Bano from SAM College Beerwah, Owais Sofi from Department of Music and Fine Arts, KU bagged 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes respectively.

Iram Malik from Department of Music and Fine Arts, KU, Zaira Shafi Shah from Government Degree College Nawakadal, Aneesa Noor from Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, KU bagged 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes in Islamic Calligraphy.

Meanwhile the jury of the Shaan e Ramadan which included Mr. Mir Shafi, Dr. Shahnawaz Shah, Mr. Iftikar Jaffer, Yousuf Naqashbandi and others were also felicitated on the occasion. The prize distribution was attended by students, faculty members from different departments and participants.

While talking to MERC Times many students appreciated the organisers and university authorities for conducting such programs. “I was so happy to participate in this festival. Thanks to Almighty, I have won 1st prize”, said Sameer Ahmad Shah, student of Amar Singh College.