

MERC TIMES



**MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**



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Winter landslides create panic amongst Charar-i-Shareef residents

Fazlu Rehmaan

Srinagar

Frequent landslides create panic among the residents of Charar I sharief in central Kashmir's Budgam district.

Areas like, Trajbal, Hapat Naad, Gulshan abad, Watal Moad, Waza Bagh, Pokhri Bal near Shrine, Arzan Garzan and Chonti Naad are prone to landslides in the town.

Around the shrine, Geanti Kuje, near old bus stands, is a place where most of the shopkeepers have established their markets and are at risk as frequent landslides continue to haunt the place creating panic among the local shopkeepers.

According to local sources, massive landslides takes place here in Alamkoot area of the town, where in every month almost 500 feet of land is witnessing massive transformation.

Alamkoot situates on yusmarg, Charar I sharief road, is being considered as the revered place for Sheikh-UI- Alam's brief stay.

"Regarding Alamkoot, we will lose its essence topographically as it will witness a drastic change in coming years, if government will not look into this matter seriously, charar I sharief will lose its connectivity to Yusmarg, Pakarpora and its adjacent areas as well," says a local person Abu Sajad, while talking to MERC Times.

Earlier in 2015 due to incessant rains massive landslides took place in these areas, resulted heavy toll of lives, blockage of roads, and damage of property, worth cores.

Around the shrine, the land is also witnessing continuous soil formation and frequent erosion. "The administration is doing nothing, for the betterment of this area, government should rescue the erosion hit areas as soon as possible, it creates panic especially during winter," says Abdul Hamid, a local vendor.

Locals blame government for not setting up any soil conservation department in the area. "Atleast there should have be a soil conservation department, which could monitor the continuous soil erosion and can aware masses to remain cautious, but unfortunately, we don't have one such department," said a noted local teacher, GA Rangreze.

Shaheena Bano, whose house is near to Gulshan Abad area, faces sleepless nights due to continuous erosion outside her home, "Our kitchen is close to the hillock, which is prone to landslides, last year, this hillock created massive erosion even it directly entered into our kitchen and had broken window panes, every winter, it creates trouble, where do I go with my children in these wintry days, my children are scared to go outside and play in the courtyard," she said.

According to information, near about 70 different households in charar I sharief are suffering badly due to continuous in their respective

Whenever we receive complaints, we make sure that we send the team who assess the situation and after that we make an estimate and send to higher authorizes for authorization," he said.



I am unaware of this issue and will initiate the necessary action rest I assure you that transport will be made available soon

Illegal parking: a serious concern of lalchowk shopkeepers

Fajar Shora

Srinagar

Numerous complaints by shopkeepers of Residency road and other areas have been received regarding business losses due to illegal parking outside their shops.

Saying that they have been suffering as people park their vehicles illegally in front of the malls and shops which hampers the movement of customers thus affecting their sale.

Adding they said that this problem was taken into consideration by the authorities for sometime but later the situation reversed again. Due to unavailability of parking space, the shopkeepers said they often lose sales and leaves them annoyed.

"A particular parking area has been demarcated for those who visit Lal Chowk and adjacent areas to park their vehicles but people still park their cars in front of the shops. This makes it difficult for our customers to park their vehicles, thus affecting our sales badly," said Riyaz Ahmad, a shopkeeper.

He said even after complaining against the illegal parking many times, no action was ever taken in this regard. This has been happening here since so many years but the authorities take it lightly.

"We have a separate parking area in the basement of the mall but due to rains it is often filled with rain water, making it difficult for us and our customers to park the vehicles. Also the employees who work in the nearby offices park their vehicles in front of the shops and when we reach our shops in the morning, the places are already occupied," said Muhammad Shafiq, a shopkeeper at Hotel New Residency.

He further added that they recently lodged a complaint about the matter with the concerned authorities but all in vain. The shopkeepers lose their customers because of non-availability of parking space for them. People prefer going to the shops where they can easily park their vehicles and do shopping easily.

"There are around 2-3 paid parking zones in different parts of Lal Chowk but people still park their vehicles illegally particularly in the Residency Road area. We make all possible efforts to stop this," said SSP Traffic Al-Tahir Jeelani.

He said either the cars parked illegally are taken away by using cranes or sticker challans are used to impose fine. "Violations have been a continuous process but we are working tirelessly to ensure smooth movement of traffic in the City centre," SSP Traffic (City) added.

There are around 2-3 paid parking zones in different parts of Lal Chowk but people still park their vehicles illegally particularly in the Residency Road area. We make all possible efforts to stop this

Seminar on climate change held at KU

Wajeeha Ali
SRINAGAR

The department of Earth Sciences University of Kashmir (KU) Friday organised a seminar on 'climate change vulnerability' of the state at the EMMRC auditorium.

During the seminar which was jointly organized by the Department of Earth Sciences, KU, and Kashmir Chapters of the Indian Meteorological Society (IMS) and Indian Society of Geomatics (ISG) the experts discussed various aspects of the climate change with special focus on the vulnerability of "sectors like water resources, glaciers and agriculture."

Delivering his presidential address Vice Chancellor, Prof Talat Ahmad, said "The issue of climate change is not a local problem but a global one as rising global temperature is a concern at global level. If this phenomenon continues, there shall be alarming repercussions in future."

He said that Kashmir University is working on different aspects of climate change and is seeking to "help both at individual and institutional levels."

"We as a society should try our level best to address the climate issues and we at university are open to any such collaboration or joint effort which is aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change on local flora and fauna," added Prof Talat.

Delving further on the theme of the seminar, Prof



Talat informed the participants that University has already constituted a Working Group on Climate Change Research with membership from the academia, government and the civil society, so that the outcome from the past and ongoing research are optimally used for developing a robust strategy for the mitigation and adaption to the climate change in the region.

Registrar and DCDC KU, Prof Neelofar Khan, who was the guest of honour on the occasion deliberated upon the need to sensitize the young generation towards the environmental issues at the school level so that they may come forward and contribute towards spreading awareness in the society.

She further asked the researchers and academicians for their contribution in tackling the issue of climate change.

Rice blast' worries Pulwama farmers

Wajeeha Ali
Pulwama

Due to prevailing 'rice blast' disease, many farmers in this south Kashmir district are worried after sustaining losses in harvesting the crop this year.

The farmers accuse government for negligence while claiming that no step was taken to tackle neither the disease with scientific means nor any departmental consultation was given to the farmers.

The villages where farmers faced losses due to the breakout of the disease were Litter, Panzgam, Rakh, Zahidbagh, Niloora, Allaiepora, Nowpora, Lassipora, Kakapora, Newa, Ratnipora of Pulwama district.

The disease has also affected the crops in Nahir, Khasipora and Chatrogam areas of Tral.

Muneer Ahmad, a resident of Alliepora village said that they have suffered heavy losses. "There was more than 50 percent decline in production as the 'rice blast' disease has tendency to reduce production," he said while demanding compensation from the government.

Showkat Ahmad Lone, another farmer said that



they many a times brought the issue in notice of the concerned department and asked them for conducting soil testing. "None of our demands have been fulfilled yet," he said.

The farmers alleged that even the crop varieties provided by agriculture department get affected by this disease.

They informed that besides agriculture, they have no secondary means of income to feed their families.

While demanding removal of brick kilns in their area, the farmers said that a dozen brick kilns were working in the Lasipora belt of the district, creating a massive pollution. "These brick kilns were largely responsible for the damages in crops and breakout of diseases," they said.

The farmers demanded compensation from the government for the losses which they suffered due to the disease.

Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) Pulwama, Mohammad Yousuf Shah said that rice blast affects the old varieties of paddy only and the varieties provided by the department have given bumper crop this year and that too without any kind of disease.

"Farmers must work in cooperation with the department so that this disease can be eradicated once for all," he said, admitting brick kilns are affecting the environment and the crops as well.

Hepatitis awareness program held at Government Sub-District Hospital Bijbehara

Wasfi Amin
Bijbehara

Government Sub-District Hospital Bijbehara held a program on hepatitis to educate participants about the communicable disease.

The program was conducted after large number of people belonging to the area and nearby villages had been admitted in the hospital.

Various nuances of infection control were discussed and stress was laid upon prevention of hepatitis by vaccines. The doctors also informed the people about the symptoms and precautionary measures to be taken in curbing the spread of disease. More stress was laid upon the prevention of disease among pregnant ladies and children below 15 years of age.

Dr Muzamil Ahmad, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) at the hospital stressed upon health workers especially working in critical areas like emergency and laboratory workers to get vaccinated to prevent themselves, families and patients from the disease.

He also informed that necessary measures were taken to provide free of cost medicine and vaccines to more affected areas.

Blood donation camp held at KU

Tanveer Mir
Srinagar

Department of Students Welfare (DSW), University of Kashmir organised a blood donation camp in collaboration with SAAVA- an NGO in Gandhi Bhawan on Tuesday.

The camp was inaugurated by Registrar KU, Prof Neelofar Khan. While inaugurating the one -day blood donation camp Prof Khan interacted with the volunteers and sought their feedback. "We at the University of Kashmir are at the forefront of such activities which are aimed at inculcating sense of social and moral obligations amongst the young generation who are the ambassadors of our tomorrow," she said.

A large number of students, faculty members, teaching and non-teaching staff voluntarily participated in the blood donation camp. According to the organizers a total of 85 blood points were collected in the camp. Dean Students Welfare, Prof Rayees Ahmad Qadri expressed gratitude towards the volunteers and organisers for making the event successful. Interacting with the donors on the occasion, he said that the main purpose of any education system should be the enlightenment of youth and endeavours like blood donation camps form the bedrock of such enlightenment.

Student volunteers and employees from different departments of Kashmir University and voluntary

donors from outside the university participated in the day-long blood donation camp. "Such camps are very important for mankind and many such camps should be organised from time to time in future so that many precious lives could be saved. I have donated blood first time in my life and it inculcated the spirit of humanity in me," said Tahir Mir, a student volunteer at KU.

The event was supported by JKSA PCS, J&K State Red Cross and SBI.



KU Vice Chancellor conducts Class representatives meet

Gowhar Iqbal
Srinagar

Kashmir University Vice Chancellor Prof. Talat Ahmad held a meeting with Class Representatives of different departments in Gandhi Bhawan here in Main campus. Class representatives from all the departments were present in the meeting and put forward their grievances and the VC assured them that all the academic matters will be looked upon and resolved by the university administration.

Some of the main grievances put forward by different CRs were; Vehicle ban, Attendance,

delays in different exams, obsolete syllabus and unitization among others.

Addressing the CR's VC said that the university administration will make sure to resolve all the grievances related to the academic functioning of the university. He assured the students that syllabus will be changed from the college level and the unitization exam system of P.G's will be discontinued.

The Controller of Examinations Prof. Farooq Ahmad Mir, Chief proctor prof. Naseer Iqbal and Kashmir University's Media Co-Ordinator Muslim Jan Fazili were present and responded to the questions of various CRs.

J&K BANK UNDER ITS CSR PROGRAMME DONATES

100 BICYCLES

50 GARDEN BENCHES

ONE BATTERY OPERATED VEHICLE

TATA WINGER AMBULANCE

TO
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

Mr. P



Kashmir University with 'Go-Green' initiative

Haris Arshid
Srinagar,

Ever since assuming the role of Chairman and CEO at J&K Bank, I have sincerely and seriously been working to forge partnerships with the leading academic institutions of the state. Staying focused on creating a strong industry-academia relationship, I strongly believe that mutual collaboration in the new fields of research and development will surely help us explore and create fresh opportunities for the socio-economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

The spokesman said that J&K Bank Chairman and CEO Parvez Ahmed made these remarks soon after handing over the keys of Critical Care Ambulance and 11-seater battery-operated vehicle for differently-abled students to the Vice-Chancellor Kashmir University (KU) Professor Talat Ahmad under the bank's CSR Program in presence of Registrar KU Dr Neelofar Khan and bank's Zonal Head Kashmir Central-I Tabassum Nazir.

On the occasion, the bank under its Go Green Initiative also dedicated 100 bicycles for in-campus commute and specially designed 50 comfortable three-seater garden-benches.

The function was attended by Dean KU Prof Zaffar Ahmad Reshi, Dean Academics Musadiq Amin Suhaaf, Controller Examinations Prof Farooq Ahmad Mir, President Kashmir University Teachers Association Muheet Ahmad, HoDs of various departments, faculty members, bank's

Cluster Head Fayaz Ahmad, Head Business Units University Campus Showkat Makhdoomi and other officials of the bank and university.

"The chairman further divulged the aim to reinvigorate relations with Kashmir University and incorporating new age products and customized services for an enhanced client experience.

"It is in this direction that very recently, we both entered into an engagement for Kashmir University as our Most Preferred Customer adding more gravity and privileges to our relations with you, he said.

Furthermore, he expressed his happiness to see the work in progress for the establishment of the bank's Digital Lounge cum thinking space within University premises which will further offer an immersive banking experience to the university with state of the art transaction and digital facilities.

As responsible Corporate Citizens, the chairman stated, "We have in the past come together for various CSR initiatives and we will continue to support more such engagements to help the University achieve its true potential as center of excellence. We value the contribution of Kashmir University to our state and society in creating reason-driven intellectuals for building a rational, successful society and as a mark of our acknowledgment to the hard work of outstanding students, we have already announced the institution of Gold Medals to the overall academic toppers of Kashmir University.

Besides, it is a privilege an honor to humbly

K BANK GO GREEN INITIATIVES



by

Parvez Ahmed
Chairman & CEO, J&K Bank



in presence of

Prof. Talat Ahmad
Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University



Monday, 8th October 2018



welcomes JK Bank's

dedicate the ambulance for health centre of the University, one 11 seater electric vehicle for movement of physically challenged students, Rs. 10 lacs as contribution towards the fund reserved for financially poor students, cycles for in-campus travel convenience as a GREEN initiative for the students of the University.

Citing entrepreneurship and self-employment as twin important areas of engagement between the two institutions, he added, "We are keen to actively support the ideas/ventures seeding out of the KU incubation centers for we see entrepreneurship and self-employment as the way forward for the productive engagement with the youth of the state."

He said, "My team will continue to work with you in exploring the areas of mutual collaboration and benefit to add-value to the great bonding we have with this institution of excellence and innovation."

Meanwhile, he informally agreed to the request of financial support made by Registrar KU for the university's upcoming student festival 'Sonzal'.

Speaking on the occasion, VC Prof Talat Ahmad thanked the Chairman for the gesture saying, "This is a very good gesture on part of the J&K bank we have a very good relationship with. The bank has always been helping us in a lot of ways and there is still a lot we can do in partnership with the bank."

We look forward to having the bank's digital branch with thinking space and all the modern facilities of banking in the university campus. The process in this regard shall be completed

soon, he said.

Echoing the concerns of Chairman Parvez Ahmed, the Vice-Chancellor said, "Both the bank and university need to join hands for promoting entrepreneurship and helping youth to take up different economic initiatives. For the need of the hour is work towards expanding the possibilities of self-employment in the state."

"The biggest resource of any place is its human resource. And the human resource in J&K is talented with exceptional advantages in language and its delivery. Let's work together to make J&K a hub of best human resource", he added.

The Vice-Chancellor was particularly happy to see the bicycles, which he said, were important for them to make the green campus campaign successful.

Appreciating the on-spot approval for sponsoring Sonzal festival by Parvez Ahmed, he remarked, "Parvez Ahmed has been very kind to assure help for the upcoming student festival.

Earlier, Registrar KU Dr Nelofar Khan welcomed the dignitaries and expressed gratitude on behalf of the university for the extra care taken by the bank.

She said, "We are thankful for the extra care the bank takes of our youth. We are really grateful for the bonding the bank has with the Kashmir University. This relationship is reciprocal, which will only grow and strengthen by the day." The function concluded with the vote of thanks presented by the Chief Proctor KU Dr Naseer Khan.

NATIONAL MOOT COURT COMPETITION BEGINS AT KU

Sadaf Masoodi

Srinagar

The Inaugural ceremony of the 'Kashmir University National Moot Court Competition-2018' was held here at Gandhi Bhawan, University of Kashmir on Monday.

Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Prof. Talat Ahmad was chief guest on the occasion while as Justice Hasnain Masoodi, Chairman, Selection-cum-Oversight Committee, Juvenile Justice Act and former High Court Judge was the guest of honour.

Prof. Mohammad Hussain Head and Dean, School of Law welcomed the guests while Prof. Anand Paliwal, Dean, College of Law, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, Rajasthan presented the key note address.

Prof. Anand Paliwal, In his key note address highlighted the importance of moot courts. He said that the moot courts help in the development of argumentative skills of a law student which is a prerequisite for becoming a good lawyer.

Stressing the need to develop advocacy skills among the students, Prof. Nilofar Khan, Registrar and Dean College Development Council, University of Kashmir impressed upon that the school of law should organise such programmes at departmental level frequently and assured of all administrative assistance in this regard.

In his address, Justice Masoodi laid emphasis on the constitutional goals set out in the preamble of the Constitution which a student of law and lawyers should pursue while contesting a case in moot court or actual courts.

Prof. Talat Ahmad impressed upon the students of law in general and the participants of the National Moot Court in particular to be well equipped with the advocacy skills in the present globalised world.

Prof. Mohammad Ayub former Head & Dean, School of Law while delivering the vote of thanks especially thanked the Law Society, Convenor of the Competition Dr. S.A. Bhat and Organising Secretary Hakim Yasir Abbas for organising this event.

The event was sponsored by the Jammu and Kashmir Bank.



Bandipora sports coach in HT's top 30 achievers' list



Mehvish Dilshad
Srinagar

Faisal Ali Dar, a martial arts coach from Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir has been listed in prestigious Top 30 Under 30 Achievers of the region at the seventh edition of the Hindustan Times (HT).

According to HT, a former international martial arts champion, Faisal set up a small martial arts training academy, Ali Sports Academy and has received a Youth achievers award at Chandigarh yesterday.

While talking about the award ceremony, Faisal said, "It is an honour to be awarded by Abhinav Bindra, a Olympic gold Medalist in shooting and sharing the space with him. You get a lot of exposure as well as make useful contacts, I even got to interact with the famous cricketer Virendra Sehwag, his words were very encouraging."

Faisal Ali is the first person from Sports field to receive HT's Young achievers award. The award ceremony is held every year by the HT from past 7 years where 30 people are chosen from diverse fields and are honored with the awards. All the people chosen are under 30. The main motive is to encourage the young people.

Commenting on sports infra structure of Bandipore he said, "As Bandipora district is without indoor stadium, still we manage to get gold medals in all the games. It is my request to the Governor to take into consideration this matter and provide us with the indoor stadium."

However, Faisal is responsible for training 8-year-old kickboxing champion Tajamul Islam and a 7-year-old Asian Karate gold medalist Hashim Mansoor.

"I want to expand the academy further in the Jammu division so every youth can defend themselves by training them properly," he added.

The panelists, comprised of the cricketer Virender Sehwag, actors Kartik Aryan and Yami Gautam, and athlete Neeraj Chopra.

J&K 'Save Youth Save Future' holds 'Build Kashmir' awards in Srinagar

Minya Tufail
Srinagar

In order to give due recognition to the personalities with par excellence in Art, Sports, Journalism, activism and other fields, "Save Youth Save Future"- Baramulla based NGO roped in Hotel Lala Rukh Srinagar with a mega first function of organization. The award ceremony was named as "Kashmir Build Awards".

Eminent personalities were felicitated on the occasion. Event Started with laudable voices of Ajaz Rah & Waheed Jeelani. Huge number of enthusiastic students participated in the occasion. Noted historian Zareef Ahmad Zareef and senior journalist and poet G N Khayal thrilled the audience with their persona.

In a key address chairman J&K save youth save future Mr. Wajahat Farooq Bhat thanks the audience and chief guests for their participation and make the ceremony possible

despite unfavorable situation in the valley.

Speaking on the occasion Zareef Ahmad Zareef highlighted the role of youth in building society. He said, Our young generation should learn their responsibilities towards the society and should keep themselves away from the menaces which are detrimental to health". Lauding the role of NGOs Zareef added that, "NGOs always work tirelessly behind the sights of people. They are on their toes during calamity and vulnerability".

The awards were distributed to number of personalities from different notable backgrounds which includes Irtiq Ayoub from Sports, Sajid Yousuf in Student activism, Shahid Imran in ground reporting, Author Saima Tabassum, Tajamul Islam - Kickboxing championship and many other meritorious students.

In his final address, Wajahat reiterated that his NGO will keep organising such kind to events to boost the morale of our aspiring youth.

15 years on Kupwara bridge yet to complete

Hyder Ali
Kupwara

Fifteen years ago construction of a bridge started in Kupwara in 2003. The Sunnarpora-Holi wooden bridge spans the Nalie Hudh stream in Kupwara and the new bridge was to replace the old one and make life of commuters easier. The construction of the bridge ran for few months only and was stopped for some unknown reasons.

Over the years, people have complained about injuries and fractures while crossing over the stream on a wooden bridge, said a villager.

Once completed, the bridge would connect dozens of villages with district headquarters Kupwara. "The villages of Kealpora namely Warsun, Meelyal, Samanthwur, Farikin etc, will get connected to Kralpora once this bridge is completed," the locals added.

When it rains and the level of water goes up in the stream it makes life tougher for the people using the bridge. "We have to pass our vehicles through this Nallah. But whenever there is a rise in the water level we have to keep the cars at the main road

and walk through this stream, the water level does not allow us to pass vehicles through this stream," Manzoor Ahmad Lone of Meelyal said.

The construction was started in 2003 by Rural Development department but was left incomplete, "the contractor got his money and left the bridge incomplete," said the villagers.

"We are not able to understand why the authorities are not passing any tender to complete this bridge, even the village is home town of political leader Sajad Gan Lone" locals added.

"The students had to suffer the most. We don't attend the school in rainy days as the water level goes up," a local student said.

"We approached Deputy Commissioner Kupwara for the completion of the bridge. He assured his help in the matter and said he will look into the matter himself but there has not been any progress since then, said a local head Abdul Samad."

Cheif Engineer Rural Development Department said, "The bridge was almost complete but got washed due to the floods. The proposed amount for the bridge was already released. We had to wait for funds before proper assessment of the work."

Govt order to make kashmiri subject compulsory in secondary schools not obeyed

Maleeha Wani
Srinagar

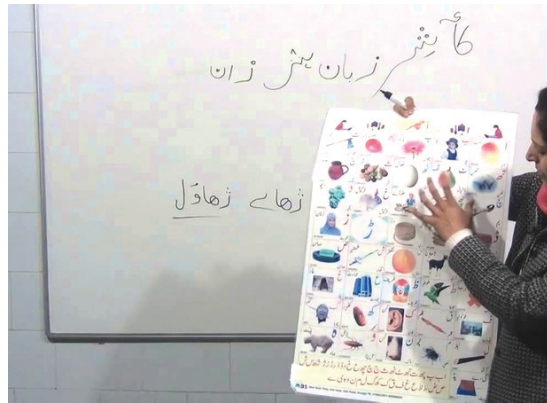
Government order to make teaching of Kashmiri subject compulsory in all secondary schools across Kashmir has no takers as most of the schools have yet to start it as compulsory subject.

The Kashmiri Language Union Jammu and Kashmir Union staged a protest demonstration at press enclave here on Thursday demanding Kashmiri subject to be taught and be made compulsory in practical in all Schools since the post remains vacant.

The protesting unemployed qualified Kashmiri language aspirants also demanded creation of Rehbar-e-Zuban scheme on the pattern of Rehber-e-Taleem.

“Kashmiri as a subject is not taught in the educational institutions despite the official orders from the administration,” Sofi Hilal Fayaz, Union General Secretary said. “If our mother tongue is ignored like this then we Kashmiris would soon lose our identity.”

He added, “Despite the fact that via order number 652-Edu of 2013 dated 26-06-2013 conveyed by SDP vide number Edu/SDP/RMSA/2013 DATED 13-12-2013 the Kashmiri subject was supposed to be taught at secondary level in



government and private schools of the state. But teaching of this subject is claimed to be neglected on the root level.”

He said in the recent past, government has again ordered “via order number 333-Edu of 2017 dated 19-06-2017” to implement Kashmiri, Dogri and Bodhi as compulsory sixth subjects in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in class 9th and 10th.

“In continuation to earlier orders issued on the subject, sanction is hereby accorded to be extension of teaching of regional languages, viz Kashmiri, Dogri and Bodhi to class 9 and 10th in all government and private (Recognised) schools

of the state as compulsory sixth subject (Graded) in areas where the language is spoken as mother tongue,” the order number 333-Edu of 2017 dated 19-06-2017 reads.

Bilal Ahmad Sheikh, PhD. degree holder in Kashmiri language said that ‘none of the schools have obeyed the DSEK order’ and are ‘not teaching Kashmiri subject’.

“ when we surveyed school to school we found that Kashmiri is not being taught in any school till date despite the government orders,” Bilal said.

Citing the example of ‘Government Higher secondary school Kulgam, Govt. Girls High School Hajin, Government Hr Sec. School Bandipora, Govt. Girls High School Nadihal Bandipora, Govt. High School Sonigam as some of the schools where Kashmiri subject is not taught despite government orders.

He added that, “the reason they get from the schools for not teaching the subject is that that the schools do not have any Kashmiri teacher and the posts for Kashmiri teachers are vacant.”

The Union with more than two thousand degree holders as members demanded implementation of government order.

They threatened of hunger strike if their demand is not met within a period of ten days.

Despite several attempts by Merc Times Director DSEK, G.N Itoo could not be reached for his comments.

Locked Hotels: Famous Pahalgam resort craves for tourists

HOTELIERS DISMAL

Imania Imtiyaz
Pahalgam

In Kashmir’s famous hill station Pahalgam, Hoteliers here are taking severe cost-cutting measures including layoffs as decline of tourism this season has put severe dents on their revenues, leaving them in the state of worry for their future queries.

Hoteliers say that many of their establishments remain locked this autumn.

The period of October-November, hoteliers say, used to be a bustling time for business in wake of holidays in most parts of India - Kolkata and Gujarat in particular. Visitors enjoying Durga Puja Holiday would throng the valley this season with a massive rush.

However, the number of tourists that visited this tourist resort in autumn this year has been negligible for second consecutive year.

“Our hotel internet and cable connections have been disconnected for the last three months and nobody complains because we have



almost no guests,” Mushtaq Ahmad, another hotelier, said.

He said he used to have all forty rooms in his hotel occupied this time of the year. “These days, not even three rooms are occupied on an average.” He added.

The laying off has left dozens of local boys jobless. “I have been working at a hotel for the last five years, but two months back, the owner asked me and other staff to leave. The only person working at the hotel right now is the watchman,” Manzoor Ahmad from

Yanner area of Pahalgam said. He said that he was planning to move to Shimla for work.

Tourism officials are aware of the depressing state of tourism in the state. According to Department of Tourism every year, efforts are being made to revive the industry and receive massive rush. The officials here believe that the industry is expecting to prosper in coming years. They believe negative coverage of National Media towards state has hampered the business of tourism adversely.

Google organizes first training workshop for journalists at KPC, Srinagar

Sahil Iqbal
Srinagar

Leading digital company Google on Monday organized a training workshop for journalists in the valley at Kashmir Press Club, Srinagar. The event was a part of the company's efforts to equip scribes with tools to fact check and identify fake data. Google has started the initiative to guard journalists from falling prey to false news stories. As part of the larger project the company will train 8,000 journalists in English and other languages in India.

It is building a network of certified trainers who in turn will train more journalists across the country. The focus of this training has been fact checking, online verification and digital hygiene for journalists.

The workshop in Srinagar was



organized in collaboration with Kashmir Press Club and New Delhi based media organization named DataLeads. Journalists from across the valley participated in the workshop and received hands on training. In a statement the Kashmir Press Club said, "We are really happy that we could organize this workshop. The aim of such events is to build capacity among our

members and journalists working in the valley. We thank Google for giving us this hands-on training and we hope to organize more such events in future".

Leading trainers delivered lectures from New Delhi on fact checking and the urgency of learning tools to debunk fake news stories and data. A detailed training manual was shared with the participants of the workshop.

Sports Council launches Dal cleaning drive



Saima Shakeel
Srinagar

In a bid to spread the message of cleaning water bodies, J&k state sports council Started an initiative to clean the water tracks of Dal lake in Srinagar.

The initiative was started from water sports centre Nehru Park and covered almost 1 km water track of the Dal lake.

More than 300 players participated in the drive & pledged to devote every Saturday for the noble cause.

While appreciating the initiative, secretary, J&k state sports council, Dr Naseem javaid chowdhary Said, "This will be the continuous process & every Saturday our players will be covering more area for cleaning this water body".

Water sports centre Nehru Park In charge Bilquees Mir said, " This is also a part of our training as no water activity could be done without preserving the water bodies".

On the occasion, several official from J&k state sports council were also present.

Anantnag Town caught in daily traffic jam, authorities decry helplessness

Muneeb Naqeeb
Anantnag

The traffic jam in the anantnag town has become a daily routine for the residents of the town, due to the increase in the number of vehicles moving on the roads, the traffic management is becoming a daunting task for the authorities in Anantnag district, especially in the main town. The mismanagement of the traffic and callous attitude of drivers and commuters has left the town in a continued mess, causing inconvenience to the people on daily basis.

Locals alleged that the administration is doing nothing in solving the problem, so to provide some relief to the people. The employees and the sick people often become the victims of the traffic jam, the vital routes leading to Child and Maternity hospitals often remain clogged with traffic, said a local resident bashir ahmad dar of main town anantnag.

The same scenes are witnessed at other vital spots in the town including Mehandi Kadal, Mattan Chowk, Janglat Mandi, K P Road and Khanabal main point. Couple of policemen can be seen on the beginning of the day, manning roads and chowks but as the day

advances they vanish in thin air.

"I had to get down from the ambulance to look for an alternative, while my wife was crying with labour pain inside the vehicle. Some callous people had parked their vehicles in the middle of road. We remained stuck for forty minutes just to reach 400 meters from the Maternity hospital at Sher Bagh due to traffic congestion", said Bashir Ahmed, a resident of Aishmuqam.

"On my way to office, barely six kilometers from my home, I am usually stuck for more than an hour every day. The sumo and tavera drivers park their vehicles just outside the general bus stand on KP Road which leads to the traffic jam," Aqib Ashraf, a bank executive said. "There is nobody to discipline these drivers. The administration considers the natives of this place as herds of sheep. Nobody bothers to check the violations by the public transporter operators", Ashraf said.

While talking to MERC TIMES, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Mohammad Younis Malik said, 'the administration has devised a plan to tackle the problem, we are taking the suggestions from civil society, media persons, and all the senior citizens of area to tackle the problem'.

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