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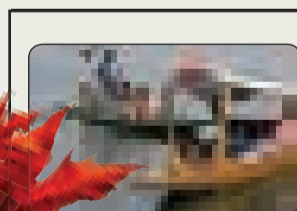
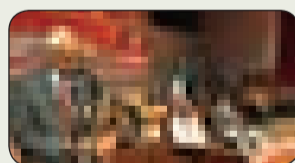
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MINIBUSES IN CITY DOWN BY 40% IN 2 YEARS

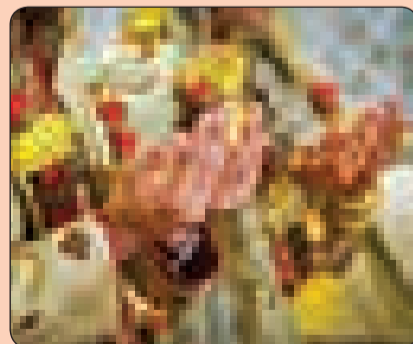


Public transport in Srinagar is dwindling fast as the number of buses plying on the city roads have witnessed about 40 percent decline in last two years. ▶
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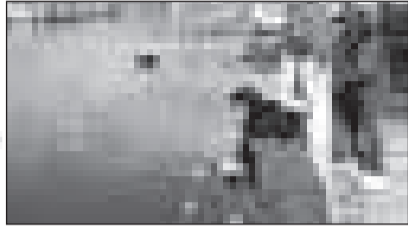


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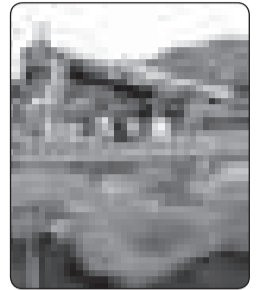


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ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL FIGURES, TILL APRIL THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS HAS TOUCHED 2 LAKH MARK, 5000 MORE THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR. AND SINCE THE DEATH OF AFZAL GURU THE RECORDS SAY THAT 1, 25000 TOURISTS HAVE VISITED THE VALLEY.



KASHMIR TOURISM SURVIVES EARLY SCARE

Shafiq Shah

Dal lake, one of the most famous lakes in the subcontinent, is choicest destination for the tourists. Shops dealing in handicrafts on the banks of the lake attract tourists to buy indigenous products as souvenirs.

"These shawl are so beautiful, I want to take each one of them home," says Ms Nazreen Hussain from Assam, who has come for a five-day holiday to Kashmir. "I was so mesmerized by the landscape that I want to spend some more days here."

The tourist flow has increased in Kashmir, which a few months back was hard to anticipate as tumultuous situation prevailed in the valley.

"There were numerous incidents, like hanging of Afzal Guru, armed attack on CRPF camp at Bemina, which were hampering tourist flow to Kashmir. Due to the circumstances, we had to face lot of financial problems. But in the middle of the year, tourist rush began to increase gradually which proved to be very beneficial for us," said Rauf Trambo, a prominent

IN THE MONTHS OF MARCH AND APRIL, LESS NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISITED THE VALLEY. I THOUGHT THIS YEAR IS GOING TO BE FUTILE BUT WITH PASSAGE OF TIME THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN OUR BUSINESS

tour travel operator of the valley

Some tourists pointed finger at Indian media for giving hype to these incidents.

"I thought the situation is not congenial here, which is why I put off the trip for some time. But once I was here, I found that media was not showing the true picture of the situation in the valley," said SKBhattacharya, a tourist from Kolkata.

According to official figures, till April the number of tourists has touched 2 lakh mark, 5000 more than the previous year. And since the death of AfzalGuru the records say that 1, 25000 tourists have visited the valley.

Shikara wallas, handicraft traders and hoteliers claim to have witnessed a disappointing response in the early months of the year, but the upcoming months have different stories to tell.

"In the months of March and April, less number of tourists visited the valley. I thought this year is going to be futile but with passage of time there was considerable increase in our business," said Ali Mohammad, Vice-president of Shikara Association.



"BOTH THE STATE POWER DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND NATIONAL HYDROELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION HAVE FAILED TO COMPLETE THE PROJECTS WITHIN THE STIPULATED TIME DUE TO THEIR INDIFFERENCE."

CANCER SOCIETY OF KASHMIR: RAY OF HOPE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Sheema Farooq

Cancer Society of Kashmir emerges as a ray of hope in the need of hour to the cancer patients of the valley.

As the number of cancer cases is increasing with each passing day, Cancer Society of Kashmir (CSK) has taken the responsibility to aware the patients that cancer is curable if diagnosed in time.

When in this busy world people have no time for their families, members of society work from dawn to dusk to lend their services to the patients who visit the society.

Established in March 1999, there was overwhelming response from the cancer patients who thronged (CSK) for free consultation. The society comprises of doctors, bureaucrats, academicians, advocates, journalists, writers, and businessmen.

"Seeing alarmingly high rate of cancer in the valley, I thought of having a society which can help these patients' especially the poor patients," said Dr. Showkat Ali Zargar who is the Chairman CSK.

Doctors who work with CSK said that they are planning to establish need



based adequate diagnostic and modern therapeutic facilities by establishing cancer hospital, educate and train medical, nursing and other volunteers for cancer work, and to facilitate their training in India and abroad.

"Our main purpose is that we want to make our valley free from cancer and we are working in this direction," said Dr.Zargar.

The society has made technical teams who have a launched a massive screening program at district headquarters in

collaboration with concerned health officers. The equipments, medicines etc. needed to make this program operational are already available with CSK to make these programs successful.

"We are getting positive signs till now and people and officials have extended their full support, which boosts our morale," said Dr.Zargar.

"We received 50 lakh rupees last year from people as donation, and we are hopeful this year it will get double, so that we can lend our services for the cancer patients in a better way," he said.

CSK also provided services during the recent unrest in the valley and provided medicines to cancer patients in their homes.

"During the unrest they were the only people who came to us and gave us the life saving medicines," said a cancer patient Ghulam Nabi.

The society is also organizing awareness camps in every nook and corner of the valley so that people get educated about this dreaded disease.

"We have to spread awareness among the masses about the cancer and we are satisfied by the response," added Dr Zargar.

J&K fails to avail RGGVY benefits

Muzamil Bashir

The implementation of multi-crore Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) is going at snail's pace in Jammu and Kashmir. The program is aimed to provide electricity to all rural households.

Official data reveals that completion of the first phase of the program seems to be distant dream.

Against the 237 unelectrified villages taken up under the program, only 185 have been completed.

Same is the position of 3525 partially the similar can be seen in 3525 particularly electrified villages, of which only 2958 have been

electrified villages. Among them only 2958 have been electrified.

The situation is no different in third category. Against 80381 Below Poverty Line (BPL) Households, electrification of 60157 has been done till date.

Officials blamed the lax response of implementing agency as sole factor for poor performance in the program.

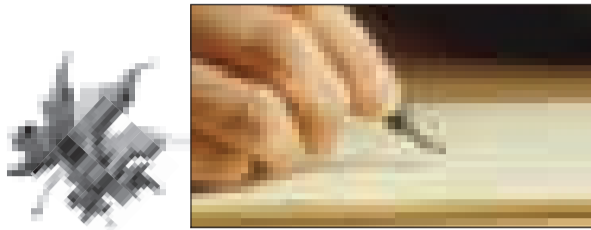
"Both the State Power Development

Corporation and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation have failed to complete the projects within the stipulated time due to their indifference. The state government cannot escape from the responsibilities as it has failed to monitor the projects properly, virtually giving them (implementing agencies) a free hand", they said.

"The uncertainty looms over whether the centre would launch the second phase of the program in JK due to delay in undertaking the completion of the first phase." he said.

Pertinently, the first phase of the program is being taken up at the cost of Rs 940 crore. While Government of India has released Rs 791 crore, the state has spend Rs 737 crore so far.

THE STATE GOVERNMENT CANNOT ESCAPE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AS IT HAS FAILED TO MONITOR THE PROJECTS PROPERLY, VIRTUALLY GIVING THEM (IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES) A FREE HAND"



"CIVIL SERVICE IS ALL ABOUT A SMARTLY DONE HARD-WORK. ANYONE CAN BE A HARD-WORKER, BUT ONE HAS TO BE A SMART-WORKER AS WELL. TO ALL CIVIL SERVICE ASPIRANTS —GIVE YOUR BEST AND SHOW THE COMMITMENT TO YOUR GOAL,"

'I WANT TO CURE THE AILING ADMINISTRATION'

With the goal of alleviating the ills, the larger society in the state is facing, **Neha Sharma** of Jammu jumped into the fray and emerged as topper in the recent state level civil services examination, bidding farewell to her career in medicine. **Mudasir Majeed** talked to the BDS doctor who is all set to be an inspiration for civil services aspirants in the state.

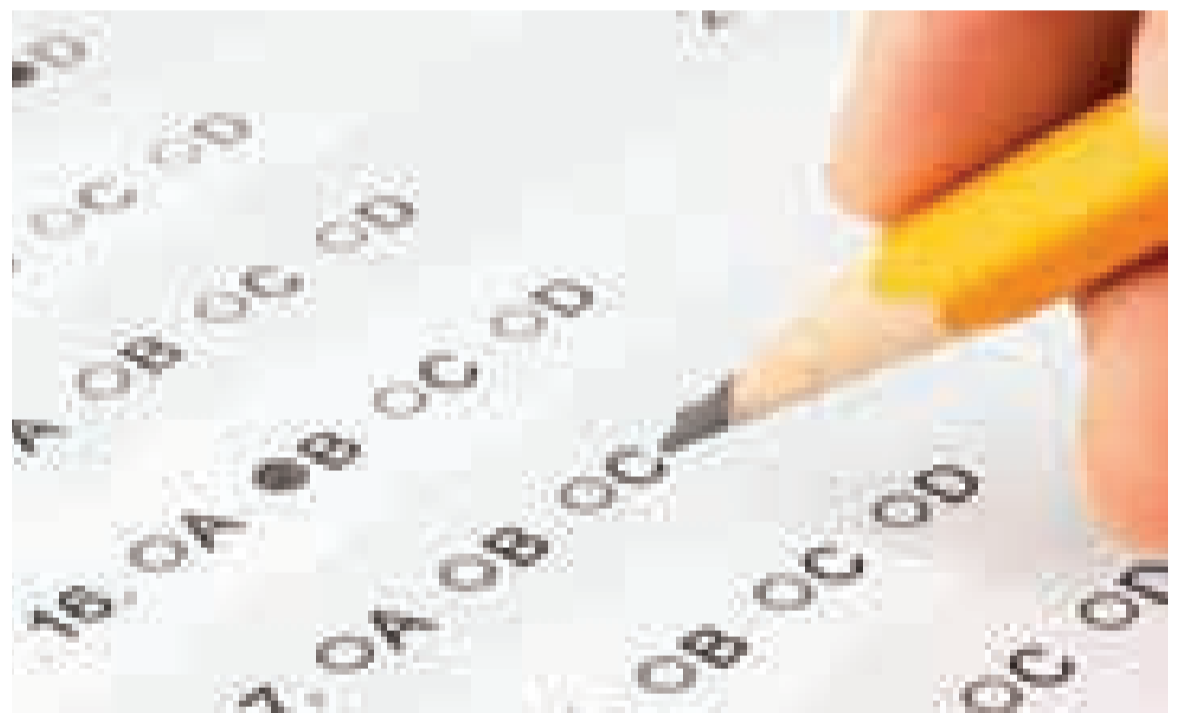
In 2009 it was Shah Faesal, who gave up his career in medicine, opted for civil services and emerged as the first Kashmiri who topped Indian Administrative Services. But this year there is one more doctor from the state who too tried her luck in civil services at state level and emerged as the topper.

Neha Sharma, 26, a resident of Trikuta Nagar Jammu topped the recently conducted Kashmir Administrative Service examination.

"My joy is inexplicable. I cannot put it in words. I hadn't even a faint idea that I would top the KAS examination. But I haven't just got selected but topped as well," says exhilarated Neha Sharma.

After passing the 12th class from Model Academy Jammu, Neha got selected for BDS in Indra Gandhi Govt Dental College Jammu. She says that it was due to the limited opportunities in the field of medical sciences that she had to make her mind for civil services. The KAS topper further says that every year around 200 students complete BDS but there are only 12 postgraduate seats, that too, in Kashmir.

"Due to the limited opportunities and the desire to bring some major changes in



the existing setup, I realized that if I make it to the civil services. I can cure the ills plaguing the administrative setup, which wasn't possible as a dentist. I decided to crack the civil services examination and I am happy that I have accomplished my aim," Neha says.

Immediately after finishing the BDS, Neha joined a coaching academy in Gandhi Nagar Jammu. "I took my coaching from The Civils in Jammu. Being a graduate in dentistry it was difficult for me to make the right optional subject choice. But all my worries ended when I talked to teachers in my coaching academy. I took Sociology and Psychology as my optional

subjects and they ensured it that I don't feel any difficulty in understanding them," Neha says.

Neha topped the KAS examinations in her second attempt. She says, "My eyes are now on Indian Administrative Services. I am hopeful that I will make it through. But for now I am joining the Kashmir Administrative Services".

The KAS topper says she has always been a top-rank holder. She credits her achievements to the support, she had from her parents. "Nothing is difficult if you have your parents supporting your goal. My father reposed unflinching faith in me. Today I have made him proud," Neha says while attributing her

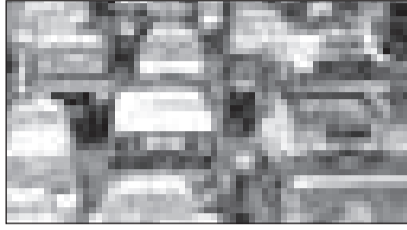
success to her parents.

Neha got married to an Agriculture Officer in 2011. She says she has no hindrance from her husband and in-laws to pursue her dreams. "My parents, husband and in-laws have no qualms with my plans of going for higher levels in the administrative services. They have always encouraged me. If I get selected for IAS I will get a bigger role to play," she says.

It was Shah Faesal and Sherish Asgar who kept inspiring Neha when she was preparing for Civil Services. Calling the two IAS qualifiers as her inspiration, she says, "They inspired and continue to inspire me. I hope this inspiration helps me to achieve one more goal".

Neha says it took her nearly two years to make it to civil services. She says that hard-work and perseverance was the key to her success. "Civil service is all about a smartly done hard-work. Anyone can be a hard-worker, but one has to be a smart-worker as well. To all civil service aspirants —give your best and show the commitment to your goal," she adds.

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EVERY YEAR MANY BUSES ARE TAKEN OFF THE ROUTES ACCORDING TO SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES. UNDER THE GUIDELINES, THE VEHICLES AFTER 25 YEARS OF SERVICE CANNOT PLY AND SHOULD BE REPLACED BY NEW ONES.

MINIBUSES IN CITY DOWN BY 40% IN 2 YEARS



PEOPLE: BUS RATIO STANDS AT 700:1

Umar Hayat/Iqbal Kirmani

Much to the inconvenience of daily commuters, public transport system in Srinagar is dwindling fast as the number of buses plying on the city roads have witnessed about 40 percent decline in last two years.

“The number of minibuses used for public transport available in Srinagar city—has come down to 1880 in January 2013 from 3021 in January 2011,” said Superintendent Police Traffic, Haseeb-ul-Rehman.

Just 1880 minibuses for more than 13 lakh city residents make the people-bus ratio of 700:1. An average minibus can have 15 to 20 seats.

Every year many buses are taken off the routes according to Supreme Court guidelines. Under the guidelines, the vehicles after 25 years of service cannot ply and should be replaced by new ones. Majority of the owners do not replace their buses. Rather they abandon the profession

after discarding the worn-out vehicles.

Shortage of public transport poses trouble to the regular commuters who have to face the problem on daily basis particularly during peak hours in the morning and in evening, exponentially. Meanwhile in little more than a year (from December 2011 to January 2013), 33500 cars went on roads in Srinagar city alone, Assistant Regional Transport Officer Abdul Majeed Bhat.

With such a large number of people opting for their own vehicles, the traffic congestion on the roads especially on peak hours results in heavy jams according to the traffic police officials. The number of traffic accidents in the city have also gone up, according to traffic police.

A daily commuter, Ramzan Rasool from HMT area, said he cannot afford a car and is dependent on public transport. “I have to face the shortage of passenger buses every day. Most of my time is wasted in wait for the buses. Most of times the buses are jam-packed, it becomes difficult for me to keep standing in a bus,” Ramzan said.

The problem doesn't stop here. During evening hours, most of the transport in the city is off the roads and people who have to work till late evenings find it difficult to travel back home.

“To return home in the evening, I have to board an auto-rickshaw which I cannot afford as there is no bus available after 7 pm. It drains my pocket,” said Arshid Rather, who works as a salesman in Lal Chowk.

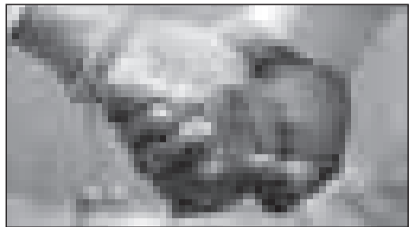
Traffic Police Department and Regional Transport Office, pass the buck on the issue. “There are no new investors in the public transport sector. The number of vehicles is decreasing continuously. Besides, we lack a comprehensive transport policy,” said Mr Bhat of the Transport Office.

But the president of Srinagar Minibus Owners and Drivers Association does not agree with Bhat. “We had asked government to provide us with subsidy and have a rehabilitation program. As buses need heavy investment and we have already loans pending, we cannot afford to buy new vehicles on our own,” he said, adding that government needs to come up with a policy for bus drivers and owners on the lines of tourism and agriculture, where it will provide easy loans and other benefits so that the problem can be solved.



THERE ARE NO NEW INVESTORS IN THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SECTOR. THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES IS DECREASING CONTINUOUSLY. BESIDES, WE LACK A COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORT POLICY.





"VILLAGERS GET EXCITED WHEN SOMEONE GETS MARRIED IN THE OTHER VILLAGE THOUGH HARDSHIPS THAT THEY FACE ARE INEVITABLE,

A MUSLIM CARETAKER OF HINDU SCHOOL AND TEMPLE

Yusra Khan

Ghulam Mohammad Malik is doing his best to preserve the institute and temple of Kashmiri pandits who emigrated in early 90's.

The 72-year old retired teacher has dedicated his post retirement life to look after the Hindu school, Vidhya Bhawan, at Khankah-e-sokhta in Nawa Kadal of old Srinagar.

"Pandits blame Muslims for their exodus in the valley, but we never forced them to leave Kashmir. It was their decision to leave the valley," Malik says.

The school was established by the Roop Bhawani Trust in 1959 in memory of a poet who lived in the area. After the outbreak of militancy in 1989, Pandits migrated to Jammu abandoning their houses, temples, schools and other properties, and the school

too met the same fate.

It was reduced to an empty structure after its last principal, Shiela Kaul, left the valley. The school was left without staff and students, and its registration was cancelled.

However, in 1995-the middle of the fierce decade in Kashmir-Malik adopted the school. He renewed its registration, and renovated the building. He continues to pay the rent from his pocket.

"My daughter helped me a lot in rebuilding the school," he explains, "When I took charge of it (school), it had only 23 students. I managed to increase the roll to 103."

Besides running the school, Malik is playing a crucial role in preservation of the temple adjacent to it. He, in fact, rebuilt the temple after a pandit lady visited the place recently.

"When I started to run the school, I didn't

renovate the temple. However, couple of years back, a Hindu lady visited and felt sad after seeing its condition. Only then I decided to rebuild it," he says. A new Shivling stands on the white tiled floor in the temple surrounded by various idols, lamps and joss sticks.

"We bought Shivling from Allahabad and idols from Delhi. We decorated and maintained it like our home," shameema, the caretaker of the temple, adds.

Vidhya Bhawan means a temple of knowledge and the school was given the name by its pandit founders.

Malik once thought to give the school a new name, but turned against his own intuition, believing: "it is perfect name for the institution, which belongs to the minority."

His only regret is: "Pandits never visited the temple or school. It's their place and I am only a caretaker."

Under development mars marriage prospects

Javaid Iqbal

Maddi, a village some 50 Kms from Handawara town, is suffering from underdevelopment. Poor health care facilities, unsafe drinking water, and bad roads are part of the village profile.

Farming is main source of livelihood for this village. Though people find it profitable, but on some occasions families face financial constraints, said Fayaz Wani, Rehber-e-Taleem (RT) teacher at Government Boys Primary School in the area.



"Most of the people are labourers here and work in different parts of the valley. They come back in harvesting season. Women prefer to stay at home and are busy in carpet weaving but they want their daughters to study further. That is why we are having more female students at this school as compared to male ones," Fayaz added.

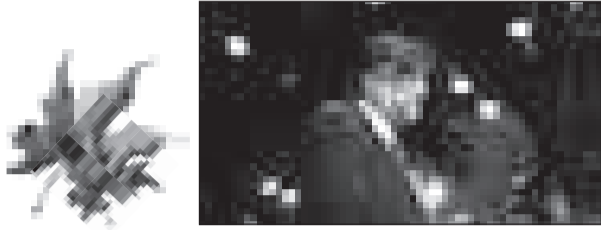
The village is based on 150 households they marry within the community "as no one is willing to send or take bridegroom from this village," said village head,

Ghulam Muhiddi Shalla

"No one is ready to enter our village, as condition of roads is so pathetic that whenever we send proposal of marriage to any other village, they prefer to stay away, that is why we have no alternative but to marry within our own community," Shalla said

"Villagers get excited when someone gets married in the other village though hardships that they face are inevitable," he added

The village is comprised of 150 households they marry within the community as no one is willing to send or take bridegrooms from this village



"WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES," PROF TALAT AHMAD SAID, "THAT WHETHER THE EDUCATION WHICH WE ARE IMPARTING TO THE STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS IS SUFFICIENT TO TRAIN THEM TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE."

KU HOSTS PARALLEL SCIENCE CONGRESS SEMINARS

Safena Wani

Keeping the need of Science for development of society in view, a three-day Regional Science Congress and 9th JK Science Congress were held at Kashmir University in the first week of October this year on the theme "Innovations and Advances in Science and Technology".

In the inaugural session of the Congress, J&K Governor and Chancellor, N.N. Vohra, who was chief guest on the occasion called upon the scientists and researchers to "rededicate their efforts" for effective application of scientific knowledge and technological innovations "to address the challenges facing the state and the country."

As the need for achieving the second green revolution for enhancing agri-productivity, Governor said: "Participating scientists in the Science Congresses will help their efforts for identifying viable solutions for meeting these challenges."



Around 1000 delegates from across India participated in two parallel Science Congresses in which around 700 research papers covering various spheres of science were read.

Prof. Talat Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of Kashmir University in his welcome address gave details of the initiatives being taken by the University for the promotion of teaching and research activities.

"We need to ask ourselves," Prof Talat Ahmad said, "that whether the education which

we are imparting to the students and scholars is sufficient to train them to face the challenges of life."

During the three day Congress a special convocation was organized to confer Doctorate of Science on Prof. Goverdhan Mehta, National Research Professor School of Chemistry University of Hyderabad.

These two joint science Congresses were organized in collaboration with Indian Science Congress Association, Department of Science and

Technology- Government of India, J&K State Council for Science and Technology and the J&K Academy of Sciences.

On the concluding day of the seminar a special award ceremony was conducted for young scientists and innovators. Dr. A.R.Trag, Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Science and Technology, Prof. I.A.Hamal, Vice Chancellor of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Deans, Heads of Departments were among those present on this occasion.

RESIDENTS OF NAGI MOHALLA DEMAND CONSTRUCTION OF FOOT BRIDGE

Bilal Bhat

Residents of Nagi Mohallah, Saida Kadal, are up in arms against the government for "depriving" them of basic amenities of life and taking their plight for granted.

The locals of Nagi Mohallah have been demanding construction of new bridge since long but to no avail. Locals accuse the authorities for making their life hell by failing to provide them basic facilities of life.

"Why are we not provided better roads, proper sanitization by municipality and why our old and risky bridge is not renovated, We voted for National conference MLA Mustafa Kamal, who promised us to address over problems but still our demands are not fulfilled," a local resident said.

Castigating ministers, higher officials and LAWDA for making their life miserable the president of the Mohallah Ghulam Muhammad Nagu said, "We are living in wretched condition. We lack proper sanitization, roads and drinking water. The scarcity of water has made our lives miserable. We don't have proper toilet system We are not even allowed to construct them ourselves under the garb of being part of the green belt. Despite continuous requests to LAWDA and other authorities ours pleas

have fallen on deaf ears"

The broken old foot bridge is cause of worry for the people especially school going children, which always puts their life in jeopardy. "In the past we tried to repair the foot bridge ourselves but the authorities stopped us by using brute force."

"We have been visiting concerned MLA for about three months He sanctioned Rs. 36000 for the renovation of the 640 ft long bridge but LAWDA still denied the construction of the bridge", the locals added

The locals have apped the government for relocating them and renovate the flawed bridge on humanitarian basis. The VC could not be contacted in this regard despite many calls, MLA Mustafa Kamal, he assured to address the grievances of people and relocate them.

EVERY TIME



RIDING THEIR WAY TO ECO-FRIENDLY CAMPUS

Fida Hussain

With the alarming increase in Carbon Monoxide (CO) levels in Kashmir, many students and teachers of Kashmir University have started riding bicycles as an initiative to make the campus eco-friendly.

The initiative came in the backdrop of the recent report by the Central Pollution Control Board in which alarming increase in CO in Kashmir has been reported.

The inspiration for the initiative is Former Head, department of chemistry Dr. Khaliqz Zaman Khan.

"I have been coming by bicycle for 25 years now to the department. People always mocked at me as being one of the top varsity official and using cycle, but I never gave up." said Dr. Zaman.

Appreciating the students for this initiative he said, "It is a good step that students are coming forward to make the campus eco friendly and I personally feel that it doesn't make any sense to come in a car within the campus."

He said the university administration should come up with the decision of banning the pollution causing vehicles inside the campus and push for the cycling service.

"With growing vehicular congestion, rising fuel costs and increasing pollution, people are

now increasingly drawn to the good wheels. The move is also intended to economize the funds and also as a healthy exercise."

Rouf ul-Aalam Bhat, Assistant Professor, Department of Electronics and Instrumentation, Kashmir University took an initiative and

departments in vehicles.

Rouf said, "Use of vehicles within the University campus is the prime reason for the air pollution on the campus. We want people to make use of cycles and add to our efforts of greener campus."

Mansoor Ahmad, one of the students of Electronics and Instrumentation Department travels 10 km everyday on his bicycle, "I travel by bicycle every day. It's an initiative towards the eco-friendly campus."

"In addition to an initiative, it helps to be both physically and mentally fit. It becomes easy for us to come to the varsity using cycle."

He said he bought a bicycle because he was inspired by others for the same.

Nasrul Islam, a Research Scholar in the Department of Chemistry said "I started using bicycle after getting motivated from the other cyclists on the campus."

"I feel good using bicycle as a means of transport because it saves my time without causing any harm to the environs."

"It is a good beginning to make the campus eco-friendly and I also want to contribute a little bit in it," said a student of English.

The cyclists said the initiative not only helps in eco-friendly campus "but also helps us to move within the campus easily and fast." They said more and more students are using bicycles and it is a good sign toward the green campus.



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