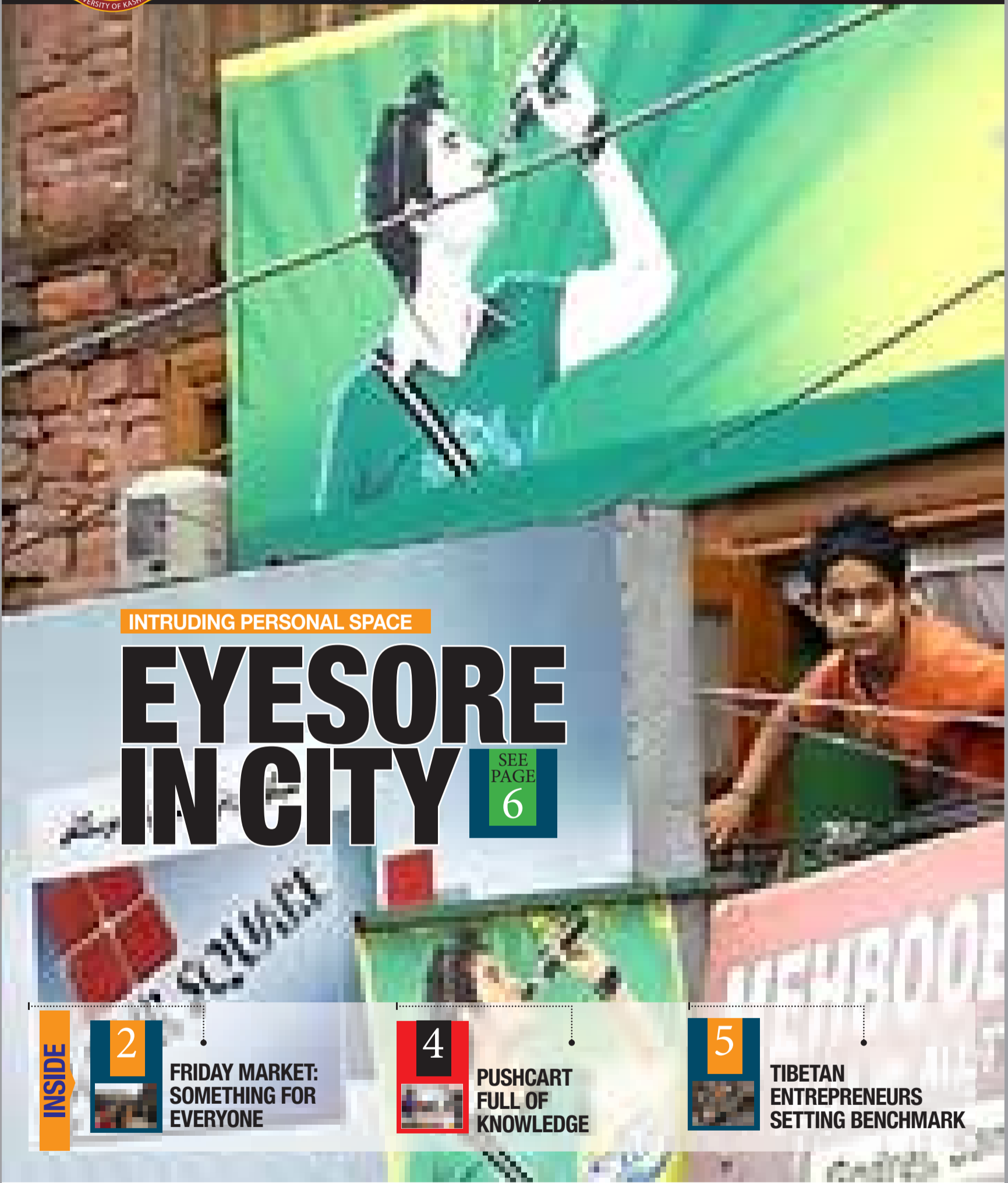


MERC TIMES



Vol 8 | No 01 | MARCH 15, 2015

MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



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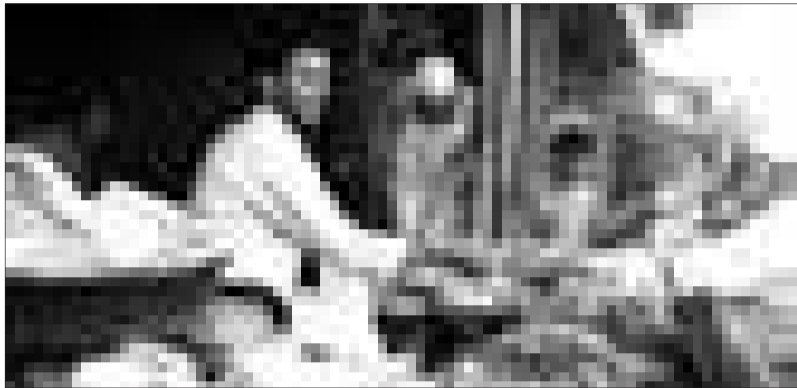


Photo Credits: Suhail

❖ Ubaid Jeelani

Srinagar: The Friday market around Dargah Hazratbal, the famous shrine, is known for a variety of things that are sold here. People mostly locals' visit the highly venerated place to offer their Friday prayers and also shop a bit in this diverse locality.

Locals gather in large numbers to buy different items from clothes to vegetables to utensils in the market. Besides Sunday market at Lal Chowk, Friday market at Hazratbal is becoming a famous spot for people to shop.

"I usually visit Hazratbal on Friday to buy fresh vegetables from vendors as most of them gather at one place making it easy for everyone to choose from a variety of vegetables. It is a perfect place for a middle class family to buy household items at reasonable rates" says Shanaz Bhat, a resident of Saderbal, an area within a few kilometers of the market.

People who visit here on Fridays mostly belong to the old city. Besides Srinagar, residents of district Ganderbal also come in large numbers. All

age groups can be seen in huge numbers. Men, women kids all make this market lively and also boost the local trade.

Some of the Friday market specialties that attract all and sundry include pickles, "halwa paratha", and the famous "rajma masala". Hawkers and shopkeepers set their special Friday stalls to attract more customers. From a variety of eatables to handmade tools to pottery work, the market has something for everyone to buy.

"On Friday we see a flurry of customers as compared to rest of the week. People come to offer their prayers and also choose to buy from here as hawkers sell at economical rates," says Shabir Ahmad, a local hawker who sells footwear on his pushcart.

Hamid, a Tibetan from Hawal finds the market unique.

"I often come here with my wife to buy household items. My children always tell me to buy "Nadir Munjas" whenever I make a visit to Dargah as it is the best place where you can almost everything you need," says Hamid.

GUNSMITHS OF CITY FACE OFFICIAL APATHY

Denied trial permission, import license

❖ Sumaiya Yousuf

Srinagar: The denial of trail permission is leading to the gradual decline of Kashmir based gun factories, which have the specialization of manufacturing carved guns with famous 'deodar' (special wood) barrel in Kashmir.

Imtiyaz Ahmed Ahangar, 48, a known gun manufacturer in his locality of Bandoon Khar Mohalla in Srinagar, blames officials for their being "non-serious" towards their "long pending" grievances.

"Due to government apathy we the gun manufacturers have suffered a lot since, it has been now two years that we are not given export license from the state government" he said.

Zahoor Ahmad Ahangar, another gun smith tells a similar story as according to him the state government has 'miserably' failed to keep up their age old trade of gun manufacturing.

Imtiyaz's ancestors started this business in Kashmir in 1925. Skilled in weapon making, his ancestors didn't stop making guns despite threats during the insurgency of 1990. The gunsmiths influenced the whole locality in Srinagar and came to be known as Bandoon Khar Mohalla.

Imtiyaz no more cares for the annual quota for production of guns but what bothers him is the permission of testing, the main problem which is hampering their trade to flourish.

"Forget about quota, we are immensely suffering due to denial of permission for trails and tests for the guns we make, it is really a big problem for us," he added.

Imtiyaz Ahmed is the owner of Srinagar's Subhana Gun Factory, which has been in business since years and is one of the oldest gun factories in Kashmir. Prior to 1947, Subhana and other gun factories were buzzing with activity, supplying thousands of guns to the princes and elites of India.

"I remember all the ups and downs in my journey in this field, my fore-fathers used to supply guns with unique designs to the elites of India. They would also sell the guns to the Maharajas of Bhopal the culture rich capital of Madhya Pradesh," Imtiyaz's father Ghulam Rasool Ahanger said.

He added there are just two gun factories left in the Valley and new ones cannot come up as new licenses or registration is denied by the government.

The factory owners have been pleading to Government for increasing their quota, however, nothing has been done so far while as the on the other hand gun factories in Jammu are booming with the quota double then that of Kashmir.

The factories currently manufacture 12-bore single- and double-barrel guns that are mostly used in sports and are bought by Army and security forces. The total quota of Kashmir gun industry is 300 guns per year.

DECADE OLD HIGHWAY PROJECT LINGERS ON, COMMUTERS SUFFER

❖ Gazanfar Afroze

Srinagar : The slow paced road widening project on Parimpora- Shalteng stretch of Srinagar-Baramulla highway undertaken by Project Beacon in 2001 continues to create traffic congestions, resulting in inconvenience to the commuters.

Every day thousands of commuters including tourists travelling on the highway are stuck in vehicles for hours as the bottleneck is yet to be widened to four-lane road. The project has been on from the last 13 years.

The situation is worse near Shalteng (HMT Crossing) as vehicular movement comes to

a halt because of the congested 2-lane track branching off into two destinations, Bandipora and Baramulla.

"Some two to three lakh vehicles ply on the highway everyday and the traffic congestion is at its peak on office opening and closing timings," said officials.

The residents of Baramulla, Sopore, Pattan, Kupwara, Handwara, Bandipora, Hajan, Sumbal, Narbal, Magam, Tangmarg and other areas have often been complaining that their considerable time is wasted while travelling to Srinagar.

Tourists travelling to famous tourist resorts like Gulmarg, Wullar Lake, and Sonamarg are

met with traffic jams..

Even ambulances ferrying patients from far off areas get caught for hours in the traffic jams. "Since past three to four years, the stretch remains chocked due to jams and the traffic moves at very low pace in both directions," said an ambulance driver, Tariq Khan of Parimpora.

"A few Beacon labourers and a couple of machines are seen on work some days," said the locals.

Commuters have appealed the Chief Engineer, Project Beacon and Divisional Commissioner Kashmir to direct the concerned authorities to speed up the road widening work so that the traffic chaos is avoided.

MUSIC AND FINE ARTS INSTITUTE STRUGLES FOR SPACE



❖ Arshie Qureshi

Srinagar: The only institution providing formal training in music and fine arts and one that aspires to carve the art scenario in Kashmir, the Institution of Music and Fine

Arts (IMFA) finds itself mired in a sorry state of affairs.

Founded as one of the city's prestigious institutions in 1965 that would devote itself to the study of arts, the institute is yet to resettle since the devastating last year floods

wrecked havoc.

The institute has been functioning from a rented guesthouse at RajBagh Srinagar, an area that faced the worst flood brunt. The ground and first storey remains dysfunctional and the all furniture and artifacts lay cluttered on the second story.

Although Kashmir University had designated a place for its new campus, but that is far from being functional any time soon. The institution is still being run in the building that was damaged totally by the floods. Even the eternal wall has not been reconstructed.

Sharing her own experience, Shaiqa Mohi, Principal of IMFA, recounted that the authorities in general never really devoted much of the attention to the development of arts in the valley. "Due to poor infrastructure, students don't opt for studying here. It's currently difficult for us even to accommodate 100 students."

A senior professor in IMFA, Iftikhar Jaffer said that the prestigious institution is slowly dying due to poor patronage of government and maladministration of authorities. "We not only need classrooms, we need large halls, studios and digital labs for our students but we have none of it available. We are the one who are answerable to students and its difficult to pacify their genuine anger," he said.

"We had number of times raised the issue of accommodating Institute long before floods with the previous Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University, and with previous Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah as well, but nothing has been done in this regard," he said.

The students of the institution have been furious for the past several weeks against the poor infrastructure. For them, learning about art here is an everyday struggle with scant facilities.

A student of sculpture, said, "It is a pity to see that our creative works are lying around without due care." Glass windows of classroom buildings that were damaged in the floods in 2014 are still in disrepair. There is water leakage too on the building as well. Toilets do not have proper bolts.

ISLAMIC GLOBAL EVENT ATTRACTS HUGE AUDIENCE

❖ Sarvat Nabi

Srinagar: Islamic Global School (IGS), Raj Bagh in collaboration with Islamic Fraternity (IF) of Kashmir organized a day-long conference on Feb 28 in the Kashmir University's convocation complex.

Renowned Islamic scholars associated with Islamic Research Foundation (IRF), Peace TV, the Global Daw'ah centre based in Mumbai, and other global Islamic speakers including Dr Athar Khan, Dr. Shuaib Syed, Sheikh Ashfaq Salfi, Salahuddin Maqbool Al Madani and Sheikh Zaffar Ul Hassan Al Madni, delivered lectures over varied topics.

Vice Chancellor of the University Prof Khurshid Iqbal Andrabi was one of the speakers at the occasion and appreciated the efforts of the school. The conference attracted a huge audience including students, scholars and parents of the young participants.

Dr Athar Khan explained the differences between the education system of Muslims and that of the entire world while on the other hand Dr Shuaib Syed



delivered a lecture on "Is Bible a word of God?" He used instances from the Bible to prove his topic.

The recorded lecture of Dr Bilal Philips was played during the occasion wherein he appreciated the efforts and encouraged people to organize more such events.

Number of lectures were held throughout the day on the love of Prophet (PBUH) and how to avoid Fitnah (dispute) while practicing Islam.

"I was happy to listen to such great personalities of the Islamic World. More Islam centric events should be organized in the valley. I learnt a lot today, in fact my entire family was here," said Afaq Ahmed, a Businessman from Anantnag.

Apart from lectures, the young students of the Islamic Global School exhibited different programs related to Islam. Mir Saquib and Zubair Salafi's Nasheeds were much appreciated. Certificates were also distributed among students and staff members of the Islamic School.

Muhammad Aamir, President IF and Principal of the school

said, "It was a great achievement for this school to organize such an important event, we will continue to bring all these great scholars on a single podium."

Towards the end, the scholars were felicitated and certificates were distributed among the students and the staff members. Mohammad Aamir thanked everyone for making the event a success especially after the devastating floods had damaged the school a lot. He urged people to support IGS.

PUSHCART FULL OF KNOWLEDGE

❖ Nisar Dharma

Srinagar: Amidst the rush in and around the famous Jahangir Chowk here, a man in his early 40s stands beside his pushcart full of colourful books on numerous subjects.

Mohammad Yaseen has been making a livelihood from past five years by selling books on a pushcart at Jahangir Chowk. Hailing from a family of cycle mechanics and with the limited earnings of his father, he could only manage to complete his schooling. Every morning, Yaseen along with four of his friends, travels from Bemina to the city centre to sell books. His friends stall in areas like Hazuri Bagh, Batamaloo and Abi Guzar etc.

“Though I’m from an uneducated family, my passion got me into the business of selling books and



Photo Credits: Suhail

that passion is sustaining me in business” he says. At any time during the day, his cart is seen surrounded by people of all age groups. Almost every passerby stops for a while, glances over the books; some pick and start reading, and a few buy a book or two. For them, it’s a treat. “As a

passer, by the cart certainly attracts my attention in a market full of fabrics, fruits and vegetables. It’s not only about the prices but about the ease to browse through a number of subjects,” says Amir Mushtaq, a buyer.

“I manage to daily profit of Rs 500 selling 10 to 20 books a day, which is more the dealer who supplies me the books,” he says. He plans selling magazines on his cart soon.

One is immediately attracted to the large and bright Islamic books meant for kids and young readers. The children books including nursery rhymes, numbers, alphabets, and stories sell like hotcakes. He also sells small dictionaries of various subjects including Sociology, Zoology, Chemistry, Economics, Philosophy, Mathematics, and Botany and on language skills.

UDAAN FALLS FLAT UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUES TO SOAR

❖ Afshaan Rashid

Srinagar: The ‘Low salary packages and the poor placement offers by the participating companies’ under the centrally sponsored scheme ‘Udaan’ is discouraging valley youths to be part of this program.

Number of engineering graduates, who earlier participated in employment fairs organized under Udaan scheme, have expressed their dissatisfaction over the employment offers given by the companies under this program and termed it a mockery on the name of providing employment.

“I participated in one of the Udaan fair and was embarrassingly offered monthly stipend of three thousand for six months which is the worst, an engineer can have in Kashmir” Sameer Ahmad, an engineering graduate said.

Udaan program was launched in the state with two main objectives to focus on, to provide corporate exposure to youth of Jammu and Kashmir and to provide corporate India with exposure to the rich talent pool available in the state, but the youth employed under this scheme have a different story to tell.

“The centers much acclaimed scheme Udaan seems to be falling in generating interest and providing quality jobs to youth of Jammu and Kashmir, for me, it is not solution to the unemployment issue of the state,” Nazir Ahmed a post graduate student said.

Mohammad Rafiq Maqbool, Assistant professor at Islamia Collage of Science & commerce, Hawal and convener Udaan program said that “the Udaan is a joint venture of the government, the corporate and the local potential more over a great initiative to provide exposure to local youth to work in highly reputed companies but the process was hampered by some flaws which we need to sort out”.

“The program was launched with a target of providing employment to 40,000 youths for the next 5 years unfortunately by the end of 2013; only 547 candidates completed their training, of which 221 have been offered jobs” Rafiq said.

The Udaan scheme has signed agreements with about thirty seven leading corporate and public sector undertakings, including NTPC, BHEL, ONGC, HAL, Canara Bank, Wipro, TCS, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Bajaj Allianz, Yes Bank, Religare, Accenture and Tata Motors.

“Government needs to pull up its socks and work harder, not only to achieve its set target but also to counter the unemployment explosion in the state” Rafiq said.

SCRAP TO STANDARD, BABA DEMB HAS IT ALL

❖ Khalid Bashir

Srinagar : City’s biggest furniture and scrap market at Baba Demb near Khanar deals with scrap to post flood items. The material available at economical rates makes the market customer friendly. The market deals in furniture, tin sheets and many other household items.

The entire market shapes up with around 100 shops and more than a 1000 people involved in trade of different sorts, ranging from buying and selling of scrap, wooden planks, iron rods and even everyday garbage. There are a few artificial flower shops, service stations as well.

“I have been running my scrap shop for over three decades now. After floods, I majorly buy old wooden planks and tin sheets. We chisel the wood with machines to make new furniture including doors, windows and frames,” said owner of a famous furniture shop in the market.

Ghulam Ahmed Bhat and Hayat Bhat jointly run furniture shop ‘Hayat Traders’ while many employees work as carpenters. The market has managed a strong customer base over the years.

Post September floods last year, the market witnessed a major growth as all the flood affected material reached

here. From electronic goods to furniture and household items everything is available in market.

“Since November last year, the construction work has increased manifold due to the huge damage caused by floods. This has led to a major boost in our trade,” says Umer Shera, owner of a timber shop.

“This market employs more than a 1000 people at this time within state and outsiders,” added Umar.

Talking to MERC Times, Farooq Ahmed, a customer said, “I had to buy a few wooden frames for doors and windows, my house is under construction and this place is the best to visit for best buying and selling deals.”

Most scrap dealers and furniture makers use contemporary machines to speed up the work. The average shopkeeper earns at least a few thousand rupees per day, making it a financially viable place.

“This market deals in so many things at the same time. We do business in lakhs per day. Unfortunately, the government has not done anything to make this distinct market systematic and presentable. Even during the most difficult period in the valley last year, we managed to speed up our tasks and cater to the needs of our customers”, said Shafi Nagoo, another shopkeeper and resident of the area.



BUDDING JOURNALIST BAGS NATIONAL AWARD

❖ Marouf Gazi

Srinagar : A budding female journalist from Kashmir has been conferred with a national award for highlighting the stories on “Crime against women in Kashmir.”

Hailing from apple town of south Kashmir, Sumaiya Yousuf won the award for his special report-“Public Transport Becoming Unsafe for Women in Jammu & Kashmir” which was selected as a best news report in ‘Gender sensitivity’ category by Laadli foundation, an NGO based in New Delhi.

Sumaiya, a journalism student has been associated with a local daily Rising Kashmir for past two years covering abominable condition of women in Kashmir.

Currently pursuing her post graduate degree from the department of MERC Kashmir University, Sumaiya works as an intern with Hindustan Times in 2013 after completing her graduation in journalism from Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication.

Her university classmate Afshaan Rashid, while sharing her experiences with Sumaiya, said “She is among the hardest working people I have ever come across besides an inspiration; not only for women but for people in general.”

Apart from her special reporting on women, Sumaiya has covered numerous beats as a female journalist, which includes Politics, Defense and City.

“She manages to travel a long distance every day from the apple town to the summer capital, does her studies at the department, and smells the news: hunts it, cracks it and gets it published the next day. It’s really wonderful to watch her maintain the balance between her work and studies,” Faruk Masudi, HOD MERC, said.

“In an era when people of her age waste time and money, she saves both and looks forward to life, marking her achievements as just the beginning,” Masudi said.

For Sumaiya, she believes that “the society has to do much, to reflect upon the status of women in Kashmir, towards that my work is a little effort.”

TIBETAN ENTREPRENEURS SETTING BENCHMARK

❖ Murtaza Fazily

Srinagar: The Tibetan women entrepreneurs at Lal Chowk are setting a business benchmark for others to follow. These women sell a variety of China-made shoes on a stall near the Biscoe school and over the years have gathered a strong customer base.

Shoes sold by these women are comparatively economical than rest of the market and also provide a lot of variety to the customers.

Sonam, Disket and Chorol, the three Tibetan women own multiple shoe stalls here selling trendy shoes ranging from Rs 400-600, sold in a large numbers.

“I started this business nine years ago and I am earning a good sum to survive in Srinagar,” says Sonam, one of the business women.

When asked how they manage the business, Chorol said, “We buy these shoes from outside the state, mostly from Delhi on low cost directly from the factories. The male members of our family do the travelling part.”

“The stock is limited as the shoe-trend changes fast. We have to buy new stocks of shoes every three months as our major customers are young people,” added Chorol.

Most of the customers regularly visit these stalls as they find the shoes classy and fashionable.

“I have been coming here from the last two years as shoes sold here are stylish, unique and inexpensive,” said Altaf, one of the customers.

These woman entrepreneurs work 11 hours a day to make a living and put more efforts in running their business than most of their male counterparts.

“We come here at 8 AM every day. It takes us two hours to set the stall and we wind up at 7 in the evening,” says Diskit, who has been engaged in this business from the last one decade.

Diskit believes that she has only been able to persist with the business due to the moral support provided by her family.

“I help my husband to run our home, pay the school dues of my children and the rent of my apartment from whatever I earn here. It’s a profitable business for me,” added Diskit.

The growing demand of the shoes has compelled these women to employ more people to manage the flow of the customers.

“We have employed two salesmen to manage the customer rush as it becomes difficult to handle the rush,” says Sonam.



Photo Credits | Suhaib

LATE MARRIAGE PLAGUING MORALS OF VALLEY

❖ Nazir Gillo

Srinagar: Experts have sounded an alarm over the emerging trend of late marriages, which according to them has given rise to many social and biological problems among late marriage couples in valley.

Prof Bashmir Ahmad Dabla, a prominent sociologist says that "The prolonged conflict has dragged the people into number of evils which now seem impossible to eradicate. Modern education to some extent is also responsible for the delay in marriage," Prof Dabla said, which, according to him "has kept the youngsters busy with competition and careers."

"Apart from that, the prevalence of dowry system, desperate economic conditions, big feast and ostentatious celebrations on the occasion of marriages are the main reasons for the emergence of late marriages in Kashmir," he concludes.

A study titled 'Emergence of late marriages in Kashmir' conducted by the sociology department of Kashmir University suggested that the average marrying age among the

Kashmiris has jumped to 30s as compared to 20s a decade ago. The male average marriageable age has gone up from 24 to 32, while in females it has moved from 21 to 28 years suggests the study.



"The cultural practices of extravagance in marriages coupled with ostentatious attitudes are the root causes behind the delay in marriages in Valley," Ghulam Ahmad, chairman Islah committee Kashmir, said.

The Late marriages are also responsible for declining fertility rate among Kashmiri

women, says Dr. Aabida Ahmad, professor Gynecology & obstetrics, maternity hospital (SKIMS) Soura.

"First concern of late marriages among women is conception problems. As their age advances, egg formation in females reduce and hence leads to infertility," Dr. Ahmad said.

"Moreover, over-aged (mid 30s) maiden mothers are prone to caesarian delivery or having trouble during their pregnancy period besides having higher chances of osteoporosis among them," she added.

However for the religious scholars, the root cause of the problem is the ignorance of people Moulana Nazir Ahmad, a scholar affiliated with Jamiat-e-Ahlihadith Kashmir, while terming the moral waywardness

as the obvious result of late marriage said, "Islam encourages taking the initiative to marry at an early age because there are many benefits in early marriage. As regards to the delay in marriage, it leads to the spread of 'Zina' (fornication or adultery), increase of spinsterhood and spread of psychological and behavioral disorders."

EYESORE IN CITY

POSTERS DEFACE PUBLIC PROPERTY

❖ Yasir Gaffar

Srinagar : Public places in Srinagar have become eyesore because of innumerable posters being pasted and hoardings being erected almost every day by some brand promoters and advertisers.

Advertisers find no better alternative than public property especially when it costs not a single penny in pasting advertisement posters, bill boards and hoardings, defacing and changing original appearance of fences of public property.

One can see abundant posters alongside the city



roads scribed by some promoters, affecting the natural appearance of these fences leading to gradual degeneration of civic property.

"Public properties are our assets, public places are our identity and it is our foremost duty and responsibility to protect our assets and to keep our identity well-ordered and sparkling. No one has right to spoil the beauty of public property." Mohammad Ibrahim, a teacher by profession said.

The pasted posters ranges from employment advertisement, coaching center notices, party promotional posters and other kind of strange posters pasted at different locations especially at public places which otherwise would have been covered in newspapers or advertised in different magazines.

"These selfish persons should understand that the public property belongs to everyone and spoiling the good ambiance of public property merely

to promote their interests does not sound reasonable at all," Aqib Lone, a university student said.

Dr. G.N Qasba, former SMC commissioner while talking to MERC Times said, "There should a proper mechanism for public notices if they are meant to be pasted at the public places, a suitable place or area should be identified."

SHERI-KASHMIR STADIUM IN SHAMBLES, CRICKET SUFFERS

❖ Sibtain Hyder

Srinagar: Met with series of blows, the Sher-e-Kashmir cricket stadium is gasping for survival owing the negligence of concerned authorities. Cricket hub laments the political parties who, according to them have ruined the ground as they dug up number of holes on the middle of ground which were later used to erect bamboo sticks for the installation of pavilion and stage inside the ground.

“Our politicians do not get tired of saying that our youth has tremendous talent and provide them quality infrastructure but the ground realities are total in contrast to it” Manzoor Ahmad, a budding cricketer said.

“Instead of facilitating the local cricketers with more techniques and infrastructure, they (poli-



Photo Credits: Suhail

ticians) ironically take away the available infrastructure from them” he added.

The murky water and dirt covers most of the ground and has badly damaged the sensitive areas of the stadium. Adding to this, the political heat that state witnessed, worsened the ailing condition of the ground,” officials said.

“They (political parties) turned the entire stadium into a rally ground without even thinking about the damages it would afflict upon the ground” said an official of J&K Cricket Association.

“The political rallies resulted in the damage of some costly equipment’s that were used to keep the turf maintained for playing the matches” he said.

Akhter Ali and Naseer Husain, former state Ranji players while expressing anguish over the mess, said that “it is shameful for us to hire a ground to practice even though we have our own ground.”

“Political rallies must not intrude the venues meant for the particular purpose, and authorities should now stand on their toes to renovate this premiere stadium of the valley” they said.

CRICKET WC PUSHES SALES OF ELECTRONIC GOODS IN VALLEY

❖ Rafia Rahim

Srinagar: The ongoing Cricket World Cup has had its affect on the sale of electronic goods in Kashmir too as people especially youngsters are showing keen interest in buying electronic goods.

The cricket world cup has brought cheers among valley shopkeepers, who claim 10-15 percent rise in sale of electronic goods.

“The world cup fever has increased the sale of electronic devices like LED’s and set top boxes by about 10-15 percent this year” says Younis Qureshi, who owns an electronic shop in Srinagar.

According to shop owners, the September floods last year brought their business to a standstill, ravaging most of the available infrastructure but the cricket world cup came as a kick start to our normal

business.

“After devastating floods, we somehow managed to restore our shops, although during initial days after floods we did not have good business but cricket fever turns out to be a festival for us”, Abdul Qayoom, an electronics shopkeeper said.

Hazik Malik, a PhD scholar, who recently bought a new LED television said that “valley youth are passionate about cricket and when it comes to an Indo-Pak match, no one will ever want to miss the action”.

The shop owners say that the rise in sales of electronic items usually occur during the winter season as people prefer to sit inside their homes because of inconsistent weather and less amount of workload which gives enough time to people to have longer contact with television sets, but now sales have gone even higher than that.

“World cup has accelerated the sale of digital TV subscription too as we distribute 40-50 connections per day. It is an unusual response from the people” says Barkat Dar, Manager at Tata sky.

The students have also joined the fray with buying of smart phones to keep themselves updated with the ongoing matches.

“We have replaced our smart phones with latest ones with better accessibility configurations, only to have easy access to applications displaying live scores” a bunch of students said.

Tanveer Ahmed Lone, the distributor-cum-partner of the Dish TV Company said that “we are receiving number of requests from the people for installation of new Dish T.V connections, currently we are providing 60 connections per day which we have never done before”.



CITY DIVERSION IRKS RESIDENTS, COMMUTERS

❖ Sami-Ullah

Srinagar: The traffic diversion on Ellahi Bagh-Hazratbal route is proving a hassle for everyone. The ongoing 'maintenance' work on the main road forces the traffic to be diverted through various residential areas thus irking passengers as well as the residents.

"Every day commuters have to suffer because of the blockade on the main road. We have to take diversions through small residential lanes which cause frequent traffic jams resulting in a lot of delay," said Mohammad Amin Malik, a daily commuter.

The local residents of Ellahi Bagh and the adjoining areas which fall under the route also face a lot of inconvenience because of the

diversion.

"The heavy traffic flow just outside our houses is dangerous since our children move in and out frequently and have to be very careful," said Basit Rashid, an Ellahi Bagh resident.

Apart from causing traffic jams and a lot of commotion on the route, the continuous inflow of vehicles results in air pollution as vehicles zip pass through these lanes leaving a trail of dust and smoke.

"If you see our houses, you will understand how dusty and polluted the ambience is. Even the trees adjoining the compound walls have grayed because of this nauseated air," says Abdul Qudous Bhat, a local shopkeeper of the area adding, "I have to regularly sprinkle water on the road in front of my shop and house to avoid dust and pollution."

The route also runs out of mini buses and people have to travel in local Sumo taxis which only accommodate nine or ten passengers at a time

The residents also pointed out to some bottlenecks in the route that cause regular traffic jams.

CORRIGENDUM

All the photographs, including the cover photo, in the previous issue of Media Times (2014) magazine were clicked by Suhaib Mansur. Due to human error his name was left out in the said issue of Media Times.



OMPURA SINKS IN DARKNESS WITH NO TRANSFORMERS

❖ Ishan Fazili

The less number of electricity transformers installed in Ompura Housing Colony has added to the agonies of its inhabitants. Situated on the outskirts of Srinagar city, the colony is on the cusp of darkness and light due to extreme low voltage.

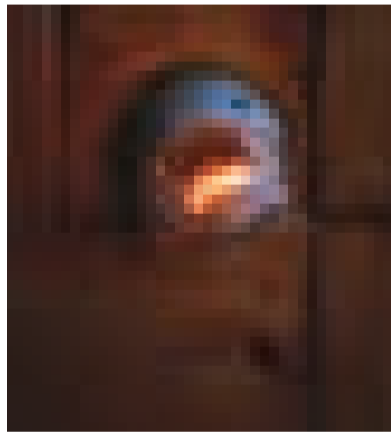
One of the transformers installed in the colony, which now caters to more than 100 households was installed 15 years back to serve not more than 30 households. Due to excess load now, the transformer breaks down frequently.

"The transformer is more than a decade old and caters to households more than its capacity. Since it breaks down after every 10 days and no one from the authorities' look into the matter, the residents themselves pool money and get the transformer repaired," said Rashid Ahmed, a resident of the colony.

Meanwhile, out of more than hundred households which the transformer caters to, only 67 houses are registered with the Power Development Department, thus making 67 house-

holds suffer due to increase in load by others.

"More than 20 houses remain without electricity for days together due to the frequent local fault, which is caused by the illegal usage of electricity and increase in load on the transformer," Rashid Ahmad added.



The colony is facing acute shortage of power supplies. Despite many pleas made by the residents to make estimates on supplies and needs, nothing has been done so far.

"Despite continuous requests to the authorities to provide more transformers, the complaints and pleas have gone unheard," said Sameer Wani, a resident of

the Colony.

Interestingly, electric meters were installed back in 2011, but till date, they remain non operational. In 2014, 24 hour power supply was made to the colony, but unregistered households and dearth of transformers continue to create electricity woes.