

# MERC TIMES



**MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**



## Edutainment show 'Galli Galli Sim Sim' reintroduced in Kashmir

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# Edutainment show ‘Galli Galli Sim Sim’ reintroduced in Kashmir



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**Tahil Ali  
Anantnag**

Supported by Vitol Foundation, Doordarshan (DD) Kashir and DD Urdu, edutainment show ‘Galli Galli Sim Sim’ makes a comeback to Kashmir.

The Indian adaptation of Sesame Street will be broadcast in Kashmiri and Urdu on DD Kashir from Monday to Sunday at 6:30 PM and 11:40 AM.

Titise Kode, Head of Education at Vitol Foundation, who backs Galli Galli Sim Sim’s broadcast on DD Kashir and DD Urdu, says, “We are proud to know that through our investment children will be able to learn important life skills and get prepared for school and life.”

Malik Zahra, Assistant Professor at Kashmir University, Media Education Research Centre (MERC) Department shares, “Such programs are culturally relevant to the native population of Kashmir and play a key role in building necessary insights in the children of various age groups

to whom these shows are directed.”

“Apart from learning about general ethics and morals, children of Kashmir in particular, will also be creatively given exposure to cultural nuances, skill building, and value of emotions,” said Malik Zahra.

“Galli Galli Sim Sim” is a flagship initiative in which special programs have been produced covering important themes about school going children. Also making available the programs in native language wouldn’t let children boun on the edutainment content available in languages other than Kashmiri.

Encapsulating the philosophy of Development Communication, programs like the Muppet show gives forth message of ‘positivity’, and importance of inclusion to children while at the same time infusing in them the inspiration for leadership and other functional skills.

It was during the Satellite instructional Television Experiment (SITE) and Kheda experiments that Indian landscape began to understand the importance of play-way method of learning.

# Historic silk factory reopens after 30 years



Public hails government's move and hopes many such steps in future to curb unemployment in the state

Abid Aleem  
Srinagar

**K**ashmir is blessed with rich cultural history, heritage and cottage industries. However, due to the unfavourable circumstances in recent times, many industries were closed down while some are coming back to life after revival.

The government on 22nd July reopened decades-old silk factory in Solina Rambagh. The factory was installed by Sir Thomas Wardle, president of the Silk Association of Great Britain in 1897. In line with the revival of such industries, the attempt to revive silk industry is also aimed at generating employment in the valley.

Dr Kavita Gupta, Textile Commissioner Government of India

said, "It is a commendable step taken by the Union government, in order to revive the art and culture of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiris can again feel proud of their silk and should come together to celebrate this step taken by the government."

Mushtaq Ahmad, an employee at the factory asserted that after the factory starts functioning, import of silk products from China will be reduced rapidly.

"In terms of quality also, the silk products manufactured in Kashmir are of best quality," he added.

The revival of silk factory at Solina by industries and commerce department

after 30 years has not only rejuvenated hope among erstwhile traders but to many people associated with the trade like cocoon producers.

With Solina factory back in business, cocoon producers who were about 40000 in number before silk factories in Kashmir were closed are now seeing light at the end of the tunnel.

Commissioner Secretary Industries and Commerce Shailendra Kumar, said, his hard work on its revival has finally paid off.

"This place has a huge historical importance in Kashmir's history. Besides that, it is one of those institutions which has given recognition to Kashmir brand across the globe," Kumar said.

With the revival of Solina Silk factory, production of 10 lakh metres of silk is expected annually.

# 16 years on, Anantnag shopping complex yet to complete

Afshan Mir  
Anantnag

**W**ith its foundation stone laid in 2002, the much awaited and publicized project of a Shopping Complex with the total cost of about 20 crores in the heart of Anantnag town is still under construction. The multi storeyed Shopping Complex with the parking space for 150 vehicles was taken up in the year 2002. Former Chief Minister, Late Mufti Mohammed Syed, laid the foundation stone of this complex on 16 July 2002. The complex is being constructed on 5 kanals of government land in Lal Chowk Anantnag which earlier housed State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) yard and a fire brigade station.

The 16 years project, the project has skipped several deadlines with a fresh deadline in this year April as well.

The complex was meant to be a business hub, some shopkeepers had paid an amount of 50000 rupees in advance for the shops to be allotted to them. Some business holders had even paid 5 lakh rupees. The work on this project started again in 2014 and since then a good

work is going on but still waiting for its completion", said a shopkeeper who did not wish to be named.

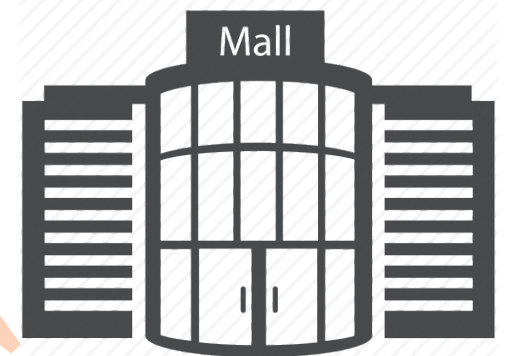
People have lost the interest and some of the shopkeepers who had paid the money seem to have lost interest as well in procuring the shops in complex and now want their money back.

"If this project is completed, it will provide a better market and will be a beneficial for us. In this shopping complex, shops will be open overnight and will provide an employment to many. It will be the pride of our town," said Shabir Ahmad Bhat another shopkeeper.

He further added that authority should be vigilant and there should be no delay.

The shopping complex will have a total of 98 shops in two floors, 14 halls for commercial purpose in upper two floors and two more halls for food court. The basement will serve as a parking space for around 150 cars, said an official.

"It is a huge project and we are working on it. There was a dearth of funds earlier but then the work has resumed since 2014. We want the people to have faith and co-operate with us," says Executive officer Municipal council Anantnag.



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# College in Uri functions without principal

**Insha Rani**  
Uri (Baramulla)

The post of the principal at Government Degree College Uri is vacant from last two months. The college is functioning without a Principal since its former principal retired in the month of April.

“In the absence of a principal, the charge is taken by the HOD Physics, Professor Reyaz Ahmed but there is no authorized person who can handle the administration and other work properly,” Muneer Ahmed, a faculty member said.

“A lot of paperwork and administrative work is pending due to non-availability of a head,” he further added.

Students of GDC Uri told MERC Times that they were already facing lot



of inconvenience due to the lack of basic facilities. Now the vacancy of the said post has snowballed our problems.

“The academics of the college is

affected badly due to the absence of principal as most of the faculty members are irregular and there is nobody to streamline the management.” Zeeshan

Budoo , a student of BG 4th semester said.

“We don't have proper canteen in our college. They have made a makeshift canteen where only soft drinks are available and we have to go out of college for other eatables”. he added .

Students also raised concerns about the college play ground which is in dilapidated condition and not fit to play on. The students alleged that they have spoken to the authorities about the issue many times but they always turn a blind eye towards it.

Director Colleges Zahoor Ahmed, told MERC Times, that, he is taking cognizance of the matter and is aware of the problems that the college is facing.

Regarding the principal, he said, that the vacancy will be filled within few days.

# JKEDI initiative boosts women empowerment in J&K

**Rooh Yaseen**  
Srinagar

In an initiative for empowering women in the state, Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), has trained 47 women under flagship entrepreneurship program.

The Entrepreneurs have chosen activities like dairy sheep, poultry farming, commercial laundry, mushrooms spawn production, manufacturing of readymade garments etc.

“There is an ample number of unemployed youth and scarcity of jobs in our state which is very unfortunate, the need of hour is supplementary skill development program to explore our inner skills which discovers new opportunities,” said Shabnum Lone.

This program aimed at empowering women and enhancing their skills.

The program is generally intended to provide training on skill development, performance improvement and self development.

“Unemployment is a serious threat for the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the availability jobs are very few in numbers so the government cannot accommodate every educated youth of the State. Hence Entrepreneurship is the only solution for this constant problem” said, Dr. M.I Parray, Director JKEDI

“The training program lasted for three weeks and the training staff was very cooperative, they not only trained us but they were constantly counseling us for skills enhancement related issues,” said Asifa Jaan.



# Locals of Dooru Anantnag accuse Tehsildar of corruption

Syed Mudawar  
Anantnag

Dooru Anantnag road was blocked on Thursday by protesters demanding the transfer of Tehsildar from their area. A group of locals from Dooru Tehsil of Anantnag district assembled near the Tehsil office in protest against Imtiyaz Mohiuddin, Tehsildar of Dooru.

Slogans were raised against the Tehsildar, accusing him of corruption, bureaucratic red tapeism and misbehaviour with public.

One of the protesters said, “We request the honourable Governor and the Divisional Commissioner to kindly transfer him as he has harassed us a lot.”

Another protesting member said, “This Tehsildar has been transferred multiple times from Dooru and yet he has been posted back here again and again. Even after several requests, the higher officials are not doing anything.”

The protestors also spoke about few vested interests in the appointment of the said Tehsildar and called it an undemocratic practice on behalf of the Government to post such corrupt officials repeatedly to aggrieved regions.



This penalises commoners without any crime and on the contrary higher authorities enjoy corrupt favours for doing this.

“We don’t know what the higher administration wants from his appointment in here, as there is already an

FIR against him. He has been causing huge problems to us through his corrupt practices and discriminatory behaviour.” another protestor said.

The enraged protestors threatened a Chakka Jam if their demands are not met.

# Shuryarshi Mandir: A home away from home for Yatris



Obaid Bashir  
Srinagar

Hundreds of the yatris have found a new home in Shuryarshi Mandir at Sonwar as the authorities are catering them with relative ease.

All the necessary arrangements have been made by the Caretakers for the catering purpose and have made it

possible for the yatris to have every basic facility.

Deen Dayal, a caretaker at the temple said, “We believe in serving for the pupose of holy cause and we have been doing this for years now.”

Dayal stated that on an average they served hundreds of Yatris on daily basis from the beginning to the end of the shrine.

“We provide them with the necessary refreshment and

some of them even stay in the temple for night,” he said.

Yatris are also up in praises for the facilities available at the Shuryarshi Mandir stating that the arrangements have always been right up there.

Jayendra Singh Yadhav, one of the Yatris said, “This is for the the third time that I am a part of Yatra and I have visited this Mandir multiple times during my Yatra , arrangements made for food are always satisfactory and the quality of the service and food is improving every year.”

Makhan Lal, another Yatri said that they have been in Srinagar for past two days and are quite happy with the arrangements of the temple adding that they provided them with the food and even stayed for the night in the temple.

Expressing their disappointment over government’s contribution, Dayal

asserted they don’t get any financial assistance from the govt , it is the group of devotees that contribute for the sacred cause.

“There are only two temples in Srinagar that cater for Yatris; Hanuman temple in lalchowk and Shuryarshi temple Sonwar,” Dayal said.

Adding to it he stated that this is a sacred job and they will continue doing it by God’s will.

# 2 years on Disabilities Act Bill, yet to be passed in kashmir

President JKHCA warns of adverse consequences

**Mirza Sharafat  
Srinagar**

Right from the day Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 was passed by Indian Parliament on 16 december 2018, several representatives of specially abled persons and noted Jammu and Kashmir Handicapped Association have protested to call for the passing of the act in Jammu and Kashmir.

“A profound distress is surrounding us each day, we are compelled to go against administration now” said Abdul Rasheed, President of Jammu and Kashmir Handicapped Association (JKHCA).

Persons with disabilities claimed that in capital city they have protested dozens of times and observed countless

hunger strikes to bring their state of suffering before the state gaze, but to no avail.

“Our rights are snatched from us every day. If our nation has passed it centrally then why our state isn’t passing the same.” asked mildly blinded Altaf Ahmad in the lobby of JKHCA office at Nopora.

“The miseries of specially abled persons are growing and govt is least bothers to redress them. We will go for hunger strikes till the Act is not passed even if it costs us our lives” the President added.

It is to be noted that the Jammu and Kashmir Handicapped Association has already met former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and Governor NN Vohra but has reaped no resolution till this date.



# Impure drinking water triggers rage among Saida Kadal residents

**Schnian Meer  
Srinagar**

Residents of Saida Kadal area of Srinagar, face problems because of inavailability of pure drinking water, blame authorities for their indifferent approach.

Eighteen years ago, the JK government set up a water-treatment plant at Saida Kadal, Pokhribal in Srinagar to supply drinking water from the Dal Lake to the residents of the area. But local people objected saying that the lake water was not fit to consume, so the government changed the water source to a nearby freshwater stream. But, in the last decade, despite getting even more polluted, the Dal Lake is the only source of drinking water for a significant portion of the area.

The state’s Public Health Engineering (PHE) department, which supplies water to households, says the state faces problems of both water quality and availability. With a long dry spell in the winters, some 39 water-supply schemes in the Valley have been hit. In north Kashmir’s Baramulla district



almost 16 water supply sources has been affected by this. Same problems have been reported from Srinagar, Budgam, Anantnag, Bandipora, Kulgam, Shopian, Kupwara and Ganderbal.

that “We are trying our best to help solve this problem for the residents and I assure the residents of the area that there problem will be solved as soon as possible.” he added.

With the rise in pollution of the Dal lake. The PHE department have sought public’s help to tackle this situation by telling them not to pollute it and the hardships it would bring in the future if any initiative is not taken as quickly as possible. When talking to a local resident Mangeet Singh he said, “I used to drink water directly from the Dal Lake without any filtration but now if I will drink a drop of it, I will be dead in just a second.”

“We are having a tough time and lack systems to store water,” Singh said. “Despite having enough availability, we have failed to manage our water resources.”

Chairman Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA), Dr Abdul Hafiz, when contacted told MERC TIMES

## PHC Shamsipora Anantnag in shambles, authorities in deep slumber



Shahid Teeli  
Anantnag

The locals of Shamsipora Batengoo suffer severely due to non-availability of basic health infrastructure in primary health centers.

In Shamsipora Anantnag, the locals alleged that there are no doctors available due to which people have to face a lot of inconvenience.

Apart from doctors there are no technicians for the treatment of the patients, the locals further added

There is also an infrastructure problem as the health centre is stationed in a single building. The shortage of medicines remain often. We have to rush to District hospital for treatment even for a headache," said Abdul Rashid the local resident of Shamsipora Anantnag".

"The government has invested lot of money in constructing the building, but all in vain as the basic facilities are not available. The infra-structure has only benefitted the contractors leaving the masses high and dry," said the residents.

In case of emergencies, there is not even a single ambulance available and the problem becomes more difficult in times of hartals," says Habibullah dar who is a local farmer.

"Govt. has left us at the mercy of our own. They are least bothered about our wellbeing," he added further.

"There is no chance of absence of doctors in any primary health centres. There are at least two MD doctors available round the clock, who also perform night duties regularly," says Chief Medical Officer Anantnag.

Moreover there are 68 ambulances in our district, so the shortage of ambulance doesn't arise," he added further. However he assured the masses of all possible help and told that their grievances will be solved at priority.

## 4 years on; Rohmu residents await completion of the bridge

Sheikh Arsh  
Pulwama

The Rohmu bridge situated over the Rohmeshi stream in South Kashmir's Pulwama district awaits completion since 2014.

The resident of Rohmu are facing grave inconvenience due to the under construction of the bridge which is the main passage connecting Rohmu to the rest of the district.

For temporary purpose the traffic is diverted towards a low-lying roughly constructed diversion made of cement pipes and fillers. The stream, about 200 metres wide, is prone to flash floods risking the life of commuters.

The bridge connects rohmu with a famous Sufi shrine at Pakherpora visited by many devotees on regular or occasional basis. These people commute through this poor shaped diversion as it is the shortest way to reach the place.

"The shortest way to reach

Pakherpora is by crossing the Rohmeshi stream. Due to unavailability of a concrete bridge we are forced to ply on the risky diversion which causes lot of inconvenience," Abdul Ahad of Rohmu town.

"I have to cross the diversion everyday to reach the school. During rains I mostly stay at home because it is not safe enough to be used during those days," said Aqib, a student.

"God forbid if any untoward incident happens, who will be responsible for that?," another student questioned.

The water level soars in summer, which further delays the construction of the bridge and makes the diversion even riskier.

EXEN R&B Division Pulwama said, "The construction of the bridge is going smoothly and we are waiting for more funds under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) The bridge is nearing completion but the setback was the flashfloods earlier this month which hindered the work process. It will soon be thrown open for the public."



## Centuries old Chinar trees uprooted in Srinagar



Ubaid gul  
Srinagar

**F**ive Chinar trees were uprooted during a strong windstorm few days ago at the famous Shalimar Bagh in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar city.

According to Floriculture Department in Kashmir, more than 300-year-old one Chinar tree while four other 50-years-old trees were uprooted following the windstorms in the area.

The department said "Men and machinery have been pressed into the service to clear the Chinar trees. Officials from Floriculture Department, Forest Department and other departments are working round the clock so that tourists visiting the heritage garden do not face any problem".

Tourists as well as locals are upset about the uprooting of these trees as Chinar trees are considered as heritage in Kashmir valley.

Chinar is locally called Boouien or Bhuni in Kashmiri- the name comes from a Sanskrit word called 'Bhawani' which means blissful mother.

Shalimar and Mughal gardens are famous for these trees all over the world and every year thousands of tourists visit Kashmir only to see it.

## Poor BSNL service irks Nowhatta subscribers

Sheikh Ahsaan  
Srinagar

**T**he poor Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) service in Nowhatta, of Srinagar city, has irked the subscribers there.

They said that both internet and mobile phone services of the state owned telecom company, remained most of the times non-functional, despite submitting monthly bills on time.

"We pay a huge amount of money to the company just for getting extremely low quality services. They are the worst service providers among all the telecom companies," said the subscribers.

While talking to MERC Times, the aggrieved said, that BSNL services in Nowhatta was so bad that they were unable to download even a small files on internet.

"The speed of internet is very slow. It takes around 50 minutes to download a file of one Megabyte (MB)," they said.

The subscribers said, that the problem existed due to lack of adequate mobile towers in the area.

"If more towers are installed in our vicinity, may be our problem could be solved, as a single tower has been kept for many areas," they added.

**The speed of internet is very slow. It takes around 50 minutes to download a file of one Megabyte (MB)**



They alleged that despite bringing the problem into the notice of BSNL authorities a number of times, no action has been taken so far.

"As we pay our bills regularly, the BSNL authorities should improve its services, otherwise we have no option but to switch to other companies," said a local resident, Shahrukh.

## Shalimar Springs Face Negligence of Authorities



Aarif Shah  
Srinagar

**T**he residents of Shalimar and its adjacent areas have accused Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) of negligence towards the worst condition of two springs located on the roadside connecting Shalimar and Foreshore. As per the residents both the springs are

in miserable condition and have become a dumping sites.

"The springs are full of garbage including plastic bottles, polythene bags, algae and other disposable things. The concrete walls of the springs are also damaged," they said.

They added that besides the twin springs there is a canal running parallel to the road which is also in dilapidated condition.

The residents said that earlier water from the canal and both the springs was used for irrigation and drinking purposes but now their condition is miserable and can give birth to many water borne diseases.

Shabir Ahmad, a resident, said, "We approached the concerned authorities multiple times but they hardly paid any heed towards the issue."

Mr Ishtiyaq Ahmad Shah, Engineer Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) Division II, said, "We have received tenders of 48 crores for 50 springs including these two also. We will take up this issue soon and both springs will be restored to their original condition."