

MERC TIMES

**MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF KAS**

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Absence of public toilets in Boulevard exasperates visitors

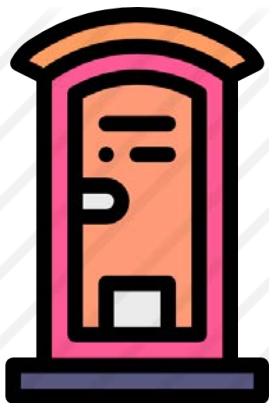
Sheikh Arsh
Srinagar

Boulevard which happens to be a famous tourist spot in Srinagar along the Dal Lake shortfalls the basic public conveniences which compels the visitors to either urinate in the lake or on its banks

Boulevard along the famous Dal Lake is one of the major tourist attractions in the valley as it serves as the main entry point to the Mughal garden, Nishat garden, Pari Mahal, Tulip garden and Botanical garden.

Visitors have been expressing resentment over the lack of the washrooms on the Boulevard road exposing the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

Lakes and Waterway Development Authority (LAWDA) which takes care of this tourist spot seems to be drowsed and is yet to facilitate visitors with a single public toilet along the stretch



"It is very embarrassing when you have to relieve yourself but you are not able to find any of the washrooms nearby especially on a place like Boulevard, there is an immediate need of toilet facility for both men and women says," Ruksana Jaan a local resident.

A few months ago a number of Amaranth Yatri were seen urinating in the Dal Lake, thus polluting it but the concerned authorities seem least bothered to stop this shameful act.

"I am a regular jogger and I mostly jog on the boulevard road, I feel really embarrassed when I see people urinating either on the banks of lake or in the lake itself but then I realize they don't have any options either, it is very unfortunate that the concerned authorities have never looked at this matter

This issue was not in my notice earlier, there was some problem but now I have talked to the higher authorities and I am waiting for the authorization

seriously" said Waseem Ahmad Mir a local resident

"This issue was not in my notice earlier, there was some problem but now I have talked to the higher authorities and I am waiting for the authorization" said Commissioner (SMC) Srinagar Municipal Corporation Peerzada Hafizullah

He further added that he will pursue this issue on fast track and the matter will be resolved as soon as possible.



Muddle of health care in hospital district Anantnag

Mir Afshan
Anantnag

Due to the lack of proper equipments and staff, health care in two of the major hospitals in Anantnag district is in the shambles

Anantnag district hospital lacks ventilators, MRI facility while the trauma centre lacks proper equipments and expertise.

Cardiology, neurosurgery, urology and cardiovascular thoracic units are manned by a single super specialist.

It is very unfortunate that these two overhyped hospitals are nothing less than 'referral sheds' because both of the hospitals refer patients to Srinagar who have already been shifted to the periphery health facilities. Says a doctor working in the district hospital Anantnag

Patients come on daily basis from adjacent districts of Kulgam, Shopian and parts of Pulwama. The hospital not only has a limited and unfit infrastructure but also lacks a proper staff.

The building was declared unsafe by the Fire and Emergency department in 2013 after a devastating fire broke out here. Subsequently, the administration had given orders of relocation of this hospital after the main district hospital Anantnag was shifted into a new block at Janglat Mandi, which left the old spacious structure vacant.

"This hospital has been overhyped as at par with Srinagar's Lal Ded hospital but in actuality this hospital does not even qualify to be called a Public Health Centre. Also, the referrals from the periphery hospitals have burdened this place too much which already has a huge patient inflow otherwise. From here also we are supposed to refer patients to Srinagar as we

cannot provide treatment and space to every patient as there is a limited space available," said an employee working in the hospital.

The old USG machine has been totally out of order in Sub district hospital Dooru, and the patients are asked to get the same tests done at higher prices from the private diagnostic centers.

However, Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Saleem-Ur-Rehman said that the MCH Anantnag is not understaffed and the process of sending doctors is on.

"Some doctors had been transferred some time back but we are in the process of deputing more doctors against the vacant posts, you might have made a mistake while reading the document as this particular hospital is not short by seven doctors", said Dr Saleem.

He said he was unaware about the dysfunctional USG machine in Dooru hospital. Documents procured by this reporter about the understaffed MCH hospital however prove Director's claims as not true.



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Department of Media Studies GDC Baramulla organizes media festival



Insha Rani
Baramulla

The Department of Media Studies (DMS), Government Degree College Baramulla organized a one day Media festival at the campus to showcase the talent, skills and creativity of media students and to promote inter-institutional collaboration.

The main aim of the festival is to forge inter-institutional collaboration, Prof. F R Beigh, Principal Govt. Degree College Baramulla told MERC Times.

Prof. Beigh said "We welcome the proposals by other institutions for greater teacher and student interactions as in the present times there is a need for cooperation and collaboration. This college will always support such progressive initiatives."

Ten films produced by the students of DMS were screened during the event. A photo exhibition on various themes was also held where the students of the department showcased their photographs. A comedy show and a skit were also presented by the students to show their talent and creative skills.

Students of the DMS appreciated the step taken by their college.

"By these kinds of events we get a chance to show our talent, skills and creativity to the world. We hope that more such events should be organized by the college in future" Said Shadab, a student of Mass Communication.

Media Students from Govt. Degree College for Women M.A Road, Srinagar, Govt. Degree College Boys Khannabal Anantnag and guest students from different higher secondary schools of Baramulla district also attended the event.

SSA teachers continue hunger strike

Will continue our struggle until our demands are fulfilled: Wani

masters of Srinagar and Jammu .

Wani while addressing the teachers and hunger strike leaders said that teaching community has decided to continue its peaceful agitation and hunger strike till the implementation of 7th pay commission on SSA teachers, Head teachers and RMSA masters and linking of their salaries with state sector.

"He said that TJAC never wanted confrontation



ABID ALEEM
Srinagar

Indefinite hunger strike by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan teachers demanding 7th pay commission benefits entered the fifth day Friday, with the health condition of several protesters worsening across the state.

The hunger strike is being observed at Pratap Park Srinagar under the leadership of chairman TJAC Abdul Qayoom Wani, whereas similar hunger strike is being observed at Jammu near Press Club under the leadership of State president JKRTTF Vinod Sharma and State general secretary JKTF Ganesh Khajuria.

Dozens of teachers at Srinagar were given medical aid after they fainted during the hunger strike, as they continued without food 96 hours into the protest.

The teachers, led by chairman of Teachers Joint Action Committee (TJAC) Abdul Qayoom Wani, have been protesting at Partap Park here since September 3, protesting against the government non serious move towards SSA teachers, Head teachers and RMSA

and always gave preference to result oriented negotiation but silence of Govt always proved counterproductive."

He said the health condition of teachers on hunger strike has deteriorated but the government continues to remain unmoved.

"We will continue our struggle until our demands are fulfilled and government will be responsible for all the consequences," Wani said.

According to the protesting teachers, no official from education department had visited them.

"The paramedic staff of SMHS hospital visited here to give treatment to teachers who fell unconscious during the strike," said a protesting teacher in Srinagar.

Ganesh Khajuria, speaking on the occasion, appealed all the teachers to be united under the banner of TJAC and support the ongoing indefinite chain hunger strike at Press Club Jammu and Partap Park Srinagar.

The teachers have been protesting ever since the previous PDP-led coalition government implemented 7th pay commission for all state government employees except SSA teachers, head teachers and RMSA masters working in two cities.



Muslims in Kashmir mark Ashura with tearful eyes

Mirza Sharafat
Srinagar

Thousands of Shiite Muslims today gathered to mark Ashura in the capital city of Kashmir, commemorating the martyrdom of Prophet's grandson Husayn Ibn Ali. Mourners participated in Zuljanah procession, from Gulshan Bagh to Mir Shams-ud-din Iraqi's shrine here in capital city Srinagar.

Mourners were seen in soil smeared faces, beating chest, and in one common black dress, marking the gloom and grief of the day. "Ashura is when Husayn-ibn-Ali defied the tyrant rule and carried the mission of Islamic prophet forward. We are on roads to showcase the character of

Prophet's household and protest the oppression of tyrant over Households of prophet" said Syed Anwar Abidi after completing his recitation of Kashmiri elegy in the ashura procession.

Around 40 contingents were carried out till the dawn, all of which culminated with the sermon of 'Sham-e-Ghariba.' Contingents comprised of mourners from diverse communities and regions. Mourners from Kargil to Central Kashmir's budgam district were seen immersed in grief.

"Ashura is the day to remember the martyrdom of Imam Hussain who laid down his life, his children including six month old baby in the holiest path of Allah, we commemorate his martyrdom and swear to walk on the path laid by him" said Riyaz Ahmad Riyaz, a mourner

leading one of the contingents of grand procession.

Ashura procession begun from Gulshan bagh and proceeded towards noted Shiite ghetto Zadibal where at the shrine of saint Mir Shams-ud-din Iraq, all contingents culminated with utmost grief.

In connection to this, government had arranged all possible facilities, from security to ambulance service, every stake holder had already prepared to coordinate with Anjuman-e-Shari Shia, one of the alternate organizers of Ashura procession in capital city.

Ashura Procession is every year taken out in Srinagar to commemorate the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) grandson Husayn-ibn-Ali, who was brutally martyred 1400 years ago in Karbala present day Iraq.

Valley observes Ashura, Budgam witnesses largest gathering

Tahil Ali
Srinagar

Thousands of people participated in the Ashura procession that was taken out from Zadibal, where people from across the city thronged since morning.

The mourners reached Zadibal from across city alleys amid the security deployment. The mourners in Zadibal were reportedly asked not to go beyond the traditional route.

Amid the mourners clad in black various NGOs along the path had pitched tents and provided first aid facilities.

"It is for no corporate motives that we have pitched tents here but a form of sadqah (charity) that we are here."

Meanwhile various ambulance facilities were also kept ready along the areas for procession.

Station House Officer (SHO) Zadibal assessing the security in the region shared, "we are making sure that the processions are taken out peacefully and the situation remains under control."

Thousands of people including women participated in more than half a dozen processions that were taken out from other areas of the city.

In Budgam district, Ashura was also observed under security arrangements. Processions were taken out throughout the district.

In Magam, the main procession was

taken out from Malbuchan. It culminated at Imambargah Ahmadpora. The procession terminated late in the evening after passing through its traditional route.

Thousands of people including both men and women assembled at the main Imambargah in Ahmadpora after marching along in various processions.

In Budgam town, the main procession was taken out from Mirgund. After passing through its traditional route, it ended at Imambargah Budgam.

Programmes of Majalis-i-Sham-i-Gharibaan were held in the evening to pay homage to the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain and his companions in Maidan-i-Karbala.

The largest gathering was observed in central Kashmir's Budgam Township where a large number of people commemorated the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS).

Students of Government Sheikh-ul-Alam Degree College Budgam had set up a stall to serve drinks to mourners.

Dozens of banners were carried by the mourners. "Imam Hussain (AS) taught us all how to stand up and resist cruelty and the government of tyranny," read a banner.

Meanwhile deployment of security forces was seen in areas under 10 police stations including Karan Nagar, Shaheed Gunj, Batamaloo, Shergari, Maisuma, Kothibagh, Kralkhud, Ram Munshi Bagh, Rainawari, Nowhatta, Khanyar, MR Gunj and Safakadal.

Stray dogs scare commuters in Bagh-i- Mehtab



Ubaid Gul
Srinagar

Dozens of stray dogs here in Bagh-e-Mehtab area of Srinagar have become a cause of concern not only for residents but also for the authorities who had so far failed to put a check on their growing population.

“This is a major problem for all of us. Stray dogs bite people, chase them when they go to fajr prayers early in the morning, and scare away children,” Shabir Ahmad, a resident of Gousia Colony, Bagh e mehtab told Merc times

Stray dogs can be seen in large groups around garbage dumps in this residential area. “These dogs have made our life hell, particularly for women and old age persons,” Habibullah said.

He said that it seems that the Srinagar Municipal Corporation(SMC) is unaware about various laws regarding how to check the growth of stray dogs as the animal birth control rules prevent their killing unless the animals turn highly infectious or rabid.

People here said that though the Municipal Corporation captured the stray dogs in the area, still their numbers just keep rising.

They said that even after making several complaints to the authorities nothing much has changed. “Some of the dogs living in our area are rabid who Not only bite people, but several accidents also keep taking place as they keep following the motorists even after dark, said Showkat Ahmad and added that many children have been bitten in the last one month, making others too scared to go out and play.

while talking to the ward officier of this area namely Bilal Ahmad Baba, he told MERC times that “we are in process to take out this mess out of the area soon”.

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Project Umeed gets awarded by the Union Ministry

Obaid Bashir
Srinagar

Project UMEED sponsored by Jammu and Kashmir state rural livelihood mission (JKSRLM) has been awarded by the Union ministry for developing and making efforts for capacity and institution building in the state for providing livelihood to the under privileged class and improve their socio economic status in the society

Project UMEED which started back in September 2013 in J&K state aims at empowering women by facilitating them to make themselves self-sufficient economically.

Project UMEED has instigated promotion and mobilizing of about 27063 women into 29703 self help groups and strengthening these groups by the way of providing revolving capital from JKSRML and linking various financial institutions for higher loans encouraging for extending their livelihood.

“I am a B.com graduate and I am running my own boutique here in Wazirbagh, its very complicated for women to work in our society but the times are changing and women are emerging as successful entrepreneurs throughout the valley. I believe if GOVT introduce more schemes like UMEED for the women empowerment in the valley we can see the emerge of some really extraordinary talent from the valley which resides hidden due to the lack of

opportunities here. I myself would not have been able to make it, if it wasn't for the JKSRML's scheme that I came to know from a friend”, said Rabia Bashir

“It's a really proud moment for us and I am very thankful to the whole J&K SRLM (Umeed) Family, and everybody associated with this project” said Abdul Rashid War Mission Director JKSRML

Meanwhile Sheetal Nanda secretary to Government rural development department and Panchayat Raj appreciated the work of Umeed JKSRML and extended her warm wishes to the team.

Project UMEED which started back in September 2013 in J&K state aims at empowering women by facilitating them to make themselves self-sufficient economically

MASSIVE FIRE BRINGS DOWN HOUSE IN BEMINA



Sheikh Ehsaan
Srinagar

Massive Fire erupted in a residential house in Shah-e-hamadan colony of Bemina, on the intervening night of 25 and 26 September. Top floor of the house was seen engulfed in flames.

Locals were terrified in the gloom of night, after watching everything burning and melting down. "I was about to sleep, soon after I saw flames, I screamed and shouted, and tried to awake everyone" said Muhammad Arshid, a neighbor living adjacent to the house gutted.

Fire and emergency soon reached on the spot after residents called on emergency numbers, who immediately started rescue operations and doused the flames. Locals appreciated prompt action of fire services.

There was no loss of life, however three people were severely injured and four who had minor burn injuries were shifted to JVC hospital.

Till now, cause of fire was not ascertained, however preliminary inquiry has been initiated by police to find out the cause of fire.

Various NGOs and philanthropists have joined hands to assist and aide all the victims if fire.

Rakhama village in shopian facing acute water shortage, people suffer

Schnian Meer
Shopian

The Residents of Rakhama village of south Kashmir's Shopian district have complained about the daily problem of irregular water supply in their village while alleging that they are being forced to consume water of canals which is very dirty and unhygienic.

A local resident here said that whenever there is non-availability of drinking water in their area they have to get it from a spring which is located very far from the village. "For other purposes, we collect the water from streams and canals which is impure."

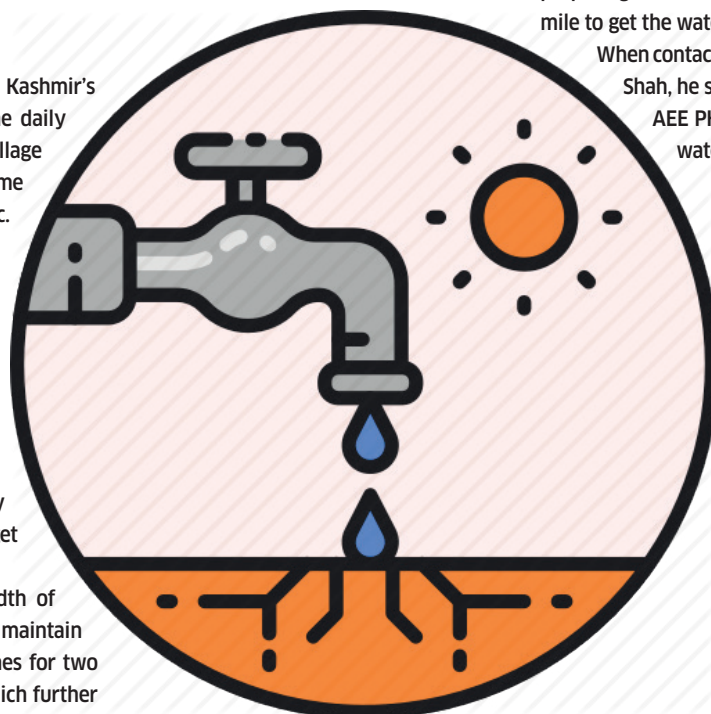
Another local of the village, Mohd Ishaq, said, "we have approached to various concerned authorities several times but it seems that they only hear our complaints but take no action to get them solved."

"The Local employees are saying that the width of pipeline present in our area is not sufficient to maintain the required flow of water as it should be 3 inches for two villages but it has only one inch of width and which further divides to half inch," he added.

Talking to Merc times, the cook of a local school of the village shameema said, "They face a lot of problems while

preparing meals for the students because they are supposed to travel half a mile to get the water for cooking purposes."

When contacted Executive Engineer PHE Shopian Division, Nissar Ahmad Shah, he said, "My department has already taken-up the matter with AEE PHE of the said area which has assured to solve the issue of water crisis in just some days."



we have approached to various concerned authorities several times but it seems that they only hear our complaints but take no action to get them solved

Javed Ali sings 'Kun Faya Kun' for Kashmir

Syed Mudawar
Srinagar

In complete contrast to the ongoing atmosphere in the valley, a concert by the name "Kun Faya Kun" of Bollywood sensation Javed Ali was organised in the lawns of SKICC on Sunday. The concert saw a huge enthusiasm in the valley about it as more than 2000 people came to watch the show. The chief guest on the occasion was the honourable Governor, Shri Satyapal Malik who during his address congratulated the organisers for the lovely evening and also made important announcements about the future policies of his government. He announced setting up of world class sports stadiums in every district and repeated the announcement of having an IPL team



for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. "The conditions in Kashmir are a result of the failure of policies for the people of J&K. It is high time to correct them and pay an ear to the youth of Kashmir". He said

Javed Ali after his performance spoke to MERC Times about the response of the audiences, "I am surprised to see such great response to my concert". He said, moreover He was full of praise about the beauty and weather of Kashmir. "it was great to perform in such a wonderful climate and Kashmir has great potential for such events as the climate suits performances in the open". He added

The concert had a concluding performance of Aqib Assad the Kashmir Idol who sang his upcoming song "Kashmir se milte hai" for the audiences.



Dal covered with Red Algae, high pollution indication

Rooh Yaseen
Srinagar

The surface of the Dal Lake has been engulfed by red algal bloom, giving the lake a total reddish appearance.

The red algal bloom is a major indication of pollution inside the water body, according to experts.

Over the years, the quality of water in the lake has suffered due to rapid urbanization, agricultural activities, siltation and municipal sewage, which help the red algae thrive.

Former professor at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST) Shafiqur-Rehman, who had identified the specific species in 1991, told Merc Times that draining of fertilisers and nutrients into the lake was the major reason for its proliferation.

"The Dal receives large amount of nutrition from many sources whether through agriculture activities, golf courses, and other sewage," Rehman said.

He said the algae colour is green in the morning but after it gets high temperature

from the sun, the colour of the bloom changes to brick-red.

"We are all aware not only about pollution level but that nutrient content has also gone up in the Dal too. We need to identify the sources from where these nutrients are coming, after that we have to control them, that is the only way to stop appearance of the red algae in the Dal," Rehman added.

An official of Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) told Merc Times that it was trying to completely wipe out the weeds and lily pads from Dal Lake.

"Currently our team is busy in aeration of the lake water so that the red algae bloom disappears. This red algae bloom will disappear only when water doesn't receive any nutrition, till then every year it will come, and every year we use aeration procedure, what else can we do," said Raman Executive Engineer of LAWDA.

He added that for de-weeding they were employing only manual procedure "as we don't have any machine for de-weeding process".



Lack of zebra crossing signs puts pedestrians in peril on KU road

Aarif Shah
Srinagar

Students face inconvenience while crossing the road. The flow of traffic plies on the road without any convenient crossing facility for the university students and other pedestrians.

Students complain that it takes them 10 to 15 minutes to cross the other side and sometimes becomes risky for them as most of the vehicles run in high speed. They further complain that there should have been Zebra crossing signs instead of speed breakers.

“Crossing road is the first task we face before entering in the university, and at times our

precious time gets wasted if we are already late for classes or exams. This should not happen and there should be crossing facility.” said Absaar Riyaz, a Kashmir University student.

Another student Urooj said “ This needs attention otherwise it can lead to accident anytime. The Zebra crossing lines should be near all the gates of University and it’s essential. We request the concerned department that they should look into this issue.”

Upon contacting with ARTO Srinagar Arif Parvez, he said “ that I am not aware about this. I will look into this matter and zebra crossing lines will be drawn as soon as possible for the ease of traffic and students

AAI launches ferry service at Srinagar international airport

Shahid Bashir
Srinagar

Taking cognizance of the inconvenience faced by air travelers at Srinagar International Airport, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has, on the instructions of Advisor to Governor K Vijay Kumar, started ferry service from the Drop Gate to the Terminal Building.

According to Akash Deep, Director, Srinagar International Airport, the ferry service, mostly comprising Innova cars, will shuttle between the Drop Gate and the Terminal Building every 10 minutes to quickly transport the air travelers, who don’t have their own transportation facility, to Terminal Building. He said each such passenger will be charged Rs 20



along with luggage by the ferry service for transportation.

Akash said it will also help air travelers to

catch their flights in time who sometimes get stuck in traffic snarls outside the Drop Gate resulting in a distressing situation.

“We have roped in the taxi operators of the Airport Stand for the purpose and they have already started the service,” he said.

The Director Airport has urged the air travelers to make the best possible use of the facility to ensure its sustainability.

Advisor Kumar has hailed the AAI authorities for launching the ferry service which he said would be of immense use for the air travelers.

Pertinently, Advisor Kumar, while taking note of the inconvenience the air travelers, mostly tourists, were facing while traversing around 1.5 km distance from the Drop Gate to the Terminal Building, had taken up the matter with AAI authorities asking them to arrange some suitable transportation facility for such passengers.