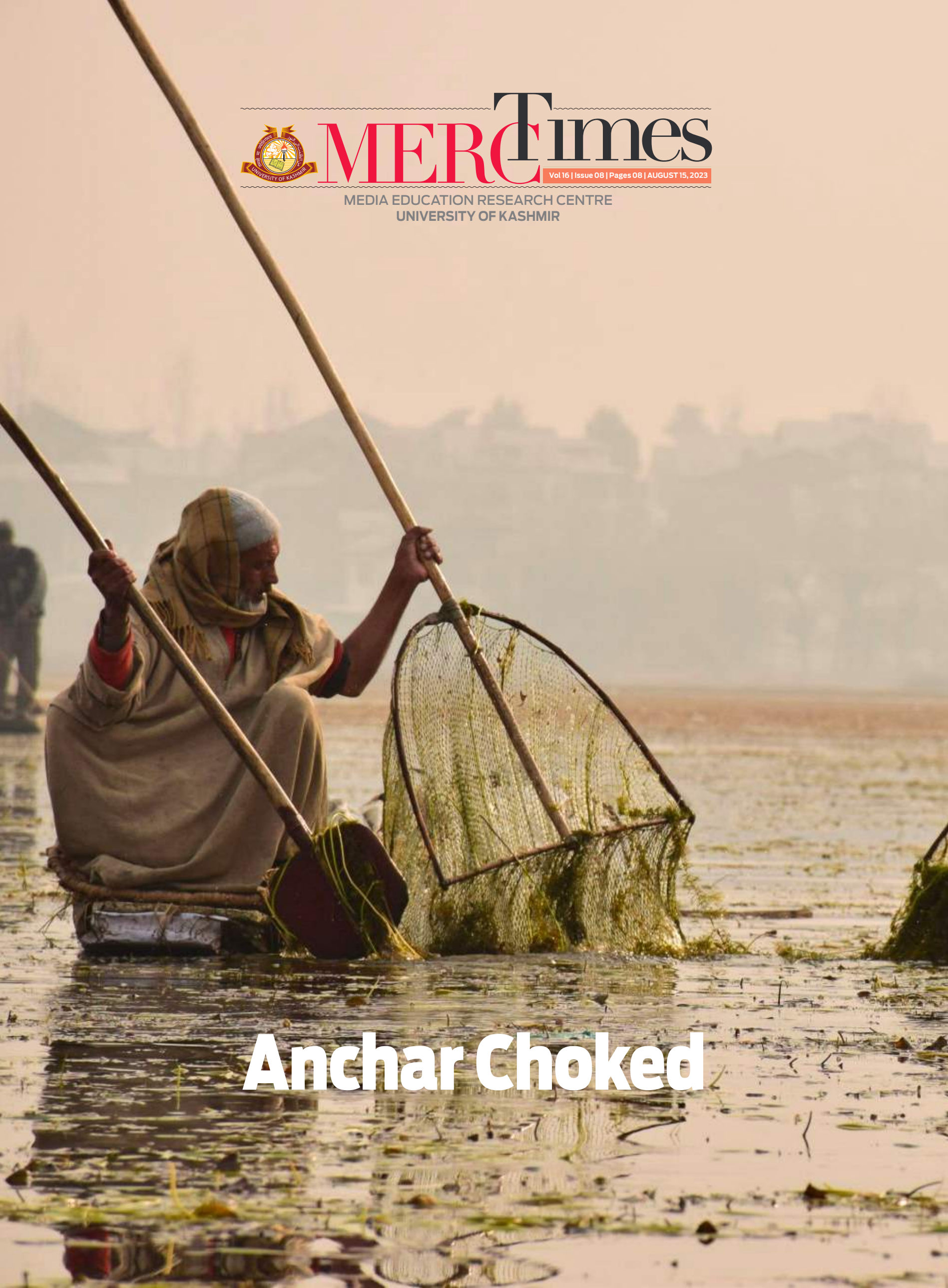




# MERC Times

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MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



## Anchar Choked

## From rural roots to global recognition

Nasira Akhter's breakthrough in polythene conversion earns her fame

Syed Batool Andrabi

It is said that nothing succeeds like success—constant struggling, firm determination, and working in challenging situations ultimately pave the way for success.

Grassroots-level innovator Nasira Akhter is an example of great struggle and success. Hailing from a remote village in the Kulgam district, she has given wings to her dreams and turned the impossible into possible.

She has discovered an enzyme from a herbal plant that converts polythene into ashes. She joined the Kashmir University Science Instrumentation Centre (U.S.I.C) and worked on this project for eight years.

In 2015, she gave a live demonstration before the HoDs, faculty members, scholars, students, and her research work was analyzed in the laboratories yielding positive results.

Furthermore, this research work was tested and analyzed at national and international level laboratories, with positive outcomes.

In 2015, a book entitled "Unsung Innovators of Kashmir" written by Shaikh

Fayaz deliberated upon this research work and highlighted the achievements of innovator Nasira Akhter.

Later on, a review of this book was published in several newspapers in the USA and patent journals in Africa and Australia. This led to Nasira's entry into India's Book of Records, the Asian Book of Records, Kalam Book of World Records, and her name being enlisted among the top hundreds in an international seminar conducted in Bhopal in 2019.

Nasira Akhter earned fame and recognition, receiving the Nari Shakti Purushkar in 2022 from the President of India.

In addition, she has earned many awards from various organizations and institutions that acknowledge her research work. Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) has also awarded her research work, and the London University recently conferred an honorary Ph.D. degree upon her.

In this long journey, she stood firmly against all odds, even when her research work was termed as a hoax.

Professor Arshad of Environmental

Science, who applauded Nasira Akhter's research work, said that this work is eco-friendly and does not have any negative effects on the environment.

Now the question arises, after receiving these awards and appreciations, is this research work a myth or reality?

Replying to this Nasira Akhter said, "Many people have made fun of my research work and criticized it by saying that it lacks scientific basis. They claim it is a hoax and a magical solution to the problem. However, I have turned a deaf ear to these comments and continue working on this project regularly for the last 20 years. I have achieved success, evident from these awards and appreciations. Though I do not have the highest qualifications and degrees in science, God has blessed me, and I have succeeded in bringing this research work to the national and international level. Recently, I have been granted a patent from the USA and other countries."

Innovator Nasira Akhter is eagerly awaiting the climax of this story, when her product will come to the market, and she will receive the dividends of this project, completing her journey.

## Man behind 'Aziz Theorem' inspired generation of mathematicians

Sheezan Naseer

Born with an insatiable curiosity and an exceptional talent for numbers, Professor Abdul Aziz, a renowned mathematician of University of Kashmir, had dedicated his life to unravelling the mysteries of mathematics and making groundbreaking contributions to the field.

Aziz completed his undergraduate studies with top honours, earning a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Kashmir.

Later, he earned his Master's degree in Mathematics from the prestigious Cambridge University.

Thereafter, Professor Aziz embarked on a remarkable research journey that spanned several decades. His research interests primarily focused on number theory, algebraic geometry, and mathematical analysis.

His innovative ideas and rigorous methodology garnered the attention of the academic community, leading to numerous invitations to speak at conferences and collaborate with esteemed mathematicians from around the world.



One of Professor Aziz's most significant achievements came in the form of his groundbreaking theorem in number theory, which provided a solution to a long-standing conjecture that had baffled mathematicians for decades. This is globally known as "Aziz Theorem." The breakthrough not only earned him widespread acclaim but also revolutionized the field and opened new

avenues for further exploration.

Apart from his theoretical contributions, Professor Aziz served as a professor at the University of Kashmir, inspiring countless students with his passion for mathematics and his ability to simplify complex concepts.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field, Professor Abdul Aziz received numerous prestigious awards and honours throughout his career. He was the recipient of the Fields Medal, the highest honour in mathematics, for his groundbreaking theorem.

Additionally, he was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society, a distinction reserved for the most accomplished scientists and mathematicians in the world.

He actively engaged in outreach programs, visiting schools and communities to promote the beauty and significance of mathematics, particularly among underprivileged children.

His groundbreaking contributions to mathematics and his commitment to sharing knowledge continue to shape the field and inspire generations of mathematicians to push the boundaries of what is possible.



# Changing climate forces farmers in Kangan to prefer maize over rice

Fozia Rashid

**T**orrential downpours have posed challenges for farmers engaged in traditional rice cultivation in Kashmir.

The excessive rainfall has resulted in flooding and diminished rice yields, prompting farmers to explore alternative crops.

This shift in agricultural practices serves as a noteworthy example of farmers' ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Historically, Kashmir has been renowned for its fertile land and prowess in rice production. However, recent years have witnessed an abnormal increase in rainfall, causing flooding and rendering rice farming arduous.

Nazir Ahmad Bhat, a diligent farmer from Kangan, has grappled with the trials of submerged rice fields, leading to decreased crop outputs.

"The heavy rains have become unpredictable, making it difficult to rely solely on growing rice. We had to think of other options that would work better in this changing climate," Bhat explained.

Among the alternatives, cultivating corn holds several advantages in

dealing with erratic weather patterns. Corn requires less water than rice and exhibits resilience in diverse climatic conditions.

Moreover, its shorter growth cycle enables farmers to harvest and sell their corn earlier, thereby mitigating risks associated with adverse weather conditions.

Mohammad Sultan Bhat, another farmer from Kangan, affirmed the practicality of transitioning to maize cultivation. "Switching to growing maize has been a practical option. It needs less water, so there is less risk of flooding," he said.

"Despite the challenges we face, I believe that by adopting alternative crops such as maize and implementing sustainable farming practices, we can overcome the adversities posed by changing weather patterns and continue to prosper as farmers," Bhat added.

While embracing corn cultivation opens new possibilities for farmers, it

also presents its own set of challenges. Access to improved corn seed varieties suitable for the local climate is crucial for their success.

Ghulam Ahmed Mir, a farmer from Cheerwan Kangan, highlights the disruption caused by heavy rains to traditional rice farming methods.

Mir expresses that growing maize has become a more viable choice for farmers, given its ability to withstand diverse weather conditions.

Emphasizing the need for collective action he said, "The changing climate affects us all. It is essential that farmers come together, share knowledge and experiences, and collectively adapt to new realities to ensure our sustainability."

Mohammad Younis, the Chief Agriculture Officer of Ganderbal, lauded the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by farmers in response to changing weather patterns, expressing his satisfaction over their efforts.



Despite the challenges we face, I believe that by adopting alternative crops such as maize and implementing sustainable farming practices, we can overcome the adversities posed by changing weather patterns and continue to prosper as farmers





## Unrelenting weather ravages **strawberry** crop, farmers face financial losses

**Faizan Khurshid**

Incessant rains, wind storms, and prolonged cold weather have wreaked havoc on this year's strawberry crop in Kashmir.

Farmers in the region are bearing the brunt of unseasonably low temperatures and frequent wet spells, which have severely impacted the harvest season, resulting in significant financial losses. Over the past two months, a relentless series of adverse weather conditions has disrupted the flourishing strawberry industry, leaving farmers grappling with the aftermath.

Kashmir experienced exceptionally high rainfall in May, marking it as one of the wettest months in the past decade, as reported by the Meteorological Department. The summer capital of the UT, Srinagar, received an unprecedented 86mm of rainfall, while Kokernag recorded the highest rainfall in the region with 215mm.

Strawberries are not only a source of income but also a symbol of agricultural richness for farmers in Kashmir. However, the unfavorable weather patterns have turned this year's harvest season into a nightmare.

"Normally, this time of year witnesses a surge in strawberry production, with farmers eagerly anticipating a bountiful crop. Unfortunately, nature had different plans," said Hameed Mir, a strawberry

cultivator.

The first blow came in the form of incessant rains that plagued the region, resulting in waterlogged fields and delayed planting schedules. As the downpours persisted, the excess moisture damaged the strawberry plants, inhibiting their growth and affecting their overall health. Moreover, the damp conditions created an ideal breeding ground for pests and diseases, further compounding the problems faced by the farmers.

Adding to the farmers' woes, strong wind storms swept through Kashmir. The powerful gusts not only damaged the fragile strawberry plants but also uprooted some, rendering them irrecoverable. "The turbulent weather conditions prevented the plants from reaching their optimal growth potential, resulting in smaller and less flavorful strawberries," Aquib Ahmad, a farmer said.

Furthermore, the prolonged cold weather has played a significant role in the decline of the strawberry crop. While Kashmir's strawberries thrive in mild temperatures, this year the region experienced uncharacteristically low temperatures for an extended period.

"The cold weather caused stunted growth and hindered the natural ripening process of the strawberries. As a result, the harvest was delayed, and the yield was drastically reduced, leaving us grappling with meager returns for our efforts," added Ahmad.

As the rains persist and the cold weather continues, Kashmir's strawberry farmers find themselves in a race against time. They are not only battling the elements but also striving to preserve their way of life and protect an essential component of the region's agricultural heritage. The resilience and determination of these farmers will be put to the test as they navigate the aftermath of this devastating strawberry season, with hopes of restoring their livelihoods and reviving the once-vibrant strawberry fields of Kashmir.



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# Once a tourist attraction, **Anchar lake** now suffers from contamination, decline

Seerat Bashir

Anchar Lake, which was once a picturesque attraction, encircled by majestic mountains, is now on the brink of extinction, owing to a combination of human activity and neglect.

This once-vibrant lake, which was connected to the renowned Dal Lake and cherished by tourists, has fallen victim to severe contamination and rampant weed growth, making navigation increasingly difficult.

Located in Soura, 14 kilometers northwest of Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, Anchar Lake's alarming decline is evident by its shrinking size. Once sprawling across 19.4 square kilometers, it has now dwindled to a mere 6.8 square kilometers.

The lake has become a dumping ground for garbage and filth, significantly reducing its appeal to tourists who used to enjoy rowing from Dal Lake to Anchar.

A local resident Fareeda Begum, who resides on the lake's shore, lamented that Anchar Lake has transformed into a landfill. She revealed that the lake receives untreated solid and liquid garbage, with her own house adjacent to the lake serving as a focal point for indiscriminate dumping during odd hours of the night and early morning.

The decline of Anchar Lake can be attributed to various factors, including human activity, sewage discharge, and the haphazard disposal of domestic waste such as polythene and plastic bottles. Weed growth has also contributed to the deterioration of the lake's ecosystem.

Ghulam Qadir, a local fisherman, expressed concern for the future of the livelihoods of fishermen and farmers residing near the lake. The declining condition of Anchar Lake has had a significant impact on their income, particularly the production of lotus stems (nadru), which has seen a significant decrease.

Previously, thousands of people relied on this aquatic resource as their main source of income, but as conditions worsen, securing a sufficient yield has become challenging.

Professor Shakeel Ahmad Romshoo, an esteemed environmentalist and academician, emphasized that Anchar Lake is just one among several wetland areas in Kashmir that face threats from human activity, excessive silt accumulation, and uncontrolled urbanization.

It has suffered significant degradation, and reversing this decline would require a collective effort involving the government, local communities, civil society, and

academia, he said.

Professor Romshoo further underscored the importance of developing conservation and management strategies for every water body and wetland in the region.

While the task of reviving natural systems is undoubtedly challenging and time-consuming, it is not impossible with the necessary support and dedication, a local resident said.

By acknowledging the dire state of Anchar Lake and mobilizing resources, there remains hope for the restoration and preservation of this once-charming and ecologically important water body.



lake has become a dumping ground for garbage and filth, significantly reducing its appeal to tourists who used to enjoy rowing from Dal Lake to Anchar.



# Mubeena Ramzan exemplifies transformative power of education as tool of **women empowerment**

Sadaf Shabir

**M**ubeena Ramzan, a prominent advocate for women's rights in Kashmir, is making significant strides in empowering women through education.

Recognized as one of the 500 most influential Muslims globally by The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, Ramzan is dedicated to uplifting underprivileged women in her community.

Mubeena developed a deep sense of empathy for the less fortunate from a young age. Despite facing financial constraints, her strong desire to help others propelled her to pursue her goal of improving the lives of underprivileged women in the region.

Founder of Ansar-ul-Nisa, a socio-religious organization in Kashmir, Ramzan has been addressing the increasing cases of suicidal tendencies among women, particularly married women, through round-the-clock counseling services.

The organization, established in 2014, focuses on providing specialized support to needy orphans, would-be-brides, and widows.

The rise in suicidal cases comes at a time when Kashmir is witnessing a surge in crimes against women. According to the latest report from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there was a 15.62% increase in such crimes in 2021 compared to the previous year.

The union territory reported over 7,000 arrests related to harassment of women in 2021. In the 2011 Census, the crime rate per lakh population in the valley stood at 61.6% as of 2021.

Disturbingly, 91.4% of the reported cases of rape, attempted rape, and dowry deaths involved perpetrators known to the victims. Additionally, there were 1,851 cases of physical assault on women with the intention to outrage their modesty.

The spike in crime coincided with the COVID-19 lockdown, during which the counseling cell at Ansar-ul-Nisa experienced an expansion in its activities.

With their 24x7 availability, the counseling services have played a vital role in addressing the mental health challenges faced by women in the region.

One notable case that Mubeena Ramzan addressed through her organization involved a girl who had been abandoned by both her parents due to their separation and subsequent remarriages.

The girl was wrongly registered as an orphan. Ansar-ul-Nisa took up the cause, advocating for the girl's rights and confronting her father on the social front.

Ultimately, through their efforts, they successfully convinced the local elders to grant her a rightful share of the property. Subsequently, the girl got married and is now leading a contented life with her



husband and daughter.

In another instance, two orphan sisters who were studying at Jamia Islamia Mahdul Muslimat received legal assistance from Mubeena's organization to secure their rightful property share from their grandfather.

As a result, they now live with their mother in their own house. These success stories exemplify the impact of Mubeena's organizations in empowering women and addressing social injustices.

She believes in providing a platform for various groups of women, including newly married women, divorcees, and those dealing with mental health disorders, where they can freely share their stories and find solace.

To achieve this, Mubeena's institution has assembled a counseling team comprising highly qualified professionals, including renowned doctors and professors. Their collective efforts are directed towards offering both financial and emotional support to these individuals.

Looking ahead, Mubeena envisions expanding their reach by establishing a dedicated helpline number. This initiative aims to extend crucial support to a wider range of individuals in need.

Currently, the institutions founded by Mubeena have 600 girls enrolled as students, while approximately 500 widows receive financial assistance. However, due to limited funds, her plans to open a college for skills-oriented courses have been temporarily postponed.

In terms of her future aspirations, Mubeena's vision entails establishing an institution where modern subjects are taught alongside Islamic education. Additionally, she intends to incorporate disciplines such as martial arts and vocational skills like cutting, designing, and

oratory.

By doing so, Mubeena seeks to empower women through a comprehensive education that equips them with both traditional knowledge and contemporary skills.

Hailing from the apple town of Sopore, she exemplifies the transformative power of education and a steadfast dedication to women's empowerment.

Reflecting on her journey, she expressed gratitude for the support of the Kashmiri people, whose recognition led her to be acknowledged among the most influential Muslims in 2019.

Mubeena pursued her studies in her hometown, enrolling in the sole women's college, which was privately run by Anjuman Moin-ul-Islam at the time.

Driven by a desire to delve into the teachings of Islam that specifically addressed women, Mubeena pursued a Master's degree in Islamic Studies at the University of Kashmir.

She sought to challenge misinterpretations and misunderstandings surrounding the beautiful Islamic religion. Witnessing the plight of abandoned women, deprived of basic necessities such as clothing, food, and water, deeply affected her.

Motivated by these experiences, she embarked on a journey of academic achievements, obtaining a B.Ed., M.Phil, and a PhD in Islamic Law.

Her educational pursuits included comprehensive theses on Islamic Law and Social Evils, as well as on Shah-e-Hamdan and Orientalism. Through her studies, Mubeena recognized the pressing need for increased resources in women's empowerment and education.

As a committed educator, Mubeena worked as a contractual lecturer and research associate in various educational institutions. Eventually, she established her own institution, Jamia Islamia Mahdul Muslimaat, catering to women's education.

The institution not only provides free shelter, food, clothes, and education to needy students but also offers vocational training in fields such as cutting, tailoring, and computer skills.

Nahila Wani, a senior student at Jamia Islamia Mahdul Muslimaat, expressed gratitude for the empowering vocational training that enables students to become financially independent.

The well-balanced curriculum fosters independence, awareness, and a deep understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Mubeena's unwavering commitment to women's empowerment, coupled with her relentless pursuit of knowledge, continues to shape the lives of countless individuals, transforming them into agents of change within their communities.

FROM **UoK**...

## Dr Imtiyaz Khan's research in aquaculture earns him **international recognition**

Zainab Shafiq

In the breathtaking region of Kashmir, where natural beauty merges with cultural heritage, resides Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed Khan, an esteemed academician and researcher in the field of Zoology, currently serving as a Senior Assistant Professor in the Department of Zoology at the University of Kashmir in Srinagar.

Dr. Khan's research work has gained substantial recognition, earning him a coveted place in the research database of Stanford University, which ranks him among the top two percent of scientists worldwide - a testament to his impactful contributions and commitment to advancing scientific knowledge.

Dr. Khan is a renowned figure in the field of Fish Biology and Aquaculture (farming in water), whose tireless dedication to teaching, research, and guidance has earned him accolades and recognition, both nationally and internationally.

With an illustrious career spanning over two decades, an extensive range of skills and specialization in various aspects of fish physiology, nutrition, and feed formulation, Dr. Khan has made significant contributions to the scientific community, making him a valuable asset to the Department of Zoology.

Dr. Khan's journey in the world of academia began with his pursuit of higher education at Aligarh Muslim University, where he completed his education from June 1996 to June 2006.

This comprehensive educational background has equipped him with a strong foundation in the principles and theories of zoology.

Prior to his current position, Dr. Khan was associated with the Department of Zoology at Aligarh Muslim University in India, where he worked as a dedicated researcher from January 1999 to October 2006.

During this time, he delved deep into various areas of zoology, honing his skills and expertise in the subject.

For over a decade, Dr. Khan has been actively involved in teaching and research at the postgraduate level in Zoology, with a particular focus on Ichthyology (the branch of Zoology that deals with fishes).

During this time, he has supervised numerous research projects conducted by M/Phil and Doctoral students, exploring the fascinating domains of Fish Nutrition and Physiology.

Several of his students have successfully completed their degrees under his mentorship, while others are progressing



steadily towards their research goals.

One of Dr. Khan's pioneering achievements was the determination of the essential amino acid requirements of the Indian Major Carp, *Cirrhinus mrigala*, and *H. fossilis* at the fingerling stage (refers to the fish that has reached a stage where the fins can be extended and protective scales have covered the body).

His doctoral thesis and research projects sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have unveiled critical insights into the nutritional needs of these fish species.

Dr. Khan's key findings have been submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture through DST-New Delhi, highlighting their practical implications for the aquaculture industry.

In addition to his amino acid studies, Dr. Khan has extensively researched the protein, energy, and vitamin requirements of various cultured fish species, including the Common Carp and indigenous Snow Trout *Schizothorax* of Kashmir.

He has also made significant strides in determining the feeding regime and nutritional needs of Rainbow Trout, *O. mykiss*, originating from the water bodies of Kashmir.

His research outcomes have facilitated the formulation of optimal fish feed and feeding practices, ensuring better growth and utilization of resources.

Dr. Khan's expertise extends beyond the confines of his laboratory. He actively collaborates with the State Fisheries Department, providing his expert services to fish hatcheries in Koker Nag and Laribal.

His on-farm demonstrations and visits to fish hatcheries have empowered his students to witness real-world applications

of their studies, fostering a holistic understanding of aquaculture practices.

Dr. Khan's research interests encompass a broad spectrum within the realm of Aquaculture, Fish Nutrition, Limnology (the study of the biological, chemical and physical features of lakes and other bodies of fresh water), and Fish Physiology.

His current endeavors revolve around studying the nutrient requirements of cold-water fish species, further expanding our understanding of their unique physiological adaptations.

Dr. Imtiaz A Khan's contributions to the field of Zoology and Fish Biology have been widely recognized and celebrated.

Most of his research work has been published in high rated and prestigious Peer-reviewed international journals.

Last year, he was honored with the Outstanding Scientist award by Vice-Chancellor Professor Nilofer Khan at a special felicitation ceremony, acknowledging his exceptional achievements.

Dr. Imtiaz A Khan's unwavering passion for Fish Biology and Aquaculture has elevated him to the forefront of scientific research.

Through his teaching, supervision, and groundbreaking studies, he has revolutionized the understanding of fish nutrition and physiology, making valuable contributions to the aquaculture industry.

As an Assistant Professor at the University of Kashmir, Dr. Khan continues to inspire and guide the next generation of zoologists and researchers, propelling the field forward with his expertise and dedication.



Dr. Khan's research interests encompass a broad spectrum within the realm of Aquaculture, Fish Nutrition, Limnology (the study of the biological, chemical and physical features of lakes and other bodies of fresh water), and Fish Physiology



# Shifting weather patterns threaten saffron farms

**Climate** experts rally for solutions as farmers grapple with **livelihood** crisis

Faisal Anjum

The saffron industry in Kashmir, which has been an inseparable part of the region's cultural and economic heritage for centuries, is facing an existential crisis due to the adverse impacts of climate change. The picturesque valley's saffron farmers are struggling to cope with the changing climate, which is jeopardizing their livelihoods and the future of this prized spice.

Climate scientists have long warned about the consequences of global warming, and the effects are now evident in the once-thriving saffron fields of Kashmir. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and shifting weather patterns are disrupting the delicate ecosystem required for saffron cultivation, leading to reduced yields and compromised quality.

Experts in the field support these worries. Prof. Sarfaraz A Wani, Director of Research at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology and a renowned agricultural scientist, explained, "Saffron cultivation is highly sensitive to environmental conditions. The plants require a cool and dry autumn, with sufficient chilling hours, followed by a cold winter for dormancy. The changing climate disrupts this delicate balance, affecting the saffron's flowering cycle and reducing its overall yield."

The detrimental effects of climate change on the saffron industry have prompted calls for urgent action. Prof. Fayaz Ahmad, Head

of the Department of Environmental Science at the University of Kashmir, emphasized the need for sustainable practices and adaptive farming techniques. "Farmers need support in adopting climate-resilient practices such as improved irrigation systems, organic fertilizers, and efficient water management. They must also be provided with financial aid and training to cope with the challenges posed by climate change."

Farmers have also noticed a decline in the intensity and aroma of saffron flowers, making the product less appealing to buyers. Abdul Basit, a young farmer from village Wyuan, expressed his worries, stating, "The quality of our saffron has significantly diminished over the years due to the changing climate. This has led to a decrease in demand and prices, putting us at a significant disadvantage."

Mohammed Rafiq, a saffron farmer from Pampore, expressed deep concerns about the changing climate conditions. "Cultivating saffron has been our family's tradition for generations, but now the weather has become increasingly unpredictable. Winters are becoming warmer, and the snowfall is decreasing. Saffron necessitates specific temperature ranges and a cold winter for optimal growth. These changes are negatively impacting our crop yields and pushing us towards financial instability."

The shift in weather patterns has also led to an increase in pests and diseases affecting saffron plants. Shabir Ahmed, an agricultural officer based in Pulwama, pointed out, "Warmer temperatures and

altered precipitation patterns have created a favorable environment for pests and diseases. This has forced farmers to invest more in pest control measures, further adding to their financial burden."

In response to the crisis, the Jammu and Kashmir government has launched programs to educate farmers on climate-smart agricultural techniques and provide them with assistance. However, there is a pressing need for increased awareness and funding at both regional and national levels to safeguard the livelihoods of saffron farmers and preserve the rich saffron heritage of Kashmir.

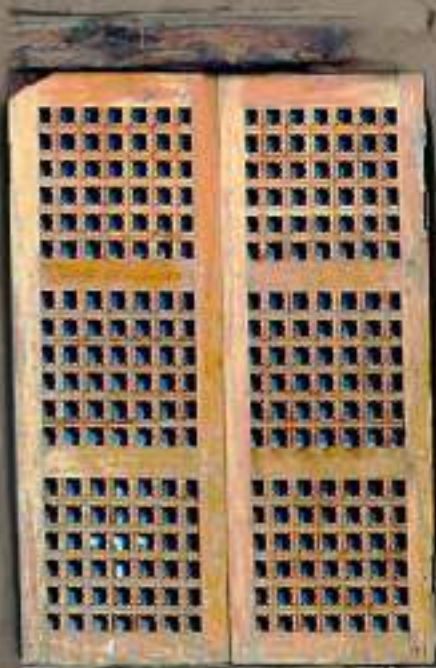
As climate change continues to threaten agriculture worldwide, the plight of Kashmiri saffron farmers serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need to address this global crisis. The resilience of this ancient industry hangs in the balance, with the hope that concerted efforts will secure its future for generations to come.

**Warmer temperatures and altered precipitation patterns have created a favorable environment for pests and diseases. This has forced farmers to invest more in pest control measures, further adding to their financial burden**

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# ARCHITECTURAL RESILIENCE

## Sana's 'halal' soaps attracting customers outside valley

**Tufail Ganie**

**S**ana Aftab, a dynamic and educated entrepreneur, has turned her passion for organic products into a thriving business venture with the establishment of 'Mountain Soap Company' in the Himalayan city of Srinagar. Using locally sourced ingredients and a creative approach, she has crafted a unique line of halal organic soaps that reflect the essence of Kashmir's natural beauty.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Sana stumbled upon the art of soap making through instructional videos on social media. What began as a hobby soon turned into a popular demand, with her handmade soaps garnering positive feedback from friends and relatives. Encouraged by the growing interest, Sana saw an opportunity to create something remarkable.

"The support and insistence of my friends were instrumental in the birth of 'Mountain Soap Company'," she said, her smile reflecting the joy of her entrepreneurial journey. Since its inception, the company has experienced tremendous success, with a substantial customer base and increasing online orders from those seeking the uniqueness of her



Kashmir-inspired products.

Having pursued her engineering degree from NIT Srinagar and completed her MBA from the University of Manchester, Sana recognized the untapped potential of her homeland, Kashmir. With abundant availability of wild-grown raw materials, starting an organic soap company became a natural choice for her.

Mountain Soap Company proudly presents an array of soap varieties made from locally sourced herbs, spices, nuts, walnut oil, mustard oil, and lavender. The captivating blends have captured the hearts

of customers, leading to inquiries from other companies interested in promoting her products. Sana's emphasis on using "halal" ingredients has earned her praise from both local and international communities.

However, the soap-making process is not without its challenges. Crafting a single soap takes approximately half an hour, and the curing process demands patience as it takes around three weeks to achieve the desired quality and effectiveness of the product.

With a vision to explore more organic options in the future, Sana envisions her company contributing not only to the local economy but also to the overall well-being of the people. Her venture showcases the bountiful resources of Kashmir and emphasizes the importance of organic and halal products, resonating with consumers worldwide.

As 'Mountain Soap Company' continues to gain popularity, Sana remains steadfast in maintaining the authenticity and quality that have become synonymous with her brand. The soap bars leaving her workshop carry not only a promise of a revitalizing bathing experience but also the essence of Kashmir's natural beauty and the spirit of a young entrepreneur's dreams.

## Cherry harvest plummets due to unpredictable weather, farmers report significant losses

**Qurat-ul-Ain**

**C**herry farmers in Kashmir, the country's leading province for cherry production, are grappling with substantial losses incurred due to excessive rainfall and hailstorms during this year's May and June months.

Numerous orchard owners are lamenting the loss of over 50 percent of their cherry harvest due to the unpredictable and harsh weather conditions. Cherries hold immense significance as the inaugural fruit of the year, given that most other fruits are harvested during the autumn season. The cherry season traditionally spans from the second week of May to the first week of July.

The growth of cherries serves as a vital economic lifeline for orchardists and laborers in the mid-year period when alternative income sources within the horticulture sector are scarce. In the region, a variety of cherry types are cultivated, including Mishri, Dabal, Siya, Awal-number, Italy, Jadi, and Makhmali.

Regrettably, the unanticipated excessive rainfall and hailstorms in May and early

June inflicted severe damage on cherry crops, leading to considerable losses for growers. Abdul Rashid, a grower from the Shopian district in south Kashmir, recounted that adverse weather conditions allowed him to salvage merely 30 percent of his anticipated cherry production. Notably, despite being dubbed a "bumper cherry season" by government officials, a significant number of farmers, like Abdul Majeed, endured a 50 percent loss in their entire yield.

Bashir Ahmad, president of the Kashmir Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, expressed optimism for a promising harvest this year. However, he underscored that the inclement weather fostered scab, a fungal ailment affecting fruits like apples and pears, resulting in a staggering 75 percent reduction in cherry production.

Conversely, Mohammad Amin from the Directorate of Horticulture, Kashmir, noted that while the rainfall and cooler temperatures might not detrimentally impact overall fruit production, they would assuredly compromise the quality of the cherries.

Cherry cultivation encompasses around



1,100 hectares of land in Kashmir. In the 2021-2022 season, the region yielded more than 8,100 metric tonnes of cherries. Additionally, cherry cultivation thrives in the adjacent state of Himachal Pradesh. The districts of Shopian in south Kashmir, along with Ganderbal and Srinagar in central Kashmir, stand out as primary cherry production zones. With the introduction of high-density cherry varieties, cherries are now being cultivated in nearly all districts of Kashmir.



## Social media has detrimental effects on student's mental health: Experts

Masrat Nabi

In the digital era, where technology and widespread connectivity have become prevalent, a growing concern surrounding the impact of social media on student mental health has come to light.

Recent research conducted by prominent mental health experts has unveiled the significant toll that excessive online engagement is taking on students' well-being globally.

The study, which encompassed the survey responses of numerous students across diverse educational institutions, has uncovered unsettling revelations about the adverse consequences of social media on their mental health. Dr. Tajamul Hussain, a renowned psychologist, brought forth several key findings.

"The research underscores a disconcerting correlation between heightened social media usage and elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation among students," noted Dr. Tajamul. "The perpetual exposure to meticulously curated images, coupled with the pressure to maintain an unrealistic virtual image, fosters sentiments of inadequacy and diminished self-esteem."

The widespread influence of social media platforms has led students to continuously compare themselves to seemingly flawless online influencers and peers. This internalized pressure to conform to unattainable standards ultimately corrodes their overall mental well-being.

Furthermore, the study has highlighted that prolonged engagement with social

media platforms is contributing to sleep disruptions, thereby worsening the situation. Dr. Rayees, another expert in the field, expressed concern over the ramifications of such disturbances. "Quality sleep holds paramount importance for the mental and emotional equilibrium of young adults," asserted Dr. Rayees. "The emission of blue light from screens, combined with incessant scrolling and exposure to captivating content, culminates in sleep deprivation. This chronic lack of restorative sleep impairs their cognitive acuity and emotional resilience."

In response to these disconcerting trends, educational institutions are gradually acknowledging the necessity to address the harmful effects of social media on students' mental well-being. Mrs. Rukiya, the principal of a local high school, underscored the significance of instilling awareness and facilitating open conversations. "As educators, we bear the responsibility of nurturing a safe and supportive environment for our students," Principal Rukiya remarked. "We are actively devising workshops and awareness campaigns to educate students about the potential risks tied to excessive social media usage. Additionally, we aim to equip them with strategies to strike a harmonious balance between their online and offline activities."

Simultaneously, mental health organizations are urging parents and guardians to play an active role in monitoring their children's online interactions while providing emotional support as necessary.

"Parents must remain vigilant to

discern noteworthy shifts in their child's demeanor or emotional state," Principal Rukiya advised. "Promoting open lines of communication and reminding them that social media often presents a mere highlight reel rather than an accurate portrayal of reality is crucial. Fostering self-esteem and resilience serves as a pivotal buffer against the challenges posed by the digital realm."

While acknowledging the potential of social media as a tool for connectivity and shared experiences, it is essential to recognize and address its repercussions on mental health, particularly among the younger generation. By cultivating awareness and nurturing a supportive environment, students can be encouraged to navigate the digital landscape wisely while safeguarding their mental well-being.

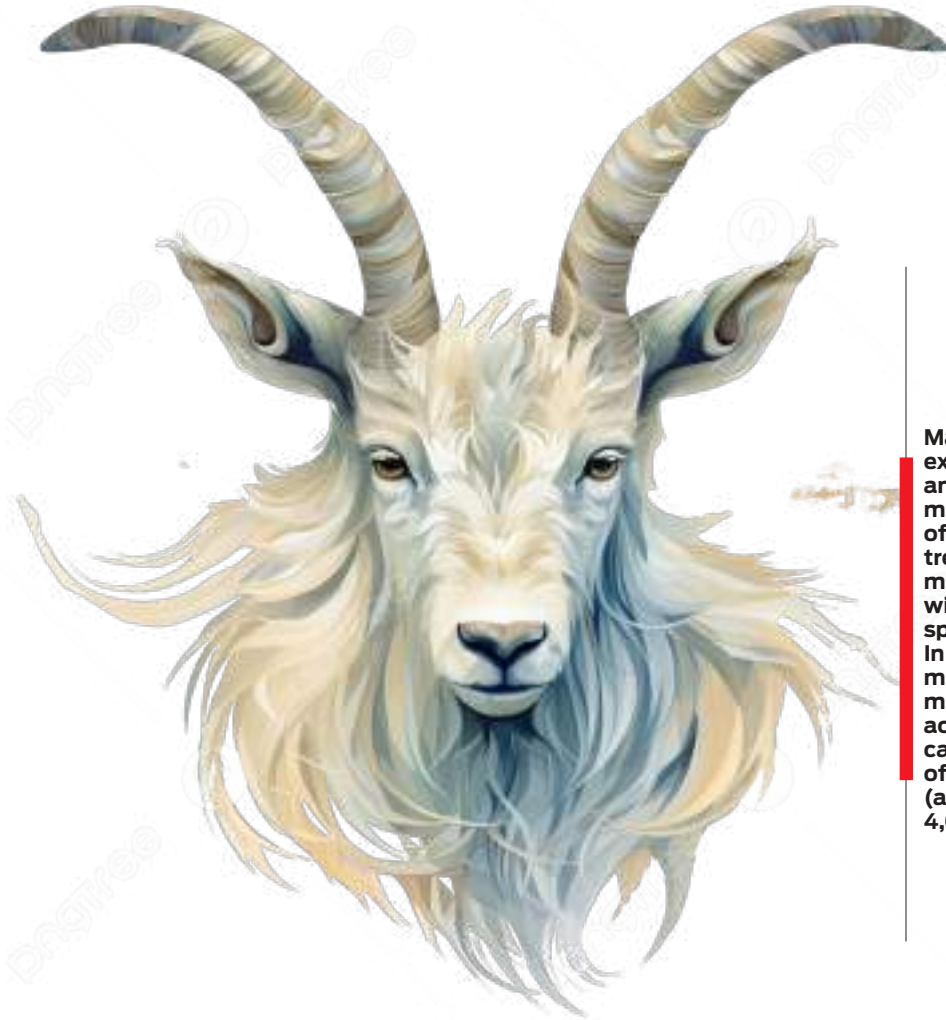


The research underscores a disconcerting correlation between heightened social media usage and elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation among students

MERC TIMES



## Kashmir's forests becoming safe haven for markhor



Markhor's exceptional agility and sure-footedness make it capable of navigating treacherous mountainous terrain with remarkable speed and precision. In the summer months, when the mountains are accessible, markhors can ascend heights of up to 12,000 feet (approximately 4,000 meters).

### Mohammad Younis

**F**orests of Kashmir have become safe haven for markhor: a screw-horned goat. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has declared the markhor an endangered species due to its dwindling population in Pakistan.

The markhor boasts a distinctive brown coat that undergoes seasonal changes. In the summer, the coat appears smooth, while it grows thicker in winter to provide insulation against the harsh cold. Notably, the markhor's striking appearance is enhanced by its elegant and curved flared horns.

Amidst a breathtaking landscape, Kazinag National Park in the Limber area of Boniyar sector, situated along the Line of Control in north Kashmir's Uri, provides a sanctuary for markhors. The park's dense coniferous forests, adorned with majestic deodar trees, create a rich and diverse ecosystem, offering abundant food sources, shelter, and camouflage for the markhors. Additionally, these trees play a crucial role in providing shade, microclimates, and vital habitats for various bird, mammal, and insect species.

The strategic location of Kazinag National Park along the Line of Control emphasizes the need for its preservation and protection. The park acts as a vital buffer zone, ensuring the conservation of markhors while contributing to the overall biodiversity of the region. Safeguarding the markhors and their habitat in this geographically sensitive area poses unique challenges and responsibilities.

Dr. Reyaz Ahmad, Coordinator of the Wildlife Trust of India for Kashmir, highlights that the markhor's presence is not limited by borders or specific landscapes. These magnificent animals can be found in various regions, including the Pir Panchal range and Kazinag National Park, freely traversing between them for breeding purposes.

Fortunately, the markhor population in Kazinag National Park has witnessed a significant increase in recent years, thanks to effective measures to combat poaching—a grave threat to their survival. Dr. Reyaz reports, "A survey conducted two years ago recorded approximately 200 markhors in the park, whereas eight years ago, the count stood at around 150.

This substantial population increase is a testament to the success of conservation efforts and signifies a promising development for the markhors' future."

The markhor's exceptional agility and sure-footedness make it capable of navigating treacherous mountainous terrain with remarkable speed and precision. In the summer months, when the mountains are accessible, markhors can ascend heights of up to 12,000 feet (approximately 4,000 meters). This remarkable ability allows them to inhabit rugged and challenging environments that remain inaccessible to many other species.

With its adaptability to diverse elevations and swift movements, the markhor is a truly remarkable creature, perfectly suited to its mountainous habitat. These characteristics contribute to the markhor's resilience and enable its survival in the challenging and often harsh conditions of its natural environment.

As Pakistan grapples with the decline of its national animal, India's successful conservation efforts in preserving the markhor population offer a glimmer of hope.



## Kashmir's heritage structure defying seismic threats

Mir Mehwish Farooq

**K**ashmir valley, a region highly susceptible to earthquakes due to its location at the intersection of the Indian and Eurasian plates, has developed a rich architectural heritage that prioritizes seismic endurance. The cultural and architectural practices of the region have been shaped by the constant threat of earthquakes.

Among the remarkable architectural gems found in Kashmir are the Taq and Dhajji-Dewari structures. The Taq, an initial system, employs load-bearing masonry piers and infill walls, connected by wooden “runners” at each floor level. This interlocking design enhances the structural integrity of the buildings.

The timber beams in the Taq buildings serve to connect the walls and floors, acting as a means to tie the structure together. The weight of the masonry in these buildings contributes to the pre-stressing of the walls, increasing their resistance to lateral forces.

In addition to the Taq, the Dhajji-Dewari construction method is prevalent in Kashmir. This technique incorporates a braced timber frame with masonry infill. The substantial timber elements interlace within the

plane of the exterior walls, providing added stability and resistance to seismic forces.

Interestingly, many houses in Kashmir exhibit a combination of both Taq and Dhajji-Dewari systems within the same structure. The Dhajji-Dewari is commonly employed for party walls between buildings, while the Taq is used for front walls.

This strategic combination allows for efficient use of materials and lighter construction, particularly useful for cantilevered walls.

Another architectural practice observed in Kashmir is the Mughal tradition of Uroosi. Uroosi, meaning “hidden bride” in Persian, involves the rolling down of intricately carved planks, resembling the appearance of a bride during weddings. This unique practice adds a touch of enchantment to the architectural landscape.

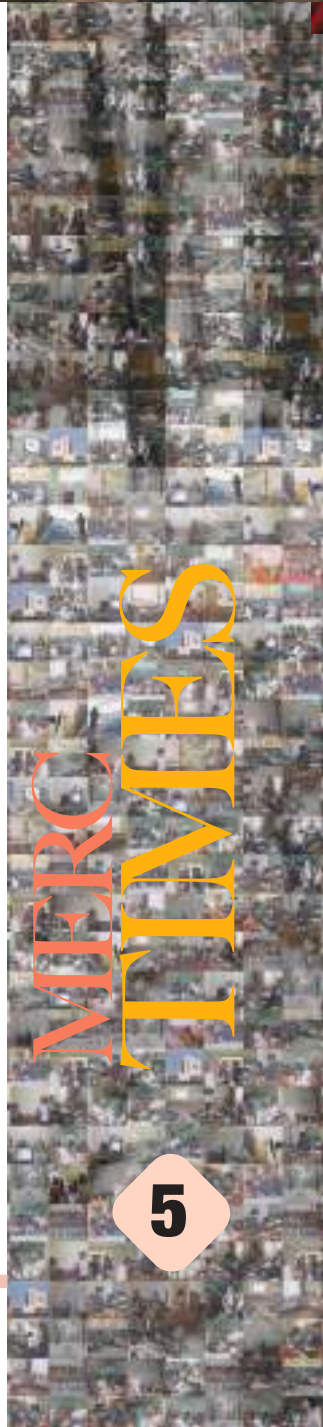
Architectural annals dating back to the 12th century paint a vivid picture of Kashmir's affinity for timber construction. Remarkably, these wooden structures were reported to reach towering heights and were praised for their strength and longevity.

Kalhana's “Kings” chronicle from 1148 noted the city's mansions reaching the clouds, primarily built of wood. Similarly, in the 16th century, Timur

described the city's large wooden buildings, emphasizing their strength and ability to withstand the test of time.

In a world increasingly governed by modern building codes, Kashmir's unique architectural practices stand apart, a living embodiment of innovation and heritage. Preserving this architectural legacy is not only a nod to cultural identity but also a commitment to resilience in the face of future seismic trials. As the valley strides into the future, its architectural treasures remain a reminder that heritage and innovation can join hands to overcome even the most formidable challenges.

**Dhajji-Dewari construction method is prevalent in Kashmir. This technique incorporates a braced timber frame with masonry infill. The substantial timber elements interlace within the plane of the exterior walls, providing added stability and resistance to seismic forces.**



MERC  
TIMES



Inside **Kashmir's** only herbarium

## Kashmir University preserving region's rich native flora

**Haseeb Ibn Hameed**

In a bid to safeguard the botanical diversity of Jammu and Kashmir, the University of Kashmir houses the region's only herbarium, which serves as a vital repository of plant specimens. Established in 1972, this herbarium boasts a collection that dates back to 1891, with the earliest specimens collected by British explorers. Previously stored in the Dehradun Herbarium in Uttarakhand, these specimens were relocated to Kashmir after the establishment of a local herbarium.

Known as the Kashmir Herbarium (KASH), this facility is located within the Center for Biodiversity and Plant Taxonomy at the university's Botany department. While there are two other herbariums in Jammu and Kashmir, KASH stands out due to its extensive collection, which has grown exponentially over the years. Initially housing 500 specimens, KASH now preserves a staggering total of 60,000 plant specimens, making it the third largest herbarium in the Western Himalayas.

Inside the herbarium, meticulously categorized wooden drawers and modern movable compactors accommodate the specimens. These specimens are



segregated based on their botanical relationships, enabling researchers to access and study them efficiently. The collection includes not only local flora but also specimens obtained through a specimen exchange program with herbariums from around the world.

The importance of KASH extends beyond preservation and storage. The herbarium plays a crucial role in research on the region's vegetation and the impact of environmental changes. Scientists, led by Junior Scientist and Curator Akhtar H. Malik, have conducted comprehensive studies indicating significant shifts in plant species richness and variations in quality along the Himalayan alpine slopes. The availability of original and

rich specimens within KASH provides valuable resources for these studies.

"While the trees still exist in the region, the current environmental and climatic conditions make the growth of new specimens impractical," explains Malik. However, with KASH's repository of 78 newly discovered tree specimens, researchers can continue to study and understand the region's unique flora.

The reputation of KASH has attracted attention worldwide, prompting inquiries from researchers seeking to explore the

tree species of Kashmir. Responding to the demand, plans are underway to launch an official web portal next year, providing global access to the herbarium's vast collection. This portal will not only facilitate research but also foster international collaborations in the study of Kashmir's vegetation.

The Kashmir Herbarium stands as a vital institution dedicated to preserving and studying the botanical heritage of the region. With its vast collection of plant specimens, it serves as a valuable resource for researchers, scientists, and enthusiasts alike, contributing to the conservation and understanding of Jammu and Kashmir's natural biodiversity.

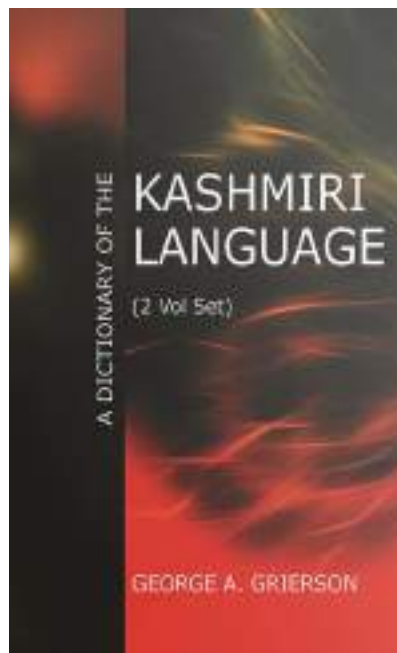
## Quest for comprehensive dictionary results in most profound works in Kashmiri

**Yameen Dar**

In the pursuit of transcending borders and nurturing human expression and emotions through language, dictionaries have played a vital role throughout history. With over 6,900 distinct languages in the world, the highest linguistic diversity is found in New Guinea, where 832 languages are spoken by a population of 3.8 million. Dictionaries, such as those defined by Oxford Languages, serve as valuable resources that list words alphabetically, providing their meanings, synonyms, pronunciation, usage, and origin.

Delving into the history of linguistic surveys, documents reveal the hard efforts of Sir George Abraham Grierson, appointed as the superintendent of the newly created Linguistic Survey of India in 1898.

Grierson's deep knowledge of Sanskrit and Hindustani led him to discover an exceptional work during his editorship—an early Kashmiri grammar written in Sanskrit by Ishvara Kaula. To his surprise,



Grierson learned that Kaula had also compiled a Kashmiri-Sanskrit dictionary, which came into Grierson's possession through Adelbert Talbot, the Resident at Srinagar at that time. This marked the beginning of the journey to formulate the first Kashmiri-English dictionary, encompassing nomenclature, synonyms, Sanskrit equivalents, English meanings, and pronunciation.

Despite facing numerous difficulties, Grierson's documents reveal that Ishvara Kaula had only completed a fair copy of the first few letters of the alphabet, each entry consisting of a Kashmiri word, along with synonyms in Sanskrit and Hindi. The rest of the manuscript comprised incomplete memoranda lists of Kashmiri words without any translation, and even those lists did not cover the entire alphabet.

During his compilation of the dictionary, Sir George Grierson observed the nature of the Kashmiri language and

CONTD... ON P7



## MERC organizes trip to Sagg Eco Village to expose students to eco-tourism



Mir Mehwish, ZainabShafiq

**M**edia Education and Research Centre (MERC) Department of Kashmir University recently organized a field trip to Sagg Eco Village in Ganderbal for the fourth-semester students on Friday.

The trip aimed to provide the students with firsthand knowledge and experience in the field of eco-tourism and organic living.

Sagg Eco Village, located in Watlar Wuder, Lar, Ganderbal, Kashmir, is a natural farm, a cultural retreat, and a lifestyle research venture.

Led by ecological entrepreneur Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Sagg is an experiment in ecological entrepreneurship where eco-friendliness meets regenerative business and sustainable community development.

Upon arrival at Sagg Eco Village, the students were introduced to the village team, led by Ms. Shaheena - the village

counselor, tour guide and associate.

Ms. Shaheena, who actively works at Sagg Eco Village, initiated an interactive session where she enlightened the students about the village's unique concept of promoting eco-tourism and sustainable living.

Introducing the place, Shaheena said, "Sagg designs, develops and promotes recreational, educational and lifestyle services, spaces, products and programs for individuals, families and communities - by integrating nature, culture, and technology through practices such as natural farming, localized building, and DIY (do it yourself) design."

The students then were shown various aspects of the village, starting with their composting system for degrading organic waste.

Furthermore, the village showcased its innovative approach to managing human waste, emphasizing the importance of

maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.

Additionally, the students were introduced to ChecheKooth a room specifically designed for discussions and brainstorming sessions.

Throughout the tour, the village team highlighted their efforts in promoting eco-tourism and how it has become a significant source of revenue for the community.

The village's emphasis on organic farming and use of homegrown produce served as examples of their commitment to sustainable living.

A singing session was held in one of the halls, providing the students with a glimpse into the cultural aspect of Sagg Eco Village.

Later, they were taken to a playground to experience the recreational facilities available.

At the end of the tour, the students were served CholeBhature (a combination of spicy white chickpeas) and deep-fried bread made from white flour) for lunch, giving them a taste of the village's local cuisine.

Professor Sabeha Mufti, the Head of the Department of MERC, expressed her satisfaction with the field trip, describing it as an educational opportunity for the students.

She also extended her gratitude to Professor SyedaAfshana for organizing the trip, acknowledging her efforts in enhancing the students' understanding of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The field trip to Sagg Eco Village served as a learning experience for the fourth-semester students who are currently working on documentaries related to the SDGs.

The visit provided them with valuable insights into the practical aspects of eco-tourism and organic living, which will contribute to their ongoing academic pursuits.

### CONT...FROM P 6

its liberal borrowing of words from Persian and Arabic. He noted that Kashmiri, especially as spoken by Muslims, freely incorporated Persian vocabulary, which, in turn, borrowed from Arabic. Grierson pointed out that certain works written by Muslims, like Yousuf Zulaikha, contained passages with vocabulary more Persian than Kashmiri.

Grierson's comprehensive work, titled "A Dictionary of the Kashmiri Language," is a four-volume document and is widely regarded as one of the most significant European contributions to the understanding of the Kashmiri language.

Professor Shafi Shauq, a research associate in the Cultural Academy Srinagar's "Dictionary Project" initiated in 1976, expresses his admiration for Grierson's dictionary, published in 1919. He believes it to be the most profound work on the Kashmiri language. Professor Shauq, critical of the dictionary later compiled by the Cultural Academy, spent years working on the project but was unsatisfied with the final document. Grierson's dictionary, according to him, far surpassed their efforts as it even included the etymology of words. Professor Shauq highlights the unique syntax of the Kashmiri language, which oddly follows the pattern of European languages, using the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure. In contrast, most South Asian languages, originating

from Sanskrit, follow the Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) structure. Understanding this language evolution is crucial, he suggests.

Driven by his passion for preserving the language and its rich cultural history, Professor Shafi Shauq dedicated eight years of his life to compiling a comprehensive Kashmiri dictionary called KaesherLugaat. He emphasizes that Kashmir has been a land of various cultures, attracting proto-Europeans, Indo-Aryans, Buddhists, and more throughout history. Consequently, the language has absorbed influences from these civilizations. Professor Shauq notes that many words in Kashmiri can still be traced back to languages spoken in Bulgaria, Albania, and others as proto Europeans began settling in those lands.

FROM **UoK**...

## Prof. Farooq Masoodi figures among leading scientists in food technology



**Munaza Dillahi**

**P**rofessor Farooq Ahmed Masoodi, the Dean of the School of Applied Science and Technology at the University of Kashmir, has been recognized as one of the world's top 2% scientists by the Stanford University.

The evaluation, conducted by John Ioannidis from Stanford University and published by Elsevier BV in October 2022, assessed the global impact of the works of leading scientists based on a composite C-Score.

Prof. Masoodi's journey in academia has been characterized by his unwavering commitment to excellence and his remarkable contributions to the field of applied science and technology.

He has dedicated his life to advancing knowledge and inspiring aspiring scholars.

Currently serving as the Dean of the School of Applied Science and Technology at the University of Kashmir, Prof. Masoodi's leadership and expertise have propelled the institution to new heights.

He has held distinguished positions at renowned organizations such as SKUAST-Jammu, CCS HAU, Hisar, and SKUAST-Kashmir, including Professor, Associate Professor, and Agriculture Extension Officer.

Throughout his career, Prof. Masoodi has received numerous accolades for his groundbreaking research. These include the Kegriwal Award for Best Research Paper in 1994, the All India Food Processor's Award in 2003, and the Best Paper Award of 2016 by the Journal



As the first head of the Department of Food Science and Technology, he played a pioneering role in its establishment and oversaw its growth into a leading department with significant research publications and teaching initiatives

of Food Science and Technology.

In 2018, he was honored with the Best Research Paper award at the ICFP conference in Sharjah, UAE.

To enhance his expertise, Prof. Masoodi has actively sought training programs and fellowships throughout.

Prof. Masoodi's contributions extend beyond his own research endeavors. He has actively participated in various committees and councils, lending his expertise to shape academic and research policies.

Notably, he has served as a member of the Peer Review Committee of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) of NDRI-Karnal.

His membership in esteemed organizations like the ICMR Working Group on Micronutrients and the Expert Panel on Food Additives at FSSAI demonstrates his commitment to advancing the field.

As an Editorial Board Member of esteemed journals such as the "Madridge Journal of Food Technology," the "International Journal of Innovative Studies in Aquatic Biology and Fisheries (IJISABF)," and the "International Journal of Trends and Technologies in Food Processing," Prof. Masoodi contributed to the dissemination of cutting-edge research and promoted scholarly collaboration.

Prof. Masoodi's research output is substantial, with over 219 publications and 4,475 citations on Google Scholar. These numbers solidify his position as a leading authority in the field of applied sciences and technology.

Beyond his research achievements, Prof. Masoodi's impact is felt through his international exposure, organizational endeavors, and research projects.

He has presented papers at international conferences, participated in training programs abroad, and organized conferences and symposia to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration.

His involvement in research projects supported by prestigious funding agencies showcases his commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge.

At the national level, Prof. Masoodi's contributions have been equally remarkable. He has played a crucial role in the upgradation and evaluation of various institutions across India, reshaping course curriculum, reviewing research papers and thesis, and providing expert evaluation of students and scholars.

His participation in expert committees has influenced policy planning, and his involvement in faculty improvement programs and science popularization initiatives has contributed to human resources development and knowledge dissemination.

Prof. Masoodi's commitment to bridging the gap between academia and industry is evident through his efforts to foster closer linkages between entrepreneurs and researchers.

He has organized interactive sessions at the state and national levels, benefiting various segments of the food processing industry.

Within the University of Kashmir, Prof. Masoodi's transformative contributions are evident.

As the first head of the Department of Food Science and Technology, he played a pioneering role in its establishment and oversaw its growth into a leading department with significant research publications and teaching initiatives.

His initiatives have provided invaluable training opportunities for students, scholars, and entrepreneurs through the establishment of a pilot plant for food processing.

Throughout his tenure, Prof. Masoodi has actively participated in the university's administration and management, contributing to various committees and advocating for the department's needs.

His leadership has been marked by the initiation of industry-oriented academic programs, promoting interaction among scholars, and inspiring intellectual curiosity.

Prof. Farooq Ahmed Masoodi's unwavering commitment to research, teaching, and knowledge dissemination has positioned him as a leading authority in the field of applied sciences and technology.