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MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE,
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



NAAC concludes KU visit
Full Story on P5

Street vendors hamper vehicular movement in city

Imania Imtiyaz

Srinagar

The street vendors continue to hamper the pedestrian and vehicular movement here in the city centre despite repeated directions from the High Court on their removal.

As per commuters, they have to face immense hardships due to the presence of vendors on roadsides and footpaths. The commuters alleged that there is no room for pedestrians as most of the space on footpaths is occupied by vendors and they are forced to walk on the roads increasing the risk of accidents.

Soliha Mir, a student, observed that almost all the footpaths



in Lal Chowk, Amirakadal, Hari Singh High Street and other parts of the city have been occupied by the vendors. "We are forced to get down from the footpath to avoid bumping into street vendors or other pedestrians thereby affecting the overall traffic and crowd management in Srinagar city."

Another commuter, Sajid Farooq, said that the removal of street vendors is a mere eye wash as authorities are not serious about the plan.

"Despite people facing hardships and congestion on the streets of the city,

authorities are not sticking to their plan of removing the vendors. On one day, the vendors are removed but next day they again occupy their spaces. It seems that they are not interested in solving the problem."

Mir Tariq Ali, Joint Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), while talking to MERC Times, assured for a strict and speedy action for the smooth functioning of the traffic.

Price hike of edibles leaves wallets dry

Sheikh Abid

Srinagar

With beginning of Ramadan, the rates of mutton and other daily edibles including vegetables hiked abruptly leaving people high and dry. People were aghast alleging that the sellers were taking undue advantage of the holy month of Ramdan that began on May 5.

"The rate of mutton was 420 per kg and within no time it reached to Rs 450 per kg. Such arbitrary hikes are unacceptable," shared Ghulam Ahmad a netizen on his Facebook page on May 6.

Similar price hikes were seen, in other daily eatables including chicken which is being sold 160 per kg.

A resident of Pandach Abdul Rashid while addressing the concerned authorities asked, "We are not even able to afford vegetables now. Where are the concerned officials, why they put specified rate list or conduct daily market checks?"

As per mutton suppliers delivery of sheep from Mandis in Delhi, Rajasthan and Punjab was stopped few days before Ramadan by the commission agents after authorities informed them that existing prices of mutton in retail markets of the valley could be hiked to only Rs 430-Rs 440.

"We cannot afford to continue our trade with such low prices so we have decided to stop purchase of sheep meant for supply to the Valley from outside Mandis. We have told the authorities to hike the prices as we cannot continue making bulk purchases with such low retail market returns," a commission agent told MERC times.

An official at Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (CA & PD) told MERC Times that it is not the case that they don't publish the rate list and they have been continuously ensuring that the government recognized rates be followed for which they are continuously conducting market surveys, quality checks and other legal procedures.



"We cannot afford to continue our trade with such low prices so we have decided to stop purchase of sheep meant for supply to the Valley from outside Mandis. We have told the authorities to hike the prices as we cannot continue making bulk purchases with such low retail market returns"

Beggars on streets despite ban

Over hundred local, non-local beggars shifted to shelter homes: DC

Sahil Iqbal
Srinagar

Despite the ban on begging, the menace continues to irk the people in Srinagar as a large number of non-local beggars can be seen begging for alms.

The locals alleged that during the month of Ramadhan their number, both local and non-local, increases sharply in the city.

Non-local beggars can be seen in groups, comprising of womenfolk holding their babies to gain sympathy. They seek alms at the traffic signals. They also ride the public transport leaving people hassled.

Non-local beggars can be seen at all major places in the city including commercial hub Lal Chowk, Dal-Gate, Khanyar, Nowhatta, Sanat Nagar, Hyderpora, Nowgam Bypass, Rambagh, Jawahar Nagar, LD Hospital Crossing, Boulevard, Jehangir Chowk, Batamaloo and many other areas.

A local student Shahid Ahmad Khan, said, "In the commercial hub beggars seek alms from the people especially students, who feel irked. Government should take strict action against them, to prevent this public nuisance."

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, issued an order directing immediate arrest of persons found soliciting alms at public places. The order also aims at ensuring implementation of provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Prevention of Beggary (JKPB) Act 1960.

modern way. A group of women beggars who beg at Hazratbal area carry cards written in English and Hindi. They usually board a bus and then distribute these cards to seek help in cash or kind among passengers. After a minute or two they collect these cards and deboard the bus.



Despite the order a huge number of non-local beggars can be seen begging for alms in the city. In many places, they come with cards seeking help in kind or cash in a

Some of the beggars can be seen making rounds of localities, which alarms the residents. They enter compounds of homes without seeking permission, which makes it unsafe for the residents. Some local residents also shared that nowadays beggars don't take a coin and rather demand notes while they even chase people.

While talking to MERC Times, Choudhary, said, "We have shifted around 100 non-local beggars into shelter homes established at Nishat and Pantha Chowk where they are provided basic facilities. We have also approved one shelter home for urban homeless at the cost of 25 lakh rupees."

Beggars are in a huge numbers and probably it will take some time to send them back to their respective states. "We will be deporting non-local beggars out of the state by providing them some financial assistance and train tickets to their homes, which will demotivate other beggars who are planning to turn to valley," he emphasized.

Uniform cut off for JK bank PO exams

MinyaTufail
Srinagar

J&K bank declared uniform cut off for preliminary examination of Probationary officer (PO) after aspirants from Jammu alleged discrimination.

The bank had declared the results on May 11 on its website and two days after declaring the result, the bank allegedly changed the result cut off.

The exam for PO posts was conducted by IBPS (Institute of Banking Personnel Selection) in collaboration with Tata services consultancy on April 22. After declaring results, students from Jammu alleged discrimination in district wise cut off list uploaded by JK Bank on its website. It came to fore that cut off in Jammu division was high as compared to valley.

Jammu based students protested against the Bank authorities. After two days, chairman of J&K bank Parvez Ahmad tweeted, "Good News for P.O. aspirants. In view of the various representations received from candidates and also the directions from the Honourable Governor, Bank has decided to declare a uniform cut off of 40 across the state in relaxation of policy."

In another tweet, he added, "All those candidates having assessment score of 40 and above shall be

eligible to write the mains. Good luck aspirants. Stay tuned for rescheduled date after arranging logistics."

Former MLA and Awami Itehad Party chairman Engineer Rasheed in a Facebook post alleged that the bank violated its recruitment norms and surrendered before the pressure from BJP government and Governor. He led a protest against JK Bank authorities for uniform cut off outside the Corporate office in Srinagar.

"It is sheer injustice with the candidates from Kashmir valley who got dropped from the list after uniform cut off," Rasheed alleged, adding, "I will meet the Governor and will make sure that recruitment process be held district wise manner so that aspirants of Kashmir don't face any kind of discrimination."



"It is sheer injustice with the candidates from Kashmir valley who got dropped from the list after uniform cut off"

APSCC demands introduction of Punjabi at KU

Wasfi Amin
SRINAGAR

A delegation of All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee (APSCC) called upon Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir (KU), Prof Talat Ahmad, for the introduction of Punjabi at varsity.

The delegation that was led by its Chairman, Jagmohan Singh Raina, while interacting with Prof Talat at Vice Chancellor's Secretariat put forth the demand of introducing a Post Graduate (PG) Program in Punjabi at the University.

They said that just like other languages are taught at the university, Punjabi too be included in the list. They added that Punjabi language was of utmost importance to their community and hoped that their demands would be fulfilled very soon.

Responding to the demand of the delegation, Prof Talat assured full support of the University. "The responsibility falls on the part of the administration for the introduction of Punjabi and we would make serious efforts for the introduction of the course at PG level at the varsity

and take it to various bodies of the University for discussion and approval," he said.

Prof Talat also said that he would also request the concerned quarters in the government for sanctioning of various teaching positions in this regard. The delegation also congratulated Prof Talat for taking over as the Vice Chancellor of the highest seat of learning in the Valley and expressed hope that under his dynamic leadership the University would attain new heights of excellence.



Qurat-Ullah Shohab's work highlighted at KU



Fajr Shora
Srinagar

An extension lecture was delivered by Dean Arts and Head, Department of Urdu, University of Jammu Prof Shohab Enayat Malik at the Directorate of Distance Education (DDE), University of Kashmir on the topic "Qudrat-Ullah Shohab: Art & Thought".

Prof Malik discussed the life and literary contribution of Qudrat-Ullah Shohab with special reference to his novel "Ya Khuda" and autobiography "Shohab Nama".

The lecture was presided over by Dean

School of Open Learning Prof. Mushtaq Ahmed while as Director Distance Education Prof. Mahmood Ahmed Khan welcomed the guest and threw light on other activities organised by the Directorate in the recent past.

The lecture was attended by faculty members, students and scholars of the varsity.

The lecture was followed by a discussion on different aspects of literature with reference to Qudrat Ullah Shohab.

Program coordinator Dr Altaf Anjum conducted the session while Dr Irfan Aalam presented vote of thanks.

Wajeaha Ali
Srinagar

The Law School of Kashmir University (KU) started a drive for cleaning the campus. The cleanliness drive was initiated by KU in collaboration with Kashmir Protective Security Services and NGO SAAYA on May 1.

Under the motto of Clean Green and Healthy Campus the drive was launched to promote the values of cleanliness, discipline and respect for environment.

Students and faculty members voluntarily participated in the event. The students of all the semesters of Law department started the activities with cleanliness of the campus.

The Head of the Law department Prof Mohammad Hussain initiated the drive.

"Events like these instil in oneself the spirit of standing up for the environmental cause and hence these are precursors for the good causes you will carry with yourself," Prof Hussain said, while addressing the students.

Prof Hussain thanked the students for their large participation in the drive and asked them to understand the message of the cleanliness drive.

The General Secretary of NGO SAAYA, Arbaz Malik emphasised on promoting such activities in the campus for making the campus environment-friendly.



"It is our primary duty to keep our surroundings and campus clean. Such activities should be promoted on a larger scale," Malik said.

Hundreds of students showed lot of enthusiasm in the cleanliness drive and appreciated the efforts of the Organizers in keeping the campus clean and green.

"This kind of drive motivates all of us all and reminds us about our duties towards building a cleaner and better surroundings", a student of 3rd semester, Sameena shared.

Segregation of various wastes like, glassware, plastic ware, papers and other miscellaneous items was carried and disposed properly by students.

**Law
school
launches
cleanliness
drive**

NAAC CONCLUDES KU VISIT

Sadaf Masoodi
Srinagar

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) team concluded its three day visit at Kashmir University (KU) on May 4.

The inspection team arrived here on May 1 for the restitution of NAAC accreditation of KU. The previous NAAC accreditation of the varsity had expired in May 2016.

Within a couple of weeks after the visit, NAAC team will be submitting the performance report of the varsity to Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and University Grants Commission (UGC).

Divided into two groups, the NAAC team begun its inspection from the department of Botany.

Making the inspection more transparent, the NAAC team took feedback from interactions with students and scholars of the varsity.

An official at the varsity shared that the team reviewed the working of north and south campuses through PowerPoint

presentations prepared by the respective directors of the campuses. The NAAC team had also visited varsity's another campus at Zakura.

"The NAAC accreditation is a two stage

process. It includes Self Study Report (SSR) to NAAC in which the varsity submits its self assessment document. The second part includes majority inspection done on basis of the SSR while as remaining portion

is inspected by the team physically," the official briefed MERC Times reporter.

During the visit, the NAAC peer team held meetings with the heads of the departments and Deans of various faculties and administration of the varsity. The team also interacted with the teaching and non-teaching staff.

Preparations in the university were made in full-swing ahead of the NAAC visit. Holidays of the teaching and non-teaching staff were cancelled for many days before the inspection.

KU was given 'A' rank by NAAC peer team during the last inspection in 2012.

With the securing of 53rd position among the universities assessed in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)-2019 and an overall ranking of 79 from amongst all universities assessed by the MHRD, KU is expecting better grading this time. The NAAC accreditation will make the varsity eligible to grants from Government of India.

NAAC is an autonomous body funded by UGC India. It assesses and accredits higher education Institutions in India based on their standards of academic excellence. The NAAC visit to higher education institutes takes place every five years.



KU IMPOSES BAN ON VEHICLES

Students allege authorities of selective discriminative implementation

Muneeb Naqeeb
Srinagar

The authorities at university of Kashmir have imposed ban on private vehicles. The ban was initially implemented for five days and continued later as demanded by Kashmir University Teachers Association (KUTA).

The campus is more than 263 acres of land with a pretty good tree cover epitomized by the comforting and restful gardens like Naseem Bagh and avenues lined with evergreen trees. The Hazratbal shrine is just outside the main gate of the university.

The students have raised questions about health emergencies, inter departmental visits and offering

prayers at Hazratbal shrine. None of these reasons however hold water considering the fact that the University has made available some electric cars and plans to buy more



electronic vehicles like electronic rikshaws as part of its green mission.

A student Davood from Linguistics Department said, "A couple of feet of snowfall or heavy rains can make walking very difficult in the campus and can make you sick also, as the electric transport provided by the university cannot accommodate all the students".

Kashmir University Proctor Dr Naseer Iqbal told MERC Times that the administration is in the process of hiring battery installed vehicles to ferry people who cannot walk all through the campus. "Till the university is fully equipped with electric vehicles, private vehicles are to be allowed inside the campus," he added.



KU organizes skill exhibition festival

Gowhar Iqbal
Srinagar

Amid the University of Kashmir being busy with the visit of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the Department of Student's Welfare (DSW) organized the art and skill exhibition in its main campus here on May 01. Different stalls were installed near the Statistics Department of the varsity.

With paintings, drawing, embroidery, food and other fine arts being displayed in the exhibition, the students welcomed the initiative taken by the university.

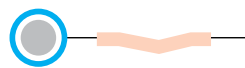
Shafiya Shafi, a painter, said that exhibitions like these would help the students to grow and present their work before the world.

"We get to learn a lot in these exhibitions as there are many people who have attended such exhibitions before," she added.

Cultural Officer DSW, Shahid Ali Khan, said that the university has

been conducting the exhibition for the past many years and shall continue it in the future as well.

"The idea is to showcase the talent of growing Kashmiri artists in different fields and to realize the potentiality and the talent of these students," he added.



"The idea is to showcase the talent of growing Kashmiri artists in different fields and to realize the potentiality and the talent of these students"

Frequent internet shutdown chokes students and businessmen



Mir Tanveer
BUDGAM

Internet blockade in Budgam district over past several days is taking a toll on students and businessmen, who are appealing authorities to restore the services at the earliest.

On May 4, internet services were snapped in Budgam district and have not been restored yet.

Students preparing for entrance examinations for postgraduate, undergraduate courses and competitive examinations complained they are facing lot of inconvenience as the internet is main source for the preparations today.

Beigh Javeed, an educationist said, "21st century is believed to be the age of communication which has become a spine in the human civilisation nowadays".

"Every sect of society; be it education, health, weather or media, every field heavily relies on internet directly or indirectly. But in Kashmir any trivial incident leads to the suspension of internet."

He said the blockade make the entire society suffer.

"Students preparing for exams, teachers enhancing their potential and media providing latest updates across the district are terribly hit by the unwise and uncalled blockade of internet," Gulzar a student said.

"We as a part of society strongly disapprove this of resource and want that internet should be restored without further delay," he added.

A group of aggrieved students said they were unable to prepare for various exams scheduled at the end of the month due to internet blockade. They said the government has put their careers at stake by suspending the internet service time and again.

"In present times, internet is of great importance. One fails to understand why state is always hell bent to block internet services in the valley," Shakir Mushtaq, a student said,

"I think the internet must serve as a tool to stop rumours from spreading but unfortunately authorities here think otherwise".



Students preparing for exams, teachers enhancing their potential and media providing latest updates across the district are terribly hit by the unwise and uncalled blockade of internet

Work on Kupwara-Poshpora road to be completed soon

Haider Ali
Kupwara

The work of widening the road stretch between Gushi and Poshpora in north Kashmir's Kupwara district that has been undertaken by PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) will be completed soon.

The 5 km-long road stretch is being widened to two lanes to enable easy movement of vehicles and to minimize the heavy load of traffic on the Kupwara-Trehgam highway which meets the widened road through its two ends.

The villagers had been demanding the widening and macadamization of the road for long.

The construction work is being carried out by the Roads and Buildings Department (R&B). The road passes through the villages of Gushi, Hanjipora, Bohipora, Poshpora, and Babagund.

Due to the location of Government Degree College,

Kupwara, on this road, there is a huge traffic jam on the road at various places.

The locals said that they were hopeful about the reduction in the usual traffic jam after the completion of the work. They added that the journey is only a 10



minutes drive but due to the bad condition of the road it takes more than 20 minutes to reach Kupwara. They

appealed to the government and the workers to finish the macadamization at the earliest.

Site Incharge, PMGSY, Farooq Ahmad Sheikh, said, "Over 200 labourers work on this project in order to speed up the process. There is a deadline of October to

complete widening and macadamization of the road and currently we are working on three places on the road". He said that the rest of the work has already been completed.

Mohammad Anwar Malik, Executive Engineer R&B, Kupwara division, said, "The actual width of the road to be made is 52 feet but as of now we have reduced it to 36 feet and the rest widening of the road will be done in later phases. This road is actually a bypass which will reduce the traffic between Kupwara, Trehgam and Tangdar highway and the traffic will be diverted through this road that will meet the highway at Trehgam."

He added that the project was a huge development for the villages connected by this road.

GMC to have its own media cell

Mehvish Dilshad
Srinagar

In wake of unnecessary 'rumors' being spread and 'illogical allegations' in news regarding the hospitals and patients care, the Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar has directed all the Medical Superintendents in its associated hospitals to create media cells to put forth a counter narrative and to respond 'providently' anytime such misconception is created.

In a circular issued by the Principal GMC on May 08 it asked all the Medical Superintendents to form the media cells to be enrouted by themselves. They have advised them to create Facebook page and Twitter handle to avoid such rumours and revert back immediately whenever such thing happens.

The contents of the circular read, "On the directions of Administrative Department, all the Medical Superintendents of Associated Hospitals, GMC Srinagar are hereby asked to create one media cell to be

headed by Medical Superintendents and shall incorporate members from the faculty and hospital administration. The media cell shall create one official Facebook page and one Twitter handle to be operated by concerned Medical Superintendent wherein the achievements, performance and work done shall be highlighted on day to day basis. The media cell shall proactively respond to any media/ social media news or rumor whatsoever of immediate nature by presenting the facts before the public and also shall apprise the administrative department."

While talking to principal GMC, Samia Rashid regarding the directions given by the government she said, "The government has directed us that the media cells should be created in the hospitals in order to make the work done in the hospitals public and to respond with facts whenever needed."

Dr Rashid did seemingly invalidate the decision taken by the government of forming media cells after the incident that took place at GB Panth

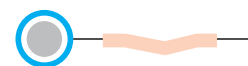
Hospital, Sonwar, wherein an infant died due to the condition known as Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation (DIC).

According to sources this decision was taken promptly after the G.P Panth issue. "While a full-fledged campaign was launched to defame the doctors, they could not put forth their point of view. The move has come to counter such campaigns," sources added.

This incident created tension after many people and journalists took to the social media, posted pictures of the infant blaming the doctors of negligence.

When asked whether any action will be taken against those who resort to posting picture of the infant and blaming doctors of 'negligence' without verifying the facts, Dr Samia said that the aspect will be looked into once the report of the committee formed to inquire into the incident comes out.

"We see that too, let's wait for the inquiry report and we will decide as per that," Dr Rashid said.



The government has directed us that the media cells should be created in the hospitals in order to make the work done in the hospitals public and to respond with facts whenever needed



Kashmir University organises plantation drive

Saima shakeel
Srinagar

Kashmir University Ministerial Staff Association [KUMSA] organised a plantation drive at Kashmir University Model High School, under the banner 'GO GREEN PLANTATION DRIVE'.

The drive was attended by Vice Chancellor Prof. Talat Ahmad, Special Secretary to Vice Chancellor Dr Tanveer Ahmad Shah, Media

coordinator of the varsity Dr Muslim Jan and President KUMSA Qazi Jeelani along with other office bearers of KUMSA and faculty members of the school.

On the occasion, Prof Talat highlighted the importance of plantation and urged the people to come forward voluntarily to plant trees and help expand the green cover of the campus.

The drive was preceded by an interaction of Vice Chancellor with

the teachers of the Model High School in which the Vice Chancellor was apprised about the functioning of the school and problems faced by the school administration and students.

Prof Talat assured his due co-operation in renovating and upgrading the school. "We will make sure that the school is kept on priority and the students be given best possible infrastructure and other facilities from the available resources of the university," Prof Talat added.

The faculty members appreciated the efforts of Vice Chancellor for his keen interest in upgrading the school and requested him to provide the school with a library, science lab and sports faculties.

"It was great fun and also something that made us understand our responsibility towards the environment. Hopefully, we will plant more trees in the coming times" said Zainab Ahmad, a class 10th student.

T-20 cricket tournament concludes at KU

Fazil Buchh
Srinagar

T-20 Premier Cricket Tournament organized by Sheikh-ul-Alam Boys Hostel Zakura Campus University of Kashmir concluded amidst lot of fanfare at Sports ground Zakura Campus KU. Director CCAS and Provost Boys hostel Prof. G.N. Khaki was the chief guest at the concluding ceremony during which wardens of boys hostels Dr. Sheikh Javaid, Dr. Mehraj and Dr. Yahya were also present.

A total of 12 teams participated in the tournament from different hostels and departments of the University.

The final match was played between Institute of Technology Zakura Campus and Sheikh-ul-

Alam boys hostel block- A. The thrilling final match was won by Institute of Technology Zakura Campus by 04 runs.



According to the organizers of the tournament the purpose of conducting the tournament is to inculcate the sports culture among the talented students of the University which will help them to build strong foundation both physically and mentally.

"Sports is very important for physical fitness. Losing and winning is part of the game. Today was our day and we won," said the winning captain Zahoor Ahmad.

"It was hard day for us as we couldn't end up winning the game. We tried our best but couldn't end up by winning. I think fielding let us down. It's not a good feeling to lose a game," said the captain of another team Imran Nabi.



EDITORIAL TEAM

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