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MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



**JKEDI
organizes female
entrepreneurship
program**

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Contractual teachers stage protest

Gowhar Iqbal
Srinagar

Fresh batch of contractual teachers alleged that the earlier batch of 2006 has been regularised while they suffer indiscriminately. The protesting teachers claimed that they were 'more qualified' and appealed the administration to extend their contracts.

President All Jammu and Kashmir Contractual Teachers, Adil Gulzar said that the state has qualified teachers with around 1200 teachers from Kashmir and 170 from Jammu, serving the society from past few years with a 'meagre salary' on monthly basis.

"We have showed 100 percent results in our respective institutions. By ending the contracts the government has snatched livelihood of hundreds of youth," Gulzar alleged.

The protesting teachers said that they have raised the issue with higher authorities but they have not heeded to their problems.

Vice President All Jammu and Kashmir Contractual Teachers Reyes Ahmad said, "The teachers have been working on contract basis from 2018 in far flung areas of state in extreme weather conditions. They have been given an extension of 1.5 months."

The protesting teachers demanded continuation of their contracts for overall benefit of students and their respective institutions.



Spring welcomes weddings



Sadaf Masoodi
Srinagar

Preceding the month of fasting marriage season has begun in Kashmir as the spell of cold ends. The weddings begin with the coming of spring and commence again after a break of fasting month (Ramadhan).

People mostly prefer to arrange the marriage ceremonies after the month of May, as considered apt with pleasant weather conditions.

Shakeel Ahmad, a bridegroom-to-be shared, "I decided to get married in the month of May because the months following May get hotter."

Despite the love for traditional cuisines (Wazwan) guests in the marriage ceremonies feel the heat of sun which disturbs the tastes of traditional cuisines.

"It gets excruciating to attend a marriage ceremony in hot weather due to the hot and humid condition," Shanawaz Bhat, a youth shared.

Though many upper class people have extra arrangements like air conditioners, there have been some health problems like food poisoning in hot weather conditions. There are other complaints like diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain as per various medical reports.

Father of a bride-to-be, Ramzan Sheikh shared, "Weddings in spring season are apt to do as people who wed in summer suffer in many ways."

"Dishes left in this season cannot be stored for a long time. The food

gets stinky within few hours," he added.

As these troubles occur for the guests and hosts from one side, dealers in the marriage ceremonies, on the other side make most of it. Butchers, the professional wazaas (chefs), decorators and the band men remain in demand throughout the time.

"It is the time of rise for us when we get extremely engaged in the work. We have our deals done two or three months before. In the summer season we have to work thoroughly," said a chef, Ghulam Qadir.

Over the years the marriage trends and styles have changed manifestly in the valley. Many people have opted for the western styles of conducting marriage ceremonies and professional decorators from outside the valley are hired to make it a memorable event.

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Imam Sahib health centre lacks basic facilities

Shahid Bashir
Shopian

A Primary Health Center at Imam Sahab area in South Kashmir's Shopian district lacks basic facilities. Absence of doctors compel patients to move to district hospital Shopian.

People accused administration for neglecting the area, saying that the only functional health center in the area lacks basic facilities, with no doctors available.

A local resident of Imam Sahib, Showket Ahmad Teli said, "Due to the lack of infrastructure and government's negligence the health center is in a very bad shape and also lacks basic equipments, which compel locals of the area to move to other hospitals and private clinics to conduct any sort of medical test".

The health center is located in a private building and runs from 10:00am to 4:00pm

only, which leave patients helpless in times of emergency.

Another local resident, Mohammed Ramzan Koka said, "The non-availability of basic facilities at Imam Sahib health center forces people to move to district hospital Shopian which not only causes hardships for common masses of the area as they have to travel 10-12 km to reach the hospital but the district hospital also remains over crowded by patients from different areas of the district".

He further added if the already functional health care center at Imam Sahib would have been allotted all the basic facilities and doctors would have been available, it would not only give relief to poor patients, but would also minimize the crowd of patients at district hospital.

Pertinent to mention that the only lady doctor posted in the health center has been attached with Yatra duty and currently the health center is without a doctor.

Residents of the area have urged the Governor to take the matter on a serious note and allot funds for the upgradation of building as well as the equipments necessary in the hospital.

Talking to MERC Times, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Shopian, Dr Sanauallah Bhat said, "The work of new building has been taken under Prime Minister Development Fund. The money has been released to department of Road and Buildings (R&B)".

Moreover CMO Shopian through District Planning Officer conveyed that the work on new building has been started in the year 2012 and 40 percent of work has already been done but due to the negligence and least interest of contractor, the work is still pending.

The contractor has refused to initiate the final work of building, even though R&B department has assured to blacklist the contractor, he added.

JKEDI organizes female entrepreneurship program

Fajr Shora
Srinagar

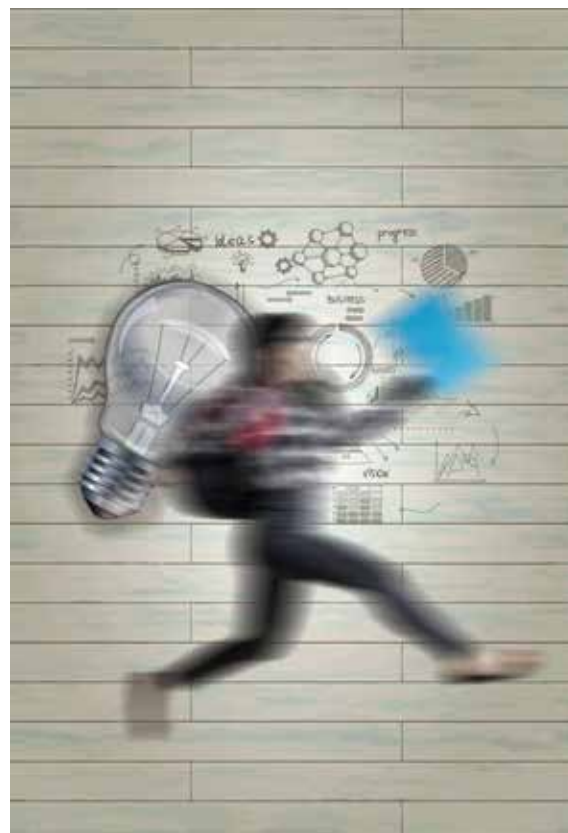
In an initiative for empowering women in the state, Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) has trained around 47 women in an entrepreneurship program.

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

This program aimed at empowering women and enhancing their skills.

The program generally aimed at providing lessons on skill development, performance improvement and self development training.

"There is a huge number of unemployed youth and less number of jobs in our state which is very



unfortunate. We need more and more skill development programs to explore employment opportunities," said Neelofar Khan, Dean College Development Kashmir University.

"Unemployment is a serious threat for the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the jobs available are very few so the government cannot accommodate every educated youth of the state," said Dr. M.I Parray, Director JKEDI.

"Entrepreneurship is the only solution for this continual problem," he added.

Asifa Jaan, Dean Social Science Kashmir University said that the training program lasted for three weeks and the training staff was very cooperative. "They not only trained us but were constantly counseling us for skills enhancement related issues."

As part of the entrepreneurship program aspirants were deputed to the field visit and Market surveys.



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Trenz village awaits completion of power station

Haris Arshid
Shopian

Even after four years of approval, the 11 KV receiving station sanctioned under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Scheme at Trenz village of district Shopian, still awaits formal inception of work, apart from cutting trees and soil investigation, no tangible work has been done on the project yet.

The decision was taken in 2015 by District Development Board (DDB) for building of 11 KV receiving station at the village. It was felt through departmental surveys that the adjacent villages of Halqa Trenz are facing routine electricity failure due to lengthy service line from old receiving station which is situated 17 kms away and the villages falling in this area are at the tail end of the receiving stations. The project was also important to lessen the existing load on old receiving station to ensure electricity supply in all seasons of weather.

The locals expressing grief over the promised construction of receiving station stated that the officials came and asked concerned Awqaf Committee of the area to immediately provide them with the land for receiving station to stop erosion or deviation of funds approved for the project and within no time Awqaf negotiated with the illegal occupants of land and many trees and other hurdles were grounded, promptly facilitating the land. "But disappointedly, from the last seven months, we haven't seen any officials paying visits to site and the work has been totally put on halt."

AEE Power Development Department (PDD), Irshad Ahmad said, "At first the construction of this project got delayed because of the tendering process. It took a lot of time to complete the tendering process for this project and then the project was transferred to Power Grids Corporation of India, and

they have stopped the work of this project due to the lack of funds."

Arif Hussain, Chairman Awqaf Committee Trenz said, "We facilitated every possible support to Power Grid Corporation. We provided a plot of more than Three kanals for the receiving station, and from last four years we are demanding that the construction of this project should be completed as soon as possible, but the authorities have utterly failed to incept the tangible work at project site, resulting in immense hardships to the inhabitants of the entire area."

Talking to MERC Times, General Manager Power Grids Corporation, Shafat Ahmed said, "The work of this project got delayed due to lack of funds, the government is not releasing funds for these projects. The funds allocated by government are not sufficient to complete these projects, that is why the project is getting delayed," he said.

The locals of the area urged the concerned authorities to look into the matter and demanded that this project should be put in the priority list and funds for this project should be allocated /released as soon as possible.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON RISE

Over the past five years, 4157 cases of domestic violence have been registered under the Domestic Violence Act in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.



Imaniya Imtiyaz
Srinagar

Rise in the domestic violence cases in Kashmir has left many people shocked. Scores of women were divorced, many were beaten over different pretexts and many were compelled for suicide.

According to the police figures, 3960 cases related to violence against women have been registered during the past seven years in Jammu and Kashmir in which 5150 accused were booked.

Women's Police Station Rambagh receives 10 to 15 complaints of domestic violence every day. "There has been a steep increase in the cases related to violence against women, particularly from past few years. Incidents related to domestic violence or matrimonial disputes are on rise," said a senior police officer who wished not to be named.

The police officer added that "These days people lack tolerance and thus violence takes over. After their marriages, girls find the indifferent attitude of their in-laws which results in more problems and ultimately these cases land in the Police Station. The officer however claimed that the registered and filed complaints are not the only cases of domestic violence in Kashmir. A number of silent sufferers exist which makes it increasingly difficult to tackle the problem.



Rajdeep Sardesai with MERC students



Syed Mudawar
Srinagar

Award winning news anchor and editor-in-chief of India Today TV, Rajdeep Sardesai interacted with the students of Media Education Research Centre (MERC) of Kashmir University here in Srinagar on Friday 5 April. The interaction session was held in the lawns of a local hotel here and more than 40 students from the department of MERC participated in the session.

The session was held to educate the students about their responsibilities as journalists.

The session was arranged by MERC faculty for providing 'exposure' to the students. During the session Sardesai stressed upon the need for reporters in the field to take their job 'seriously' and pursue the reporting 'objectively'. He talked about the business models of mass communication and also talked about the processes that make news business a 'tedious' job.

When asked by one of the students about the issue of ethics, he replied that ethics were highly important to become a good journalist, "Due to lack of ethics in the contemporary news scenerio we are facing crisis in the field of journalism", he shared.

During the session Sardesai also spoke about the emergence of digital media and its scope. "Digital media in India is still at an infant stage and it might take five more years to find its grip completely", he added.

The faculty members of MERC thanked him for the session and proposed for another interaction session of the journalist with the students and faculty.

Sonamarg hoteliers demand basic facilities

Obaid Bashir
Srinagar

Hotel visitors in Sonamarg are disappointed as water and power supplies in these hotels are not restored since their opening on April 12.

The traders and hoteliers have demanded immediate restoration of power and water supplies in Sonamarg area so that the visitors do not face any problems while staying there.

"Power and water supplies are very essential and the lack of these are causing a lot of issues for the tourists and other locals, due to which tourist are fleeing back to Srinagar and our business is taking a hit," said Farooq Ahmad a local hotelier.

"We cannot expect tourists to stay in our hotels with no electricity or adequate water supply," he added.

Taking to MERC Times Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal Hashmat Ali Khan said. "This year's heavy snowfall has caused tremendous damage to the supply lines of PDD and PHE at several places, due to which the restoration process is taking time."

He further said that they have already issued an order restricting night stay of tourists till the supplies are restored.





Anantnag stinks in absence of garbage dumping sites



Afshan Mir
Anantnag

With Municipal Council Anantnag forced to dump garbage on the roadside and on the banks of rivers in absence of dumping site, the fear of epidemic looms large in this south Kashmir town.

"It is an irony that Anantnag town, which is the largest after Srinagar city in the valley, is without a garbage dumping site," a local resident rued.

He said that Municipal Council has been dumping garbage on the banks of river Aaripat in Achajipora, Mehandi Kadal and Doonipawa areas.

"The passage of water was blocked leading to the overflow of Aaripat river and inundating many areas," said the residents.

The locals complained that the Municipal authorities are also dumping garbage on the roadside.

"Heaps of garbage that have piled up on the roadside in the main markets of Anantnag town is breeding insects and can be cause of diseases," said the residents. They added that the dirt and garbage stinks has already spread infection.

"The district administration and Municipal Council Anantnag are not even going for disinfectant

sprays like phenyl to avoid spread of diseases," said Tawheed, a local resident. He said that the dirt and rubble can be found in many parts of the town with administration turning a blind eye.

Officials in Municipal Council Anantnag (MCA) have already identified a huge patch of land in Doonipawa area as dumping site but with illegal stone quarries continuing to operate there the plan could not be executed.

"The proposal was discussed with the district administration but despite court orders they have failed to vacate the stone quarries," an official said on the condition of anonymity.

He said that certain sites in the peripheries of town wherein the garbage was being dumped have already got filled up. "The municipal workers are forced to dump the garbage on the roadside," he added.

Executive Officer, MCA, Shabir Ahmad, admitted that the lack of dumping site was a major issue in the town. "We are doing our best to ensure that garbage is disposed off at a proper place but certainly in absence of the dumping site we are facing difficulties".

Ahmad said that they have pressed into service vehicles to clean the roads and ensure proper sanitation.

DD-Kashir launches 'Kus Bani Koshur Karorpaet'

Insha Rani
Srinagar

DD-Kashir launched the Kashmiri version of international quiz show 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' at the Doordarshan Kendra's Srinagar Studio on April 29. The show is named, 'Kus Bani Koshur Karorpaet'. The Kashmiri actor and radio jockey, Rayees Mohiuddin will host the show.

The quiz based show is aimed to give an opportunity to the people of Jammu and Kashmir to prove themselves in the field of knowledge. The show also gives them a platform to share their personal experiences and stories of achievements and success giving them the opportunity to inspire and motivate others.

Officials at Doordarshan said that this



is for the first time that a show based on an international format is being aired on DD Kashir. The participants are taken to New Delhi where the shooting will take place.

During the launch of the show, Director General, Doordarshan, Supriya Sahu said, "The show would give opportunity to highlight the people of Jammu and Kashmir to bring their untold stories to the rest of the country."

The show will broadcast at 8:00 PM from Monday to Saturday and will be repeated the following day at 7:00 am and at 2:00 PM.

The program is produced by Studio NEXT, a production house of Sony Pictures Networks. The team of Studio NEXT has produced more than 1,800 episodes of the show across eight languages.



Zakura residents rue bad road condition



Rooh Yaseen
Srinagar

The residents of Zakura complained about the dilapidated condition of the road stretch from Zakura Crossing to Batpora. They alleged that the road was dotted with potholes, giving tough time to commuters.

Muhammad Maqbool, a resident said, “We have approached the concerned authorities many times. They do the repairment but after few months the condition gets bad as before”.

He complained that the authorities use cheaper materials for the repair and take away larger portion of the funds for themselves.

Rosy Bano, another resident said, “When it rains, walking through these roads becomes

more difficult as the potholes get filled with water. Old people and children suffer the most. They have to be more cautious while walking.”

The locals hold authorities responsible for any mishap on the road.

Muhammad Amin Shah, a shopkeeper said, “A lot of dust rises by the movement of the traffic due to the present condition of the road. That is also harmful for the health of people. A layer of dust settles on the commodities put outside to sell.”

While complaining about the issue, Shabir Ahmad Bhat, a driver told that the situation was problematic for drivers also as they had to pass over it many times a day. He added that they had to fix their buses every now and then.

Sami Arif, Chief Engineer, Roads and Buildings Department Kashmir (R&B) assured that he would personally look into the matter and solve the problem as soon as possible.

Budgam filtration plant faces delay

Aarif Shah
Srinagar

Locals of Pahnoo, Budgam protest against the non functioning of water filtration plant.

The filtration plant is meant to cater to needs of more than a dozen villages including Traenz, Chitragam, Molu, Dangarpora, Pahnoo and adjoining villages.

Official sources from Public Health Engineering (PHE) told MERC Times that the project has already been accomplished but locals from the village didn't allow them to start the project.

“They have reservations that this project will not fetch them water supply which is not true because Pahnoo is the first village and we tried hard to assure them they will get better supplies”, said Mohammad Aslam Executive Engineer PHE Division Budgam.



second day with sand and mud, which itself depicts that dirty water is being supplied to the area. We request the authorities to make use of this filtration plant, so that the people of our area would not face problems anymore”, Abdul Ahad Lone, a local resident said.

Another resident Gul Mohammad Teli alleged PHE Department of playing with their health. He also alleged that the Department is promising big and delivering the least.

Aslam added that the concerned officials held meetings with the villagers and hoped that the project would soon start functioning.

Locals alleged that the contaminated water is being supplied to them that badly affects their health.

“The pipes are getting blocked every

However Executive Engineer PHE Budgam Mohammad Aslam refuted the claims and termed them baseless. “The department guarantees the National Quality Standards for water supplies are being maintained and good quality drinking water is being supplied to these areas”, he added.



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'Fake News Detection' workshop held at MERC



Sheikh Arsh
Srinagar

A day-long workshop on 'Social Media Verification' and 'Fake News Detection' was organized by Media Education Research Centre (MERC), Kashmir University (KU) in collaboration with Google News Initiative (GNI) on April 30.

The workshop was conducted by the Google-certified trainer, Faisal Yaseen who while stressing upon practicing journalists to make use of the readily available tools to detect fake news, appreciated the efforts of MERC for providing opportunities to budding journalists to equip themselves appropriately.

"The originators of the fake news don't bother about the authenticity and credibility but journalists have to stand guard to professional ethics," said Faisal

Yaseen.

He also briefed the students about the digital safety and data hygiene following which an engaging question-answer session was held.

"The role played by a responsible media person has assumed more significance in today's time because only trained professionals using the available tools can differentiate between the real and fake news and can disseminate factual and credible information to the masses," said a senior faculty member, Mr. Nasir Mirza.

A practical session was held in the department and the students got a chance to practise techniques to detect fake photos and videos.

Head of the Department, Dr Aaliya Ahmad said, "The workshop was organized to sensitize the journalism students about the tools available to detect fake news."

The workshop was organized to sensitize the journalism students about the tools available to detect fake news