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UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



**Road side women vendors  
reveal their struggle**

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## Hazratbal residents grumble upon contaminated water



**Mehvish Dilshad**  
Srinagar

**B**atpora residents of Hazratbal area complain against Public Health Engineering (PHE) for failing to repair the main water supply line in locality, which according to them, gets mixed with the drainage water.

According to the locals there has been a leakage in the water supply line of the area since past several weeks. “It has been more than a week now since we are facing this problem, the concerned department has failed to plug the leakage due to which drainage water is getting mixed with drinking water,” said Gulzar Ahmad Naikoo, a local resident .

Residents of Batpora threatened to block Kashmir University road if the issue is not resolved by the concerned authorities.

Another resident of the same area, Arshid Ahmad said that “due to contaminated water supply, many cases of gastroenteritis and other related infections have been reported in the area but no one from the PHE department is bothered to look into the matter and resolve it”.

Upon asking about the concern Chief Engineer PHE, Abdul Wahid told the MERC Times that the department has deputed fresh teams which will resolve the issue within two days. “We have also asked the concerned PHE officials to resolve the issue on fast track basis”.

## Road side women vendors reveal their struggle

**Schnian Meer**  
Srinagar

**W**hen it comes to roadside vending, streets are full of challenges for women. There is a lot of struggle associated with the job.

Jaana, a 60-year old, fisherwoman in Hazratbal says, “I am an old woman and suffering from many health issues. This work demands a lot of energy and hard work. There are many difficulties that I have to go through on daily basis”.

There are a number of women who take to roadside vending to support their families. They are seen selling vegetables, toys, pickle, street food, fish and other items. They also have to work under similar conditions.

“These sufferings have become a part of my life now. And this is very exhausting. But I have to work whatever the conditions may be as I am having no other option. I have to support my family”, says Jaana.

Jaana also told MERC Times that she could not provide education to her children because of lack of resources. She has two sons who work as labourers at Dal Lake.

“If I had been able to provide education to my sons, I would have not been sitting here and struggling so hard. Now I don’t want my grand children to suffer the way we have been suffering from more than three decades. That’s why we are working so hard so that we could provide them a better future”, she added.

Reena, a 16- year old roadside vendor, also could not pursue her studies because she had to earn and support her family. She sells toys near Habak crossing in Hazratbal. She looks after her younger brother and sister and brings them along with her as her entire family works at different places during day time and there is no body to look after them.

“I am from Hoshiyarpur, Punjab .My entire family works here in summers. Winters are very harsh here due to which we are not able to earn much during that season. So we have to move to our place where we work for two to three months and come back here when the weather improves”, she says.

Reena wants her brother and sister to study but because they have to travel from one state to another to earn their livelihood, they are not able to get them enrolled in any school.

There are a number of issues that are common among these women vendors. Lack of access to proper toilets, harsh weather conditions, safety issues and health issues are some of them.

Hajira, 35 years old, sells vegetables at Foreshore Road on the banks of Dal Lake and said that sometimes she feels like she should give up this job and go back to her home but the thought of her daughter stops her from doing so.

“My daughter is in 8th class and she wants to become a doctor. I really want her dream to come true. I want her to study. I don’t want her to suffer the way I have been suffering. She is everything to me as I have no son. She would make me proud one day. That’s why I have to work hard and do what I have been doing from last one decade”, she said.

Hajira is on medication from last one year. She is stressed about the future of her family and particularly of her daughter. She fears that the inability to support her financially may create hurdles in her career.





## JKEDI recieves 70 fresh ideas, displays 20 prototypes of innovations

Maleeha Wani  
Srinagar

The boot campaign of Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on 23rd April reached SSM College of Engineering, Parihaspora where more than 225 students from different streams participated in the camp. Besides engineering and management students, the faculty members of the college also participated in the day long event.

The camp was part of the boot camp campaign launched by the Institute in all the districts of state under the J&K startup policy 2018 for which JKEDI has been designated as the nodal agency.

The JKEDI team for boot campaign included Project Manager, Syed Firdous, consultant Shaikh Fayaz and nodal officer JKEDI Baramulla, Waseem Ahad, Syed Moyid and Waseem ul Gani, an official handout said.

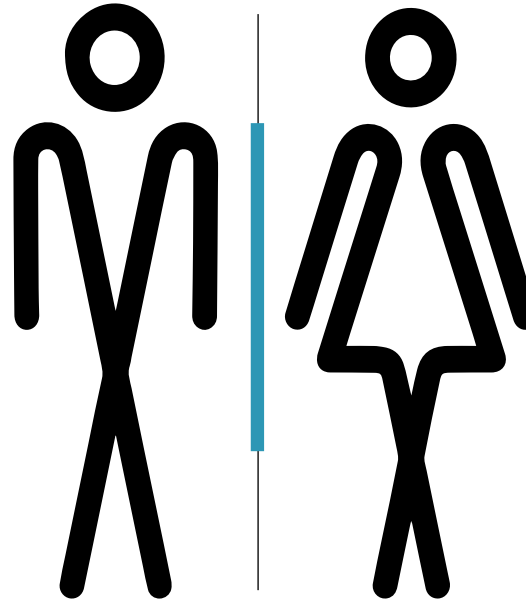
The Program was coordinated by JKEDI district centre Baramulla, Project Manager, Syed Firdous deliberated on the background and rationale of J&K startup policy. He also stressed on need for creating an enterprising society and collaboration between JKEDI and engineering colleges like SSM to facilitate young innovative minds to enrich entrepreneurial ecosystem, the handout read.

Consultant Shaikh Fayaz deliberated on history of innovations and motivated the students to develop a critical thinking which could lead to innovations in different fields. He urged the participants to share their innovative ideas so that the institute could help them turn those ideas into profitable business ventures.

On the occasion 20 students of the college displayed the prototypes of innovations and discussed commercialisation prospects of their ideas with the JKEDI startup team.

During camp the team received 70 ideas shared by the SSM college students. These ideas shall be made part of "idea bank" to be scrutinised later by an expert team. The main objective of the boot campaign launched by JKEDI is to bring mass awareness about the start up policy and to inculcate spirit of innovation among the youth to give flip to the conversion of innovative ideas into profitable business ventures, the handout added.

## Public toilet shortage along Boulevard road



Muneeb Naqeeb  
Srinagar

Lack of public toilets at the Boulevard Road, world famous tourist spot here presents a very grim picture. Absence of public convenience compels the visitors to respond to the call of nature in the Dal Lake itself or on the banks of the Lake.

Boulevard Road that runs along the famous Dal Lake, is a major tourist attraction in the Kashmir Valley and serves as the entry point to the Mughal Gardens, Chashma Shahi, Pari Mahal, Tulip Garden and Botanical Garden.

Visitors to the spot have been expressing resentment towards lack of washrooms at the Boulevard Road that is exposing the lack of apathy of the local authorities towards Swach Bharat Mission (SBM).

Lakes and Waterway Development Authority (LAWDA), mandated to oversee the tourist spot, is in deep slumber and least bothered to facilitate visitors with public toilets along the stretch.

"It is very embarrassing when you have to relieve yourself but you are not able to find any of the washrooms nearby especially at a place like Boulevard Road. There is an immediate need of toilet facilities for both men and women," said Shabnum Jaan, a local resident.

Parvaiz Ahmad Baktoo, a houseboat owner commented that it is very unpleasant to notice people relieving themselves in the lake.

"The issue has recently been brought into my notice and we immediately brought the said issue to the higher authorities. The authorization for initiating remedial measures is expected soon", said Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation Peerzada Hafizullah.





# Govt to keep a check on pharmacy shops

**Minya Tufail**  
Srinagar

In view of increasing cases of drug addiction, state government is set to hire volunteers to keep a check on the sale at pharmacy shops.

It is in effect to tighten the grip over drug dealing agencies which are believed to be conducive for the drug addiction cases in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

“Government will tighten the noose as serious notes are being taken by the government in this regard and hence volunteers will be hired for the purpose,” an official, who wished not to be named said.

Chief Pharmacist SKIMS, Mohi Durakshan said, “Busy with politics, the civil society has ignored the grim reality to keep a check upon.”

Blaming the society for non-mobility, Durakshan requested the social agencies to come forth and mobilize the public opinion about the issue that has degraded the society.

“There are registered NGOs, mohalla committees and other people with good credentials who can assist them in notifying about the illegal activities at the pharmacies,” Durakshan said.

A counselor at Drug De Addiction Centre, DDC Batmaloo, Uzma Qureshi said that boys and girls from teenage

to adults are seen involved in the drug addiction. There are increasing cases of youngsters seeking rehabilitation in the drug de-addiction centers across different districts.

“We receive cases where youngsters who have familial issues get addicted to drugs, these are neglected children who use drugs for escapement from reality,” Uzma shared.

On other hand the easy availability of these drugs in pharmaceutical agencies are also held responsible for the menace.

Ali Mohd, a parent said “Our society has degraded due to parents neglecting their children, it is a social and moral issue that needs to be contained when all the sections of the society come together.”

# SMC workers union express anguish

**Fazlu Rehman**  
Srinagar

With only 2500 SMC (Srinagar Municipal Corporation) workers in power to clean up the whole Srinagar city, at the same time Workers Union Corporation claim against the highhandedness of Srinagar Municipal Corporation authorities for neglecting the basic rights of labour workers with no proper uniform and equipments.

The working labours who clean up the city on daily basis with extra burden and overload claim that Srinagar Municipal Corporation is not paying enough wages and equipments to them.

“Our labours toil very hard with extra work load to make the city clean, we remove thousands of tons of heaps of garbage on every alley and street of Srinagar on daily basis, but unfortunate part is that our rights are every time denied”, claim Chairman Workers Union Corporation, Gh. Muhammad Solina.

The Workers Union Corporation Srinagar, the corporate body of Srinagar, deals with the cleaning up the city on daily basis protested against the Srinagar Municipal Committee authorities for

their highhandedness and heedless approach.

The daily cleaning workers work more than six hours of their given time, but majority of the workers claim that they are being given extra work load to clean the city, which according to them is very hard for them to do.

While talking to one of the labour in Partap Park area of Lal chowk, who cleans the given area on daily basis said, “I work daily to clean the given area, without any identity and uniform. I have been given only two brooms in a year, with extra workload, which is a sheer injustice for me.”

He further expressed his serious concern over neglecting their basic right by high authorities who calmly sits in the cozy offices in Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

President, Chairman Workers Union Srinagar, Ab Rashid, while claiming Swatch Bharat Abhiyan, a centre govt cleaning campaign of India, “an utmost flop campaign bearing no meaning on ground reality in the Srinagar city” said, “We are having careless officers in our Corporation who neglect our basic rights deliberately.

Though crores of rupees are sanctioned

to clean the city mess, but due to official apathy, they hardly care to sanction the basic rights including shoes, uniform and proper brooms.”

Also some of the daily workers do claim that in the city they are being given undue job like to remove the graffiti’s on roads, walls and shops which sometimes become hard job for them to do. They sometimes are being targeted by the city local boys in the streets for rubbing the pro freedom graffiti’s. In addition to this, they are being given a job to remove the debris part on construction parts in the city, which they claim as not their job.

Further, Workers Union Corporation alleged that more than seven lac rupees have been spent recently in a local hotel here for transport workshop event, which according to them is a waste of money and time. They say that the same amount would have been spent on their equipments and uniforms.

Meanwhile, while talking to the concerned Chief Sanitation Officer Srinagar, Mohammad Akber Sofi, said “We are investigating the matter and soon we will be sanctioning proper uniform and quality equipments to the basic workers He assured to increase the man power work force upto 7000 workers across the city”.





# KU organizes social service camp

Wasfi Amin  
Srinagar

A social service camp was organized by the University of Kashmir (KU) on the eve of following Friday of Shab-i-Mehraj here on April 12.

The camp was set by the Dean of Students Welfare (DSW) in collaboration with the National Service Scheme (NSS) to provide refreshment to the people.

Prof Talat Ahmad, Vice Chancellor, KU, Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir, Registrar, Dr Raies, Dean DSW and members of

Proctor office and DSW were present on the occasion. Prof Talat served the devotees with tea and expressed his gratification over the arrangements made over there.

Abdul Ahmad Mir, a devotee from Anantnag said, "We are really happy and thankful to the administration of the University for arranging the camp. We hope that similar camps will be arranged in the future too."

Dr Raies said, "I am thankful to the administration and staff for their support. Without their involvement, we could not have arranged this camp."







## Lolab residents decry supply of contaminated water



Haider Ali  
Kupwara

Inhabitants of Lolab area in north Kashmir's Kupwara district are up in arms against the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department for supplying contaminated water to the area.

The residents said that authorities have been supplying contaminated drinking water from past two months, causing immense hardships to locals.

They said that according to District

Water Testing Laboratory Kupwara Physico-Chemical Water Analysis report show bacteriological contamination.

"The water is unfit for human consumption and can cause diseases. We appeal Chief Engineer PHE to look into the matter," they said.

"Despite repeated requests to the concerned authorities, we are being forced to use contaminated water from filthy streams," said Haleema Begum one of the residents. She said that womenfolk of the area have to walk two kilometres to fetch water.

The residents said that their locality is just few kilometre away from main town but unfortunately the area has been deprived of the basic facilities like water, electricity and road connectivity.

When contacted Parveez Wani, Executive Engineer PHE Department, said that the water pipes have been laid in the area and soon water will be supplied to these areas.

## Lalbazar colony road in shambles

Saima Shakeel  
Srinagar

The resident of Umer Colony, Lal Bazar rue over the dilapidated road which has become a nuisance for the locals and demand immediate repair of the road.

The locals complained that after the installation of drainage system in the area, authorities didn't wrap up the road properly which is the reason for such condition of the road.

"The road is in such a bad condition that we cannot even walk properly. Vehicles get damaged with this kind of road", said Ali Mohammad, a local.

"The road is in such a condition that we cannot even walk properly. When our guests arrive they fear to come with their vehicles, as road is in bad condition since a long time", said Junaid, a local resident.

Local also alleged that they spoke to the contractor who installed the drainage system in the area. The contractor told them that he is out of funds and will try to repair it soon.

When contacted Chief Engineer R&B Kashmir, Sami Arif said, "I would get a report on the issue and would look personally into the matter"..







# Exposed transformers pose threat to human lives



**Mirza Sharafat Srinagar**

Hundreds of power transformers installed along roadsides without shields pose an open threat to human life. The transformers are found with uncovered wires and joints that threaten to stun with electric shock.

As per the locals in areas like Khomeini Chowk Bemina, Nowpora and various other the transformers make the areas 'danger zones' posing danger to children and students, who pass from lanes in these areas.

"We people have become habitual of passing from an electric transformer whose naked wires can touch anyone on the road. This is alarming and I am worried as most of

the children passing on roads are not aware of this danger," said Manzoor Hussain, a local resident of Bemina.

The power facilities installed on roads are required to be covered with insulation so that human life is not threatened.

"The Power Department does not even bother to put a warning board at such spots to make pedestrian alert about the danger. In addition, most of the facilities in Srinagar are installed against the standards and safety measures," alleged another local resident Zakir Ahmad of Bemina area.

Efforts to contact Chief Engineer, Hashmat Qazi, where futile to a number of telephonic calls. Later a complaint was registered on PDD helpline to demand necessary action.

# Budgam residents demand removal of brick kilns

**Sheikh Ahsaan Budgam**

Annoyed by the pollution emitting from brick kilns in the area, people held a protest in Nasrullah Pora area of district Budgam on April 11.

Acting on a call given by the Mohalla President, hundreds of residents held protests against the brick kilns in Nasrullah Pora, staging sit-ins and blocking traffic movement on the roads.

The protestors were raising slogans, demanding closure of industrial plants. According to the protestors, the plants contain 'pollution generating machines', which affect health of the people in the area.



"It is unfortunate that factories are preferred over human lives as administration is taking no steps to curb the pollution menace in our localities," Syed Muzaffar Hussain, an

elderly protestor blurted out while others raised slogans against the administration for 'paying no attention towards the problems of the local residents.'

"We have been experiencing this unhealthy and unhygienic atmosphere for many years now. People especially children and elderly are the worst sufferers," Uzair Khan, a youth told MERC Times.

Despite repeated attempts Assistant Development Commissioner Budgam, Mushtaq Ahmad Simnani refused to comment on the issue.

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# Urdu language and literature seminar begins at KU

**Tahil Ali**  
Srinagar

A two-day seminar on Urdu language and literature, *'Riyasat Jammu Kashmir Main Urdu Zubaan-o-Adab ki Mojuuda Surat-e-haal'* begun here at University of Kashmir on April 27.

The seminar was organized by Department of Urdu KU in collaboration with National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), New Delhi.

Registrar University of Kashmir, Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir who presided over the inaugural session of the seminar said that the present situation of Urdu language in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is in a dire need of revival.

Former Head and Dean Jamia Millia Islamia Department of Urdu, New Delhi, Prof Obaid-ur-Rehman Hashmi in his keynote address said that Kashmir has carried a legacy of rich traditions rooted in the Sufi culture and has produced gems in the language and literature. "There are names of brilliant poets and writers

from Kashmir whose names would always resonate whenever rich language and literature is being talked about." He also talked about the relevance of the language in contemporary times and read out poetry couplets of various Urdu poets of the subcontinent on the occasion.

Head Department of Urdu, KU and the seminar patron Prof (Dr) Arifa Bushra delivered the welcome address. She talked about the viability of the Urdu language and literature and how it came a long way in the state of Jammu and Kashmir where it isn't even a native language though is spoken and loved with zest.

"Culture of consumerism and globalization brought with itself many challenges for the language and literature of Urdu. It is only because of its strong capacity that it withstood the tests and continues to thrive till date", she added.

Former Director Directorate, of Distance Education University of Kashmir Prof Shafiq Parveen who was the guest of honor on the occasion

said that Urdu language bridged people of various communities, region and countries despite all the odds and would continue in the same promising direction.

**Culture of consumerism and globalization brought with itself many challenges for the language and literature of Urdu. It is only because of its strong capacity that it withstood the tests and continues to thrive till date**