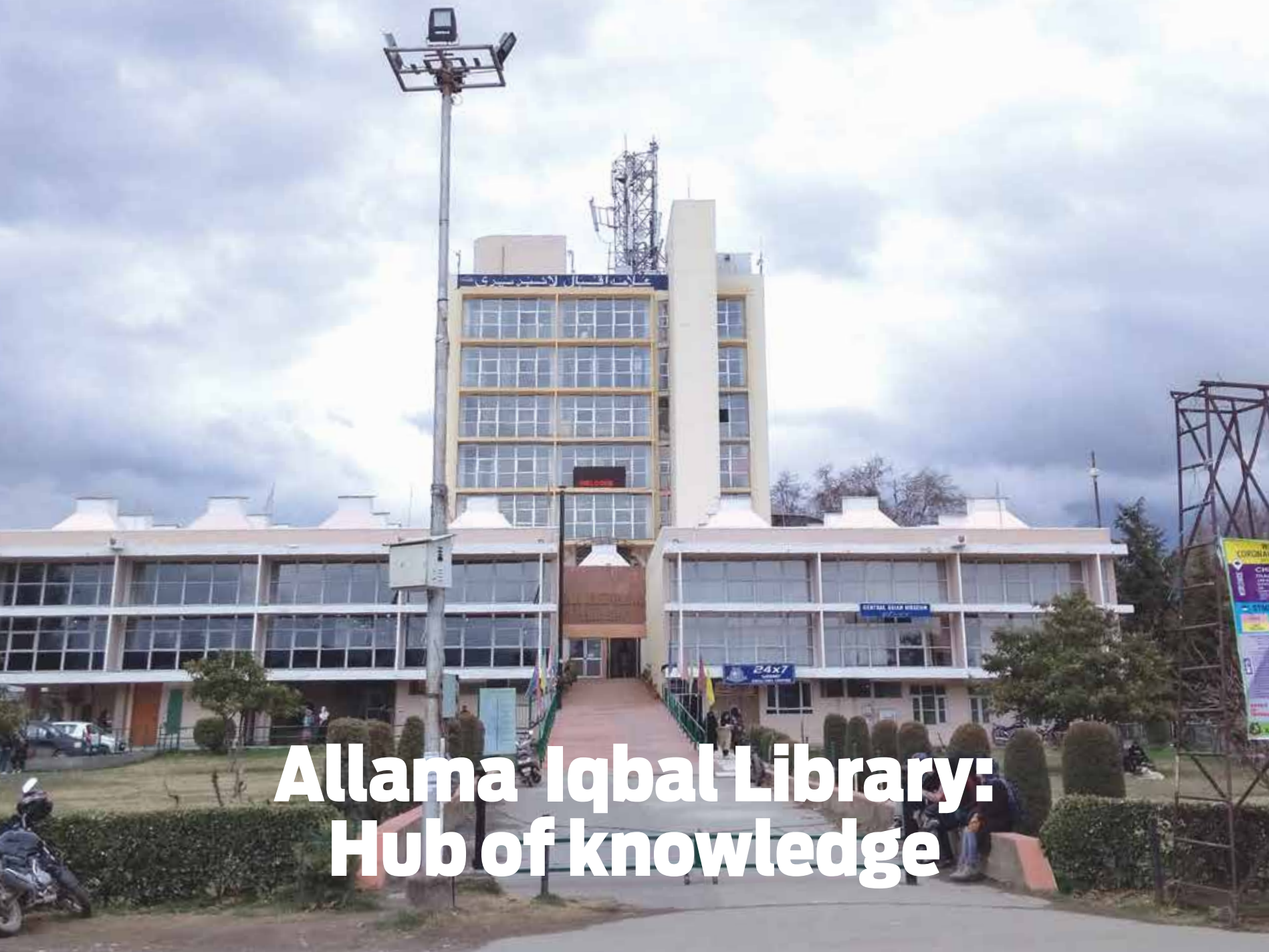


Vol 12 | Issue 09 | OCTOBER 15, 2019

MERC TIMES

**MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**



Allama Iqbal Library: Hub of knowledge

INSIDE {STORIES}



Dara among favourite destinations for summers
P02



DLL: A glint of hope for unemployed youth
P04



Institute of Foreign Languages, a no man's land
P07



Kulgam town sans garbage dumping site

Farzana Nisar

Kulgam

The water of the famous river, Vishaw, located in south Kashmir's Kulgam town, is turning poisonous as tons of garbage is openly being dumped on its banks.

According to the residents, due to the absence of proper waste disposal mechanism, the banks of the river Vishaw are being polluted. They are also becoming a breeding ground of diseases as truckloads of garbage generated in the town and neighboring areas is dumped on the river on daily basis.

Arif Ahmad Zargar, a local resident said, "Local Municipal Committee is using Vishaw river as a dumping place to dispose the generated solid waste and the same water is supplied to dozens of villages for drinking purpose by Department of PHE."

"Also, the condition of the water worsens when it rains," he added.

Moreover, the locals claimed that the presence of stray dogs on the garbage site has hampered their smooth movement.

"One can spot hundreds of stray dogs prowling freely around the garbage and chasing the residents. We cannot go alone to the nearby areas as they pose serious threat to our lives," said Gulshana Akhter, a local woman.

As per the guidelines of Solid Waste Management Handling Act 1998, adequate arrangements need to be made to improve the environmental condition of the towns. However, the municipal authorities seem to be in deep slumber.

"The land for the dumping site has been identified and the estimated cost of the project is Rs 24 crores. However, the funds are yet to be released by the government," said Syed Manzoor Andrabi, the Executive Officer of Kulgam Municipal Committee.



Dara among favourite destinations for summers

Its closeness to the nature makes it a favorite spot for Srinagar people to beat the summer heat.



Yasir Ahmad

Srinagar

Known for its natural beauty and gushing water streams, Dara, Harwan, located at the distance of 50-kilometres from Lal Chowk, is becoming a top favorite destination for people in summers.

"I come here to take a bath whenever I feel low. Every dip in this water takes away my sorrows. I believe that anyone feeling tired and low should visit this place because it refreshes the mind," said Suhaib, a resident of Natipora Srinagar, who visits this place thrice a week.

Mostly, students visit this place to hangout after their tiring day in schools and colleges. Dara has become a reliever for them.

"The water is quite cold which is a big relief in summers. But the greenery, trees, and mountains surrounding the gushing water make it worth visiting. One more feature of this place is the silence engulfing it which makes it more serene," said Mubashir, a student of Kashmir University.

Dara also connects trekkers to the other famous lakes namely Tarsar, Marsar and Manasbal. The place looks equally serene and ravishing in winters, as the white snow blankets its huge mountains. There are people who feel nostalgic while visiting

this place and many people do come here to relive their great memories.

Nadeem, a teacher by profession said, "I have been to Dhara several times. It has been a perfect getaway spot for me and my friends ever since our childhood."

"We swim and do trekking and every time we leave we look forward next time to visit this place again." He added.

The locals here have been witnessing an increase in the number of people visiting this place every summer.

"Many people in the valley are discovering this place as a favorite summer spot. In the future we expect more and more people to come here and explore the beauty of Dara," said Nazir Ahmad, a local resident.

The water is quite cold which is a big relief in summers. But the greenery, trees, and mountains surrounding the gushing water make it worth visiting. One more feature of this place is the silence engulfing it which makes it more serene



Aagosh, a fight for children

Zaid Bashir

Srinagar

Aagosh, a Non-Governmental Organization, first of its kind in Kashmir has taken up the task of fighting child sexual abuse in the valley by conducting workshops to spread awareness about the issue.

“Children in our society cannot prevent sexual abuse being done to them, but we as adults can understand as well as prevent such abuses in our society,” said Dr. Khawar Khan Achakzai, one of the founding members.

The organization comprises of some noted social workers, social activists, lawyers, journalists and teachers who have set up the forum purely as a part of civil responsibility. It provides a platform to those victims who want to come forward

and talk about the trauma and suffering that they have undergone. Apart from this, the organization trains caregivers to detect, deal and report abuse to authorities.

“Till now we have conducted three workshops in three different schools and have trained more than 30-35 teachers and parents to deal and prevent the cases of child sexual abuse,” said Achakzai.

The first workshop was conducted at Iron Fist Martial Arts Academy, Soura on 19 May 2019. The second and the third workshops were conducted at Blue Bells School, Khanyar and Lotus Garden, Rainawari, on 15 June and 6 July respectively.

The victims of child sexual abuse have been suffering from gross societal challenges, in addition, to the grotesque, physical and mental ramification of the sexual exploitation that they are subjected to.

“It was for the first time in the workshop that I spoke about it. I believe Aagosh will certainly help in the prevention of child sexual abuses. For those who have been abused, I want them to come forward and speak about it,” said Zubair (name changed), who recalled his experience of abuse in Aagosh’s workshop.

The organization also distributes free handbooks on child sexual abuse among teachers and parents. The handbook expound in detail about the protection of children in schools, madrasas and special settings and touch topics like behavior changes in abused children, types of child sexual abuses, ways of approaching and talking to potentially abused children.

Aagosh is planning to organize more workshops outside Srinagar in future and it will be open to everyone for sharing necessary information and spreading more awareness.





DLL: A glint of hope for unemployed youth

Toiba Bashir

Srinagar

As unemployment continues to be a big challenge, Directorate of Lifelong Learning, University of Kashmir, is trying to be a ray of hope for the youth.

The Directorate facilitates to bring change in the lives of the common masses by providing them professional, vocational, skill based and job oriented courses. It conducts workshops, trainings, seminars, and sensitization cum awareness programs to aware people about the latest opportunities that the directorate provides.

“It is exclusively an extension department which provides a series of continuing education courses, trainings and different programs to equip the talent of the youth with the self-employment skills, to lead them to be the best entrepreneurs of the future,” said Dr. Ghulam Hassan Mir, presently the Director of the department.

The Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DLL) was established in the year 1978 with its name as Centre for Adult Continuing Education & Extension (CACEE) having an academic status under the University of Kashmir. This Centre was later promoted as

a Directorate and named as The Directorate of Lifelong Learning.

DLL accommodates number of short-term technical and vocational courses with different durations. It also conducts short term certificate courses like; Mobile repairing, CCNA, Tally 9.2, Basic computer and internet, Digital photography, Videography, Plumber, Fitter, Electrician, Maintenance of machines, Networking and Web Designing, Microsoft VB Net, Fashion Designing and Food Processing.

“I was immediately hired after completing a course in Networking and Web Designing by a company in Bangalore,” Suhail Bashir, an ex-student of the department.

The Directorate plays a major role in focusing the practical needs of the marginalized and weaker sections of the society through its diverse outreach programs thereby developing a meaningful and sustained rapport between the university and the society.

“We conduct many outreach programs in the far away areas of the valley. Recently, we conducted an outreach program in the Gurez Valley. By doing so, our mission is to bring the weaker sections of the society in the fold of new opportunities and make them self-employed,” said the Director.

The Directorate of Lifelong Learning

also works for upliftment of women belonging to weaker sections of the society. It teaches them courses like handicrafts, tailoring and paper machie.

“I learned paper machie from here and surprisingly my products got sold during the Book Fair held in Kashmir University in June this year,” said Saima Mir.

“Even I am getting more orders from different handicraft owners,” Saima Mir added in a joyful manner.

“I have enrolled myself for the tailoring course. Within a short span of time, I have learnt a lot and have started taking orders of stitching clothes at my home,” said Masarat Imtiyaz.

“We teach almost 30 courses in the Directorate and every year near about 1000 students are enrolled in different courses. We have a very flexible system, admission is based on first-come-first-serve basis and the syllabus is framed after critically examining the need and requirement of the youth and the market outside,” said the director.

The Directorate is also working to introduce new programs that tally with the needs of the present generation thus enabling youth to set their income generation units and promote professional abilities through required inputs.



Sir Syed Gate turning into a place for collecting online products

Parrey Babar
Srinagar

As the university of Kashmir has barred the entrance of delivery boys inside its campus, Sir Syed Gate is turning into a place of collecting online-ordered products.

On the footpath of the road leading to Lal Bazar, near Sir Syed Gate of the University of Kashmir, the delivery boys from different e-commerce sites are seen busy in delivering the parcels. The recipients are mainly the students and employees of the University of Kashmir.

“On an average we deliver sixty parcels per day to the students and employees of the university and approximately 500 parcels are delivered in the campus per week,” said Mehraj, an Amazon deliver boy.

“Students who cannot receive their parcels at home collect them here, so it lowers our travelling burden,” Adil Ahmad, a Myntra delivery boy said.

These delivery boys come every day at 10 am and sit on the footpath and leave around at 3pm after delivering their products to the desired customers. However, these delivery boys find it tough to preserve these products during bad weather till they are

delivered.

“Weather affects our products as they are kept on the footpath during rainy days. They are also obstacle to people taking footpath, but there is also no suitable place to keep these products safe from rain,” said Aamir, who delivers products for Flipkart. “We had approached the university administration to allow us within the campus but they refused for certain security reasons,” he added.

There are mainly five companies who deliver their products in the university including Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Jabong, Snapdeal and the students prefer these online shopping sites for their credibility and quality of products.

“I often go for online shopping as it is much feasible and I prefer to do it from Amazon and Myntra because of their credibility. I prefer to give university address as I am around the campus so it becomes easy for me to take my parcel from here,” said Tabasum Mir, a PhD scholar.

“It would have been better if we could receive our parcels near our department as we have to cover a long distance before reaching Sir Syed Gate,” said Saifah Amin, PG student of MERC.

“However, this address is compatible with all shopping sites, so it is an additional benefit of studying in the University Of Kashmir,” Saifah added.



Markaz-i-Adab wa Saqafat organizes a seminar at Tagore Hall

Saqib Jameel
Srinagar

A seminar was organized by Kashmir's Markaz-i-Adab wa Saqafat at Tagore Hall in which writers, scholars and students from a range of background participated.

During the seminar, a book 'Bar Machravith' was released. The author of the book is Younis Waheed, a young poet and writer from the valley. The book release function was presided over by the noted poet and writer Prof Muhamad Zaman Azurdah while Prof Shad Ramzan, Dr. Aziz Hajni and Inayat Gul and others were the guests of honor.

Former Finance Minister, Abdur Rahim Rather was also present at



the occasion. "It was an enlightening experience as we got to know the essence of poetry, books and written hard bound texts," said Zaffar Sofi, a student from University of Kashmir.

Meanwhile, a review of the book was presented by Shabir Hussain Banhali, Shafi Shabnam and Prof Shad Ramzan. A short summary of the book was also presented and a light background information about the writer and some poems from the book. Younis Waheed was also honored with an award by Markaz-i-Adab during the occasion.



Institute of Foreign Languages, a no man's land



Arbeena
Srinagar

While a great number of students studying different disciplines inside the campus of the University of Kashmir are seen rushing to their different departments but the department of Foreign Languages has still been waiting for the fulfillment of its vacant seats.

The Institute of Foreign Languages in the University of Kashmir was established in 1976 to develop linguistic competence and academic potential of students through intensive foreign language programs. The faculty consists of three teachers including Ghulam Mohd Bhat, the Head of the Department. The institute offers certificate courses for one year in French, German and Russian languages with the intake capacity of 25 students per language respectively.

However, the data provided by the concerned department shows that only a handful of students enroll themselves in these courses. In 2018, only two were students enrolled in

French and Russian languages while eight students registered for the German language course. In 2016, nine students had registered for French, four for German and only one student had joined the Russian course.

“Students today are more inclined towards professional courses wherein they could find a suitable job after the course is completed. We on the other hand, provide students with only certificate courses which can't promise jobs here,” said Dr. Irfan Fazili, who teaches Russian.

Mushtaq Ahmad Shah, who teaches German said, “The problem is that people aren't aware of the benefits of learning European language. There is a need for creating awareness among the people regarding the benefits of learning different languages. People who have good command over German can really have bright future ahead.”

“A lot of German companies like Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Robert Bosch Engineering and Business Solution etc. are present in India, so there is a lot of scope for

students of the German language,” he further said.

But students look more interested in studying Arabic and Persian as compared to these languages. Despite the presence of all the three foreign languages in the open elective basket students are hardly attracted towards them.

“The real history of Kashmir is written in Persian. I am very enthusiastic to know about Kashmir. So, Persian became my choice,” Mehboob Hussain, a Persian scholar said.

Arshad Mehmood, an Arabic scholar said, “We have a strong relationship with the Arabic language. It caters my needs in this world by providing me a job option as well as in the world hereafter by allowing me to go deep into the religious sciences.”

“The department has also submitted its proposal to the authorities for the development of integrated courses in foreign languages to attract students. However, that is under the consideration of higher authorities,” Dr. Fazilli added.



Allama Iqbal Library: Hub of knowledge

Sheikh Mustafa
Srinagar

Allama Iqbal library, located in the center of the Kashmir University campus, is amongst the top knowledge hubs of Kashmir. The library serves to all book lovers with plausible material and helps them in gaining knowledge.

Allama Iqbal library is the largest library in Jammu and Kashmir. It has 21 divisions and well-maintained centrally heated halls thus, making it an ideal study place even during winters.

“I have always found serenity at this place, there are different books, which you can explore without even paying for them,” said Nadeem Khan, a student from Business school.

Tauseef Ahmad, a student of Department of political science said, “We often face so many problems like Internet lockdowns that badly affect our studies, but this is one of the best places where we can continue our studies without any

interruption.”

The library also caters to the needs of civil service aspirants and provides them with the relevant material. Many students have benefitted because of the availability of vast material in the library.

One of the civil services aspirants, Navshaad Anjum Mir said, “I would have never been able to prepare for the civil service examinations, but it was because of this library that I have been able to do so.”

“The silence and the separate study corners makes it the best place to study without any distraction,” said Afshan Mir, another civil service aspirant.

Professor G M Peerzada, the librarian of the Allama Iqbal Library said, “This library is at par with other libraries in terms of content, resources, rear books, hand-written books, manuscripts of culture, history, religion, handicrafts and so on.”

“We also introduced the RFID Section, Visual Impairment Section and Career Corner section especially for civil service

aspirants.” He further added.

I have always found serenity at this place, there are different books, which you can explore without even paying for them