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HOSTEL LIFE AND STUDIES

Shahid Habib

Hostel is a place where students stay for pursuing formal education away from their homes. But the concept of hostel is not only limited to place of residence, it is well said that hostel is a human practical laboratory as well.

Shahid Habib took a vox pop with hostel boarders of Kashmir University to know about their experience in hostel and the educational environment they get there. Here is what they had to say;

Javaid-ul-Islam, PG Political Science, KU

“Hostel is a place where one is free, you don’t have to worry about preparing food and all that, you get plenty of time to learn not just through books but also by interacting with roommates and other boarders, sometimes from different region, religion and culture.”

Sheikh Mustafa, M.A Hostel, K.U

“Hostel provides a congenial atmosphere for studies, especially for students who really want to learn something. There is an opportunity of reading newspapers, magazines and other useful books in the reading room.”

Toiba Bashir, PG Mass Communication and Journalism, KU

“Well I find that there is no such reading culture in hostel, there are reading rooms but they have problem of basic hygiene and it is noisy as well. There are 4-8 boarders in a single room, quite difficult to study for. There is no Wi-Fi connection. Even, if we study in the Library of main campus, there is a fixed time (currently 7:30PM) and we have to return back to hostel. The only time we can study at hostel is in the dead of night when everyone is asleep, but that takes toll on our health. The only good thing I find in my hostel is availability of newspapers, magazines and some joyful moments with roommates. Overall, hostel life is a chick flick of both joy and suffering as well.”

Farzana Nasir, PG Mass Communication and Journalism

“First of all, I found hostel safe place for girls as there are proper safety measures. In hostel we get to know students from other departments and get some knowledge about their subject as well. Seniors are always there to help. I often do discussions with my seniors and roommates and get my confusions cleared on complex topics. We develop understanding; we learn to compromise and respect each other.”

Aabid Hussain Parrey, PG Political Science, KU

“Hostel is very beneficial and helpful for students as there is less workload, rented rooms cost a lot, and sometimes we can’t afford that much. We get feasible atmosphere for studies at hostel. There are also debates and competitions and we learn a lot from them.

Government middle school lacks basic facilities



Humaira Nabi
Ganderbal

The students of Government Middle School Nunar, Ganderbal suffer in absence of basic facilities at their school since long time. Located 28 km away from summer capital Srinagar, Govt Middle School of Urpash Nunar shows the deteriorating condition of educational institutes in Kashmir valley.

As per the locals, the students of Government Middle School, Nunar, have to face different issues, due to the lack of facilities like washroom, classrooms, playgrounds, and computer labs.

The school also lacks a science laboratory and a library.

“I read in class 8th and haven’t been to a science lab yet,” said Muneer Ahmad Dar, a student of the school.

Majority of the students studying in this school belong to BPL families and can’t afford going to a private school. Most

of the girl students have left school due to lack of separate washroom facility for females.

“Lack of separate toilet facility for girls is one of the major reasons why girls leave their studies at primary level. Not a single girl here is enrolled in either class 7th or 8th,” said Naseema Akhter, a teacher at Government Middle School Urpash Nunar.

“Concerns of the students are genuine as we are lacking some basic facilities like science lab, computer lab, library and other concern being the inadequacy of playground,” said Abdul Aziz, Principal of the School.

“Despite government’s best efforts to bring our education sector at par with international standards, it’s the inadequate infrastructure that holds it back,” said Abdul Majeed Dar, a local resident.

“Classrooms, washrooms, playgrounds, laboratories and libraries are as important for the holistic development as the quality of education itself,” Majeed added.



Mughal Road devouring precious lives



Shaheen Qayoom

Shopian

The Mughal Road, which connects Pir Panchal region with south Kashmir and is an alternative to Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, is devouring precious lives in road accidents.

This was the route that was first taken by Akbar to cross over to Kashmir. After Akbar, same road was used by Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb, to travel here. These 84-kilometres between the towns crossing Peer ki Galli is the stretch called Mughal Road. However, the total distance between Jammu & Srinagar via this route is far greater; a total of 330-kilometres.

Amid the mesmerising beauty of Mughal Road, fatal road accidents have always remained a grave risk on the road as absence of mobile telephone network and any health institution renders an accident victims vulnerable.

As per the details with MERC Times, in the jurisdiction of Surankote police station from Buffleiyaz to Peer ki Galli, five accidents took place in 2016 resulting in

death of nine persons. While in 2017, nine persons lost their lives in five road accidents.

Similarly, ten persons got killed in nine road accidents in 2018 while in the first six months of 2019, six persons lost their lives in four accidents on the road.

When the police officials were asked about the causes of accidents, they revealed, “Bad condition of roads, rash driving, pedestrian’s negligence, drunk driving and mechanical fault are the major causes of such accidents.”

“The condition of this road is so bad that each passing day an accident takes place. It is a big threat to our lives. We demand the road should be mended properly and only then allowed for traffic movement,” said Ghulam Hassan Mir, a local resident.

It is pertinent to mention that Mughal Road was restored for traffic from Shopian to Poonch and vice-versa on May 7, 2019 after a gap of five months. After its restoration, travelers claimed that the road was not suitable for traffic movement, as landslides during winters had damaged the road at many places.

The condition of this road is so bad that each passing day an accident takes place. It is a big threat to our lives. We demand the road should be mended properly and only then allowed for traffic movement





Home is far on Fridays for Kashmir University students

Asif Khan
Srinagar,

While people on Fridays throng to the shrine of Dargah, Hazratbal in huge numbers to express their religious devotion, these Friday travels of people from across the valley have started creating problems for the students of the University of Kashmir.

People visiting Dargah Hazratbal on Fridays travel along with their families to offer prayers and pay homage to the holy relic. They often come from different walks of life and different age groups are seen in buses going to Hazratbal on this day. From kids to old people, all are seen travelling with great enthusiasm to offer their prayers. Unfortunately, the mismanagement of such travels has landed Kashmir University students especially females in trouble, as they find it difficult to board a bus back to their home on Fridays.

Buses are often overcrowded on this day and the female students studying at the University find it difficult to board a jam-packed bus. This paves way for hecklers to harass female students.

"There are good numbers of buses which are available but due to the overflow of migratory passengers, we are unable to find any place in the bus," Iqra Azam, a PG student of Food Science and Technology at the University of Kashmir said.

"At the same time, there is always this threat of being harassed by the crowd. It would have been better if some buses could have been kept reserved for the university students," Iqra added enthusiastically while offering a solution.

"The ladies special bus in which I travel is usually very comfortable but on Fridays it is very suffocative as many women board the bus once it crosses the University gate," Sofia Bashir, a PG student from the Business School revealed.

"I hardly get a bus on Fridays, so I prefer to sit back at home on this day of the week," Saika Aziz, another student of Food Science and Technology said.

Arshad Ahmad Dar, a bus driver, who has been driving from Hazratbal to Lal chowk route from past seven years said, "Some passengers are certainly left behind on Fridays, as the bus is usually filled by people mostly from the far-off areas like Pampore, Budgam, Nowgam, and Baramulla."

"This university route is dry for us as far as our bus earning is concerned. However, Fridays come as a relief and every bus earns more than what it does on other days of the week. So, overload is bound to happen," he further added.

Altaf Ahmed, a traffic personnel, who has been discharging his duties on the same route while acknowledging the problem said, "It is a genuine problem as

I witness people hung on the sides of the buses without caring about their safety."

"But it is the authority which has to step into action and solve this problem," Altaf added while his face gave a concerned look.

However, Tahir Gilani, the senior superintendent of traffic police however didn't reply on being approached about this issue faced by the students.

At the same time, there is always this threat of being harassed by the crowd. It would have been better if some buses could have been kept reserved for the university students



KU holds International Conference



Sumaiya Mir
Srinagar

A two-day International Conference on “Rethinking Education of Religions in the Modern World and Challenges” was organized by the Department of Religious Study of Central University of Kashmir, which was held in the University of Kashmir, Srinagar.

The conference was held in collaboration with the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi. Scholars from different religions came together to attend the conference and representatives from different universities of the country were present on the occasion. While, scholars from countries like US, UK and Arab were also present in the conference.

“The purpose of this conference was to bring modern education close to religious education and vice versa. We need both Modern and Religious studies. There is a lot of bifurcation between these two streams, so we want to integrate them,” said Prof. Hamidullah Marazi, Director of the Conference.

“Our youngsters are losing their moral values, spirituality, forgetting their own culture and trying to blindly follow the West, therefore, we need moral education in modern curriculum,” Dr. Marazi added.

People from different religions came together and expressed their views on solidarity, inter-faith dialogue, learning to

live together, to accept each other as human beings and to find common links between religions.

“It is very important in today’s world, where things are falling apart that we tolerate and accept each other,” said Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali, Director General World Institute of Islamic Studies for Dialogue, Gender, Justice and Peace; Mumbai.

A Muslim Scholar from Maulana Azad Urdu University mentioned that there is an immediate need to redesign the syllabus of Madrasas. He said that Madrasas of India were established during the post-Independence era to bring children close to their religion but as the scenario has changed now, so there is a need for reformation of syllabus. Madrasas have to give students who are experts in other subjects as well. He also mentioned that online education portal should be created for higher education to give basic and right knowledge of religion.

Main theme of the conference was based on rethinking of religious education and the need of moral education in our existing curriculum. Scholars from across the globe attended the conference and regardless to their religious backgrounds, they showed their concerns and put forward their expertise regarding new steps that need to be incorporated and inculcated in education system to make it more moral based.

The conference also put forward the views

that modernity has given big challenge to the originality of all the religions around the world, so to sort out this chaos post-modernist and post-colonial scholars have tried to overcome such challenges and in this wake philosophers like Frithjof Schuon, Rene Guenon, Hossein Nasir are trying their best to find a methodology in which religious study can be developed as an academic tool keeping in regard the essence of every religion.

“Today’s society is in chaos; politically, economically, socially and in family matters as well. Everything is breaking away and to sustain we need to go back to the originality of our faiths. In this modern world, everyone wants to get education. When you are going to school, you are studying so many subjects and if those things are not related to your everyday faith of your life then you will always be in confusion. Modernity changed the center of society from faith to reasons. We need to come back to faith. Faith has to become the center of this world,” said Navneet Kaur, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

While hailing this move in the wake of religious studies, Nazar Mohamad Rather, Research Scholar, S. H. Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir said, “This was a great initiative taken by Central University of Kashmir who are assembling people from different faiths and discussing the common concerns of humanity.”



Students awaiting the reopening of Nescafe in University

Mukeet Reshi
Srinagar,

Nescafe gave students quick food options by opening its outlet in the campus of University of Kashmir, but unfavorable circumstances hampered its smooth functioning, the students are eagerly waiting for its doors to reopen and welcome them again with its diverse menu.

Following modern food culture Nescafe became the latest franchise to start its outlet in the university campus. Nescafe provided students with swift food options like Maggi Cuppa noodles, iced tea, cold coffee, etc.

University is the home to many famous

food giants like Shahi Darbar and Mir's Canteen in Naseem Bagh but Nescafe was able to create its space due to its quick service.

"Though there are other outlets in the campus but it's because of its quick service which attracts us towards it," said Shahid Nazir, a PG student of MERC department.

"As the youth is quick and spontaneous they want their food to reflect the same and that's where Nescafe comes into play," said Arshid Khan, a PG student from social work department.

"We catered to a wide variety of people, including students leaving late from the library, university guests and hostellers," said Imtiyaz Ahmed Kumar, head staffer of the café.

The café operated from 9 am in the morning till 9:30 pm in the evening, which was a new concept in Kashmir.

"The response had been excellent and we are trying to restore its functioning as soon as possible," he added further.

"I am eagerly waiting to have its refreshing cardamom tea again along with my comrades inside the calm pentagon," said Afifa Afreen, a student from the Psychology department.

"I visit the café everyday in the lunch break hoping that its doors would be open but I return back disappointed. I want to have coffee again with my friends as I used to," Saima Rashid, a PG student from Islamic studies while feeling nostalgic said.

'Help' foundation holds exhibition in Kashmir University



Taiba Hameed
Sopore

With the aim of empowering women and strengthening the underprivileged section of the society, Help, a local Non-government Organization held an exhibition in the campus of the University of Kashmir.

Help foundation has been working for uplifting women and underprivileged children of the society since 1997 with the core values of selfless service, profound compassion, unquestionable transparency, urgent execution, personal accountability and also brings win-win solutions for the problems of distressed sections of

the society. The foundation imparts skill based trainings with quality education to the needy people.

"So far we have trained 20 thousand women and successfully educated many children living in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir," said Asma Qureshi, one of the founding members of Help.

Help foundation sells hand-made products made by women displayed under the brand name "Shehjar" meaning shade, thereby, reflecting its mission of sheltering distressed people and preparing them for future challenges.

"We provide different skill based trainings to women helping them to live a better life," Asma added.

Students from different departments of the University actively participated and bought things from different stalls thereby showing their support for the cause. Hailing the efforts Asma Nisar, a psychology student said, "Such steps for the betterment of our society are welcomed and I hope that everyone would come forward to play their role in the betterment of our society."

"By organizing events like these we make people aware about the Shehjar brand and, so far, people have received it very well," Asma Qureshi further added.

"The embroidery bag is actually better than the one I bought earlier from market," said Mysara Hassan, a Media Student of the University of Kashmir.

The money that the foundation gets out of these events is directly spent upon the welfare of underprivileged people of the society.



KU introduces diploma in Urdu journalism

Malik Nauman
Srinagar

University of Kashmir has introduced a post-graduate diploma course in Urdu journalism at the Directorate of Distance Education starting from session 2019.

The course has been introduced to provide formal training to aspiring as well as working journalists associated with Urdu news media.

Talking over the need of such a course, Dr. Altaf Anjum, Incharge Course Coordinator and Senior Assistant Professor of the Directorate of Distance Education said, "We have noticed that most of the reporters working for Urdu news media haven't received any formal training in journalism. They lack skills that are expected from professionals."

"We also received requests from Anjuman-e-Urdu Sahafat Jammu and Kashmir, a representative body of working journalists in Urdu news media across the state, for introduction of this course. On account of these, we have decided to introduce a post-graduate

diploma course in Urdu journalism at the Directorate of Distance Education from session 2019-20," Dr Altaf added.

The duration of the course has been set to one year, with two semesters spanning 6 months each. Senior faculty member and former head, Media Education Research Center (MERC), University



of Kashmir, Prof. Nasir Mirza said, "The introduction of this course was the culmination of sustained efforts by various parties to secure the future of Urdu journalism in the state."

Dr. Mushtaq Haider, Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Urdu hailing University's step to introduce such course said,

"Despite having a large circulation, Urdu newspapers are facing a decline in readership because the standard of journalism offered is lower than their English language counterparts."

"I hope this course serves as a corrective and instructs students how journalism should be practiced in Urdu," he added.

However, Dr. Mushtaq also expressed reservations about assigning the course to the Directorate of Distance Education.

"To my knowledge, the Directorate of Distance Education doesn't possess the infrastructure required to properly instruct students in TV and radio journalism, photography and editing. I

fear the course will be limited to mere academics while its practical component might be neglected." He said.

However, when the grievance was brought into the notice of the concerned directorate, Dr. Altaf Anjum said, "The university wouldn't have let us introduce the course if we lacked the necessary infrastructure."

Kashmir university holds cricket tournament

Saifa Amin
Srinagar

A T-20 Cricket tournament started in the University of Kashmir in which 35 teams from Kashmir University's main campus and its other affiliated campuses participated. The Directorate of Physical Education and Sports organized this inter-department cricket tournament for men.

The tournament was played on knock out format. Out of the 35 participating teams, 16 teams progressed forward and entered the second round of the tournament.

The 16 teams were divided into groups A and B respectively. The winner teams from these two groups met in the finals on 16 September. All leading cricketers of Kashmir University participated in the tournament. Sixteen members

out of these 35 teams were selected to represent Kashmir University in the inter University tournament, where they played against the teams of different universities of India.

Talking about the facilities at the



tournament, the captain of MERC Team said, "The ground and pitch is well maintained and the umpires are doing well, giving fair decisions."

"The physical education department also provided necessary equipment to

the teams who needed it," he added.

The organizer of the tournament, Mr. Nadeem Ahmad, who is also the Assistant Director of Physical Education and Sports Department said, "The only reason behind organizing this

tournament is to provide ample opportunities to the students of Kashmir University and enhance their sports skills."

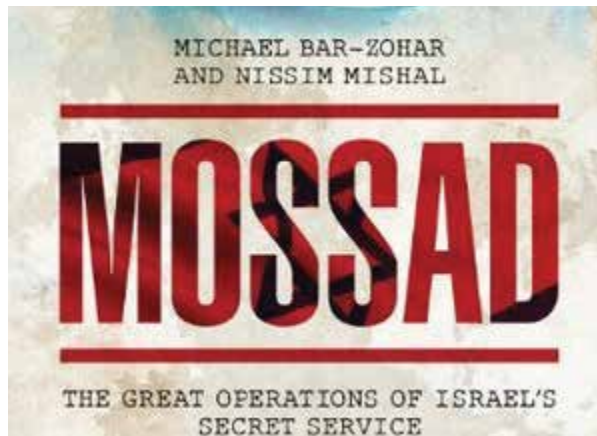
"Tournaments like these have positive impact on students as they are able to come out of their daily routine classes and get to interact with other students. With the help of this move, students get to know about facilities available to them

and most importantly, this tournament provides an opportunity to students to represent Kashmir University at the national level and get acquainted with the outside competition." he further added.



Book review

Mossad: An extensive get through into the operations of Israeli Secret Service



Umer Mukhtar

Mossad, a detailed book of the operations performed by Israeli Secret Service (Mossad), written by Michael Bar Zohar and Nissim Mishal, shares the secretive tactics of the organization which is audacious to take covert feats on foreign lands. The book tries to present a wordily depiction of events that happen during a secret operation and the risks involved with them. The book also covers the strategies employed by the masters of Mossad to the failures encountered by them. The author has successfully made his statements valid by giving a brief description of the happenings concerned with the contents of the book and by giving a detailed account of interviews conducted with prominent people like the former Israeli President and the former Heads of Mossad.

The reader gets comprehensive knowledge about the tools employed by Mossad from renting safe houses for execution or drawing an escape plan for its agents when the trouble seems to be around. Further, the author has also given some historical value to the book as it shares Israel's relations with other countries in the past and also with the militia like Kurds. Some lines contain discussions and meetings of author with former agents and discussing their confidential information. The book is not restrained to reveal events like conduct of operations or the tolls taken by the Mossad but the author has also given a humanistic touch to the book when the most secretive organization puts its efforts together to make Yoselle's (young boy kidnapped by ultra-Orthodox Jews) return possible.

The vast amount of records given by the author promises credibility as it takes its readers behind curtains to see the real truth which was unknown. The happenings during the conduct of secretive operations are supported by interviews from various people who were at the realm of affairs during that time.

Creative corner In conversation with heart

How many times can a same thing break your heart?
As long we love, it would be with us, be our part.
When we love, we need to let things go,
Begin from the start.

Things are temporary as are people,
Why stress and jeopardise peace?
Because everyone is there to hurt you
Their presence or absence shouldn't matter too.

So dearest mad heart! Dwell in eternal secrecy,
Stop desiring for people needlessly,
Stop praying for their come back,
They were never meant to be yours,
Deep down you knew it too.

You offered them elixir,
They welcomed you with venom
You offered them your modest bosom
They walked over it with ruthless spikes

Talk to the paper or the moon
They posses patience, people don't
The moon will remind you of the past,
But wish them to stay happy at last.

Hakeem Farshita

