

Valley witnesses spike in cancer cases

Nusrath Sidiq

In Kashmir healthcare has been a constant let-down inspite of so many government policies and schemes. For cancer suffering patients, the valley is still in need of better facilities and resources.

According to recent studies, Kashmir has witnessed a sharp spurt in the number of cancer cases over the years. This has been a matter of concern for both public and medical fraternity as well. Speaking to Samanbal, Director, Shere-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Dr Showkat Zargar said: “The influx of cancer patients has drastically increased from the last three or four years. From around 2500 patients, nearly 4000 patients are registered at SKIMS every year now.”

“From the last two to three years there has been research advancements which have benefited patients at large,” he said while stressing on the need to have better healthcare and proper medication for the cancer patients.

“I have already sought help from the government to assist us in having medicines on time,” Dr. Zargar added.

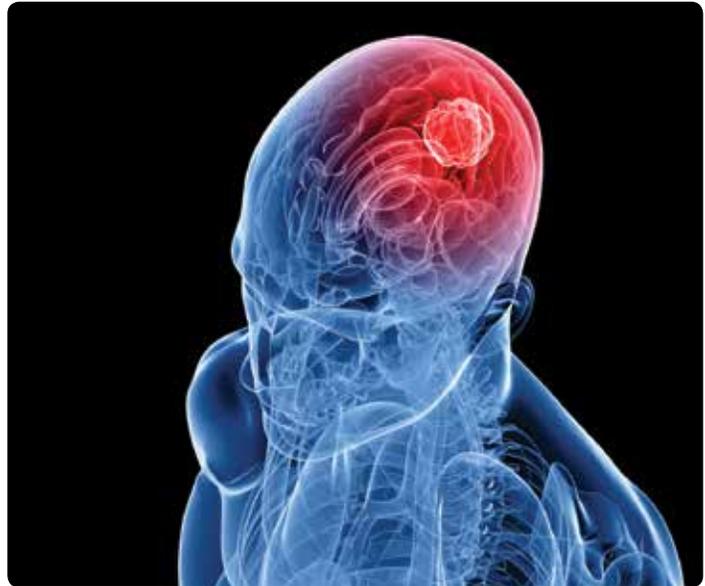
Shaheen’s son has been diagnosed with brain tumor. “It has ruined our life. I want my son to live. He always tells me ‘Mother! I will die’ and it’s like a bullet piercing through my body. This disease has put psychological pressure on him and on our family. He always remains isolated and quiet,” said Shaheena.

“I want to sell my everything to keep him alive.”

Abdul Ahad, a patient from Sopore, was diagnosed with lung cancer last year, but the disease was at preliminary stage, which saved him. “For treatment I went outside the state which costed me nearly 10 lakh rupees but still I cannot live a normal life. I cannot work properly as a precautionary measure which sometimes puts stress on my mind.”

Arif lost his father to cancer. “Life certainly changes

“The influx of cancer patients has drastically increased from the last three or four years. From around 2500 patients, nearly 4000 patients are registered at SKIMS every year now.”



when a doctor says that you have a cancer. Everything is lost there and the only hope is God.”

According to experts, changing lifestyle and use of harmful chemicals has led to increase in the instances of cancer.

“The need of the hour is to spread more awareness camps and hold frequent check-ups to combat this disease at an early stage so that people’s lives could be saved in time.”



From the Chief Editor



The Department of Convergent Journalism organised key technical sessions on the topic 'Journalism for Social Change' with Prof Jyotika Ramaprasad, Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, School of Communication, University of Miami, United States and 'Online journalism' with Professor Martha Mosha from University of Botswana, Africa.

Prof. Jyotika gave a presentation on the role of communication in facilitating social change with examples from her personal experience as a researcher working with HIV positive patients in Uganda. Prof. Martha Mosha gave a detailed presentation on the basics of online journalism while drawing examples from her native country, Botswana. The exercise evoked overwhelming response from the students. The sessions were followed by field visits to prominent media houses where interactions with the editors and reporters took place.

The department of Convergent Journalism is continuously striving to upgrade the department and is in the process of procuring more advanced equipment for audio-visual production unit. Besides, the department is setting up studio where students can put theory into practice in the field of Audio/Sound, Television, Film making and documentary.

The courses in broadcast journalism require commitment, great effort and relentless dedication from both students and Instructors and we really hope that the department will come out with best products.

Happy reading!

Asif Khan

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Azhar dribbles his way to success

Amjed Abbas

Azhar Ali is one of the young promising football players from Kashmir. He currently represents J&K Bank Football Club. Born at Pandrethan in the outskirts of Srinagar, Azhar (26) did his early schooling from SMD (Syed Mustafa Danishgah) Munawarabad and later joined Govt Boys High School, Jawahar Nagar.

He started playing football from an early age and when he turned 9 he was encouraged by his family and friends to play on. Azhar started his football career with a local club Paradise Football Club Pandrethan. His talent soon invited the attention of selectors.

He started as a midfielder but then was made a defender. He also plays in the defensive midfielder position. Azhar joined Maharaja Football club in 2002 where he played for four months. His hard work and skills were noticed by senior selectors. After a successful season with Maharaja Sports, he moved to Food and Supplies team, one of the oldest football clubs in J&K.

He played with zeal and enthusiasm and later on moved to J&K Forest team, which is regarded as one of the best teams of the State. He played for Forest for nine years and further improved his skills.

It proved to be the turning point for his career. Azhar was selected for the J&K 11 team and grabbed the chance to represent his state for the first time. He was a member of Under-19 and Under-21 teams of J&K. With time as he continued to perform better, Azhar was selected to play at the national level. He has played in Santosh trophy, considered as the biggest football league of the India, five times.

Azhar has been adjudged *Best Defender* of the State four times in his career. He has scored 23 goals in his overall career spanning over 15 years.

He played the historic game played between Mohamadan FC



“Government must take necessary steps to build new stadiums or renovate existing infrastructure where the players can be trained by coaches, develop new tactics and where they can further improve their skills.”

Kolkata and J&K-11 at Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar in 2013. The event was witnessed by 35000 people, the highest ever recorded attendance at the stadium. Azhar remembers it as the best game of his life.

He was offered to play for a Kolkata based club, but he rejected the contract. Azhar said he wanted to play for his own State.

In 2014, Azhar signed a contract with J&K Bank football club and continues to play there. Azhar’s favourite club is Real Madrid and his favourite player is Pepe. “I like his skills, approach, speed and tactics while playing in the field,” he says.

Azhar says he was motivated by his father to play football. “He supported me ever since I used to play football. Even though my father was suffering from financial problems when I was nine years of age but still he brought me a new pair of football shoes and a uniform that I carry with me even now wherever I go to play a match.”

Azhar’s dedication to football hampered his education. “It did affect my education. I did not complete my graduation. While choosing football as my career, I was supposed to go for practice every day and that didn’t allow me to attend classes and then I decided to choose only football.”

Regarding sports infrastructure in J&K, Azhar opines: “It is not good in our state. Jammu and Kashmir is blessed with talent whether it is football, cricket or any other sport; the infrastructure is the basic need. I have played football almost in every part of the country; only J&K is lacking behind in infrastructure.”

“Government must take necessary steps to build new stadiums or



renovate existing infrastructure where the players can be trained by coaches, develop new tactics and where they can further improve their skills.”

Azhar says government is trying its bit in promoting sports culture in the valley “by organising tournaments throughout the year and providing funds as well as jobs to players”.

Azhar wants to play for national team and ISL (Indian Super League). “And also I want to open a football academy where I can train, encourage, motivate young talent, who are passionate to play football.”

Official neglect keeps *Baramulla-Babreshi* road in shambles

Peerzada Mansoor

Despite the claims of successive governments, the Baramulla-Babreshi road remains in shambles, much to the inconvenience of people in the area.

The lone 32-km-long link road connects with the famous shrine of Baba Payam-Ud-In Reshi (RA) Babreshi and the world famous tourist destination of Gulmarg and caters to commuters from Kupwara, Handwara, Sopore, Uri and Baramulla.

The road was macadamised around ten years back. “Rains and landslides has damaged the road at several places. The parapet walls also got damaged. This is the only link that connects us with the district headquarters,” said Javid Ahmad, a local resident.

This road passes through many villages including Charadari, Chandoosa, Kalantra, Nambalnar, Chonti Pathri and other adjoining villages of Kandi Baramulla. It is a narrow link road and needs to be widened. At many places the road is without parapet walls making it vulnerable to accidents.



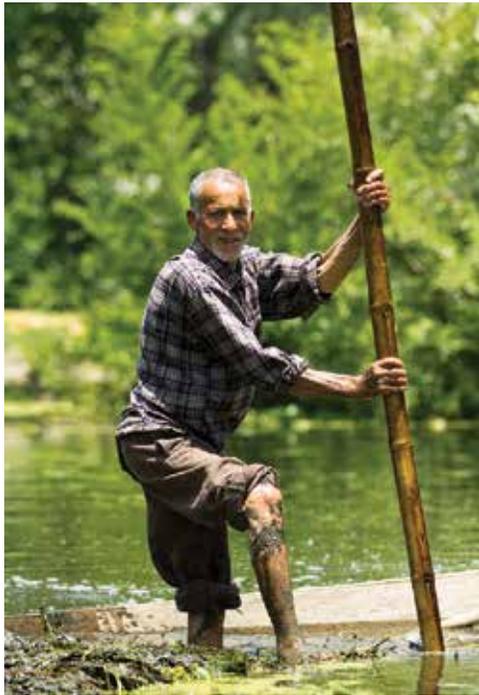
“We were informed by the district administration five years back that the structures falling within 40ft of the proposed road would be demolished and notices were also issued but nothing was done thereafter,” said a group of shopkeepers from Chandoosa area.

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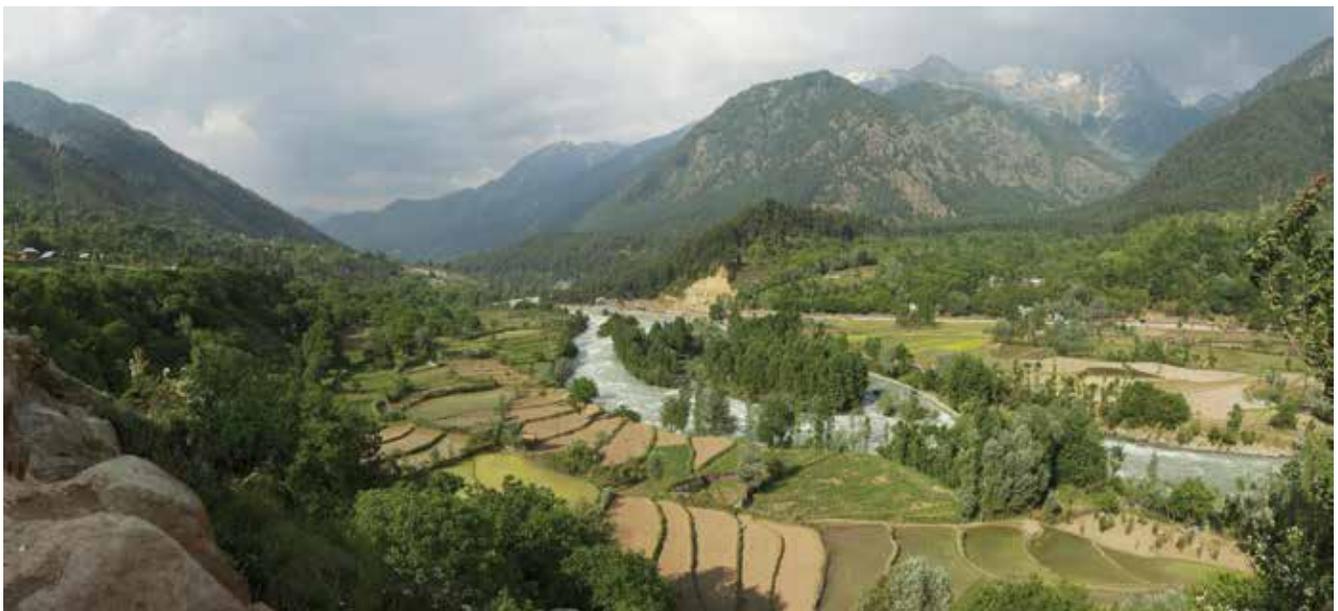
Myriad Hues of Life

From the joy of childhood to the poise of old age to the trail of headlamps, DCJ students catch different moods of life



In the lap of nature

From gleeful kids to graceful birds to mesmerizing landscape, DCJ students capture different frames of life



“We face immense hardships. We are not able to reach schools and colleges in time,” said a group of students from Kalantara. “For us the road has become a source of inconveniences.”

Some people also cited the threat of landslides and land sinking. “The area is prone to landslides and land sinking. The road was damaged at several places and the parapet walls were also washed away by the recent rains. But work has not been started to restore it back,” said a local Ghulam Qadir.

Speaking to Samanbal, Executive Engineer R&B, Division Baramulla, Shabir Ahmad said: “We will look into the matter. If there is a need to widen the roads we will inform the government about the matter.”

“People should approach my office. If there is a dire need. The problem of the road link can be solved as soon as possible,” he added.

MLA Baramulla, Javed Hussain Beig said: “We are planning to upgrade and widen this link road. Babareshi is a pilgrimage site and witnesses huge tourist flow. It connects whole north Kashmir. We have taken the matter with the concerned authorities. I have taken serious note of it. This problem will be solved soon.”

The road connects the far flung areas of Kandi Baramulla with the district headquarters, Beig added.

“It is a very narrow road and hardly any vehicle can pass. Not only this, it is also difficult to drive on this road as it is potted,” said a driver Sageer Ahmad.

“We approached Roads & Buildings department of the state several times, but they did not pay any heed towards the problem,” said Bilal Ahmad, a local resident.

State administration have left us on the mercy of God. It is sheer discrimination with us. We appeal the concerned authorities to look in to the matter and solve the problem for the future, he adds.

Visit to a Govt school serves as an eye-opener

Insha Latief

The consistent dismal performance of government schools in secondary and higher secondary examinations over the years has been a subject of debate and people have been blaming the educational policy of the successive governments.

Some people blame the “irresponsible” teachers while others hold “lack of infrastructure” responsible for the plight of government schools, and many attribute the failure of the education system to both the factors.

This reporter visited one of the schools in Srinagar city and found out how much people are reluctant to send their wards to government-run institutes.

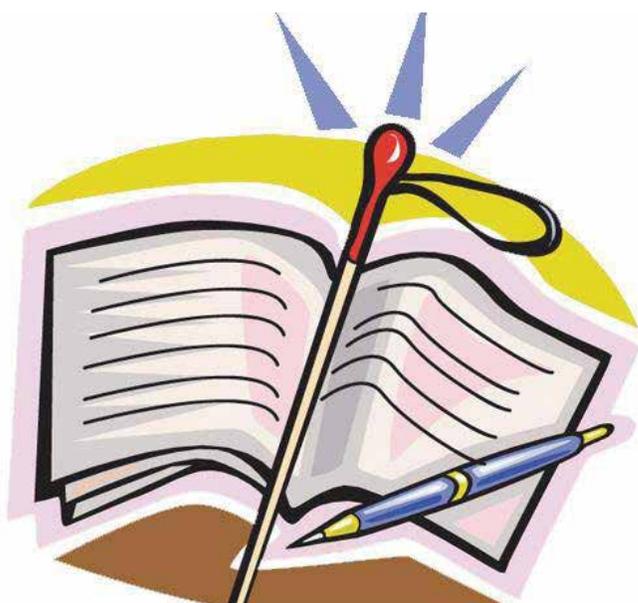
Government Primary English Medium School was established in 2011 under SSA scheme. It has 30 students on roll-from kindergarten to 5th class- taught by two teachers appointed through Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) scheme.

“We have 30 students in total. We have only 1 student in 5th class, none in 4th class. 2 students in 3rd class, 5 students in 2nd class, 12 students in 1st class and 10 students in kindergarten,” one of the teachers said.

Whether it is cold or warm, children have to sit on the floor because there are no seating facilities. There is neither ventilation facility nor any heating facility.

Meanwhile, a cook arrived and opened the window to allow fresh air to enter the class. She spread a sheet in the classroom and untied the bags in which utensils full of rice and curry were placed carefully. The school children in maroon uniform gathered curiously around her to see what new dish they had to relish.

The cook namely Gulshan prepares mid-day meals for the students of the school. Cook works on the monthly pay of Rs 1000 and due to the late release of salary and non-availability of space,



many cooks have left the job. Gulshan prepares the meals at her home and brings to school at lunchtime. "It's so tiresome to cook at home and carry the heavy utensils to school. There must be a separate room where I can cook. If I cook here children may fall ill because of the smoke," she said.

About the decreasing number of students in government schools, one of the teachers, wishing anonymity, said, "People prefer to go to private schools because of their good infrastructure and other facilities. My neighbour works as a painter and recently paid Rs 7000 as admission for his child in a reputed crèche. We too teach students well but it is the government that fails to get people's attention."

"I personally went from home to home to motivate parents to send their kids to this school which was like begging. If any one remains absent for many days I go to that student's home and enquire about his/her absence. This school would have been closed if there would have been no students," said Gulshan.

After the lunch is over, children get some time to play. But since there is no playground, they have to play only indoor games. Some boys could be seen playing with small colourful metallic cars while others struggled to make perfect shapes from clay balls. Girls formed a circle near the teacher's table and sang, "Ring a Ring o' Roses..."

There are two wash-rooms in the lawn, which are used by other tenants. The school students have to use same wash-room where most of the time taps remain dry because of the scarcity of water when local residents switch on water boosters/motors.

Forlorn nomads left to fend for themselves

Suhail Bhat

Jammu and Kashmir is home to a number of nomadic tribes, which are known for their unique customs. However, these communities continue to struggle even for the basic amenities like healthcare and transport facilities as this reporter found out while interacting with some families. Ali Sayeed, 30, a Gujjar from a far-flung Sinder Mandi area of Rajouri district, died last year after critical illness. According to family members, he died because of the non-availability of medicines.

"At that time we were looking to shift him to Srinagar for treatment but unfortunately there was no transport available because of heavy snowfall so we buried him near Pir ki Gali in a graveyard. We would have buried him in our ancestral graveyard but due to bad weather we could not do so," said his mother amid sobs.

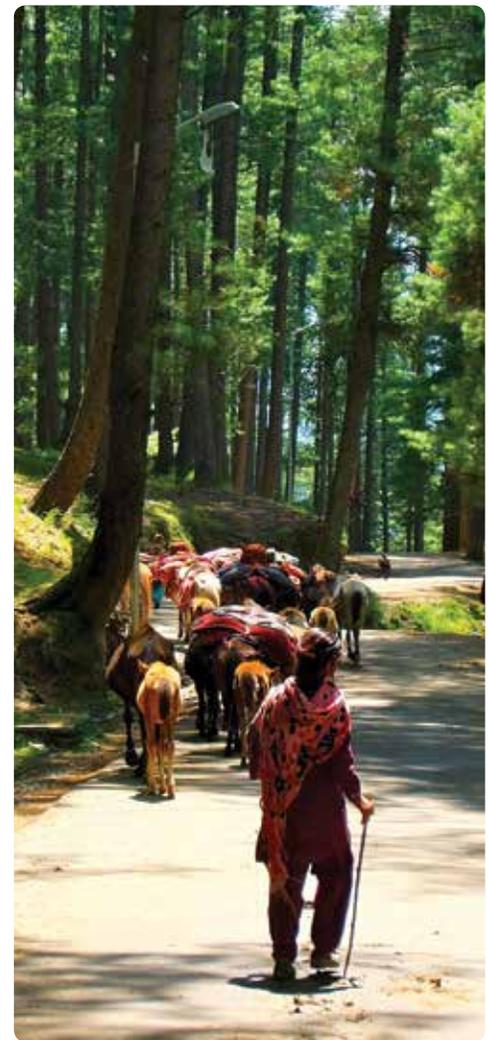
Abdul Qayoom Khan, head of 8-member family, has been working as a shepherd for last four decades. He narrated story of his helplessness when his wife gave birth to their second son on road. "It takes us not less than 40 days to reach the district headquarters of Rajouri," he said. Women and elders ride on horses while the young ones have to cover long distances on foot.

"For us it has become a routine. Our children are the worst victims as they are confined to rearing of cattle," Khan added.

"Government of Jammu and Kashmir had sanctioned mobile schools for the families belonging to Gujjar and Bakerwallas, but these schools are still non-functional," said an angry Bakerwal, Hamid Khan.

"My children help me earn bread for the family. If I send them to school who will take care of my goats?" replied Safeer Khan when asked why doesn't he send his two teenage sons to school.

A nomad teenage girl from the Surander area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, Rafiqqa wants to go to school. "But we don't even have our own house. We are living a life of misery. We feel alienated



from the rest of the world."

Researchers have thronged the hilly countryside to document different aspects of their life include their day-to-day problems.

CUK Events June 2015

CM reviews work on CUK campus



Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed visited the designated campus of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) and took stock of the ongoing work regarding establishment of the varsity.

Minister for Education, Naeem Akhter, CUK officiating Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj uddin Mir, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Asgar Samoon, MLA Ganderbal, Ishfaq Jabbar, MLC, Yasir Reshi, PDP leader, Qazi Muhammad Afzal, CUK Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, Controller of Examinations, Dr. Nazir Ahmad Gilkar, Deans of several Schools, Heads and Coordinators of various Departments, senior police and administrative officials were present on the occasion.

DCJ students interact with experts from US

Department of Convergent Journalism, Central University of Kashmir organised technical-cum-interactive sessions on 'Journalism for Social Change' and 'Online Journalism' for the students of second and fourth semester.



Prof. Jyotika Ramaprasad, Vice-Dean for Graduate Studies & Research, University of Miami and Prof. Martha Moshia of University of Bostwana were the resource persons for the sessions held.

Dean, School of Media Studies, Prof S. Fayyaz hailed the department for facilitating interaction of the resource persons with the students. "We are at a disad-

vantage because of our geographical location and situation so such opportunities of having experts from abroad interact with the students is quite beneficial," said Prof. Fayyaz while thanking the guest resource persons for visiting the department.

Coordinator DCJ, Asif Khan said, "The department always looks forward to facilitate interactions of students with eminent people from the field so that they get to benefit from the experiences of the practitioners."

CUK, Physical Education College Ganderbal celebrate International Yoga Day

The Directorate of Students Welfare (DSW) Central University of Kashmir (CUK) in collaboration with Government College of Physical Education, Ganderbal, celebrated International Yoga Day at varsity's Nowgam Academic block.



The student representatives of both the institutions performed different Yoga Asnas shown by the trainer, Irfan Hussain from the Government College of Physical Education Ganderbal.

CUK officiating Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj uddin, Government College of Physical Education, Principal, Dr. Hartej Singh, DSW Director, Dr. Fayaz A Nikka and faculty members of both the institutions were among others present on the occasion.

CUK V-C inaugurates special interactive session on 'Rajbhasha Hindi'

Prof. Mehraj uddin, officiating Vice-Chancellor Central University of Kashmir (CUK), inaugurated a special interactive session on "Rajbhasha Hindi" at Sonwar Transit campus.

Deputy Director (O.L), Gajraj Singh, Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, Controller of Examinations, Dr. Nazir Ahmad Gilkar, Hindi Adhikari, Sakeena Akhter were among others present on the occasion.