

PEOPLE IGNORE HEALTH ADVISORY, BUY UNSAFE ITEMS

Khalid Khan

Despite the officials and experts warning against the use of items exposed to floods, people could be seen buying contaminated products offered on discount by many shopkeepers in Srinagar city, especially Lal Chowk.

Many traders have put up the flood-affected merchandise for sale attracting the customers who ignore the health hazards involved while buying products including garments, furnishing, shoes and electronic goods on cheaper prices.

The floods left behind a trail of destruction in the summer capital with Lal Chowk being one the worst hit areas.

Flood Aftermath

Manzoor Ahmad, a resident of Anantnag district, could not resist the temptation of buying a few items on cheaper rates.

"I bought those woolen blankets and clothes at a very cheap rate. These items are usually very expensive but this time the shopkeepers are selling them on discount as they were exposed to flood water," Manzoor said.

"I had come here early in the morning to buy various items as the rush of people picks up fast during day time," he added.

Besides the shops and showrooms, some traders have set up makeshift stalls to sell the goods damaged by flood waters.

Many shopkeepers are even selling the products on footpath. "My showroom is not in a state where I can sell furnishing items. I am selling them on discount rates on the footpath," said Ghulam Rasool who owns a shop at Batamaloo.

"We witness a huge rush of customers for the flood exposed items. Before floods my daily sale was around Rs 4000. Now though we are earning double but still we are running in loss as we offer 30%-50% discount on the flood-exposed items. More and more people are buying furnishing items because the prices are very low," he added.

Inayat Dar sells wristwatches at Amira Kadal Bridge. His shop was also submerged in the water like others in area. "I am selling these watches at just Rs20 and Rs30 now as they are exposed to flood water. These watches are not worth to be

sold at original prices. People are attracted by the price. They look for the watches which are still workable and buy them."

"I have suffered losses in lakhs. I cannot send the watches back to dealers. I also don't have any insurance. I hope I will get appropriate financial assistance from the government," Dar added.

Although the cheaper prices are attracting many customers, there are others who are against it.

"I would prefer to buy clothes at higher prices rather than go for those flood affected items. I don't understand what makes people to buy this stuff. On seeing the condition of this market one does not feel like buying even a single thing. These items are flood affected and cause infection," Aqib Nazir, a local resident, said.

"Experts have already warned people about the dangerous consequences of flood affected products, but still people are taking the risk by buying those products," he added.

Experts and officials had initially estimated the losses to the tune of one trillion. The business community claims the losses caused by the flood in Lal Chowk, Regal Chowk, Residency Road, Maisuma, Court road, Koker Bazaar area alone run into several thousand crores.

Altaf Ahmed, who runs a garment shop at Forest Lane, said: "After the flood water receded, the clothes in my shop were ruined by the mud."

"Stock worth billions has been destroyed. The shops are in a bad state. Dirt is yet to be cleaned off the streets. This place looks quite different from what it used to be," Altaf added, referring to the huge losses suffered by the traders.

Like other traders, Altaf expects the government to help the traders restart their businesses.

"Every outlet has suffered losses and there are hundreds of shops in these areas. You can imagine the extent of the damage," said Nazir Altaf, a local businessman.

Most of the businessmen said that they were caught unawares when the river Jhelum breached its banks at several places from Abi-Guzar Bund and the water entered Lal Chowk on September 7.

It was Sunday and most of the shops remain closed as per the local municipal law. Besides, the trading community believed that the government would not allow the commercial hub to get marooned.



From the Chief Editor

I am pleased to present another issue of Samanbal to you. In September 2014, our Valley witnessed one of the worst floods in history caused by torrential rains. Most parts of Srinagar were submerged under water. There was a heavy casualty and loss of property. But as they say, "It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light"; people have braved the onslaught with determination and resilience.

In these testing times, our university teaching, non-teaching staff also proved their character by displaying unity, patience and resolve. The aftermath saw everyone of us cleaning, reviving and of course setting the things right. We were back in action in no time. Ours was in fact one of the first educational institutions in the Valley to start working immediately after floods.

There are many stories to tell. From being homeless to losing everything to floods, people have so much to share. This issue has tried to cover some narratives, news reports, and photographs by our students touching different angles of devastation caused by floods.

Also, the department organized a Media tour to Ladakh in the month of August; an experience of which is shared by one of our outgoing students.

Happy reading!

Warm Regards

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LAYOUT AND DESIGN : Mohammad Younis Zargar
PHOTOS : DCJ
FEEDBACK : asif.khan@cukashmir.ac.in

...AND I WAS HOMELESS

Rifat Mohidin

Till September 7, I had no idea what the word "homeless" really meant till I was one in the city.

On the fateful morning, I was half asleep when the water gushed into our locality (Jawahar Nagar). Like other families in the areas, we had to leave our home in a hurry leaving all our belongings behind. Amid the chaos, I could not decide what to pick and what to leave for the water to wash away.

I assumed that it would be a one-day affair. I thought I will be back in my room where I had left everything unorganized and scattered. I will come back and organize the books which were lying scattered on the shelf of my bed.

It has been almost two months since I left my home, but I feel like it's been decades. I miss my home every moment. I would hardly visit any of my relatives before. I am known for my homesickness, but with floods forcing us to vacate the home I had no excuse to stay back.

No place can ever be like a home. The feeling of being homeless is terrible. You become conscious of being at a different place where you have to behave with etiquettes. It's not like home where you can just be yourself without bothering about the formalities. All these days of homelessness increased my love for my home. I wanted to go there and kiss every wall of every room.

After floods when I visited my home for the first time, all love and longing was gone. I was broken, just like my home. It was no more a home.

The things that made it a home for me were all washed away by the floods. There was void and gloom; our voices echoed and everything smelt dead.

In my room, my childhood photographs and hard-earned by-lines that I had collected during three years of my internship were nowhere. A collage of my by-lines encased in a glass frame, which was hanging on the wall, was broken on the floor with glass scattered all over. The mud had stained my colourful work.

My books were in mud. I could only recognize one book, gifted to me by a friend a year ago "Beloved" by Toni Morrison.

The scenes of devastation at my home still haunt me. I tried to look for the colour of my dresses in the filth but I could hardly find anything in the muck. It was all gone, just a memory left with me now.

The memory became a terrible sight. I wanted to leave the place. With fading colours, it was a hopeless home now.



TWO 'ANGELS' WHO SAVED A VILLAGE

Irfan Rashid

Ghulam Muhammad Sheikh, 50, of Kanihama was busy along with his family to relocate the recently purchased building material and his son was thinking about the ways to save the heaped rice.

“But there was no way out so he (Sheikh) hired one Tata Mobile vehicle and went to Narbal to hire a small boat only with the intention of ferrying out costly material to nearby village along with family members,” says Ghulam Muhammad's wife.

Kanihama was one of the first areas in district Budgam to get submerged in the September floods.

It was very hard to get a boat at that moment as every person wanted a boat for himself and his family. But he somehow convinced one boatman against a handsome amount.

“When I reached the village along with the boat I was called out loudly for help from every window, every house and every lane. I could not resist helping them out at the cost of the costly material and distressed family,” says Ghulam Muhammad.

The irony is that he is hydrophobic.

“Whenever I was in the middle of the water I got frightened but then at the very moment I used to look at the mournful faces of people and that gave me the energy to continue,” remembers Ghulam Muhammad.

Initially there was less flow of flood water, but once the water rose above the ground floor, he was no longer able to ferry out the people and the hope for the village was about to die.

Sheikh is now remembered in the village as “tootah sheikh” a Kashmiri proverb used for intelligence.

At this dire moment, Assadullah Sheikh, 45, came to rescue the rest of people who were still left behind in their homes with the help of Ghulam Muhammad's boat.

He hails from adjoining mohallah.

“I used to take 6 persons in a small boat (punt) with carrying capacity of only 3 to nearby mound spanning half a kanal land,” says Assadullah, adding 300 people stayed on that small piece of land along with dozens of dogs and domestic animals.

It was a very unusual moment for the whole village to spend a full night under open sky along with animals. Next day, there was a rumour in the village that in one of the houses, eight people have died. So Assadullah went to that house which is located on the extreme end of the village.

“I took all of them in the boat and were about to reach the safe point that the boat sunk,” says Assadullah.

Assadullah held on to one baby and with other hand caught hold of a tree branch while others fell in water.

He took people from the mound, which was no way safe as water was rising, to a nearby village called Wengaam, Dangerpora, located 5 kms away.

“I got sores all over my body and particularly my hands and shoulders,” says Assadullah.

He had to make several rounds to and fro to get people out from flooded area to safe zone.

Assadullah rescued his family on the third day only after he had helped hundreds of people.

On the fifth day of the flood army came to rescue and saved rest of the villagers.

Assadullah says he did not take any food for four days of rescue work.

Later he was bedridden for 8 days. There is a long queue outside his house and people come to enquire about his health.

“Assadullah Sahab came to the rescue of people at a time when the administration was absent on ground and boats were missing,” says Altaf Ahmad, a local resident.

“We witnessed how he worked hard day and night along with his friend Ghulam Muhammad to rescue the flood-affected people,” says Altaf. “We are proud of these two angels and their heroic efforts.”



'I DISCOVERED A VOLUNTEER IN ME'

Junaid Rather

Situated on the foothills of mighty Himalayas, the beautiful valley of Kashmir has been struck by the worst ever witnessed floods. The devastating waters of Jhelum, a major tributary of river Sindh flowing into Arabian Sea, turned the valley into a landscape of ruins. From district Pulwama in south Kashmir to Baramulla in North this flood took almost the entire Valley in its ambit. But the worst hit part was the capital city Srinagar.

Srinagar- a city built by Ashoka is a low lying patch of land on the route of river Jhelum. This congested city houses over 20 lakh people who live along either banks of this river.

The recent flood has had a devastating impact on almost every part of this culturally affluent city. The tragedy struck the valley on Sunday, September 7 when the water from Jhelum started breaching the bunds that once stood as barriers.

Soon its waters reached almost every possible corner of the city. The furious water currents even left the outskirts engulfed. Jhelum water washed away hundreds of structures along its route and left thousands stuck in their houses. It was sudden. None could escape.

Like every other Srinagarite, I too suffered a loss- a personal loss. It hit the mosque where I was introduced to the word of my Creator. It washed away the school where I learnt the lessons of life. It devastated the streets where I spent hours of boyhood leisure and sadly, it struck the house where I heard lullabies from my mother. Structures don't exist now but memories do - on swampy walls, in the rubble, on the broken blackboard.

On the fateful day, I left my place to get a few packets of cigarette for the coming days of possible shortage. On my way back home I stumbled upon a plastic white bottle floating on the water. The flood water had just started entering our area. I was taken aback when I opened the bottle. There was a small piece of paper inside which read: "Give us milk for kids or take us to the safer side. We are about to die_ Green Lane Azad Basti."

This SOS was from an area on a walking distance from my house. Azad Basti is a place where I often go for a walk (for smoke) in the evening. God knows how many times I must

have seen the person who had written the chit.

I knew that it was not just the kids of Azad Basti, but the flood had begun to inflict miseries on thousands - young and old. The message in the chit had served its purpose. It had incited the volunteer in me. I joined the brave lot who were rescuing people stuck in their houses and taking food to the needy.



Journey as a volunteer turned out to be an experience for lifetime, a painful one of course. The scenes I witnessed were of gloom and despair. From every corner we could hear women and children crying for help. Those screams still reverberate in my ears. We managed to save a few, provide food to many. Thankfully, I did give milk to many families of Azad Basti.

This rescue operation was quite eventful. At one point of time, we had a close shave.

Along the margins of a narrow street, our boat was sailing through a three storey house as it collapsed producing shock waves in the water. A portion of its debris fell on the boat and it capsized. Death seemed closer than ever. I jumped into the water. As I took my head out of water, I saw dust and dust all around. The house was galloped down by the flood water as if it never existed. For a moment I could see no one from the team I was a part of. I swam to the safer place. That day I realised that the rebellion to learn swimming as a kid was worth every punishment I was given by my parents who were always against it. Thankfully all my teammates also turned out to be good swimmers. We had a close encounter with death. It could not, however, kill my conviction to carry on the courageous operation. I was not the only soul who felt the pain of the people. There were hundreds of brave men from all shades of life from all the parts of valley who took on the rescue work despite all hurdles.

The catastrophic floods have resulted in large scale loss of life and property in Kashmir. According to official estimates, at least 285 people have died and thousands others have been displaced in the floods.

The bigger question is that could Srinagar city have been saved or the damage reduced? There are many theories doing the rounds. Some experts attribute the flooding of the city to the failure of authorities to breach 'Kandizal', an important barrier (bund) to the water of Jhelum located in Pulwama district of south Kashmir. Whenever the water level in Jhelum reaches threatening levels, a section of this barrier is opened to prevent the water from entering Srinagar city. Some local politicians of the areas representing the people living in the flood channels of Pulwama and Srinagar reportedly threatened the officials of Flood and Irrigation Control department not to divert the water of river Jhelum. As the water was not diverted in time, it entered Srinagar city.

STARING AT DEATH

Roushan Elahi

There were no announcements. No speakers blaring the onset of the impending danger. No sirens or alarms. There was just silence broken occasionally by the sound of moving cars. Where are these people heading to at one in the night? My mother asked in a tired voice. I had no answer. The pain in my knee (torn ligaments) had resurfaced after the back breaking work of rolling carpets, sheets, floor mats and other goods during the day.

My mother's knees have grown weaker over the years. The pain she must have been going through is probably beyond my imagination. And all of this was because of our neighborhood's defunct drainage system. The week's incessant rains had made the water swell, submerging our neighborhood and had breached the walls of our house earlier in the evening. And that is what kept us awake all night. Then it all started: the frantic call of a neighbor urging us to leave home. Where would we go at 2 in the night? There was only one place for us to go. And so in the next hour or so we moved everything upstairs on a dirt-filled slab mostly occupied by decade-old unused logs of wood. The day's work was nothing compared to what we were about to do. We took utensils, buckets full of clean water, beddings, blankets, water filter, stove, gas cylinders, rice, clothes, suitcases filled with documents. Everything. We are going to take refuge up here, under the dilapidated roof of our house. The water, if and when it comes, won't reach up here or will it? We laid the mattresses on dirt and pebbles. Under the white light of a portable battery our beating hearts waited. My mind going back to the biggest rainbow I had ever seen just a few hours back. I had thought, deliverance. Now it seemed a distant dream because the nightmare was about to begin. Our neighbors called again, Jhelum is coming. They wanted us to stay awake. After all, a one-storey house wasn't good enough. They were right.

My father's face was swollen because of tooth infection. His other ailments have made him weak. We brought a chair for

him to sit on. And his quiet demeanor while sitting on that chair aggravated my sense of hopelessness. The fear of the unknown. The longing for safety from it. The frustrating wait and the desire for the unknown to put an end to itself. All unceremoniously scratched at the core of my thoughts. Eventually, the sound of the raging Jhelum put an end to it all. 3:30 am and the gushing water finally made its appearance. By 4 am, the cars in the neighborhood with built-in theft alarms went off. Vehemently raising an alarm as if a whole gang of thieves were trying to break them open and carry them away. Headlights and taillights blinked in coherence, allowing us to see the level and the flow of the incoming water. Every five minutes the water level surged. The water pushed open a neighbor's gate and swallowed his car; it's wailing ceased. The wall collapsed. This is what they call a flood. It will stop after it gulps everything down. Right? The Imam of the neighborhood mosque cleared his throat. It's time for the fajr (dawn) Adhan. God is Great, he says. And he breaks down on the loudspeaker, for all to hear. Come to pray, he says in his trembling voice. How? We keep an eye out on the concrete ladder that connects the slab with the ground floor of our house. Ten more steps and the water will reach the slab. That's the backyard. In the front of our house, there was chaos. Darkness had swallowed everything up. And the flood water ferociously competed with it. The grocery shop in front of our house had disappeared in the water. All one could see of it was its tin roof which burst open from the inside, shooting the shop's merchandise into the air.

The crackling sound of the roof had evoked a sense of urgency in my father. He asked me if I can figure out if the government had provided any emergency helpline numbers. I searched Twitter. I gave him five numbers which he dialed from his mobile phone. Busy. All of them. He waited, tried again and again till it was connected. Someone picked up. "Hello? Yes, I'm trapped with my family. Our's is just a one-storey house. Can you please help us? Okay. Okay."



The voice on the other side of the phone gave my father another number. He frantically dialed it. "Asalaam-u-Alaikum! I'm trapped with my family on the slab of my one- floor house. Can you please send help immediately? Yes. I understand. It's my fault. Please. I beg you. What? At dawn? The army? They will come, right? Okay. Okay. Thank you. Thank you so much!"

I asked my mother when will dawn come. In an hour, she replied. In an hour our house would be completely submerged. What good would anybody's help do then? Tears swelled my eyes and trickled down my face. The fear of not being able to save my parents ran deep through my consciousness. What am I supposed to be doing now? The darkness outside. The sound of rushing water. The silence of my mother. My father's grim expression. The hopelessness surrounded me just like the flood water all around. I was staring at my mother's despairing face while I thought of their death.

Till the first speckle of sunlight came, my father had called the number four times. Twice it said help is coming. The last two times it didn't respond. My father lamented. My mother cursed her fate. We waited. Faces started to appear from windows and balconies. Looking on. The water surged on. It had no reason to stop even when it had covered every inch of our neighborhood. All one could see was a brown ocean. You think of stranded people with water

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a feet away from swallowing them. You wonder what the whole world might be doing to save people like you. Simultaneously, you think of the time left before you end up as a floating body.

Out in the distance a military boat appeared. My father screamed at the top of his voice. "Hey! Hello! Here! Help! Help!" Salvation, I thought. Anything to save my family, I retorted to my reluctant conscience. My father kept screaming. The Indian army men were now looking at us. Finally! my family's getting out of here. They come closer in their motor propelled boat. A few more meters and they would take us along with them. My neighbors join the chorus. "Major Sahab, save them, save them!" The Indian soldiers, in their camouflage uniforms look all the same. Six or seven in one boat. Just the one directing them has a hat with a red rim. The only one standing in the boat. Supervising our rescue! Surely three more people won't be a burden! He says something to his subordinates. And they stop rowing the boat. "We will come back for you," the Major said waving his hand. They started turning back. Started the motor and left the scene. My father's screams got louder. I looked on dumbfounded. They were not here for us. My father was quiet now. I ran to the concrete ladder to check where the water was. Two more steps and water would make it's way towards us. What now? I asked my parents. They just looked on. They had nothing to say.

I realized we are on our own. To save our lives, we had to do something, and fast. Determined, I thought of our one and only move. There's now here to go past the ladder in the backyard. No wall to be seen. No support. Nothing. Trapped. In the front of our house, there's only water. Nowhere to go. Trapped. On the right side of our house there's nothing. Just water. Nowhere to go to. Trapped. On the left though, there's hope. Our neighbours call out to us. They want us to get on top of our roof immediately. Impossible. Even if we were able to get on top of it, the roof wouldn't be able to hold our weight. It was dilapidated for a reason. No, stop messing with my plan. I approach my father. We go left. We sit on that roof, it's taller than ours, firmer and stronger than ours, that's where we go. How? My father asked. There's still ten feet of distance between the roof and us. "We use these logs of wood," I reply. My father pondered. That's the only way. Nowhere else to go. Nothing else we can do. My father nodded. Speaking has become difficult for him. The swelling had taken over his jaw. We find a workable ten foot log.

"Two, make it two. No way we can cross over one. If we slip and fall, it's death. We find two. The roof wants us to crawl in order to place the logs in the desired place." We complied. We placed them perfectly. Next, we moved. The water was getting nearer. It waited like a predator, taking sadistic pleasure in our desperation. Five more minutes and it will be flowing over the slab. Catching hold of our feet, dragging us along into it's den. Ten more, and it will flow over the roof, and maybe leaving our bodies up for exhibition. My mother was scared. All of her life's work in making a broken house to function had been destroyed by what she called God's wrath. "What are you waiting for?" I asked her. She replied with tears of despair. "What do we take with us?" She knew we could only take two bags and two suitcases. "In one, a few clothes; in the other, my laptop. The suitcases have the documents. And we move. Now!"

TRYST WITH HERMIT KINGDOM

A trip to Ladakh and an adventure of life time

Hinna Sadaf Khan

It was a hazy morning with a little mist... 5:30 am was the reporting time to reach the Central University campus at Magarmal Bagh, but only four students had turned up on time. By 6'O clock the chit chats got louder among students of Department of Convergent Journalism (DCJ).

The media expedition tour had stirred the excitement among the boys and girls alike. With heaped haversacks and colorful sleeping bags hanging from their shoulders, the students exploded into full blown laughter well before journey. The much-awaited 'super deluxe' bus arrived at around 7 am. The smiles were replaced by sullen expression when the 'super deluxe' turned out to be a mere tag on the rear side of the green SRTC bus.

"Ladakh and in this bus"! I shouted derisively.

But the thrill inside us overcame the discomfort of travelling in a worn out bus.

Our bus driver, an old chap in shabby clothes with protruding belly, signalled everyone to get started. After an hour or so the bus halted at Kangan. We relished hot tea with stuffed parathas at a dhabha (roadside kiosk) before heading for the real Ladakh journey.

'Antakshri' kept everyone awake and on toes and made the journey enjoyable. The picturesque mountains of Sonamarg, cool breeze and green pastures freshened up everyone. The serenity soon turned scary when our bus started climbing the heights of Zojila Pass, known to be the world's third highest route.

We fretted over the narrow, steep roads and sharp curves making us close our eyes at times. We could see the rocks roll down the mountains. But our driver maneuvered the bus with ease and crossed the Zojila with expertise.

The bus driver-cum-guide beckoned us towards Gumri, a battle field of 1948-49, the first village of the region Mattayan, the famous Tiger hills and Drass where temperature plummets to minus 40 degree Celsius.

After a long and tiring day we reached Kargil at 9 PM. Kargil is historically important owing to its strategic location and proximity to the Silk Route. Kachu Guest House welcomed us and made our stay comfortable. We huddled ourselves in blankets and dozed off.

Next morning, we packed our bags and boarded the bus. The bus made way through perilous mountains of Kargil towards Leh. The signboard read '225 KMs to Leh'. The meandering Suru river accompanied us for a while





before disappearing into deep and steep gorges.

After Kargil, as we entered the town called Mulbeik we came across an altogether different civilization. The huge Buddhist Monastery standing tall in the town stands testimony to the dominance of the Buddhist culture.

We travel on the world famous pass known as 'Fotila'. The unique topography captivated our minds; it seemed mammoths were resting on mountain peaks. The landscape of Ladakh mesmerized us all. We all used to jump off our seats on spotting the different colours of mountains; blue, grey, pale and black.

There is so much contrast between Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh...the three regions of J&K; this peculiar topic remains hot among students and our teachers.

Another topic warmed up the conversation; the mystery of the existence of historic Thetys Sea and shifting of tectonic plates and formation of Tibetan Plateau.

The twinkling stars lit up the evening in Leh. We could see the shooting stars falling and the trail they left behind. One could feel being very near to the star-studded sky. Finally we arrived in the town of Gompas- Leh. One could get the feel of Tibet. Infact, it is often referred as 'Little Tibet'.

The 'feel-good' factor at Kalam Guest House made our stay better than expected. The tingling sensation due to chilly weather indicated that winters can be atrocious in Ladakh.

Next morning we all planned to go for sightseeing. The market seemed a perfect blend of traditions and modernity. There was no traffic, so no honking; no hustle bustle, so no worry to hurry up. It augured well for our 9- day stay.

The colorful ornaments and stone jewelry caught our attention. Even a non-shopaholic person feels the urge to shop. Leh market is a place for everyone. It is full of bright yellow apricots, sapphire colored raisins, green veggies, pale butter and special varieties of kernels.

The marketplaces are usually dominated by men, but on the streets of Leh, there are no patriarchal distinctions. In Ladakh, women folk take active part in every sphere of life, including commerce.

We got to see an unusual mingling of communities. We spotted Israelites with English people, Mongolians with blacks and so on. The inhabitants donned traditional attire 'Guncha'.

We climbed up the hillock to visit the Japanese Stupa- Shanti Stupa. Some of us felt breathless but our feet kept trudging up to visit the master piece. The mosaic of miniatures and striking white colour of Stupa adorns the hillock. The fun frolicking students got into museum 'Hall of Fame' and its adjacent adventure park near Spituk. From a distance it looks like a military base camp with tanks and armaments.

Being in Ladakh is like revisiting the history. There are many places which make you feel nostalgic like Shey mosque, which is believed to have served as the resting place of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA). Shey is known as the ancient capital of Ladakh. Just above the mosque on a hillock there is a beautiful Gompa known as Thikshy.

The journey to Pangong Lake flared up the adrenaline rush further. As the bus started to ascend the Changla pass; second highest pass in the world, the acrophobia started aggravating.

It was the adventure of life time when we peeped out through the broken window of our bus. This time it beat all records of steep and narrow roads. All of a sudden, there was an eerie silence punctuated by sighs. Another bout of anxiety crept in when three girls felt breathless due to low oxygen levels. Somehow, we made it to world's largest lake- Pangong Lake. Its turquoise blue waters greeted us. It was a treat to see the sea in a desert (Ladakh is also known as 'cold desert').

We ventured out to the hot springs of Chumathang as well. The boiling water mixes with the cold Sindh water and leaves one flabbergast where this boiling water oozes out.

The more we explored Ladakh the more we wondered about its mysteries.

The last and tenth day added spice to our tour. Our coordinator surprised us by organizing bonfire and a cultural night. The night as well as the tour culminated with fun, laughter, and above all expedition.



EVENTS



CUK EC meeting held

The 14th Meeting of the Executive Council of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) was held at its Sonwar Transit Campus on November 11.

Various issues concerning the University administration, academia and campus development were discussed in the meeting and number of decisions were taken on the occasion. The members passed the draft regulation for the conduct of the first convocation of the University, approved research degree ordinances and also adopted modifications to the cadre recruitment rules of non-teaching employees.

The Council also nominated persons on the Search Committee for selection of new Vice-Chancellor for the University. The services of 13 faculty members and 17 employees in the administration were also confirmed. The Annual Report 2013-2014 and Annual Account 2013-2014 of the University were also presented during the meeting.

The meeting was chaired by CUK officiating Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj-ud-Din and attended by the EC members including noted documentary film maker and Television presenter, Siddharth Kak, former Vice-Chancellor Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Prof Siddiq Wahid, Ex-JKPSC Member, M MBhat, Director IIM Jammu, Dr. Ram Vishwakarma, (through video conferencing), Dean School of Languages, Prof. M Aslam, Dean School of Management, Dr. Abdul Gani, Head of the Department Tourism Studies, Prof. S Fayyaz, Registrar CUK, Prof. M AfzalZargar and Controller of Examinations, Dr. Nazir A Gilkar.



Workshop on news channel operations

Department of Convergent Journalism, Central University of Kashmir organized a one-day workshop on 'News Channel Operations' on October 18 for the students of third semester. Senior journalist, Zaffar Iqbal, who is currently working with NDTV for its Srinagar bureau, was the resource person for the workshop.

The topics discussed included electronic news gathering (ENG), writing pitches, Piece to Camera, voxes, modulation, TV writing, OB operations, feedback, product control room, input and output desks. The students received participation certificates at the end of the workshop.



Workshop on print media

The Department of Convergent Journalism (DCJ) conducted a one-day workshop on 'Newspaper organization: Hierarchy and roles' on November 15. Senior Editor, Greater Kashmir, Arshad Hussain Kaloo was the Resource Person for the workshop. During the workshop, he delved on various topics including structure of news organizations, role of editors and ethical dilemmas facing the journalists.



Fee concession to flood-hit students

Central University of Kashmir (CUK) officiating Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj-ud-Din has constituted a panel to explore the possibility to review the semester examination fee of those students whose families had been hit by recent floods in Jammu and Kashmir.

The university having received several applications from the students of different departments, for waiver of fees discussed the matter on November 13 in a meeting of VC with the class representatives of various departments at CUK's academic block at Nowgam. The officiating Vice-Chancellor asked the committee to come up with the recommendations urgently so that it can be placed before appropriate bodies for immediate relief.



Symposium on National Education Day

Department of Education organized a symposium "Moulana Azad-Life, Works and Contribution to Educational Thought and Practice" to commemorate the birth anniversary of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, also referred to as National Education Day, on November 11. As many as 26 students from various departments participated in the symposium.