



P7 STATE

5TH CRAFT SAFARI TRAVERSES DOWNTOWN

Recognised as the UNESCO's Creative City in the field of Craft and Folk Art, Srinagar today witnessed the fifth craft Safari. The Safari Started from Ranawari and included a team of the officers from the Handicrafts and Handloom

P5 THINK

TOXIC, TORTUROUS, TREACHEROUS: INSIDE KASHMIR'S WRONGED WEDLOCK

When Sumaiya first held her baby she had never imagined that she would be all alone, sitting on a hospital bed with a newborn in her arms and loneliness around. Even though the maternity ward in a government hospital where she gave birth



P7 STATE

MERCURY PLUMMETS AFTER RAINS LASH PLAINS

Rains lashed plains in Jammu and Kashmir, bringing drop in day temperature on Tuesday. A meteorological department official said that Srinagar, the summer capital



Quote!
It always seems impossible until it's done
-Nelson Mandela

Kashmiri Students Caught In Ukraine War Walk Home

49 Students Reach Moldova, Romania Amid Gunfire; Air Raids



Zaid Bin Shabir

SRINAGAR: As the Government of India's Operation Ganga—to evacuate stranded students—in Ukraine comes under sharp focus, many Kashmiri students have managed to leave the turbulent country for

Moldova & Romania on their own, apparently without any official support. Pertinently, three different groups of 49 Kashmiri students have managed to crossover into Moldova and Romania, after being caught up in the middle of air raids

and fierce fighting in Kharkiv, Somy, Kyiv and Odessa cities. On February 28, these 15 Kashmiri students were all ready to leave for Moldova before their trust was cut short by an unpredictable round of blasts. This was a final call for these young **More on P6**

6 YOU KNOW, THE EMBASSY HAS LITERALLY done nothing for us. There were no buses for us. We had to catch a cab for Moldova on our own. The world should know how we managed to reach Moldova. We have no money and no help was forthcoming."

616 Indians Return From Ukraine On 3 IndiGo, Air India Express Flights

Three evacuation flights from Romania's capital Bucharest and Hungary's capital Budapest came to India on Tuesday with 616 Indian nationals who were stranded in Ukraine due to the Russian military offensive, officials said. On Tuesday, two flights were operated by IndiGo while one service was operated by Tata Group-owned Air India Express. India began the evacuation of its citizens from Ukraine's

western neighbours such as Romania and Hungary on February 26. Private Indian carriers have brought back 2,012 Indian nationals in nine special flights till now. Air India Express operated the Bucharest-Mumbai flight via Kuwait with 182 Indian nationals. IndiGo operated Budapest-Delhi flight via Istanbul with 216 Indian nationals. India's largest carrier also operated Bucharest-Delhi service via Istanbul with **More on P6**

NEWS DIGEST

Commercial LPG Prices Hiked By Rs 105

NEW DELHI: The price of commercial LPG, used by hotels and other commercial establishments, was on Tuesday hiked by Rs 105 to its second-highest level but rates of subsidised gas sold to households remained on freeze. **More on P6**

Militant Associate Held In Sanat Nagar

SRINAGAR: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a militant associate of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Sanat Nagar area of the city outskirts. A top police officer told GNS that a militant was arrested along with ten magazines of **More on P6**

Tractor Crushes 2 Brothers To Death

SRINAGAR: Two brothers were killed on Tuesday when a tractor ran over them in central Kashmir's Budgam district. 19-year-old Sajid Ahmad Dar and his younger brother Abrar were critically injured on Tuesday afternoon when a tractor ran over them at Sama Mohallah **More on P6**

Army Hands Over Pck Youth To Police

WArmy on Tuesday handed over a Pakistan-controlled-Kashmir resident, apprehended by it along Line of Control in Poonch district, to police. An army official said that the person, namely Dilshan son of Mohammad Sayeed, a resident of Hajira, was taken for questioning after **More on P6**

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Work On Transit Accommodations For KP Employees In Full Swing: Govt

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration is working for speedy completion of transit accommodations for migrant employees in the valley, an official of the Relief and Rehabilitation Department said on Tuesday. Around 920 kanal (115 acres) of land has been identified and transferred to the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR) at 19 locations for construction of transit accommodations in Kashmir. The prime minister's

package for Kashmiri migrants announced in 2008 has two major components. One is provision of 6,000 jobs for youths and the other is provision of 6000 accommodation units for employees. Over 4,000 migrant employees have already been selected and appointed in different departments and over 1,000 odd units have been completed.

"The administration of Jammu and Kashmir is expeditiously working towards speedy completion of transit accommodations so that they are made available to migrant employees," the official said. He said that **More on P6**

Me'raj-e-Alam Celebrated With Religious Fervor

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Despite rains and cold conditions, thousands of devotees on Tuesday thronged shrines and mosques across Kashmir Valley to offer special prayers on the occasion of Me'raj-e-Aalam.

According to reports, the biggest congregation on Me'raj-e-Aalam, (the night of ascent) when the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) ascended to the heavens, was held at the Hazratbal shrine where thousands of devotees both men and women converged to have a glimpse of the sacred relic of the Prophet five-time during the day.

Notably, Muslims every year celebrate on 27th of Rajab (Hijri calendar), the Isra and Me'raj, the two parts of a Night



An elderly man holds his skull caps in supplication as the head cleric (not in the picture) displays a relic believed to be from the beard of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) at the Hazratbal Shrine on Me'raj-e-Alam on Tuesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Journey that prophet took during a single night around the year 621. Within Islam it signifies a physical journey. During Me'raj, the command

for five daily prayers (Nimaz) was also given to the Prophet of Islam. Local administration had made special arrangements and traffic was **More on P6**

India, Pak Meet To Discuss Water Treaty

Press Council Of India

ISLAMABAD: A 10-member Indian delegation has arrived in Pakistan for the annual meeting of the Permanent Commission on Indus Waters (PCIW) and the two sides will discuss among other topics arrangements about flood flow information during the current season and finalise future programmes, meetings and inspections.

The delegation, headed by the Indian Commissioner for Indus Waters, arrived here via Wagah border on Monday to attend the annual PCIW meeting being organised by the office of Pakistan's Commissioner for Indus Waters under obligations of the Indus Water Treaty-1960, the Dawn newspaper reported. **More on P6**

Traffic Resumes On Kashmir Highway



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu-Srinagar national highway was opened for traffic Tuesday after a day-long closure owing to a massive landslide in Udhampur district, officials said. While light motor vehicles were allowed from both sides

of the highway this morning, heavy vehicles were moving only from Srinagar to Jammu. Road clearance operation in the landslide-hit area was underway. Explosives were used to blast boulders which had completely blocked the highway at Dewal near Samroli on Monday.

Cylinder Blast Injures 2 Kids, 9 Others At MCCH Anantnag

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: At least 11 people, including two children were injured on Tuesday after a gas leak triggered a cylinder blast at the Maternity and Child Care Hospital (MCCH) in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. According to officials, the cylinder exploded on Tuesday afternoon at the ticketing counter at MCCH Anantnag, leaving as many as 11 people, including two minors, 6 attendants and 3 employees injured.

All the injured, the officials said, were removed to the Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag for treatment. The condition of all the injured is stable. The injured have been identified as Fayaz Nazir of

Malknag and Sahil Raina of Bijbehara (both employees), Muhammad Abbas of Srigufwara, Sahil Khaliq of Warwan, Bittu Singh of Palpora Kulgam, Juniad Ahmed of Kokarnag, Zakir Tariq of Kachwan, Manan Javaid of Malknag, Rehana Farooq of DK Pora and mother-daughter duo Bilkesa Akhtar and Ruby Manzoor, both residents of DK Pora Anantnag. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr Piyush Singla has ordered a probe into the incident by an ADC level officer and has also asked them to submit the report within 7 days, an official spokesman said. Singla, he said, also announced that the government will bear medical expenses of the injured.

J&K Logs 55 Fresh Covid-19 Cases

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported 55 fresh Covid-19 cases even as there was no death due to the virus in the last 24 hours, officials said on Tuesday.

They said 29 of the fresh cases were reported from Jammu Division and 26 from Kashmir Division, taking the overall tally to 453052. Giving district wise details, the officials said Srinagar reported 17 cases, Baramulla 3, Budgam 0, Pulwama 0, Kupwara 4, Anantnag 0, Bandipora 2, Ganderbal 0, Kulgam 0, Shopian 0, Jammu 23, Udhampur 1, Rajouri 0, Doda 0, Kathua 2, Samba 1, Kishtwar 0, Poonch 1, Ramban 0 and Reasi 1. There was no death reported in the last 24 hours, they said. So far 4748 persons have succumbed to the virus—2325 in Jammu and 2423 in Kashmir. Besides, they said, **More on P6**

GoI Picks Darakshan Andrabi To Head Waqf Board

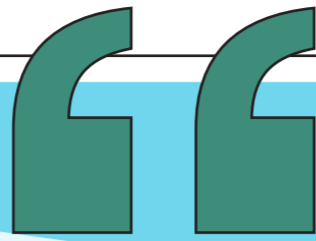
4 More Members Appointed To Maintain Religious Assets Of Muslims In J&K

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Nearly two-and-a-half years after reorganization of the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir, the Government of India has nominated five persons from diverse backgrounds as members of the Waqf Board for J&K Union Territory. In a significant step towards the constitution of the Waqf Board in Jammu & Kashmir, the Union Minority Affairs Ministry has appointed five persons as members of the body entrusted with maintenance of religious properties



of Muslims in UT. According to a notification, Dr. Darakshan Andrabi has been appointed as chairperson of the Board. The notification states that Andrabi has been appointed under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 14 of The Waqf Act-1995. According to the notification, Syed Muhammad Hussain has **More on P6**



THE BEHAVIOUR OF HER HUSBAND STARTED TO DRASTICALLY change toward her. He started to misbehave with her. Sumaiya did everything in her power to make the marriage work for six years and she would have done it for the rest of her life if her husband hadn't left eight months pregnant Sumaiya all alone in that rented apartment

Toxic, Torturous, Treacherous

Inside Kashmir's Wronged Wedlock

Tabia Masoodi, Al Mista Masoom

WHEN Sumaiya first held her baby she had never imagined that she would be all alone, sitting on a hospital bed with a newborn in her arms and loneliness around.

Even though the maternity ward in a government hospital where she gave birth was bustling with the contrasting sounds of crying babies and their happy relatives, Sumaiya was staring into space, lost in her thoughts trying to comprehend the uncertainties that her future holds.

The new mother was jolted back into reality when her baby cried, only to be lost again. This time she raised a flurry of questions in a comatose state: "Why are marriages in our society so uncertain and turn into unending torture, especially for women? Why can't husbands divorce their wives without causing them harm and keeping them hanging?"

Sumaiya had fallen in love with her college-mate Usmaan and to her joy, he reciprocated her feelings. They were inseparable in college.

"Like any love story, ours was also made of promises and dreams," says Sumaiya, with moist eyes. "I dreamt of a happily ever after."

After settling their respective careers, they wanted to get married but to their dismay Usmaan's parents refused stating that she does not match their financial status.

Sumaiya's family was also not in favour because they had two daughters to marry off before her. They feared it would cause a hindrance in finding a match for them and society would question their decision.

But the lovers left no stone unturned to make their parents understand. From cajolery to heated discussions, they did everything but it was all in vain.

"When our parents didn't agree we were left with just one option," says Sumaiya, with a pang of guilt in her tone. And that option was to elope and marry against the wishes of their parents.

Sumaiya started her new life in a rented apartment far away from everyone she once held dear. In the initial days of her marriage, everything seemed close to perfect and Sumaiya couldn't ask for more until one day everything started to disintegrate.

The behaviour of her husband started to drastically change toward her. He started to misbehave with her. Sumaiya did everything in her power to make the marriage work for six years and she would have done it for the rest of her life if her husband hadn't left eight months pregnant Sumaiya all alone in that rented apartment.

"My husband never wanted a child and forced me to abort the first two times. But the third time when I resisted he left me," says Sumaiya. "He threatened me the first two times that if I didn't do as told he would refuse to accept me as his wife."

Perplexed with the situation, Sumaiya decided to take legal help. She appointed a lawyer and sought his advice on the further course of action. The lawyer advised her to deliver the child and afterwards they would file a case for maintenance of the child.

"When her baby was six months old we filed a case," said Irshad Ahmad, her lawyer. "But Usmaan denied that Sumaiya was his wife."

Sumaiya and her lawyer moved to another court and filed a civil suit to prove that she was Usmaan's wife and the baby's father.

"Whenever there is a matrimonial dispute, children suffer a lot. In this case, particularly Usmaan denied that he was the child's father and as much emotional damage it caused, there are other implications as well. For instance, the child needs a domicile certificate, only a father can provide that," says advocate Irshad.

Seven years of uncertainty, frustration and anger later, Sumaiya was finally delivered justice.

"When I first went to a lawyer I was eight months pregnant and when the case settled my child was eight years old. It is a lot to process and handle," says tearful Sumaiya.



Illustration: Getty Images

Even though the uncertainty ended in Sumaiya's case, it's not true for every matrimonial dispute.

Arfa has been in an uncertain marriage for more than four decades and it is still continuing.

In the first year of her marriage, she had this instinct that her husband Mushtaq

shame, I had another reason to stay in this marriage," says Arfa. "After the incident, a month later or so, he apologised and wanted to take me home. So, I thought he had changed. But nothing ever changed."

After Arfa went home, things were better on and off. And in this course of time,

The uncertainty in the Arfa's household raised three disturbed individuals. All the children are married now and managing to build a stable family except the youngest daughter.

While the elder two got a chance to escape physically from the traumatic situation because of their higher studies, the

“WHENEVER THERE IS A MATRIMONIAL DISPUTE, CHILDREN suffer a lot. In this case, particularly Usmaan denied that he was the child's father and as much emotional damage it caused, there are other implications as well. For instance, the child needs a domicile certificate, only a father can provide that,”

was cheating on her. And not long before the instinct was proven right.

Like many nights Arfa was once waiting for her husband to come home. It was almost midnight and there was still no sight of him. As the clock ticked 12, Arfa stood up from her couch and left

she delivered her first child. Mushtaq was not only a careless husband but was also a negligent father.

"I had accepted my fate that my marriage is in shambles and will remain so but he was the same with our three children as well," recounts Arfa in a dejected

youngest daughter lived with her mother and was continuously witnessing the situation. Due to this she developed trust issues and carried them with her into her own marriage.

However, to her relief, her husband proved to be supportive and under-



Illustration: Getty Images

in search of her husband. Following her hunch, she reached exactly the place and found her husband with another woman in her house.

Even though Arfa always had a doubt witnessing the incident shook her to the core. Heartbroken, she left the place and went straight to her mother's home. "My sister came at 1 in the night with a deathly pale face creating a gloomy environment in the household," says Irfan, Arfa's youngest brother.

Arfa could not comprehend the situation and was perplexed in taking any decision. Due to societal pressure and the common notion that it would bring shame to her and her family, Arfa did not ask for a divorce.

"With all the reasons of society and

voice. Mushtaq never for once took the responsibility of his children and provided for them. The entire responsibility fell on Arfa's shoulders. The only relief at the point was that she was a government employee and was able to manage all the responsibilities but the unstable lifestyle took a toll on her children. They had to constantly move in and out of their home. With that came shouting, fights and unending ache and longing for a place that could provide them with constant comfort.

"With everything that our mother did for us, it is highly appreciable, but it would have been better if she had taken a firm stand and left that man," says Shu-gufta, Arfa's eldest daughter.

standing. He helped her to see the other side of the coin.

"When children are not rehabilitated they take the insecurities and emotional trauma into their own marriages," says Wasim Kakroo, consultant psychologist, centre for mental health services. "The cycle of abuse continues."

Mushtaq and Arfa are now grandparents but the uncertainties and disputes are still unresolved between them.

Marriage is considered a fundamental unit of any society and Kashmir is no exception. But in lakhs of successful marriages, a few thousands are unsuccessful as well.

"Maerthi kaednam (I will only leave my husband's place after death)," says Heena. Heena has been married for over ten

years now and these ten years have been nothing but a living hell for her. But she still holds a belief that a woman is nothing without her husband.

From physical to verbal abuse and humiliation she has been continuously suffering. Even though her family has been telling her to end her suffering, she is herself reluctant stating that her children need their father and her position will be reduced in society.

"I know it's a dead-end and he will never change but I don't see any other way for me. It is easy for everyone to talk," expresses Heena. "As foolish as it sounds, there is always a hope though."

At the beginning of her marriage, everything seemed dreamy but just within a few months, Heena's husband Altaf started to behave indifferently. Heena at first did not understand the cause behind this indifference. But then someone from her in-laws told her that he wanted to marry someone else and is still in contact with her. Hearing this, Heena was shattered.

"I just cannot understand why he married me then," asks Heena. "What was the need of this suffering and ruining my life?"

Heena gathered some courage to confront her husband and asked him if he was cheating on her. But Altaf denied any such allegations. He was furious.

Heena poured her heart in front of her family and told them about everything that has been happening to her. But she did not let them take any step fearing that he might divorce her.

"We want to confront him and his family but she never lets us," says Rukaiya, Heena's elder sister.

Due to the stressful situation, Heena even lost her child. She miscarried her first child. In all this, one thing has always remained consistent — Heena never for once left her husband's place, no matter how many atrocities she faced there.

Living with Altaf was never a paradise for Heena. The constant stress lurking in her life has endangered the lives of her children. After losing her first baby, she first delivered a baby boy and then a baby girl. But Heena's both babies were born premature and had a very less chance of survival.

"I've always been alone in my problems," she says. "Altaf has never provided me with support as a partner."

In the last ten years of her marriage, whenever she has felt ill, her husband was never there to take care of her. "Altaf has never taken care of my sister. He has always left her to die," says Heena's sister. "He never provided her with medication and a proper living."

Mental health specialist, Wasim Kakroo talks about the children raised under the shadow of bad marriages.

Just providing physical comfort is not enough for a child to grow, he says. "If children have seen the dispute between the parents for years it becomes a part of their personality. These children can develop Borderline personality disorder. If the dispute has been continuing for years and the children are too young it is counted as an adverse childhood experience. It is emotional abuse."

In a day, Wasim provide consultation to at least ten patients and among these five to six have emotional disorders whose roots can be traced back to the disturbing childhood due to the matrimonial disputes.

"There needs an acceptance in the society that such happenings lead to a life-long trauma and emotional abuse and it needs medical help," says Kakroo.

Today, while Arfa's and Heena's children have to live with this disturbing situation, Sumaiya's story differs a bit in this aspect.

After getting divorce, she never imagined that she would have to fight for her son's rights too.

"I had to again file the maintenance case over my son's father," says Sumaiya.

"But it didn't stop there. For the sake of my child, I was forced to file another case on that man when he denied access to all those necessary documents which a father needs to provide for their children. It feels like I have spent half of my life in court seeking justice for myself and my son. Unfortunately, I was part of marriage made in hell and suffered severe consequences for it."

Caringly yours



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