

CLIMATE CHANGE FORCES LADAKH Nomads To Rethink Pashmina Wool Production



Agencies

For centuries the Changpa have tended the shaggy goats that provide silky-soft, super-expensive pashmina wool. But now many are rethinking their way of life, in part because of climate change.

Winters have become harsher and summers drier for the semi-nomadic people living 5,000 metres (16,400 feet) up in the Changtang region straddling northern India and Tibet.

This and other factors have pushed many on the inhospitable plateau to abandon their traditions and migrate to villages and cities in the Ladakh region in search of alternative sources of income.

Pashmina, a highly coveted cashmere wool, comes from the fine undercoat of a breed of Himalayan goat found in India, Nepal, Tibet and Central Asia.

But the pashmina from Changtang is seen by purists as the best. For this exceptionally warm, light and fine fibre, the animals need the particular climatic conditions of the Changpa's homeland.

"During the period June to September we live in the camp inside tents but during the winter

we have to shift to Korzok village because the weather gets too cold," said Sonam Yangzom, 55.

"We will have to build a house in the camp because living in the tents is getting too cold," she told AFP, her face weather-beaten after a lifetime in Changtang.

Shopkeeper Irfan Goruu, 31, said there were sometimes shortages of pashmina because of the changing weather.

"If the nomads of Ladakh do not produce it then nobody will... so this industry will finish," he told AFP.

ActionAid International activist Harjeet Singh said northern India is at the forefront of the ravages of climate change, suffering more droughts, floods and cyclones.

"These impacts are driving migration. People are leaving their homes. And we have seen that their livelihoods change, their patterns of life change," the 43-year-old told AFP.

"Right now at the international level, we talk much more about the economic impacts of climate change. But gradually people are realising that we need to look also at the social, cultural and environmental impacts such as the loss of culture, loss of language, loss of territory and loss of biodiversity."

How To Stick To Healthy Food Resolutions

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For many of us, January is all about giving things up: Maybe we're going to stop eating meat and embrace a plant-based diet. Or we're ready to kick excess sugar to the curb after a holiday season awash in sweets. Or we're committed to avoiding fast food.

Starting the year with noble goals for eating well is a modern rite of passage. But it's just as common to ditch those grand plans within a few weeks.

This year, how can we do it right? If we're pledging to make better food choices, which strategies can help us stick with them?

START SMALL

The consensus among experts is clear: It's tempting to begin with dramatic gestures, but the key to lasting change is setting goals that are small enough we won't scrap them by Valentine's Day.

Manageable, measurable goals can create long-term change, says Leila Azarbad, associate professor of psychology at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois. When people set lofty goals, they can get discouraged after a couple weeks.

"Our self-efficacy, that belief in our own ability, tanks," she says. "And that's a huge predictor: If you don't feel confident in your ability to make the change, you're going to discontinue trying."

Picture this, says Dana White, a sports dietitian and clinical associate professor at Quinnipiac University: You want to lose 20 pounds and you know that every afternoon you visit the office vending machine for a snack to boost your energy. So, begin packing a healthy afternoon snack — not something punitive, but something healthier that you'll enjoy



— and have that instead of a vending machine candy bar.

It's a measurable, specific change that won't be unpleasant. And if it eliminates 200 calories, that shift will make a difference over the coming weeks and months. Once that new behavior is in place, you can add another small but meaningful change.

The same thinking works if you're eliminating animal products: Rather than going cold turkey (cold tofu?), begin by replacing one dinner per week with a vegetarian meal. Plan it for a night when you won't be rushed and can make an appealing recipe, or budget for going out once a week to a vegetarian restaurant.

Then track that change for three weeks, says Anna Baker, assistant professor of psychology at Bucknell University, who researches the connection between behavioral factors such as self-management and health outcomes.

"You hear that it takes 21 days to create a habit. There's debate about whether it's 21 exactly, but you need a certain amount of time of continuing to do

something before it becomes a habit," Baker says. "Once you do kind of get used to that change and you're doing it regularly, then you can add in another thing."

If you make that one good shift for three weeks, congratulate yourself. Then maintain that behavior and add another small change, like drinking more water.

It's tempting to try making a half-dozen changes all at once, White says. But by focusing on individual, small, unhealthy behaviors and "really identifying what the triggers are that lead to those behaviors," she says, people "can have a tremendous amount of success without torturing themselves."

BE PATIENT

If your goal is to lose 20 pounds, for example, it really will take four or five months — and it should, says Alex Montoye, assistant professor of clinical exercise physiology at Alma College in Alma, Michigan.

Losing a pound a week is "really the maximum sustainable weight loss," Montoye says. Much as it surprises people, "2 pounds a week is pretty extreme."

So aim to lose 5 pounds over the next six weeks through small behavioral shifts, and measure your behavior along the way. Apps and fitness trackers can help, as can a notebook where you list what you've eaten.

Researchers have found "that we are notoriously bad at estimating how many calories we're taking in," Azarbad says. "We tend to underestimate what we're eating, because we forget. When we're cooking, we taste the pasta sauce a few times and those are calories. Or we walk past our colleague's desk and they had a jar of M&M's and we took a few, but those add up. That can be the difference between you losing a pound a week and you not."

DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF

Accept that mistakes are a normal part of building a new habit. If you know an event is coming up where you'll want to divert from your eating goals, accept that you may slip a bit then.

Aim for "consistency, not perfection," says Baker. "You have to plan in advance that you're going to screw up. We're not perfect."

ENLIST FRIENDS

Lastly, "tell everybody you know that you're doing this because social support is huge," Azarbad says.

"If you're going out to eat and they know you're trying to change your diet, they can help choose a restaurant that will accommodate you," she says.

And the need to save face may keep you on track.

"Once you put it out there on social media and you tell everybody that 'I'm going to do this. I'm going to lose 10 pounds by spring break,'" you feel that people are watching, Azarbad says. "We don't want other people to see us fail."

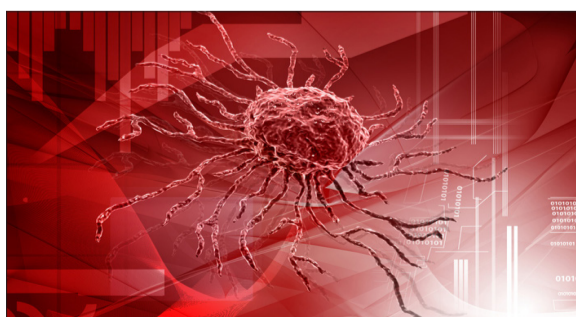
First Pain Treatment Using Human Stem Cells Developed

Press Trust Of India

Scientists have developed the first treatment for pain using human stem cells, which provides lasting relief in mice in a single treatment, without side effects. If the treatment is successful in humans, it could be a major breakthrough in the development of new non-opioid, and non-addictive pain management, the researchers said.

"Nerve injury can lead to devastating neuropathic pain and for the majority of patients there are no effective therapies," said Greg Neely, an associate professor at the University of Sydney in Australia.

"This breakthrough means for some of these patients, we could make pain-killing transplants from their own cells, and the cells can then reverse the underlying cause of pain,"



Neely said in a statement.

The study, published in the journal Pain, used human induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) derived from bone marrow to make pain-killing cells in the lab.

The iPSCs are cells which can develop into many different cell types in the body during early life, and growth.

The researchers then put the cells into the spinal cord of mice with serious neuropathic pain, caused by damage or disease af-

fecting the nervous system.

"Remarkably, the stem-cell neurons promoted lasting pain relief without side effects," said study co-author Leslie Caron.

"It means transplant therapy could be an effective and long-lasting treatment for neuropathic pain. It is very exciting," Caron said.

Because the researchers can pick where to put the pain-killing neurons, they can target only the parts of the body that are in pain.

Early Response To Poor Mental Health Can Save Children From School Exclusion

Agencies

A new study suggests that a child with mental health issues needs attention from primary school days. Then the chances of feeling excluded decreases noticeably.

The study was published in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. It shares that prompt reaction can help child patients with mental difficulties and save them from feeling excluded.

The University of Exeter led research was initially funded by a doctoral studentship from the NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care South West Peninsula, found gender differences in the relationship between mental health and exclusion.

The study used data from

the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), which included assessing children's mental health at a set range of ages from three to 16 years old.

Boys who entered the school with poor mental health are at high risk of exclusion in primary school, which prompt assessment and intervention may prevent. There were too few girls excluded at this early stage in their school career to be sure if they also had poor mental health prior to school entry.

Girls who were excluded in their final year of school experienced deteriorating mental health difficulties afterwards. Teenage boys excluded at this time demonstrated worse mental health than their peers but did not seem to struggle more afterwards.

Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the

meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: Narotam Sekhsaria Scholarship Programme 2020

Description: Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation, Mumbai has announced this scholarship for Indian students who wish to pursue a postgraduate programme at top-ranking institutions. The scholarship is aimed at offering interest-free PG loan to the students with a high academic record.

Eligibility: Indian students who are less than 30 years of age, who have completed graduation from recognized Indian university/institute and have been accepted into the top ranking educational institutions to pursue postgraduate studies from Fall 2020, can apply for this scholarship.

Prizes & Rewards: Interest-free PG loans to pursue postgraduate studies at top Indian institutions and abroad.

Last Date to Apply: 12-03-2020

Application mode: Apply online



Scholarship Name 2: Teach for India Fellowship 2020

Description: Teach for India, a non-profit organisation has announced this scholarship for the young students of universities and workplaces to serve as a full-time teacher to the wards of the family having lower income. The main objective behind this fellowship is to make young generation feel the grassroots realities of India's education so that they share their knowledge, skills, and mindsets to the underprivileged children, thus building educational equity in the country.

Eligibility: Students holding a graduation degree who are studying in a college or are working youth, experienced professionals and entrepreneurs can apply for this scholarship.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected candidates will get INR 20,412 per month and additional benefits.

Last Date to Apply: 01-03-2020

Application mode: Apply online

Scholarship Name 3: Inlaks Scholarships 2020

Description: Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation has announced this scholarship for young students to study a full-time Masters, M.Phil or a Doctorate program at top-rated European, American, and UK institutions. Selected students will get full tuition fees, adequate living expenses and one-way travel allowance and a health allowance.

Eligibility: Indian citizens studying in India for the past 6 months who holds a first-class degree or equivalent from a recognized university/institution in India and is not more than 30 years of age can apply for this scholarship.

Prizes & Rewards: The selected students will get USD 1,00,000 that covers full tuition fees, adequate living expenses and one-way travel allowance and health allowance for the selected candidates.

Last Date to Apply: 31-03-2020

Application mode: Apply online