

## In war-torn Yemen, zoo animals stare at an uncertain future

YEMEN: Yemen's war makes life a daily struggle for millions of civilians, but creatures in the country's neglected zoos, including lions, leopards and baboons also face an uncertain future.

At the country's main zoo in Sanaa, the capital seized in 2014 by the Iran-backed Huthi militias who control much of the north, a man unloaded one of a dozen dead donkeys trucked in each day to feed 31 resident lions.

Lion keeper Amin al-Majdi said some animals, including four lions that perished in 2017, have already starved to death.

"We import meat from all provinces of the country, but we are struggling with this because of the increase in the price of donkeys," he said. "We used to slaughter three or four donkeys for six lions, now with 31 we have to slaughter 10 to 12 donkeys."

Like the rest of the country, where millions



have been driven to the brink of famine after five years of conflict, the zoo's 1,159 animals, which include two critically endangered Arabian leopards, are at risk.

Among those fighting on behalf of the animals is Kim-Michelle Broderick, founder of One World Actors Animal Rescues, which raises funds to keep Yemen's zoo creatures alive. Of the country's three main zoos, the one in Sanaa is in better condition than others in the cities of Taez and Ibb, she said, but added all are in poor condition.

"The public authorities are destitute because of the war," she said. "The animals are underfed or hardly fed, or not fed at all in the case of Ibb zoo." With the help of coordinators on the ground, the organisation conducts rescues across Yemen, she said, distributes emergency food and water, and provides basic veterinary treatment to horses, other farm animals and strays.

The lions in Sanaa zoo look relatively healthy compared to big cats in other regional zoos, where emaciated animals have elicited outrage. A team of international wildlife conservationists recently flew to the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, to examine four starving and sick lions at a zoo where a lioness died earlier this month.

But Sanaa zoo authorities said they are struggling to feed their animals, with rampant inflation making supplies expensive, and the number of visitors plummeting since the war broke out.



## Horticulture Policy For JK Soon: Govt

SRINAGAR: With an aim to boost economy and upgrading horticulture infrastructure, Secretary, Agriculture Production and Horticulture Department, Manzoor Ahmad Lone today said that Jammu and Kashmir would soon have its own Horticulture Policy to tackle upcoming marketing challenges and increase the production manifold.

"Jammu and Kashmir Government will come up with its own Horticulture Policy, which will be focusing to increase production and tackling climate change, given the unique temperature of this place," said Secretary, Agriculture Production and Horticulture Departments, Manzoor Ahmad Lone, while holding public grievance camp here.

"The policy has been drafted and it has gone for the comments to all the stakeholders. We are hopeful that we will soon have our own policy, which will be focusing on boosting economy and upgrading horticulture infrastructure," Lone informed.

The proposed policy would suggest appropriate technological interventions human resource development to meet the national nutrition requirements, international competition and safeguard the interest of growers and increase in their income.

"Horticulture sector plays

an important role in any region and contributes significantly to the region's economy. In Jammu and Kashmir Horticulture is a source of livelihood for 33 lakh population. About seven lakh families are directly or indirectly involved and depend on the Horticulture sector," he informed.

He said that Horticulture sector also provides jobs to other related trades such as fertilizer, pesticides, Agriculture machinery, traders and processing of fruits, etc.

He said that the Department of Horticulture Planning and Marketing provides timely market feedback and guide the fruit growers in marketing, handling of post-harvest operation/activities in order to face the market challenges.

"Horticulture development is one of the core areas and a number of programmes are being implemented, resulting in the generation of higher incomes in the rural areas, thereby improving the quality of life in villages," he said.

"The growth of horticulture sector can be attributed to various initiatives taken by the Government including introduction of improved varieties, mechanization, establishment of fruit mandies, Technological support, awareness research and exten-

sion programmes," he said.

Lone said Government was taking every possible step to discourage mono-cropping across Jammu and Kashmir, saying that it doesn't serve any purpose and growers and farmers too don't get economically elevated and motivated to sustain in the sector. "I believe that we should discourage this mono-cropping as much as we can but at the same time we should provide some incentives to the farming fraternity," he said.

He said that Government was also encouraging local entrepreneurs to establish their own nurseries. "Currently we have nearly 400 nurseries and National Horticulture Board has accredited 78 nurseries and the process continues in this regard," he said.

Lone said that the variety of horticultural products of Jammu and Kashmir has earned worldwide fame because of its good quality and taste. The fruit crops grown in the state are apple, almonds, walnuts, pears, cherries and apricots in temperate areas and mango, citrus, litchi, papaya, guava etc. in subtropical areas. Saffron cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir is unique in the world.

Lone informed that over the decades, the growth graph of Horticulture sector in Jammu

and Kashmir has shown a tremendous spike with 10000 metric tons of production in 1950 to 25 lakh metric tons of production in 2020.

"We have still not reached to the optimal level. Government is working on every front to make this sector highly vibrant and self-sustaining for the farmers and growers," he said.

He said that Policy will help the Government harness the horticulture potential. The committee will study how country's GDP and economic rate will be after 30 years and whether we will be able to meet up the consumption level of the country, if no, what measures need to be taken."

"This Policy would give us a way forward as to how we can aim at increasing horticulture revenue from current Rs 8000 to Rs 50000 crore a year," he said, adding "The farmers will be educated on regular basis and they will be cultivating crops all the scientific research which will create impetus whenever we have to face any international competition," he said.

Director Agriculture, Altaf Andrabi, Director Horticulture, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat, among other senior officers departments were present during day-long public hearing camp.

### SHORT TAKES

#### PLVs imparted training to facilitate under-trial prisoners

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has taken a unique initiative to provide free and speedy online access to the case status to the under-trial prisoners.

To achieve this goal, the e-Court Staff of each District Court has imparted training to the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) engaged in the Legal Aid Clinics and also to the convicts identified by the jail authorities.

PLVs facilitate the under-trial prisoners to get online information of their respective cases pending in different Courts, without waiting for physical visit of their kith and kin to the Jail for getting to know the status of their respective cases.

As many as 26 Para Legal Volunteers and 32 convicts from 12 districts and 14 Jails/ Sub-Jails have been trained so far.

#### Commissioner SMC interacts with officials

SRINAGAR: Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Gazanfar Ali today chaired a meeting of SMC Officials to take first hand appraisal of the works of the corporation. The meeting was attended by senior officers of the corporation including ward officers. During the course of meeting Commissioner was briefed about the functions of SMC including granting of building permissions, issuance of birth and death certificates and other works.

On the occasion, Commissioner SMC, directed the officers to provide hassle free services to the public in a time bound and transparent manner. He directed the officers to issue building permissions within the stipulated time frames.

Regarding sanitation, he directed officials to improve and upgrade overall Sanitation in the city and repair the street lights where ever required.

Later, the officials of the corporation informed him about various issues being faced by the employees and sought his intervention in this regard. The Commissioner assured them that their issues will be addressed on priority.

#### EXPIRED BEVERAGES:

#### Food Business Operators asked to return stock to suppliers within 7-days

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 7: The Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety, Srinagar has asked all the Food Business Operators of the district, who are in possession of expired beverages including carbonated water and juices, to return such stock to the concerned suppliers under an intimation to his office within seven days.

After this date, Food Business Operator found in possession of expired beverages will be dealt with stringently under the provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act.

## Focus on development, public outreach and economy: LG to DC's

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu on Friday asked the District Magistrates (District Development Commissioners) of Kashmir Divisions for concerted efforts public outreach and public service.

The Lt Governor was chairing a meeting of District Magistrates at SKICC Srinagar which was also attended by Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan; Chief Secretary, BVR Subrahmanyam and Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmed Khan.

The Lt Governor asked the District Magistrates to pay special attention to community empowerment and called for institutional arrangements for resolving the issues and concerns of under-privileged sections. Underlying the need for resolving the local issues faced by the people, he asked the officers for making extraordinary efforts on various fronts. He called for greater emphasis not only on developmental projects but also social and economic fronts.

The Lt Governor called for active and responsible participation of lo-



cal democratic institutions including Block Development Councils and Panchayats in development process. He emphasized that with empowerment of local bodies there is an added responsibility and accountability on part of grassroots institutions to strengthen the local developmental scenario and making best use of resources made available.

The District Magistrates of border districts were directed to achieve 100% coverage of all the beneficiary and welfare oriented schemes in border villages for which resources will be made

available as per requirement. He also asked for construction of bunkers to cover all the households in the border villages. He directed the DMs for conducting audit of hospitals in their respective districts and projects the requirements for providing best healthcare and diagnostic facilities in rural areas.

The Lt Governor asked the District Magistrates for attending the issues related to law enforcement in the districts and submitting a monthly report on the law and order scenario in the districts.

Earlier, Chief Secretary, BVR Subrahmanyam asked the District

Magistrates for periodic review of rural development schemes and involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions; focused attention on Jal Jeevan Mission, relief disbursement, Kisan Credit Cards, schemes for farmers, universal coverage of beneficiaries under pension schemes, scholarships, efforts to eliminate the use of single use plastic, industrial development, ICDS and educational institutions.

District Magistrates of Srinagar, Pulwama, Kupwara, Shopian, Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam, Kulgam, Bandipore and Ganderbal were present in the meeting.

## China virus crisis deepens as whistleblower doctor dies

BEIJING: An ophthalmologist who first blew the whistle on the coronavirus, and was punished for doing so, died from the virus on Friday. The death triggered an outpouring of grief and anger at the authorities in China.

The coronavirus outbreak has now killed more than 630 people and infected at least 31,000 people worldwide.

Li Wenliang, 34, died early Friday, the Wuhan Central Hospital said in a post on China's Weibo platform. The announcement brought forth grief on social media over a doctor is seen as a national hero and anger over the government's handling of the crisis.

"He is a hero who warned others with his life," a fellow Wuhan doctor wrote on Weibo.

"Those fat officials who live on public money, may you die from a snow-storm," wrote another angry Weibo user in a comment that has since been censored.

The coronavirus disease has spread across China, prompting the government to lock down cities of tens of millions of people, while global panic has risen as more than 240 cases have emerged in two dozen countries.

A quarantined cruise ship in Japan now has 61 confirmed cases.

Chinese president Xi Jinping and U.S. president Donald Trump, whose countries have tussled over trade and human rights, spoke on the phone about the health emergency on Friday.

Xi urged "the U.S. side to respond reasonably to the novel coronavirus outbreak", according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Li's death highlights the enormous risks that frontline doctors have taken to treat patients in overwhelmed and under-equipped hospitals in Wuhan, the quarantined city of 11 million people where the virus emerged in December.

Medical staff are overstretched and lack sufficient protective gear, the deputy governor of Hubei province admitted Thursday.

Li sent out a message about the new coronavirus to colleagues on Decem-

ber 30 in Wuhan -- the central city at the epicentre of the crisis -- but was later among eight whistleblowers summoned by police for 'rumour-mongering'.

He later contracted the disease while treating a patient. Censors appeared to struggle with how to deal with his death.

State-run newspaper Global Times and state broadcaster CCTV first reported on Weibo that Li had died late Thursday, only to delete their posts after the death rapidly surged to be among the top topics on the popular platform.

The World Health Organization re-

and surrounding cities have been ordered to stay home, while several countries have banned arrivals from China and advised their citizens to leave.

Major airlines have suspended flights to and from the country. But cases keep emerging.

Two cruise ships carrying thousands of holidaymakers in Hong Kong and Japan have been placed under quarantine as authorities test people for infections.

On Friday another 41 people tested positive aboard the Diamond Princess in Japan, bringing the total number of infected cases on the ship to 61.



## H&ME Deptt orders addition in list of free drugs, diagnostics to be available in Govt hospitals

JAMMU: The Health and Medical Education Department today ordered an addition in the list of Drugs and Diagnostics being provided free of cost to the patients in Government Hospitals, Sub-Centre and Primary Health Centres. A list of 15 drugs and 9 diagnostic services shall be made available at PHC Level.

This would be another initiative of the department towards ensuring quality and affordable health care services to its citizens with minimal out of pocket expenses.

The Lieutenant Governor administration is keen in strength-



ening the health care facilities in all government hospitals with emphasis on grass root level health institutions so that health care is available at the remotest possible

areas of the UT with minimal referral of patients to tertiary care institutions.

The free diagnostics thus incorporated included Urine Dip-

stick in Sub Center besides Rapid Syphilis Test, HIV Serology Rapid Test, Typhoid Serology, Hepatitis Test Basic HBSAG, Liver Function Test, Blood Urea, Creatinine, Lipid Profile and Stool Test.

Similarly, free drugs hereby incorporated included Enalapril, Metamorphine, Glimperide, Telmestatine, Salbutanol, Ibuprofen and Fluconazol and Pheytoin Sodium tablets Albendazole and Metronidazole Benzorate Oral syrup, Gentamycin and Dexamethasone injections, Xylo-metazoline Nasal drops, Wax Solvent Ear Drops and Liquid Paraffin.