

Preterm babies can acquire their immune system



LONDON : Babies who born prematurely can rapidly acquire some adult immune functions after birth, equivalent to that achieved by infants born at term, according to a new study.

For the findings, published in the journal Nature Communications, the research team followed babies born before 32 weeks gestation to identify different immune cell populations, the state of these populations, their ability to produce mediators, and how these features changed post-natally.

They also took stool samples and analysed to see which bacteria were present.

"The data highlight that the majority of immune development takes place after birth and, as such, even those babies born very prematurely have the ability to develop a normal immune system," said study researcher Deena Gibbons, Professor at King's College London in the UK.

During the research, they found that all the infants' immune profiles progressed in a similar direction as they aged, regardless of the number of weeks of gestation at birth.

Babies born at the earliest gestations - before 28 weeks - made a greater degree of movement over a similar time period to those born at later gestation.

This suggests that preterm and term infants converge in a similar time frame, and immune development in all babies follows a set path after birth.

According to the researchers, infection and infection-related complications are significant causes of death following preterm birth.

Despite this, there is limited understanding of the development of the immune system in babies born prematurely, and how this development can be influenced by the environment post birth.

Some preterm babies who went on to develop infection showed reduced CXCL8-producing T cells at birth, the study found.

This suggests that infants at risk of infection and complications in the first few months of their life could be identified shortly after birth, which may lead to improved outcomes.

There were limited differences driven by sex which suggests that the few identified may play a role in the observations that preterm male infants often experience poorer outcomes.

"We are continuing to study the role of the CXCL8-producing T cell and how it can be activated to help babies fight infection. We also want to take a closer look at other immune functions that change during infection to help improve outcomes for this vulnerable group," Gibbons added.

Nurse found dead in Srinagar, police starts investigation

SRINAGAR: A Nursing student was found dead at her rented house in Soura area of Srinagar outskirts.

Police sources told Kashmir News Trust that a nursing student (name withheld) from South Kashmir's Dooru area, who was studying at a private college here in Srinagar was found dead at her rented accommodation.

A police official said that prima facie, it seems a natural death, however, they have registered a case for investigation.

Meanwhile, a biker died on spot on Srinagar-Baramulla road after an unknown speedy car hit him. The victim was identified as Adil Ahmed Bhat, a resident of Auroora Baramulla.

Police have registered a case and set investigation into motion.



Garbage Dumping At Jhelum Banks Goes Unabated, Authorities In Slumber

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The river Jhelum has been turned into a waste dump with people frequently throwing the garbage into it at various places. As per sources, the shopkeepers and vendors at different places are openly dumping their garbage into the banks of Jhelum, exposing government's tall claims of stringent policy to keep valley clean. "The authorities have failed to protect the water bodies from getting polluted from waste products thrown into the banks of river Jhelum either by the people or by the shopkeepers," a local Faizan Ahmad of saffron town Pampore said.

Ahmad said aquatic life is at risk owing to water pollution by accumulation of garbage at the river banks. "Lethargic approach of government is directly responsible for not taking this issue seriously," he said.

Behind valley's lone tertiary maternity hospital Lala-Ded hospital, there is an open outlet through which liquid waste and other filth flows into Jhelum while as at Amira Kadal the vendors and shopkeepers throw the waste into the Jhelum.

The officials at the helm of affairs also acknowledged that the river is in "poor condition" and a large part of it has been encroached and polluted. To save river Jhelum and kept it safe from human interference, an official from Geology and Mining department suggested that there is a need to restore the catchment AREAS OF THE RIVER AND GO FOR THE "SCIENTIFIC dredging of sand and soil from the river."

"The ruthless extraction of sand and soil has affected the river. There should be a proper plan for the stabilization of the river. The river is our lifeline

and is used for irrigation purposes for horticulture and agriculture and is important for tourism flow," he said.

A Tehsildar posted in south Kashmir told Kashmir News Trust that polythene flow was a serious issue that poses threat to the river.

"Department is routinely conducting drives. On the other hand urbanisation is increasing and garbage disposal has become an issue. Now we have used some cluster approach to deal with it," said tehsildar who did not wish to be named. Environmental experts said that the catchment areas of the river should not be disturbed and construction should be prohibited to avoid any human interference. "The dredging of Jhelum is important. Other than beautifying some part of its embankments in Srinagar city, the administration has mostly failed to save Jhelum from en-

croachments, pollutants and other solid waste," he said.

From Sangam to Pantha chowk the river flows through residential areas of villages and towns and at several places it is seen that the liquid waste and other filth is flowing into the river.

The Government in its recent Economic Survey Report has also expressed concern over the deteriorating condition of river Jhelum. The rivers and ground waters as per report are continuously polluted by untreated effluents and sewerage.

In 2019, the high court also directed the divisional commissioner Kashmir to ensure that no solid waste is dumped in river Jhelum. The court directed the divisional commissioner to file by next date of hearing a compliance report attesting no solid waste is dumped into the river, from its source up to Baramulla. (KNT)

Coronavirus: Social media users spreading hate and misinformation warned in Leh

Observer News Service

LEH: District Administration Leh here in Ladakh has issued a stern warning to those who are propagating misinformation about the spread of Coronavirus and trying to hurt the sentiments of a particular religious community.

District Development Commissioner, Leh, Sachin Kumar according to Kashmir News Trust has issued a formal order asking social media users not to twist facts about the spread of Coronavirus and desist from hurting the people belonging to a particular religion.

"It is reported that some people on WhatsApp and facebook are forwarding messages that has a potential to disturb peace in the region. Only Group Admins should forward the messages and if anybody is found propagating misinformation, the group admins will be held responsible," the order reads.

From past couple of days, users on WhatsApp are urging government to stop entry of those people in Ladakh, who have restored from foreign countries. The users were



seen targeting a particular community.

District Development Commissioner, Leh though the order has warned people of severe consequences and asked them desist from spreading abhorrence and hate.

Pertinently, earlier, the police in the newly formed Union territory

of Ladakh had urged the admins running whatsapp App groups to register themselves at the police stations in the twin districts of Leh and Kargil.

"These days people are using social media as a means of instigating by circulating texts and audio, video clips for their self interest and personal gain, which creates

an ambience of hatred and fear amongst the people.

"It is implored on the general public of the district to bring into the notice of police any such misuse of social media for a timely action. As such activity on social media platform is liable to punitive action under various provisions of the law." (KNT)

KU VC Prof. Talat Ahmad delivers lecture at UGC-HRDC

SRINAGAR: Vice-Chancellor, University of Kashmir Prof. Talat Ahmad delivered a lecture on "Rise of the Himalayan Mountains and Climate Proxies" at UGC-Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC) of the University of Kashmir during the ongoing 84th General Orientation Course that is being attended by 40 Assistant Professors of various colleges and universities of J&K.

Prof. Talat Ahmad dwelled at length upon how the Himalayas came into being and how they are impacting the climate change.

In his lecture, he deliberated upon plate tectonic framework and the probability of earthquakes in the Indian subcontinent in general and Kashmir Himalayas in particular. Prof. Talat Ahmad threw light upon how the earth's climate has been moderated within limits through geological time and why has earth been cooling over the past 50 million years when the plate movements have not actually accelerated.

Prof. Talat Ahmad emphasized that humans cannot control nature, therefore, there should be no unnecessary fiddling with the nature. He also discussed climatic-tectonic feedback and its impact on precipitation in detail.

The lecture was followed by a question-answer session during which participants of the course asked several questions related to the plate tectonics, Kashmir Himalayas, environment, climate change, earthquakes and other disasters.

In his welcome address, Director, HRDC, Prof. Shabir Ahmad Bhat stated that orientation programmes are focussed at developing competencies among the faculty, making the teaching-learning process more result-oriented, developing strategies for enhancing quality and thereby improving the entire education system. He reiterated that the topics for the course are meticulously chosen considering the latest developments in the higher education sector and eminent personalities from academia and other fields are invited for an interaction with the participants.

Coordinator, UGC-HRDC and Course Coordinator, 84th GOC, Dr. Mohammad Ishaq Geer while conducting the proceedings of the session elaborated upon the importance of such lectures that establish interlinkages of the education with environment and climate change.

He thanked the Vice-Chancellor for sparing time out of his busy schedule for interacting with the participants of the 84th Orientation Course. (GNS)

Facebook testing cross-posting stories on Instagram

SAN FRANCISCO: Social media giant Facebook is testing a new feature that would allow Facebook Stories to be cross-posted to Instagram Stories, TechCrunch reported on Tuesday.

Currently, Instagram Stories can be shared to Facebook Stories, but the reverse is not possible. The feature comes as Facebook continues to integrate Instagram with the rest of its services.

According to a Facebook spokesperson the company is now formally testing the cross-posting feature to make it easier to share moments with the people who matter to the user, as people might have different audiences and followers on Facebook versus Instagram. Facebook will continue to explore options for simplifying and improving how Stories work across its apps. The new option would allow Stories to be shared interchangeably from one platform to another. The screenshot of the Facebook-to-Instagram cross-posting feature was posted by Jane Manchun Wong, who regularly discovers new social networking features ahead of their release.

The feature is accessible to testers via the Story Privacy settings page in the Facebook app, where one would find a new "Share Story to Instagram" toggle.

Six shops gutted in Srinagar fire

SRINAGAR: Property worth lakhs were destroyed after fire engulfed six shops in Alamgari Bazar area of Kashmir capital Srinagar.

A police official said that flames emanated from a shop that within no time engulfed five other shops.

Prima facie, short circuit seems to be the cause of the fire, but police have taken up the investigation and trying to ascertain the facts.

Locals told Kashmir News Trust that fire tenders reached in time and doused the fire, otherwise more shops would have been destroyed in the incident. (KNT)

Deforestation for coffee production ups malaria risk

Sydney Researchers, including one of an Indian-origin, have estimated that 20 per cent of the malaria risk in deforestation hot spots is driven by the international trade of exports including coffee, cocoa, palm oil, tobacco, beef and cotton.

Previous studies have shown deforestation and rainforest disturbances can increase the transmission of malaria by creating conditions where mosquitoes thrive: warmer habitats and fewer predators.

"What does this mean for affluent consumers?" asks study senior author Professor Manfred Lenzen, from the University of Sydney in Australia.

"We need to be more mindful of our consumption and procurement, and avoid buying from sources implicated with deforestation, and support sustainable land ownership in developing countries," Lenzen said.

According to the researchers, directing consumption away from deforestation has benefits beyond the malaria link; it will help reducing biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions as well.

For the findings, published in the journal Nature Communications, the



research team investigated links between the increasing risk of malaria in developing countries to products demanded by distant consumers.

"This study is the first to assess the role of global consumption in in-

creasing deforestation and, in turn, malaria risk. Unsustainable human consumption is clearly driving this trend," said Indian-origin researcher and study co-author Dr Arunima Malik from the University of Sydney

in Australia.

"We achieved this by quantitatively relating malaria incidence first with deforestation, then to primary commodity production, which we then connected to global supply-

chain networks and ultimately to worldwide consumer demand," Malik said.

The final step was accomplished by coupling a highly detailed and large international database with an established and widely used analytical technique - multi-region input-output (MRIO) analysis, the study said.

"This work goes beyond simple incidence mapping and correlations, in that it unveils a global supply-chain network that links malaria occurring in specific locations because of deforestation with globally dispersed consumption," Malik said.

The results of the study can be used for more demand-side approaches to mitigating malaria incidence by focusing on regulating malaria-impacted global supply chains, the researchers said.

Demand-side initiatives such as product labelling and certification, supply-chain dialogue and green procurement standards have been successful in addressing trade-related global problems such as deforestation, threats to species and child labour.

Realme 6 goes on first sale from March 11

NEW DELHI: Chinese smartphone maker Realme on Tuesday announced that its recently launched smartphone Realme 6 will go on first sale from March 11 on realme.com, flipkart.com and across offline preferred partners.

Users can enjoy a flat Rs 750 off on ICICI Bank credit cards while purchasing the smartphone on flipkart.com.

The smartphone will be available in 3 memory variants: 4GB+64GB priced at Rs 12,999, 6GB+128GB priced at Rs 14,999 and 8GB+128GB priced at Rs 15,999.

In terms of specifications, the smartphone features a 6.5-inch display and has a 90Hz refresh rate.

The device is powered by MediaTek Helio G90T SoC and will be available in two colour options - comet white and comet blue.

Realme 6 comes with a quad camera setup that includes a 64MP main shooter 8MP wide-



angle shooter and two 2MP cameras for depth sensing and macro shots.

Additionally, there is a 16MP selfie shooter on the front.

The smartphone houses a 4300mAh battery with 30W Flash Charge and runs Android 10.