



P5 STATE

BANDIPORA ACHIEVES 100% TARGET UNDER E-SHRAM SCHEME

The District Administration Bandipora has achieved 100 percent completion of e-SHRAM registrations. Joint Director planning Imtiyaz Ahmad on Tuesday briefed media about the

P7 THINK

TROUT FISH FARMING: THE WAY FORWARD

Although five species of the trout fish were tried for cultural practices in Kashmir, most failed either at the stage of breeding e.g., Splake trout (which failed to breed after the stock maturation eventually the whole stock perished) or at the



P11 SPORTS

2ND ODI: INDIA AIM TO SEAL SERIES AGAINST WEST INDIES

After winning the first ODI convincingly, Rohit Sharma-led Team India will look to continue their domination and win the second ODI and seal the three-match



Quote!

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop
- Confucius

NEWS DIGEST

12 Results: BOSE Website 'Crashes'

SRINAGAR: Following the announcement of results of annual exams (regular) of 12th class for Kashmir division, the official website of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) 'crashed' due to heavy **More on P10**

Two-Way Traffic Highway Today

QAZIGUND: The 270 kilometer-long stretch Srinag-Jammu national highway, shall remain open for both way traffic on Wednesday, traffic authorities said. Traffic authorities said that on 09-02-2022, **More on P10**

NIA Arrests Budgam Man In Delhi

SRINAGAR: National Investigation Agency (NIA) Tuesday said that it has arrested a resident from Budgam district of Central Kashmir in connection with a case regarding Al-Qaeda's plans of triggering an IED blast in Lucknow city. **More on P10**

JK Bank Q3 Net Profit 164%

SRINAGAR: J&K Bank Net Profit has witnessed a steep rise of 164%YoY in the December Quarter of FY 2021-22. The bank stated this after its Board of Directors reviewed and approved the numbers for third quarter and nine-months ended December 31, 2021 in a meeting held today at Bank's Zonal Office in Gurgaon, New Delhi.

Delimitation Proposals To Go Public After Feb 14

Its Orders Cannot Be Questioned In Any Court, Say Officials



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The delimitation commission's proposals are expected to be unveiled for suggestions and objections from the general public immediately after February 14, news reports said on Tuesday.

The commission headed by former Supreme Court judge,

justice (retd.) Ranjana Desai will publish its proposals for the delimitation of constituencies, together with the dissenting proposals, if any, of any associate member, immediately after the MPs will submit their suggestions/objections, news reports said.

"The Commission has asked the MPs to **More on P10**

Govt Issues Policy for Journalists, News Portals

Journalists Can Lose Accreditation If They Act Against 'National Security'

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Journalists acting in a manner prejudicial to the country's "security, sovereignty and integrity" as well as "public order, decency or morality" will lose their government accreditation, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has said in its new guidelines.

The Central Media Accreditation Guidelines-2022, announced on Monday, also lays down guidelines for the accreditation of journalists working for online news platforms. News aggregators are not being considered for accreditation, the government said.

According to the new policy, accreditation is liable to be



withdrawn or suspended if a journalist acts in a manner prejudicial to the country's security, sovereignty and integrity, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in any relation to

contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

Accreditation can also be suspended if a journalist or the media organisation he/she represents is found to have furnished false/forged **More on P10**

No Registered Body Called Kashmir Press Club: Govt

There is no registered body by the name of 'Kashmir Press Club' in Jammu and Kashmir as it has failed to register itself under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, the government said. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai also said in the Lok Sabha the Estates Department of the UT administration has taken over the government building where the Kashmir Press Club was operated, on January 17, in presence of the **More on P10**

PAGD to Hold Meet on Feb 23

The Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) is all set to hold a meeting on February 23, to discuss the recent draft put forth by the Delimitation Commission. According to sources in PAGD the grouping will meet on Feb 23 in Srinagar at its president Dr Farooq Abdullah's Gupkar residence. Earlier, the meeting was scheduled to be held at Jammu on Feb 13. However, the sources said that the meeting has been rescheduled and will now **More on P10**

WE HAVE CALLED A MEETING ON FEB 23 TO DISCUSS THE DRAFT presented by Delimitation Commission. The meeting was scheduled on Feb 13 at Jammu earlier, which has been postponed as some of the leaders were not available on the particular date, thus the meeting has now been fixed on February 23, 2022."

7 Die, 771 Test Covid-19 Positive in J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Tuesday reported seven deaths and another spike of 771 cases pushing the number of active cases to 12,358 in the UT.

With seven more deaths, the death toll in J&K has reached 4,728 and 771 fresh positive cases reported on Tuesday have pushed the tally of positive cases to 448,105.

Of the exact number of 448,105 cases, 285,107 are from Kashmir division and 162,998 from Jammu division.

Officials said that among 771 new cases, 363 belong to Kashmir division while as 408 are from Jammu division, adding **More on P10**

Aiming To Empower Citizen Participation: LG

SMC Inks MoUs With Praja Foundation & Azim Premji Foundation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Municipal Corporation on Tuesday signed Memoranda of Understanding with Praja Foundation and Azim Premji Foundation for making Urban Governance more effective and transforming primary school education in Srinagar city.

In the presence of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the MoUs were signed by Sh. Athar Aamir Khan, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Commissioner; Sh. Bijoy Shankar Das, Leader - North Eastern States and Jammu & Kashmir at Azim Premji University and Sh. Milind Mhaske, Director Praja



Foundation. The Lt Governor said that the MoU between SMC & Praja foundation aims to empower

citizen participation through enhanced e-Governance system in Srinagar & capacity building programmes **More on P10**

TRANSPARENT & PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES in urban governance are important for tapping the vast potential, vitality of our cities and higher economic growth."

Family-Run Parties Biggest Threat To Democracy: PM

Press Trust of India

New Delhi- Family-run parties are the biggest threat to India's democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday as he launched an all-out attack on the Congress and held it responsible for several ills confronting the country.

Replying to the debate on the motion of thanks to the president's address in the Rajya Sabha, he said the people of the country had to wait for many years to get basic facilities like water, power and roads because of the the Congress.

As the opposition party, too, the Congress is creating hurdles in the country's development, he alleged.

He also accused the Congress of being in the grip

of urban Naxals, who are today controlling its thought and ideology. That is why, the prime minister added, the grand old party has become negative. "The Congress in a way is in the grip of urban Naxals. That is why its thought has become negative."

Modi suggested that the opposition party change its name from Indian National Congress to 'Federation of Congress'.

He said when a family is paramount in a particular party, the biggest casualty is talent.

He also attacked the Congress for sacking over 50 state governments of several parties during its over 50-year rule at the Centre.

Taking a jibe at the Congress, the prime minister said if it **More on P10**

Hyundai's Kashmir Post: India Summons Korean Envoy

NEW DELHI: India has summoned the South Korean ambassador over the "unacceptable" social media post by Hyundai Pakistan on the so-called Kashmir solidarity day and bluntly conveyed to him that there could be no compromise on the matter as it concerned the country's territorial integrity.

South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong spoke to his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar this morning and the Korean side regretted the offence caused to the people and government of India by the social media post.

Sending a tough message, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the South Korean envoy was summoned on Monday and a "strong displeasure" of the government on the social



media post was conveyed. India expected the company to take "appropriate action" to properly address the issue, he stressed.

Bagchi said the Indian ambassador in Seoul contacted the Hyundai headquarters and sought an explanation.

The MEA spokesperson said India welcomes investments by foreign companies in various sectors, but, it is also expected that such companies or their affiliates will **More on P10**

75 Percent Pass 12th Class Exam, Girls Outshine Boys

Observer News Service

Srinagar Girls dominated overall percentage as well as top positions in all four streams as 75 percent students passed 12th class examinations, the results of which were declared by the J&K Board of School Education on Tuesday.

In all 54075 out of 72180 students who appeared in the examination have been declared successful and they included 37301 boys and 34879 girls. Of these, 26971 boys (72 percent) and 27104 girls (78 percent) passed the examinations, a board official said.

293 Students Share First 10 Positions In 4 Streams

The first 10 positions in Science stream were shared by 248 students. In Commerce, the first 10 positions were shared by 33 students. 61 students shared the first 10 positions in Arts stream. In Home Science, **More on P10**

According to the board, at least 23,573 students bagged the distinction, 20,717 students got first division, 9277 secured second division and 509 passed the exams with third division.

The figures also reveal that in the exams, at least 11 students were having disputed eligibility, 47 students were absent, nine students were disqualified and an examination was cancelled of 26 students.

The students were given a syllabi relaxation of 40 percent following the closure of schools in view of COVID-19 outbreak. **More on P10**

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Toppers Speak

Arusa Parvaiz who bagged the top position from the Faculty of Science is the student of Kashmir Harvard Educational Institute Naseem Bagh. She has secured 99.8 percent marks. Arusa says that the guidance of her teachers and support of parents helped her achieve the feat. **More on P10**

Facebook, Insta Block Handles of Chinar Corps

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: Facebook and Instagram have blocked the handles of Chinar Corps, the Indian Army's strategically located formation in the Kashmir valley, for over a week now and have not responded to the official communication in this regard, officials said on Tuesday.

"The pages on Facebook and

Instagram were created to negate the lies and propaganda flowing from across the border and also to apprise people of the real situation in the Kashmir valley," an official said.

A senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the matter had been taken up with the authorities concerned in Facebook, but so far there has been **More on P10**

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Govt Orders Transfer Of 5 Top Officers

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday ordered transfer of five officers in the interest of administration with immediate effect.

According to an order issued here, Navneet Singh, IFS, DFO, Doda, has been transferred and posted as Additional Chief Executive Officer, Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

Naresh Kumar, JKAS, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Bhawan, Katra, has been transferred and posted as Joint Director in the Directorate of Information, J&K, vice Irshad Ahmad, JKAS, has been asked to report to the General Administration Department, for further posting.

Sudhir Bali, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner **More on P10**

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobserver.net

K O V I E W

Revival Of Tourism

Before the third Covid wave broke out in January, Kashmir witnessed an inflow of 2.5 lakh tourists in November and December, most of them visiting Gulmarg and Srinagar. Tourist footfall was between 4,000 and 5,500 per day in the two months. According to the tourism department, the occupancy of the hotels in Gulmarg had gone up to nearly 100 percent, so was that of the houseboats in Srinagar and other places like Pahalgam. Snowfall in the Valley has always been a big draw for tourists which is a novelty for most people in mainland India. Also, with international travel continuing to be barred, Kashmir has become the preferred destination for tourists in the country. More so, in the winter when unlike most parts of mainland India, it snows in Kashmir.

The surge in the tourist rush began in October itself when around 93,000 tourists visited the Valley. Overall, six lakh tourist footfalls have been recorded in Kashmir in 2021. In 2020, 4.1 lakh tourists had visited Kashmir amid the then runaway pandemic. These are glad tidings for the sector otherwise battered by the turmoil following the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019 and the subsequent Covid-19 pandemic.

But in January, the spike in fresh Covid infections, this time triggered by a new virus mutant Omicron. The number of tourists who visited the Valley in January came down to 35000. Also, there was also some opposition in the Valley to the encouragement of the tourist arrivals in the midst of a full-blown Omicron wave.

Now with the Omicron wave winding down, tourists could be hoped to return. Tourism is one of the mainstays of the Kashmir economy. And the return of tourists to the Valley in large numbers would be a positive development. And to this end, the administration has already taken steps to protect the Valley as a safe destination. This has involved a two-pronged strategy: one, vaccination of the people associated with the tourism. Second, strict enforcement of the SOPs to ensure the safety of the tourists during their stay in the Valley. The administration has already carried out vaccination drives at tourist destinations.

Tourism has the potential to shore up our beleaguered economy. Here's hoping that things improve from hereon. The waning pandemic wave is once again creating conditions for unhindered tourism in the Valley. This is also the hope of the people associated with the tourist sector. They expect the third wave to blow over soon so that the tourists continue pouring into Kashmir and help resuscitate the economy and generate jobs.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Her Right To Learn

By backing the "ban" on wearing the hijab to colleges, the BJP government in Karnataka violates the fundamental freedoms of students – and promotes an exclusionary code of public behaviour. Instead of finding ways to defuse the confrontation between an Udupi college and its students, the state government has doubled down and invoked provisions of the Karnataka Education Act, 1983, and directed colleges to ensure that "clothes which disturb equality, integrity and public law and order should not be worn". This is dubious framing – and one that does not stand the test of the Constitution, which guarantees citizens the right to equality, the right to education, and the right to practise their religion.

The potential consequence of the Karnataka action could be to force young women, who face enormous odds to reach the gates of schools and colleges, to retreat from classrooms to the confines of their homes or religious institutions. The BJP's much-vaunted commitment to girls' education (Beti Bachao Beti Padhao) and the rights of minority women that it championed in the legislation against triple talaq rings hollow when its government can so recklessly risk the hard-fought gains of educating Muslim girls. The common sense of coexistence by which millions of Indians live their lives shares nothing with the hardline secularism of, say, the French republic. Here, secular spaces like schools and colleges regularly see displays of religiosity. Wearing religion on the sleeve – from the woman on the street to the highest functionaries of the government (though the state must be held to higher standards of neutrality) – is part and parcel of daily life. Ironically, the BJP often dismisses secularism as an affectation of the ancien regime it has uprooted. That a dispute over a uniform can lead to colleges shutting out students of a community suggests that even the pretext of secularism is being weaponised to target minorities. The discriminatory logic of such a polarising campaign was evident in a Kundapura college, which allowed protesting women students inside the campus but herded them into separate classrooms. The Indian republic's success in resolving the competing claims on public spaces and resources from various communities might be up for debate, but it has never been guilty of sanctioning a segregation of spaces. Separate can never be equal in a democracy.

Courts have spoken on the rights of an individual, the rights of a community and the freedom of choice. It is up to the courts again to step in and draw the line. The anti-hijab campaign may be part of a larger agenda of polarisation in coastal Karnataka where the ruling BJP has ratcheted up anti-Muslim, anti-Christian rhetoric and the Congress has abdicated and even ceded space to hardline groups. Children at the barricades of their schools and colleges facing off over identity, being herded into separate rooms, doesn't deepen democracy, it aggravates many a risk. The hope is that the court, the custodian of rights, takes note.

The Indian Express

What A Waste!

Dodge The Scientific Waste Management Laxity To Control Dog Menace



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Azan, a 10-year old boy from Gund-Abraham village in Pattan North Kashmir was mauled to death by stray dogs recently. Local residents of Pattan and surrounding villages are protesting against the authorities as they failed to take up scientific waste management in the area which has resulted in huge increase in stray dog population. The locals allege that municipal authorities in Pattan have failed to set up a scientific waste management site with the result solid waste generated from Pattan town especially the poultry waste, food waste and other kinds butchery waste collected from the main market is dumped unscientifically in nearby villages.

Azan was attacked near Singhpora Jheel bridge on Sunday afternoon, when he was walking on the roadside and suddenly a group of stray dogs attacked him. Media reports say that the little boy was badly injured and died within no time. The residents of several villages living around Srinagar-Baramulla highway protested at Singhpora. Every protester blamed unscientific waste disposal as the main cause of increase in dog population which is threatening the lives of pedestrians.

Before this incident, some months back, another boy was mauled to death by stray dogs in Baramulla. In December 2020, a noted lawyer from Deewanbagh Baramulla Abdul Majeed Rather was also mauled to death by stray dogs. The middle aged lawyer was on a routine morning walk when stray dogs attacked him. He was badly injured and after 21 days he died at SMHS hospital Srinagar due to multiple organ failure.

Waste management not a priority of Govt

For more than 6 years, I have been writing and researching a lot on solid and liquid waste management in Jammu & Kashmir. I can say with authority that in spite of Kashmir valley or even Jammu division having been choked with plastic and other kinds of waste, the Govt officials are not taking it seriously. All civic work requires more investment and maintenance in the mountains due to harsh climatic conditions and limited land, and this is even more challenging when it comes to addressing the issue of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). In Jammu & Kashmir, this simple truth was ignored for many years.

In the 2019-20, annual budget only Rs 40 million was allocated for waste management in Jammu & Kashmir for 91 urban local bodies (municipal committees and councils). Out of the total budget allocation of Rs 4.64 billion, 80-90% funds were kept available for civil works by the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies in Srinagar and Jammu and not even 15% of the budget is allocated for solid waste management (SWM). On the other hand, the government in its action plan on SWM issued vide Government Order No: 25-HUD of 2019 Dated 21.01.2019 said that 25% of the budget allocation to urban local bodies is spent on waste management. I have not come across a single municipal institution in J&K where scientific waste management policy is being followed as mandated under MSW Rules 2016.

On February 15, 2017, a Srinagar-based newspaper reported that there was no alternate site available for creating a new landfill in Srinagar. Former Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh, while responding to a question from local legislator of Eid Gah Srinagar Mubarak Gul, said on the floor of the J&K Assembly that a committee was constituted to look for land to create a new landfill site but the committee headed by District Development Commissioner Srinagar could not find suitable land in and around Srinagar.

If drastic measures are not taken to address the issue of unscientific waste management, the Kashmir valley will turn into a trash bowl as plastic and other waste is constantly dumped into Kashmir's water bodies like lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. Most of the wetlands and lakes plus deep drains have become choked and this is resulting in constant waterlogging during rain and snowfall. Civic authorities who are supposed to implement MSW Rules 2016 are themselves involved in dumping municipal waste in wetlands, water bodies and open spaces.

Meeting with Chief Secretary in 2018

On December 17th 2018, I along with senior members of Environmental Policy Group (EPG), had a detailed meeting with the then Chief Secretary B V R Subramanyam at Civil Secretariat Jammu. The meeting was organized in the back-

drop of a High Court order wherein the then Chief Justice of J&K High Court Geeta Mittal had directed the J&K Chief Secretary to listen to our suggestions on scientific waste management in J&K. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) had been filed in the High Court by EPG for scientific waste management in J&K both in urban and rural areas. The meeting was attended by the administrative secretaries of housing and urban development department (HUDD) & the department of Environment & Forests as well.

Inhouse composting of waste

I urged upon the Chief Secretary and his administrative secretaries to enforce implementation of Municipal Solid Waste Rules 2016 in letter and spirit. When CS asked me how could the pressure on landfill sites in Srinagar and Jammu or other towns in J&K be reduced, I responded with the suggestion that all those people who have land available around their houses be directed to compost the food and other biodegradable waste within the house by making compost pits or using plastic or

THE RESIDENTS
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steel drums to process that waste. I also suggested that municipal sanitation staff be given clear direction not to lift food waste from those households having 8 marlas (2178 sq feet) or more land around their house. The Chief Secretary after closing his eyes for a while told me whether the suggested model was being followed in any state or country? I told him "let J&K be the role model for other states or countries by making in-house composting mandatory and let it become a public movement"

After more than 3 years of that meeting with CS, we have made no progress at all and the situation is going from bad to worse. I can't blame Mr B V R Subramanyam for having failed to address the issue. The situation from 2019 has not been conducive at all, but from last 1 year the Govt is not taking any steps for scientific waste management. Lots of money has also been provided by the Govt now for waste management but nobody knows what are the priorities of the Govt?

Waste to Energy plant in Srinagar

On October 23rd 2017, Jammu & Kashmir cabinet gave a nod for setting up of a waste to energy plant in Srinagar. The plant which was to be constructed under the public private partnership (PPP) at Achan Saidapora landfill site is supposed to generate 5 megawatt of electricity on a daily basis from 5 metric tons of solid waste. The company which was allotted the project had to invest Rs 120 crores and would thus get the ownership rights of this plant for a period of 25 years. The whole project was based on the build-own-operate and transfer model (BOOT).

Around 5 years back, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) passed an order directing the Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir to ensure compliance to the cabinet order dated October 23rd 2017, on setting up of the waste to energy plant. The NGT which had been hearing the petition on Achan landfill site from 2013 onwards in the matter of Dr Irfan Ahmad and others v/s Nawang Rizzin Jora the then J&K Housing and Urban Development Minister in its order had said,

"We make it clear that we will not grant any further time on any ground whatsoever as it merely an administrative compliance now"
It is now almost 5 years, yet the order of the NGT

SRINAGAR CITY IS
surrounded by water-bodies
and wetlands. There are not
even 100 kanals of wasteland available
where a new landfill site could be set up

and J&K cabinet has not been implemented. It is the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) which is solely responsible for not adhering to the cabinet order of 23rd October 2017. The department is also responsible for not respecting NGT's order followed by a Govt order.

The NGT came to the conclusion of directing the J & K Government to set up waste to energy plants after several rounds of deliberations and discussions. NGT had constituted some expert committees for providing a solution to Srinagar's solid waste problem. If the government, like several waste management experts, had disagreements with the waste to energy projects, why did the J&K cabinet give a nod to the NGT's direction?

Srinagar city is sitting on a literal volcano of waste. The existing landfill site at Achan is like a man made volcano which can explode any time as methane gas is getting accumulated under huge garbage cells. This landfill has been choked completely and SMC continues to dump 400 to 450 metric tons of municipal solid waste at the site on a regular basis. This is not only unscientific but also very dangerous.

The main challenge for managing solid waste in Srinagar or even Kashmir valley is the dearth of landfill sites. Srinagar city is surrounded by water-bodies and wetlands. There are not even 100 kanals of wasteland available where a new landfill site could be set up. We are not like Bhopal or Indore city where there is huge land availability. The municipal corporations in these cities indeed manage the waste scientifically by following MSW Rules 2016 but these cities have a great benefit of having huge landfill sites as well.

Rural Waste Management

Managing solid and liquid waste is no more a privilege for the people living in urban areas. Now the rural population also has been given this facility under the national flagship programme Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G). Pertinent to mention that Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin guidelines of 2014 and revised guidelines of 2017 had a provision of solid and liquid waste management programme in rural areas but as States and Union Territories (UT's) had more challenging issues like countering open defecation, the same got delayed. Finally in 2019 SBM-II was launched at national level also known as Open Defecation Free Plus (ODF Plus) programme. The ODF Plus again got a setback due to the outbreak of COVID 19 in March 2020. Finally by the end of 2020 the work on ODF-Plus was taken up and some projects on solid and liquid waste management were taken up in some states and UTs. The programme is being implemented in a phased manner across rural India. To ensure waste is not a useless entity, a new name was coined for it. Now the waste is called resource and that is the reason that under SBM-Gramin updated guidelines this programme is now called Solid Liquid Resource Management (SLRM).

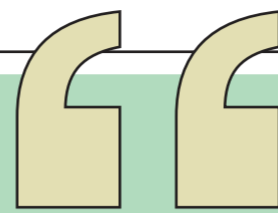
The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation which is the nodal Ministry for rural waste management under SBM-Gramin has already provided around Rs 100 Crores to Jammu & Kashmir for taking up waste management projects in J&K. It is now almost a year since the funding has been provided but unfortunately not even a single project on rural waste management in any part of Jammu & Kashmir has been taken up. Due to non availability of scientific waste management programmes in rural areas, the plastic and other solid waste has choked not irrigation canals, lakes, streams, rivers and even forests. Due to continuous population growth and sudden surge in use of packed food material and diapers in rural areas of Kashmir from the last 10 to 15 years, the plastic waste generation has increased manifold in rural areas of Kashmir. Even in remote villages one can see huge quantities of plastic waste most of which is not at all recyclable like packaging material, diapers, sanitary napkins, thermocol packaging material etc. This huge waste accumulation is giving rise to the stray dog population in rural areas.

Conclusion

Last year's observance on World Environment Day (June 5) was based on the theme of 'ecosystem restoration' and focuses on resetting our relation with nature. This marked the formal launch of the UN decade on ecosystem restoration. Big and small nations have different plans for the next 10 years on ecological restoration. An ecologically sensitive place like Jammu & Kashmir needs a special push for eco-restoration in the next 10 years. The situation is more demanding in Kashmir valley. Our rivers, lakes, glaciers, and forests are under severe threat. The stray dog population is on rise and now our people are getting killed by dog attacks. In such a situation Govt officials can't remain the mute spectators. They must come forward and take up projects on waste management in rural and urban areas of Jammu & Kashmir. Scientific waste management will not only give us respite from solid and liquid waste but this will decrease the attacks by stray dogs on the human population as well.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is Founder and Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement



TROUT, BEING A CARNIVORE FISH, REQUIRES a high protein percentage of 40-50 percent for different age groups, and a fat percentage generally higher than 12 percent.

Trout Fish Farming

The Way Forward

Haziq Qayoom Lone

Although five species of the trout fish were tried for cultural practices in Kashmir, most failed either at the stage of breeding e.g., Splake trout (which failed to breed after the stock maturation-- eventually the whole stock perished) or at the stage of embryo formation in the egg, e.g., Sebago salmon. The Eastern brook trout did find its feet in Kashmir in sparse numbers, thanks to the low hatching success. And hence the spread of its culture was always close to zenith. Brown trout, which require better water quality conditions with higher oxygen requirements and lower temperatures proved difficult for culture in the flow through systems across Kashmir. The only species of trout that flourished left, right and center in Kashmir is the rainbow trout. Known for its relative 'hardy' nature, the fish tolerate lower oxygen levels and temperatures up to 25°C for longer periods of time. The fish received its own identity in the cold water fisheries of the Indian subcontinent, especially in the countries like India, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan. Kashmir remains second to none in the production in India.

Although sufficient, the trout production in Kashmir is far less than the realized production potential. The main reason being flunked market structure and thin market channel within and outside Kashmir. The government of India must try and facilitate the marketing of trout fish into mainland India by creating a channel that can function from every district of Kashmir to the well-off neighboring UTs/states, such as Delhi, Chandigarh. This extension can later be taken directly from the trout villages as the villages exist in close proximity to each other, usually in the uplands. This will surely encourage more farmers to take up the initiative and become trout growers.

A huge cluster of Indian population is unaware about the name rainbow trout, let alone the benefits of eating it. The majority of the restaurants in Kashmir do not serve trout, let alone other



“ RESTAURANT OWNERS AS WELL AS THE GROWERS must be encouraged to serve trout on the table. They could be encouraged to pin-up the posters and pamphlets stating the factual information about trout meat and its benefits. In fact, the Department of Fisheries, Jammu and Kashmir can play a big role in it, by using their extension agents

states of India. Restaurant owners as well as the growers must be encouraged to serve trout on the table. They could be encouraged to pin-up the posters and pamphlets stating the factual information about trout meat and its benefits. In fact, the Department of Fisheries, Jammu and Kashmir can play a big role in it, by using their

extension agents.

Better quality of trout feed is yet another issue that can seriously change the dynamics of trout farming in Kashmir. There should be transparency of the feed composition from the government feed mills. Many trout farmers of Kashmir complain about less growth, a culture period that extends

more than 12 months. More so, there are other problems like feed spoilage during storage as well as feed wastage in the form of 'dust'.

Trout, being a carnivore fish, requires a high protein percentage of 40-50 percent for different age groups, and a fat percentage generally higher than 12 percent. The pelleted floating feeds have shown promise in the experiments run by the DCFR at Utrakhhand. If these conditions are met, this can reduce the culture time period by 3-4 months. An optimum of 10 percent moisture in trout feeds will reduce the chances of spoilage and increase the longevity of the fish feed. Not only will such a standardization of feeds increase the growth rates of fish, reduce the chances of fungal attack in feeds and hence eventual loss to the farmer, but it will also reduce his dependence on private fish feed companies, that sell the feeds to them at a higher costs. The storage feed depots could also set up in far-flung areas at common meeting places that can provide feeds to the farmers from time to time, of the adjoining districts.

Other models like leaf protein concentrates can be brought up in practice as they have been successfully tested both in carp and trout diets. Water pipe partitioning into two (one at the inlet, and second at the midway of the raceway) and small shady areas can be made in the trout raceways, that will let fish have more freedom for oxygen, and diurnal freedom, prevention from the solar UV. The stress lowered in fish by such little adjustments can be a pathbreaking in controlling the disease of the fish.

Its high time that the government of Jammu and Kashmir realises that Kashmir fisheries' future lies in its professional candidates that study a four-year degree program as Bachelors of Fisheries Science (BFSc) and a two-three year degree program Masters in Fisheries Science(MFSc). The inclusion of students with Zoology background in graduation/ masters into the fisheries department, really begs a question of justice.

The author is studied M.F.Sc from the G.B.P.U.A.T Utrakhhand

'DON'T LOOK UP': Hollywood's Primer On Climate Denial Illustrates 5 Myths That Fuel Rejection Of Science

Gale Sinatra - Barbara K. Hofer

Every disaster movie seems to open with a scientist being ignored. "Don't Look Up" is no exception - in fact, people ignoring or flat out denying scientific evidence is the point.

Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Lawrence play astronomers who make a literally Earth-shattering discovery and then try to persuade the president to take action to save humanity. It's a satire that explores how individuals, scientists, the media and politicians respond when faced with scientific facts that are uncomfortable, threatening and inconvenient.

The movie is an allegory for climate change, showing how those with the power to do something about global warming willfully avoid taking action and how those with vested interests can mislead the public. But it also reflects science denial more broadly, including what the world has been seeing with COVID-19.

The most important difference between the film's premise and humanity's actual looming crisis is that while individuals may be powerless against a comet, everyone can act decisively to stop fueling climate change. Knowing the myths that feed science denial can help.

As research psychologists and the authors of "Science Denial: Why It Happens and What to Do About It", we recognize these aspects of science denial all too well.

Myth #1: We can't act unless the science is 100% certain

The first question President Orlean (Meryl Streep) asks the scientists after they explain that a comet is on a collision course with Earth is, "So how certain is this?" Learning that the certitude is 99.78%, the president's chief of staff (Jonah Hill) responds with relief: "Oh great, so it's not 100%!" Government scientist Teddy Oglethorpe (Rob Morgan) replies, "Scientists never like to say 100%."



This reluctance to claim 100% certainty is a strength of science. Even when the evidence points clearly in one direction, scientists keep exploring to learn more. At the same time, they recognize overwhelming evidence and act on it. The evidence is overwhelming that Earth's climate is changing in dangerous ways because of human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, and it has been overwhelming for many years.

When politicians take a "let's wait and see" attitude toward climate change (or "sit tight and assess," as the movie puts it), suggesting they need more evidence before taking any action, it's often a form of science denial.

Myth #2: Disturbing realities as described by scientists are too difficult for the public to accept

The title phrase, "Don't Look Up," portrays this psychological assumption and how some politicians conveniently use it as an excuse for inaction while promoting their own interests. Anxiety is a growing and understandable psychological response to climate change. Research shows there are strategies people can use to effectively cope with climate anxiety, such as becoming better

informed and talking about the problem with others. This gives individuals a way to manage anxiety while at the same time taking actions to lower the risks.

A 2021 international study found that 80% of individuals are indeed willing to make changes in how they live and work to help reduce the effects of climate change.

Myth #3: Technology will save us, so we don't have to act

Often, individuals want to believe in an outcome they prefer, rather than confront reality known to be true, a response that psychologists call motivated reasoning.

For example, belief that a single technological solution, such as carbon capture, will fix the climate crisis without the need for change in policies, lifestyles and practices may be more grounded in hope than reality. Technology can help reduce our impact on the climate; however, research suggests advances are unlikely to come quickly enough.

Hoping for such solutions diverts attention from significant changes needed in the way we work, live and play, and is a form of science denial.

“ AS SCHOLARS WHO WORK TO HELP PEOPLE make sound decisions about complex problems, we encourage people to consume news and science information from sources outside their own identity group.

Myth #4: The economy is more important than anything, including impending crises predicted by science

Taking action to slow climate change will be expensive, but not acting has extraordinary costs - in lives lost as well as property. Consider the costs of recent Western wildfires. Boulder County, Colorado, lost nearly 1,000 homes to a fire on Dec. 30, 2021, after a hot, dry summer and fall and little recent rain or snow. A study of California's fires in 2018 - another hot, dry year - when the town of Paradise burned, estimated the damage, including health costs and economic disruption, at about \$148.5 billion.

When people say we can't take action because action is expensive, they are in denial of the cost of inaction.

Myth #5: Our actions should always align with our social identity group

In a politically polarized society, individuals may feel pressured to make decisions based on what their social group believes. In the case of beliefs about science, this can have dire consequences - as the world has seen with the COVID-19 pandemic. In the U.S. alone, more than 825,000 people with COVID-19 have died while powerful identity groups actively discourage people from getting vaccines or taking other precautions that could protect them.

Viruses are oblivious to political affiliation, and so is the changing climate. Rising global temperatures, worsening storms and sea level rise will affect everyone in harm's way, regardless of the person's social group.

How to combat science denial - and climate change

A comet headed for Earth might leave little for individuals to do, but this is not the case with climate change. People can change their own practices to reduce carbon emissions and, importantly, pressure leaders in government, business and industry to take actions, such as reducing fossil fuel use, converting to cleaner energy and changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions.

In our book, we discuss steps that individuals, educators, science communicators and policymakers can take to confront the science denial that prevents moving forward on this looming issue. For example:

- Individuals can check their own motivations and beliefs about climate change and remain open minded to scientific evidence.
- Educators can teach students how to source scientific information and evaluate it.
- Science communicators can explain not just what scientists know but how they know it.
- Policymakers can make decisions based on scientific evidence.

As scholars who work to help people make sound decisions about complex problems, we encourage people to consume news and science information from sources outside their own identity group. Break out of your social bubble and listen to and talk with others. Look up.

The authors are Professor of Education and Psychology, University of Southern California and Professor of Psychology Emerita respectively. The article is being reproduced by arrangements with The Conversation

Love For Nature Is Partially Heritable, Suggests Study

Agencies

How many of us love visiting nature parks and taking a quiet stroll there, with nothing but the sound of birds? Did our parents do the same thing when they were young? According to a large-scale study of UK twins led by Chia-chen Chang at the National University of Singapore, a person's appreciation of nature and their tendency to visit natural spaces are heritable characteristics.

It was published in the open-access journal 'PLOS Biology'.

Researchers surveyed 1153 pairs of twins on the Twins UK registry about how they experience nature, asking them to rate their familiarity with and desire to be in nature, and how frequently they visit natural spaces such as public parks and private gardens.

They found that identical (monozygotic) twins, who shared almost 100 per cent of their genes, were more similar to each other in their orientation towards nature and how frequently they visited nature compared to fraternal (dizygotic) twins, who shared around 50 per cent of their genetic material. Heritability ranged from 46 per cent for nature orientation to 34 per cent for frequency of garden visits, suggest-

ing a moderate influence of genetics over how people experience nature.

However, environmental factors explained more than half of the differences between individuals. People living in urban environments tended to have less nature experiences, due to for example limited access to gardens, highlighting the importance of availability in shaping nature-seeking behaviours. Heritability also declined with age, suggesting that genetics may become less influential as people age and experience a unique set of environmental conditions.

Spending time in natural spaces has been found to improve mental well-being, but different people

experience and benefit from nature differently. This study provided the first evidence for a genetic component to both our predispositions towards nature and our tendency to visit natural spaces. Nature-oriented people may actively seek out nature even if it means traveling from their home, but diverse urban planning is needed to provide access to natural spaces and the benefits they offer for all, the authors said.

"Spending time in nature links to better health and wellbeing," added Chang. "A twin study shows that a person's desire to be in nature and how often they experience it are influenced by both genes and personal experiences."

Researchers Identify New Way To Amplify Trustworthy News On Social Media Without Shielding Bias

Agencies

It is a known fact that news, be it real or fake, spreads like wildfire on social media. Social media sites amplify misinformation and conspiracy theories. To address this concern, an interdisciplinary team of computer scientists, physicists and social scientists led by the University of South Florida (USF) has found a solution to ensure social media users are exposed to more reliable news sources.

In their study published in the journal 'Nature Human Behaviour', the researchers focused on the recommendation algorithm that is used by social media platforms to prioritize content displayed to users.

Rather than measuring engagement based on the number of users and pageviews, the researchers looked at what content gets amplified on a newsfeed, focusing on a news source's reliability score and the political diversity of their audience.

"Low-quality content is engaging because it conforms to what we already know and like, regardless of whether it is accurate or not," said Giovanni Luca Ciampaglia, assistant professor of computer science and engineering at USF. "As a result, misinformation and conspiracy theories often go viral within like-minded audiences. The algorithm ends up picking the wrong signal and keeps promoting it further. To break this cycle, one should look for content that is engaging, but for a diverse audience, not for a like-minded one."

In collaboration with researchers at Indiana University and Dartmouth College, the team created a new algorithm using data on the web traffic and self-reported partisanship of 6,890 individuals who reflect the diversity of the United States in sex, race and political affiliation. The data was provided by online polling company YouGov. They also reviewed the reliability scores of 3,765 news sources based on the New Guard Reliability Index, which rates news



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sources on several journalistic criteria, such as editorial responsibility, accountability and financial transparency.

They found that incorporating the partisan diversity of a news audience can increase the reliability of recommended sources while still providing users with relevant recommendations. Since the algorithm isn't exclusively based on engagement or popularity, it is still able to promote reliable sources, regardless of their partisanship.

"This is especially welcome news for social media platforms, especially since they have been reluctant of introducing changes to their algorithms for fear of

criticism about partisan bias," said co-author Filippo Menczer, distinguished Luddy professor of informatics and computer science at Indiana University.

Researchers said that platforms would easily be able to include audience diversity into their own recommendation algorithms because diversity measures can be derived from engagement data, and platforms already log this type of data whenever users click "like" or share something on a newsfeed. Ciampaglia and his colleagues propose social media platforms adopt this new strategy in order to help prevent the spread of misinformation.

Pandemic Widens Screening Gap Among Non Covid Diseases, Including Cancer

Agencies

The ongoing Covid pandemic has disrupted healthcare systems globally leading to widening the gap between treatment and patient care of non-Covid disease including cancer. Cancer is a major contributor to the disease burden worldwide. Several studies have projected that the global cancer burden will continue to grow for at least next two decades.

The Covid pandemic has undoubtedly delayed the cancer screenings, diagnosis, and treatment around the world. The cancer cases in India increased at an average annual rate of 1.1-2 per cent from 2010-2019, and deaths in the country also went up at an average rate of 0.1-1 per cent in the same period, according to the analysis by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington School of Medicine.

The new cancer patients registration, follow up for old patients and surgery had recorded considerable decline in India between March and May 2020, compared to the same period in 2019 as per a Lancet study of May 2021. The ambidirectional cohort study was conducted at 41 cancer centres across India that were members of the National Cancer Grid of India to compare provision of oncology services between March 1 and May 31, 2020, with the same time period in 2019.

A total of 54 per cent reduction was recorded in the new patients registration between this period. The number of new patients registered decreased from 1,12,270 to 51,760 between March 1 and May 31, 2020, as per the study. On the same line, a total of 46 per cent reduction, from 6,34,745 to 3,40,984 patients, was registered in the number of patients who had follow-up visits to the hospital.

Dr Anshuman Kumar, Delhi based cancer specialist, told IANS that in the absence of decentralised cancer care centres in India, the patients have largely been ignored in the first and second Covid wave. "Patients coming from rural areas of different states were stopped to visit for follow-up and even for first time treatment as all transport communication channels was closed. All of sudden, premier health institutions like AIIMS and others started refusing patient admissions other than Covid which impacted the cancer care in India adversely.

Highlighting the Lancet study, he said

that 54 per cent reduction in the new patients registration among 41 cancer care centers nationwide was due to the illogical decision of shutting doors of premier health institution for non Covid patients.



According to a study from AIIMS Oncology department, total 51 per cent reduction was recorded in new case registration in OPD and around one third reduction was noticed in the cancer surgeries. The Lancet study points out that the hospital admissions decreased from 88,801 to 56,885 (36 per cent reduction) and outpatient chemotherapy decreased from 1,73,634 to 1,09,107 (37 per cent reduction) in 41 cancer centres.

These reductions were even more marked between April and May, 2020. Cancer screening was stopped completely or was functioning at less than 25 per cent of usual capacity at more than 70 per cent of centres during these months, the study said.

The ongoing Covid pandemic has also impacted adversely the research and development in the cancer. "The COVID pandemic has impeded the R&D of cancer treatment in 3 ways. Firstly, patient enrolment in oncology clinical trials of chemotherapeutic drugs has gone down. Second, the trials of modes of administering these therapies also got impacted adversely. Oncotherapy medicines have to be protected from Bacterial Contamination and the health care worker (HCW) has to be protected from getting chemically contaminated by these drugs. Trials of advanced closed system transfer devices got stalled. Thirdly, R&D in Oncology also suffered as there was also a conscious effort by many cancer researchers to focus their effort on Covid," said Pavan Choudary, Chairman Medical Technology Association of India.

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