

Govt Shifts 56 IAS, JKAS Officers In Major Rejig

Dr. Bilal Bhat Posted As DC Srinagar, Jatin Kishore To Hold Charge Of Director Information, Athar Amir DC Kulgam

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Union Territory government on Thursday ordered a major reshuffle by transferring 56 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Jammu And Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) officers in the interest of the administration

also hold the additional charge of Administrative Secretary, Estates Department, till further orders," reads the order.

Suresh Kumar Gupta, IFS:1991, Director, Social Forestry, J&K, holding additional charge of MD, State Forest Corporation, has been transferred and posted as Principal Secretary to the Government, Culture Department.

Shailendra Kumar, IAS:1995, Principal Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department, holding additional charge of Administrative Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, has been transferred and posted as Principal Secretary to the Government, Agriculture Production Department.

Ms. Mandep Kaur, IAS:2004, Commissioner/ Secretary to Government, Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, holding additional charge of Administrative Secretary, Housing & Urban | More on P6

Among those shifted include at least five Deputy Commissioners with Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat posted as DC Srinagar, according to a government order.

Alok Kumar, IRS: 1990, Principal Secretary to Government, School Education Department, holding additional charge of Administrative Secretary, Higher Education Department, Civil Aviation Department & Estates Department and Civil Aviation Commissioner, has been transferred and posted as Principal Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department. "He shall

All 3 Branches Of Govt Unanimously Removed Art- 370: VP

'With This, Syama Prasad Mookerjee's Dream Has Been Completely Fulfilled'

Press Trust Of India

Kathua: All three branches of the government unanimously abrogated Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution, thereby fulfilling the dream of Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Vice President Jagdeep Dhanekar said on Thursday.

The vice president said there is now a substantial shift in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and attributed it to the prevailing peace, stability and public order in the region.

He was addressing a function after inaugurating a biotech start-up expo in Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at developing the district along the International



Border with Pakistan as a hub for budding entrepreneurs.

"Congratulations to the executive led by the prime minister, the legislature -- Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

completely fulfilled, he said. Mookerjee had left an indelible mark on this land, he said.

"The land with grave imprints of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the land facing danger, has seen that danger being removed in this era. No one thought that Article 370 would be stamped out. This article, called temporary in the Constitution, became a curse for us," Dhanekar said.

Union Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh attended the function.

Twenty-five startups, including 11 from Jammu and Kashmir, took part in the expo, titled "Emerging Startup Trends in North India".

The vice president also said there is now a | More on P6

Dry, Cold Weather To Continue Till Jan 13

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Although extreme cold has gripped Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir for more than a month, dry and cold weather is likely to continue across Jammu and Kashmir till January 13, according to the Metrological Center Srinagar.

The dry spell with chilly mornings and evenings is likely to continue in J&K until January 13, according to Met authorities.

Since no significant weather activity has been forecast in the Union territory as of now, the Met officials said the intensity of the cold is expected to rise, especially in the mornings and evenings.

However, given that the Weak Western Disturbance (WWD) is set to affect J&K tonight, Met officials said the sky is expected to remain overcast across the UT.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Director Meteorological Center Srinagar, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said there would | More on P6

Eid Milan: HC Refuses Bail To Accused

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has dismissed a plea by Syed Shamasuddin Rehman, one of the twelve people arrested in connection with 'Eid Milan' last year, challenging dismissal of his bail application by NIA court here last year. In his plea Rehman claimed that he is a "religious scholar" and had, on invitation, attended the Eid Milan where other accused were "incidentally" present.

"The Trial Court did not go through the evidence and the material collected by the Investigation Agency to find out whether the prima-facie case against the appellant (Rehan) was made out or not," he said while challenging order dated 25 September 2023 passed by | More on P6

'Minimize Input Cost For Farmers And Maximise Output' LG Asks Edu Institutions To Take Innovative Approach

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday called upon educational institutions to take innovative approach to minimize the input cost for farmers and maximise output with efficient growing techniques and technological support

As Jammu Kashmir leaps towards building a modern and sustainable agriculture and allied industry through Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), educational institutions will have to take innovative approach to minimize the input cost for farmers and maximise output with efficient growing techniques and technological support," Sinha said.

He was addressing the 8th Convocation Ceremony of SKUAST Jammu at Baba Jitto Auditorium here on Thursday.



At the convocation, the LG called upon agricultural universities and educational institutions to develop innovative agriculture technologies and enhance productive

capabilities of the farmers. "A huge opportunity awaits India in Agri Innovation, Agri Technology and Processed Food and institutions like SKUAST will play | More on P6

Bukhari Calls On Amit Shah



New Delhi: Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari met Home Minister Amit Shah here on Thursday and raised several issues, including the recent killing of three civilians during an anti-terror operation in

Poonch district. Three civilians, aged between 27 and 42, were found dead on December 22 after they were allegedly picked up by the Army for questioning in connection | More on P6

Terrorists Escape From Forces Dragnet

Agencies

Srinagar: An encounter that broke out on Wednesday evening at Hadigam village of south Kashmir's Kulgam district following specific input about the presence of terrorists was called off, as terrorists managed to flee from the spot, officials said on Thursday.

An official said that an encounter broke out Wednesday evening after a joint team of Police, Army's RR and CRPF launched a search operation in the area.

He said as the joint team of forces intensified searches towards the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired upon the party, which was retaliated to, triggering an encounter.

"There was a complete lull in firing from both sides after initial contact." The operation was suspended during the night in view of darkness. However, with dawn, the security forces resumed search operations in the area and expanded the cordon. "There was no | More on P6

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Low-Cost Plant Compound May Help People Quit Smoking: Study

Press Trust Of India

Cytisine, a plant-based compound, increases the chances of successful smoking cessation by over two-fold compared with placebo and may be more effective than nicotine replacement therapy, a study has found.

Cytisine, a low-cost, generic stop-smoking aid has been used in eastern Europe since the 1960s and has shown no serious safety concerns, the researchers said.

However, the compound is not licensed or marketed in most countries outside of central and eastern Europe, making it unavailable in most of the world, including many low- and middle-income (LAMI) countries where it could make a big difference to global health.

The study, published in the journal Addiction, pooled the results of eight trials comparing cytisine with placebo, with nearly 6,000 patients.

The combined results showed that cytisine increases the chances of successful smoking cessation by more than two-fold compared with placebo,

the researchers said.

They also noted that cytisine may be more effective than nicotine replacement therapy, a medically ap-



that cytisine is an effective and inexpensive stop-smoking aid. It could be very useful in reducing smoking in LAMI countries where cost-effective

"World-wide, smoking is considered the main cause of preventable death. Cytisine has the potential to be one of the big answers to that problem," said De Santi, lead author of the study.

The research also looked at two randomised controlled trials comparing cytisine with nicotine replacement therapy, with modest results in favor of cytisine, and three trials comparing cytisine with varenicline, without a clear benefit for cytisine.

Cytisine was first synthesised in Bulgaria in 1964 as Tabex and later spread to other countries in eastern Europe and Asia, where it is still marketed, according to the researchers.

In 2017, the Polish pharmaceutical company Aflofarm began selling it as Desmoxan, a prescription-only medicine, and Canada approved it as an over-the-counter natural health product, Cravv, they said.

Because cytisine is a low-cost drug, it could form part of a plan to increase accessibility to drug therapy for smokers, which tends to be limited in LAMI countries, the researchers added.

proved way to treat people with tobacco use disorder by taking nicotine through means other than tobacco. "Our study adds to the evidence

smoking cessation drugs are urgently needed," said Omar De Santi from Centro Nacional de Intoxicaciones (CNI), Buenos Aires, Argentina.

AI-Generated Influencers Stealing Business From Human Content Creators

IANIS

Generative AI-created virtual influencers are now stealing business from human content creators as big brands now embrace AI avatars to promote their products on social media.

Virtual influencers, created by using artificial intelligence (AI) tools, have broken into the growing \$21 billion content creator economy, reports The Financial Times.

"We were taken aback by the skyrock-

eting rates influencers charge nowadays. That got us thinking, "What if we just create our own influencer?" said Diana Nunez, co-founder of the ad agency called The Clueless.

Nunez created Aitana Lopez and the "rest is history".

Pink-haired Lopez is now a virtual influencer that is followed by more than 2,00,000 people on social media.

The virtual influencer now earns more than Rs 9 lakh per month. "Brands have paid

about \$1,000 a post for her to promote their products on social media—despite the fact that she is entirely fictional," the report noted.

The Clueless has another creation in development, which it calls a "curvy Mexican" named Laila.

Over the past few years, there have been partnerships between luxury brands and virtual influencers, like Kim Kardashian's make-up line KKW Beauty with Noonouri, and Louis Vuitton with Ayayi.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Kupwara. NIT No. 104-Kupwara/ 9817-25 of 2023-24 e-tendering DATED: - 01-01-2024. For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-tenders (in single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other state/Central Governments for the following works:-

Government of Jammu and Kashmir Office Of The Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Pulwama. Subject: Quotation (for supply of items for celebration of Republic Day 2024 event) at Municipal Council Pulwama. E-NIT No: MC/Pul/2023-24/3110-14 Dated: 03.01.2024. For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K UT, term e-tenders (in single cover system) are invited from the interested persons, parties, dealers, firms, suppliers, for supply and installation of below mentioned items for "celebration of Republic Day 2024 programme" at Municipal Council Pulwama.

علی محمد بٹ کا انتقال پر ممالی. یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ علی محمد بٹ صاحب مورہ بورڈ 3 جنوری 2024 (بدھ) کو انتقال فرما کر مالک حقیقی کے حضور آخوش رحمت میں جا کر گئے ہو گئے۔ مرحوم صوم و صلوات کے پابند، اخلاق و بلند کردار سے متصف اور علاقہ بھر میں اپنی شرافت طبع سے معروف شخصیت کے حامل تھے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ سے دعا ہے کہ مرحوم کو اپنے نور رحمت میں بہت بہت الفردوس کے بلند مقامات سے سرفراز فرمائے اور لواحقین کو صبر جمیل عطا فرمائے (آمین)۔ اس سلسلے میں مرحوم کی اجنبی فائز خواتین 7 جنوری 2024 (اتوار) صبح 10:30 بجے ان کے آبائی مقبرہ مسجد ملک صاحب مورہ انجمن میں منعقد ہوئے۔ بعد ازاں تعزیتی مجلس مسرورم کے دولت خانہ واقع ملک صاحب مورہ انجمن میں منعقد ہوئی۔ فوت: مستورات سے التماس ہے کہ وہ اپنے ماتحتی قبر کا بیوہ وغیرہ دلائیں۔ موگواران۔۔۔ تصدیق احمد بٹ منظور احمد بٹ (فرزند ان) 8899609587, 7780885703

ادو قتر جامع تحصیلدار گلشنہ درخواست مخائب عبدالحمید بٹ پر محمد عبداللہ بٹ ساکنہ شہ پورہ تحصیل کریری برادھول RBA سرٹیفیٹ بحق بھتیجہ پر حارث حید بٹ و سہانہ حید بٹ تحت امی آر 144,294,375510. اہتمام براد آگاہی بر خاص و عام معاملہ مندرچہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر بدھ میں زبردستی کاروائی ہے اس نسبت باورای حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ پتہ نکالات دیکر ڈپلٹ کے گئے جس سے عہد ہوتا ہے کہ سائل شہ پورہ میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ کمپنی کی سالانہ آمدنی 2,40,000 ہے کمپنی بدھ میں فراڈ پیشکش ہے۔ عبدالحمید بٹ ولد محمد عبداللہ بٹ 40 سال مزدوری ممتاز و بیگزہ و بیو عبدالحمید بٹ 38 سال گھریلو کام حارث حید بٹ پر عبدالحمید بٹ 18 سال زیر تعلیم سہانہ حید بٹ دختر عبدالحمید بٹ 17 سال زیر تعلیم اور شہید بٹ دختر عبدالحمید بٹ 15 سال زیر تعلیم ماہرہ حید بٹ دختر عبدالحمید بٹ 12 سال زیر تعلیم ایک علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتایا گیا ہے۔ سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ پناہ دینا یا عذر یا اعتراض سات یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ مینا کوڈ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔ نامب تحصیلدار kri

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S Alpalther Tours And Travels " Situated At Adina Magam Budgam Public Notice Whereas I, Ishrat Majid D/o Abdul Majid Bhat R/o Gumboora Khag intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of "M/S Alpalther Tours And Travels " Situated At Adina Magam Budgam Kashmir under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas I will submit state subject / Domicile certificate , Qualification Certificate, pan card / Experience Certificate(Minimum 5years), Police character certificate, Bank statement (minimum balance 10000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by sub Registrar, printing material (Letter head / Visiting card) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist I Prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12) before my case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial institutions/Bank/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration(email id: dtdregl23@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in a leading newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained. bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE A. Motor cycle bearing Registration No. Engine 29607 Chasis 18315 Police Station by No. No.: is under seizure at which is owned by Ali Mohammad Dar s/o Gh Mohd Dar The owner/applcant is seeking release of the vehicle. If anybody having any objection may kindly report to the Office of Tehsilidar South Srinagar within 03 days. No objection will be accepted after the given time has passed. NJ

University of Kashmir, Srinagar Notice The candidate whose particulars are given below has reported to the University that he / she has lost his/her University Certificate/s and has applied for issuance of duplicate certificate/s: Name: Ulfat Fayaz Paretnage:- Fayaz Ahmad Mir Residence:- Check-1- Kawoosa Registration No : 2186-MAG-2017 Certificate/s lost:- Graduation Marks Card Roll No/s:- 20617272 Session/ Year Dec-2020- Feb 2021 Before University will consider issuance of Duplicate Certificate/s in favour of the candidate, any person having any objection shall report to the undersigned within one week from the date of issuance of this notice. The original certificate/s issued to the candidate be treated as cancelled No: F(Duplicate/ MC-6th Sem/PA /KU/22 Assistant Controller of Examinations (PG/UG/Prof bmg

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KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Friday | 05-01-2024

Rising Cancer Cases

The surge in cancer cases across India, particularly in regions like Kashmir, demands an urgent attention. The recent Lancet study, revealing India's staggering 12 lakh new cancer cases and 9.3 lakh deaths in 2019, underlines the gravity of this health crisis. Among Asian countries, India stands as the second highest contributor to the cancer burden, a situation echoed in Kashmir, where cases have risen drastically over the past decade.

The Lancet study pinpoints critical insights: Tracheal, bronchus, and lung cancers top the list in Asia, with notable prevalence among men. However, cervical cancer ranks high among women across several Asian nations. Encouragingly, the HPV vaccine has exhibited efficacy in preventing this cancer, offering a beacon of hope in disease prevention strategies.

The findings link cancer proliferation to several factors prevalent in India and Asia. The concerning escalation of ambient air pollution acts as a significant catalyst. Five Asian countries, including India, witness alarmingly high levels of PM2.5, posing a severe health risk. Rapid industrial growth, urbanization, and heightened vehicular usage contribute to this hazardous environmental scenario.

Furthermore, smokeless tobacco consumption emerges as a prominent concern, especially in South Asian countries like India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. The prevalence of products like khaini and gutkha correlates significantly with oral, esophageal, and pancreatic cancers. Similarly, issues related to food contamination and adulteration, witnessed prominently in Kashmir, have been identified as contributors to the rising cancer cases in the region.

The trend demands immediate, comprehensive intervention. A robust approach encompassing public health policies, enhanced awareness campaigns, and stringent regulatory measures is imperative. Efforts must focus on mitigating the identified risk factors: controlling air pollution, curbing tobacco usage, and combating food adulteration through rigorous monitoring and stringent legal actions against offenders.

Moreover, the healthcare infrastructure in low- and medium-income countries like India, demands urgent augmentation. Rural areas, in particular, face scarcity in oncologic facilities, resulting in delayed diagnosis and treatment, thereby impacting survival rates. Policy measures aimed at improving accessibility and affordability of cancer screening and treatment are indispensable.

Kashmir, experiencing a disproportionate surge in cancer cases, warrants special attention. The government must prioritize comprehensive research to identify the underlying causes. Unveiling the reasons behind this surge is critical for public awareness and preventive measures. Addressing issues of food adulteration, enhancing healthcare infrastructure, and fostering awareness campaigns are imperative steps for Kashmir's healthcare system.

Combating the escalating cancer crisis in India and specifically addressing the alarming surge in Kashmir necessitates a collaborative effort between the government, healthcare institutions, and the public. It's imperative to act swiftly, implementing targeted measures to alleviate this growing health burden and secure a healthier future for the country and in our Valley

OTHER OPINION

Democracy's Year

Globally, more voters than ever in history will head to the polls this year as, starting with Taiwan in January and running through the US elections in November, over 40 countries representing 41% of the world's population and 42% of its gross domestic product will have a chance to elect their leaders. In that sense, 2024 will be Democracy's Year. Under normal circumstances, that's a cause for cheer as it sends out a strong signal that democracy, the most cherished possession of human beings, is alive and kicking. But these are extraordinary times—with two brutal wars raging, inflation still remaining a tough challenge and economies going through frequent phases of uncertainty, electoral outcomes have a huge potential for further disruption.

First up will be Taiwan's January 13 presidential elections, which could set the tone for US-China relations for years to come, with tensions likely to escalate further if the current Taiwanese Vice-President wins as forecast. But the biggest example of election-led disruption with a profound impact on the global economy would be the US presidential race culminating in November. After a tumultuous year, the US and China ended 2023 with an uneasy detente. But that fig leaf will be blown away if Donald Trump returns to power. Few have forgotten how a tense US-China relationship gave way to an all-out trade war under the former president. As Trump means unpredictability, there could be an unstoppable escalation of tension between the two countries with disastrous consequences.

Elections with all-but-certain outcomes can also be worth watching. While Vladimir Putin may be embarking on a sure-win re-election campaign, the March presidential election victory margin, if available, could be an indicator of whether more Russians are backing his seemingly endless war with Ukraine. Yet another predictable outcome will be seen in India where Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party is already seen to be in pole position. But here too, the victory margin will be of great relevance. A diminished margin could force the ruling party to tone down its aggressive Hindutva—something that many quarters are wishing for as a best-case scenario. On the other hand, a victory margin that is even close to the 2019 election results would make it easy for the BJP to implement its remaining agenda—cultural nationalism that includes the Uniform Civil Code, the One Nation-One Election idea, etc. Of special interest also will be whether the Modi government will gather the courage to unleash a fresh set of radical economic reforms.

Financial Express

New Year Resolution Our Built Environment Should Secure Us From Earthquake Disasters



Picture for representational purposes only/ Free Stock Images

Dr. Afroz Shah

“Our regions are prone to various hazards, and earthquakes are the most dangerous because of their unpredictable nature, which gives us sleepless nights. Therefore, it is good for our societies to work on a resolution to make the incoming year a swift leap towards preparedness and making our surroundings an abode of peace. We can do it; it costs what is easily affordable to many and possible for others with the help of government and private agencies

As we say goodbye to 2013, it is a valuable learning experience to explore what we have achieved and what needs to be accomplished to make the Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh regions hazard-resilient societies. The earthquake and flood hazards remain key challenges to address, rooted in the structural setting of our region linked to the tectonic plate interactions between the lithospheric plates of India and Eurasia. The past and current geological investigations suggest that the region is prone to large-magnitude earthquakes that can devastate millions of people, inhibiting the region. Therefore, investing in building a sense of security and safety from earthquake hazards is good.

The decades of crucial scientific wisdom on understanding earthquake hazards and how to live in harmony with them cannot be accomplished and shaped unless there is an awareness in people's minds and an inner urge and thirst in administration to make a change for good. The built area comprises what humans have created over centuries for survival and comfort and must be hazard-resilient; it includes our buildings, roads, hospitals, schools, etc. The built environment must be appropriately managed to improve its resilience; otherwise, it could become time bombs that explode and cause harm at a time when we wish them to save us, which is our great challenge in the future. Buildings are often made to secure life from heat, cold, danger, predators, etc., but, ironically, not from earthquake hazards, which is something least bothering our societies for unknown reasons. I fail

to understand why.

I have been writing articles on earthquake hazards for more than a decade now, as many other scientists and researchers do, and most of it is published by Kashmir Observer, which has taken a leading role in disseminating scientific information vital for the security and safety of our societies from hazards, in particular, earthquakes and floods. Yet, whenever I visit India, I fail to understand why our buildings do not follow the standard earthquake safety building procedures and practices that will save lives during earthquakes. I have been posing this question to myself and discussing it with several scientists, students, and people in Kashmir, which made me conclude that the changes are difficult to make but are not impossible. The mindset is not ready to leap towards a new building practice where some previous social norms may have to be abandoned for good. For example, they include well-trained architects and engineers from some of the best institutes in the world to replace the existing ones, who are locally trained, and most of them are not even formally trained at universities, etc. For example, most of the residential buildings I have witnessed in Anantnag, where I come from, are designed and constructed by local architects and other engineers, who have often not been trained in a formal engineering institution. It is a huge problem, and the current norm ought to be replaced by professional engineering design and construction.

The government must adopt a resolution to carefully monitor the competence of engineering

design and construction patterns to allow systematic replacement procedures for the greater good. The recently concluded 6th World Congress on Disaster Management (WCDDM) in Dehradun also recognized the need to change the existing practices for good. The world's scientific community and people from diverse backgrounds emphasized the need to reevaluate the existing norms in preparation for a better future to effectively combat the risks posed by hazards.

Our regions are prone to various hazards, and earthquakes are the most dangerous because of their unpredictable nature, which gives us sleepless nights. Therefore, it is good for our societies to work on a resolution to make the incoming year a swift leap towards preparedness and making our surroundings an abode of peace. We can do it; it costs what is easily affordable to many and possible for others with the help of government and private agencies. We must start to navigate the route of hazard preparedness and disaster resilience in the built environment for the better of our regions, and to accomplish this enormous task; the government must play a critical role by monitoring, facilitating, and rebuilding the infrastructure in the region.

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

The author is a National Geographic Explorer and Sr. Assistant Professor, Structural Geology



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Power of Words

Words carry a lot of power. They can build and lift, comfort and calm, and teach and inspire. Contrarily, words can destroy and demolish, incite and enrage, and embarrass and demean. Their meanings crystallize perceptions that shape our beliefs, drive our behaviour, and ultimately create our world. The power of words

arises from our emotional responses when we read, speak or hear them. The words we write or speak to others can leave a huge impact and create a lasting memory, either good or bad. It is therefore very important to choose them wisely and use them properly. Words are like music – when played well, they can enchant and delight the whole environment. And, words

are free. But, if used in a wrongful and harmful manner, they even cost you a mountain. Words hold incredible power to shape our lives. Positive communication, rooted in empathy and understanding, can transform relationships, boost our physical and mental well-being, and inspire personal growth. By choosing our words carefully, we can harness the power

of language to create a brighter, more fulfilling life. So, let us embrace the power of words and use them to uplift, inspire, and transform the world. Said Mother Teresa: “Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”

Ranaganathan Sivakumar

Mindful Fridays

STEPPING STONES OF RESILIENCE

Embracing Setbacks with Inherent Value

Wasim Kakroo

In the grand tapestry of human existence, the quest for self-worth often intertwines with external validations such as accolades and achievements. Society, with its penchant for measuring success in tangible terms, can unwittingly foster a culture where one's self-worth is tethered to accomplishments. However, the danger lies in the inherent fragility of such external markers, as they are susceptible to the unpredictable currents of life. In this article, we will explore the significance of disconnecting self-worth from accolades and achievements, emphasizing the resilience that arises from nurturing an intrinsic sense of value.

THE INNATE ESSENCE OF SELF-WORTH

The intrinsic sense of self-worth bestowed upon individuals at birth is akin to an intangible birthright, a gift that transcends the external markers of success. It is a fundamental essence, not subject to the fleeting nature of achievements or the capricious judgments of society. This innate value forms the very core of a person's identity, shaping their perceptions, decisions, and interactions with the world.

Acknowledging and preserving this core self-worth is paramount, for it acts as an unwavering anchor amid the unpredictable storms of life. In a society that often places undue emphasis on external validations, recognizing the intrinsic value within oneself becomes an act of self-preservation. The temptation to compromise this intrinsic worth for conditional positive regard may arise, especially in the face of societal expectations, but doing so lays the groundwork for profound challenges during setbacks.

Protecting this inherent worth is not a passive endeavor but an active commitment to self-affirmation. By embracing the profound truth that one's value is not contingent upon external achievements, individuals fortify themselves against the uncertainties of life, establishing a resilient foundation upon which they can build a fulfilling and authentic existence.

CONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD: THE PITFALL

In the intricate dance between self-worth and societal affirmations, the concept of conditional positive regard emerges as a critical factor

shaping individual perceptions. This dynamic suggests that one's value is intricately tied to meeting specific expectations or gaining approval from others. This external validation becomes a double-edged sword, offering momentary elation with each success but exposing individuals to the harsh winds of self-doubt when faced with failures.

The precarious emotional terrain navigated by those who tether their self-worth to external achievements becomes especially evident in the aftermath of setbacks. In these moments, when the applause of success fades into silence, individuals reliant solely on external affirmations may find themselves in an unsettling state of emotional disarray. Without the sturdy anchor of intrinsic self-worth, setbacks can become not just hurdles to overcome but existential crises, as failures threaten to erode the very foundation upon which their sense of identity rests.

In essence, the concept of conditional positive regard underscores the vulnerability inherent in relying solely on external markers of success for self-worth. It urges individuals to explore a more resilient path by anchoring their worth in the unwavering core of intrinsic value, free from the capricious judgments of external forces.

THE PERILS OF OVER-IDENTIFICATION WITH ACHIEVEMENTS

The peril of over-identifying with achievements lies in the precarious dance between success and the looming shadow of failure. This overreliance on external accomplishments sets the stage for a vulnerability rooted in the fear of judgment and falling short of societal expectations. The weight of one's self-worth tethered to accolades becomes a double-edged sword, as the elation of success is eclipsed by the paralyzing anxiety of potential failure.

This fear acts as a stifling force, a silent saboteur that whispers caution in the ears of those seeking to take risks or pursue their passions. The prospect of not meeting society's benchmarks becomes a specter, casting doubt on the validity of one's worth. The unchecked repetition of this cycle solidifies a perpetual sense of inadequacy, erecting formidable barriers to personal growth and fulfillment. Reluctance to step outside the comfort zone becomes a default response, sti-



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fling creativity, innovation, and the pursuit of authentic self-expression. Thus, the journey toward true self-discovery is hindered, as the fear of judgment eclipses the potential for personal evolution and resilience in the face of life's inevitable challenges.

NAVIGATING SETBACKS WITH RESILIENCE

In the intricate dance of life, challenges are the inevitable partners that test our mettle. The illusion of perpetual success dissipates when confronted with the unexpected twists and turns of our journey. In these crucibles of adversity, the significance of intrinsic self-worth emerges as the cornerstone of resilience. Individuals

fortified with a profound comprehension of their inherent value possess an emotional bedrock that remains unshaken in the face of setbacks. Instead of interpreting failures as a damning indictment of personal inadequacy, they embrace them as invaluable opportunities for growth and learning. Through this paradigm shift, setbacks become stepping stones, and resilience evolves not as a reaction to external circumstances, but as an intrinsic quality rooted in the unassailable belief in one's inherent worth.

CULTIVATING INTRINSIC SELF-WORTH
Nurturing intrinsic self-worth is a lifelong journey that involves self-

reflection, self-compassion, and a commitment to personal authenticity. Understanding that one's value is not contingent upon external validations liberates individuals to explore their true passions, take calculated risks, and embrace the full spectrum of human experience. Here are some strategies for cultivating intrinsic self-worth:

- Self-Reflection:** Regularly engage in introspective practices to identify personal strengths, values, and areas for growth. This self-awareness forms the foundation of intrinsic self-worth.
- Positive Affirmations:** Develop a habit of affirming your positive qualities and accom-

plishments. Verbalizing self-praise can reinforce a positive self-image and counteract negative thoughts.

- Set Boundaries:** Establish and communicate healthy boundaries in relationships. Respecting your own limits fosters a sense of self-worth by prioritizing your well-being and needs.
- Celebrate Achievements, Big and Small:** Acknowledge and celebrate your successes, no matter how minor. This practice reinforces the idea that your efforts and accomplishments contribute to your self-worth.
- Practice Self-Compassion:** Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, especially during challenging times. Embracing self-compassion allows you to navigate setbacks without compromising your sense of worth.
- Embrace Authenticity:** Align your actions with your true self. Pursue activities and goals that resonate with your values, fostering a genuine sense of identity and worth.
- Mindfulness Meditation:** Cultivate mindfulness to stay present and non-judgmental. Mindfulness allows you to observe thoughts and emotions without attaching your self-worth to them, promoting a more balanced perspective.
- Surround Yourself with Positive Influences:** Build a supportive network of friends and mentors who uplift and encourage you. Positive influences contribute to a nurturing environment that reinforces intrinsic self-worth.
- Set Realistic Goals:** Establish achievable and meaningful goals. Meeting these objectives contributes to a sense of accomplishment and reinforces the belief in your capabilities, bolstering self-worth.
- Express Gratitude:** Regularly acknowledge and appreciate the positive aspects of your life. Gratitude fosters a positive mindset, helping you recognize the inherent value in yourself and the world around you.

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THE POWER OF PATTERNS

A Little Repetition Goes a Long Way

Bill Birchard

"Plop plop, fizz fizz, oh what a relief it is." You might have thought that only the pill that goes with that jingle creates relief. But science suggests the jingle's wording itself elicits relief. The repetitive syntactic pattern eases people's processing of the meaning, and easier processing rewards people neurologically.[i] Scientists call this mental assistance, cognitive facilitation. Professional writers and speakers use it all the time, in works highbrow and low. At the high end is poet Percy Bysshe Shelley[iii]:

*"And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?"*

The first two lines mirror each other syntactically. The initial sentence and its reflection in the second—even if you're oblivious to the repetition—allows the meaning of the second to dawn quicker. Or as scientists say, the first sentence's pattern acts as a syntactic prime.[iii]

PARALLEL PROCESS

This points to one of the simplest and easiest tricks to help

you say things with more impact: Recast the flow of your words into repeating patterns. Create a prime and a follow-up (or two). You'll do something writing teachers have long advocated. You'll create a parallel structure—parallel in phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and overall expression.

Priming syntactically doesn't rank high in artistic glamor. But we now know from science that it does rank high in effectiveness because it lubricates the flow of words into people's minds. That gives you a straightforward means of writing or speaking that hooks people.[iv]

Why does priming work? Readers and listeners are always asking, "What will this person say next? What will the next word be? The next phrase? The next sentence? The next chapter? The habit of predicting what's next is universal. It's a human obsession—and people read and listen at every tier of language structure.[v]

When you place a prime early on—a word or phraseology or sentence structure you plan to reuse—people take notice even if behind the curtain of their consciousness. They instantly and

unknowingly place a predictive bet.[vi] And if they're right, they reap a payoff in faster language processing.[vii]

Many experiments confirm this advantage. One small study by Uta Noppeney and Cathy Price at University College London asked 25 people to read blocks of text with and without syntactic primes. (Some blocks had repeating language structures; some did not.) People who read blocks with parallel patterns finished sentences faster, in roughly 2.0 versus 2.1 seconds.[viii]

PRIME PLUS

Sascha Topolinski at the University of Cologne did a simple experiment that reinforces yet other powers of a prime. He asked people to read short question-and-answer jokes and rate their funniness. His experiment had one manipulation: Some readers unknowingly received a verbal prime buried in an introductory part of the experiment, and some did not.[ix]

The prime was a "significant" word from the joke's punchline. Each person was exposed to it one to 15 minutes beforehand.

Having been exposed to this key-word, what do you think happened in people's minds?

Here's one joke: "What were the last words of a vampire?"

Answer: "Dawn!"

Okay, that's an old one not worth a laugh out loud. But if Topolinski's research holds, you just found it funnier than you otherwise would have because my third paragraph included "dawn" as a prime.

Topolinski's readers rated jokes as funnier so long as they got the punchline prime more than a minute beforehand. Less than a minute and the prime didn't work as a humor booster. In Topolinski's mind, the primes helped people to solve the joke and to cognitively master the punchline.[x]

Jokes aside, priming is an underappreciated way to make your words more reader- and listener-friendly. When readers or listeners are primed, they don't have to rev their language-processing machinery as much. Your prime is a heads up, and it gives them a head start in understanding.

EASY PEASY PATTERNS

Engaging people with syn-

tactic priming often takes little skill. At the most basic, you can take advantage of it by starting or finishing successive sentences similarly. Here's scientist Merlin Sheldrake, author of *The Entangled Life*, as he writes about the function of fungi:

"The story you hear about grain determines whether you end up with bread or beer. The story you hear about milk determines whether you end up with yogurt or cheese. The story you hear about apples determines whether you end up with sauce or cider."[xi]

Such simple repetition. How could it matter? As you try to digest his meaning, however, you get a helping hand with cognitive facilitation. Sheldrake's point becomes more accessible as he recycles his opening pattern. He has put the new wine of his content in old bottles, making that new wine that much more pleasurable to drink.

A second example: Nelson Mandela wrote in *Long Walk to Freedom*: "I was born free—free in every way that I could know: Free to play in the fields near my mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my

village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls."[xii]

Notice how an ordinary adjective—free—placed in a repeating structure creates an extra-ordinary prime.

So powerful are syntactic primes that they act on our minds for longer than you might guess. That was demonstrated in an experiment by Kristen Tooley and others at the University of Illinois and the University of California Davis. They showed that, after a syntactic prime, people read sentences with similar structures faster even after three syntactically different sentences intervened.[xiii]

Priming and the facilitation of repetition have their limits, of course. They can get boring. That's why journalists say: "Repeat and vary." But in everyday talk and text, an old structure conveying a new idea prevents cognitive indigestion. Here's some more new wine in an old bottle: "Plop plop, fizz fizz, oh how friendly a pattern is."

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