



IASLIC NEWSLETTER

Indian Association for Special
Libraries and Information Centres



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Quote of the Month

"Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life."

— Sidney Sheldon (1917-2007)
American novelist

Appeal to Readers

News from different regions / states are solicited from IASLIC members for inclusion in the newsletter. Send such news to the Editor.

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IASLIC ACTIVITIES

Study Circle Lecture on NLs of USA, Spain and Taiwan

The 335th IASLIC Study Circle Meeting was held on November 28, 2019 in the Central Library, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. At this meeting, chaired by Prof. Krishnapada Majumder, former Professor and Head, DLIS, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, Dr. Sukanta Kumar Patra, Assistant Librarian (G-II), Jadavpur University, Kolkata, delivered a lecture on the topic 'Services of National Libraries of USA, Spain and Taiwan: a personal experience'. The meeting started with the welcome address by Dr. Sudip Ranjan Hatua, Assistant Professor and Head, DLIS, Rabindra Bharati University, and Convener, Study Circle Division of IASLIC, who also introduced the speaker.

Dr. Patra, who had recently visited the National Libraries of USA, Spain and Taiwan, in his speech, presented a comparative view of the services provided by the aforesaid libraries from a library professional's angle. Dr. Patra, who visited USA as one of the four representatives selected from India to attend ETD Conference there, also visited the Library of Congress. LOC, he said, served as the repository of the country's history and culture. There were different galleries in that library for ancient civilizations, racial and historical events. Even children's reading room had facility and scope for creative and physical activities of children, he added. The library also had facilities to engage any library/information professional to work in the library on voluntary basis. The speaker worked there for a few hours as a volunteer.

National Library of Taiwan, according to Dr. Patra, is the most used library of that country in terms of usage. The library has large reading sections for both printed and digital collections. However, people were so enthusiastic about using that, reading seats needed to be booked earlier online, Dr. Patra said. All modern facilities and services were available in the library and library professionals were very much efficient to provide prompt service to the users, he added. One interesting aspect that Dr. Patra noticed there was that when a book was returned, it was placed in an automatic machine which cleaned the book by removing dust and germs and refreshed it with perfume for the next user.

Though, the National Library of Spain was not originally included in his tour plan, Dr. Patra became interested to see that library after having noticed a roadside advertisement of the library. On reaching the library he found its architecture very imposing. It still bore testimony to the rich history of the country and looked like a royal palace, he said. Dr. Patra presented a documentary film and some photographs of the library. He, however, could not cover the total library as he had no formal permission from the competent authority.

As Dr. Patra used plenty of photographs and video clips in his presentation, his speech was very much enjoyed by the viewers. They felt as if they were experiencing a live visit to those libraries.

After the lecture, Prof. Krishnapada Majumdar invited Dr. Partha Sarathi Das, ALIO, National Library, Kolkata, to present the picture of our National Library as compared to those of the national libraries of the countries visited by Dr. Patra. Dr. Das pointed out the major

IASLIC wishes all its members a very happy and prosperous New Year 2020

barriers in the growth and development of the National Library of India. He said, according to Delivery of Books and Newspaper Act (1956), every publisher was bound to provide one published document to the National Library along with other three designated libraries. But since the penalty for non-submission was only Rs. 50, publishers often did not submit their books. He further stated that as, according to Indian Constitution, library was in the list of state affairs, implementation of different policies by the Government of India was difficult. Apart from this, there was also shortage of fund, manpower, etc. which also affected the growth of the National Library, he added.

Dr. Sudip Ranjan Hatua, Convener, Study Circle Division, IASLIC, opined that though the video clips showed very gorgeous, clean and decent library environment, the true picture behind the scene was almost same everywhere. He admitted that level of pollution in the countries visited by Dr. Patra was much less compared to that in India.

A book in Bengali entitled "Purba Banger Swadhinata Sangramider Choritabidhan", compiled by Srimanta Pal and Pampa Bhadra published by Som Publishing, Kolkata, was released on the occasion. Dr. Jagatpati Sarkar of the Asiatic Society Library, Kolkata, hailed the initiative of publishing such a biographical dictionary of eminent freedom fighters.

In his concluding remarks, Prof. Krishnapada Majumdar also pointed out the barriers in the development of the National Library of our country.

The study circle meeting was attended by many library and informational professionals and a good number of LIS students. The meeting ended with the vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Partha Sarathi Das, ALIO, National Library, Kolkata.

CONFERENCES / SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS

National

Workshop on Quality Research Writing

An International Workshop on 'Preparing Quality Research Writing and Improving Research Impact' will be held at Vellalar College for Women (Autonomous), Erode, during January 3 - 4, 2020. For details visit: <https://www.vcw.ac.in/>

Workshop on Library Digitization

Gurudas College, Kolkata, jointly with Vikmans, is organizing a Workshop on 'Library Digitization' on January 10, 2020. For details mail to library.gurudascollege@gmail.com or pankaj@vikmans.com

Workshop on Development of E-Content

AKI's Poona College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Pune, in collaboration with Knowledge Bridge, Ahmednagar, is organizing a National Professional Development Workshop (PDW) - cum - Webinar on 'Development of Real-Time E-Content for Virtual Teaching' during January 13 - 19, 2020. For details visit: <http://www.akipoonacollege.ac.in/> or email to: librarian@poonacolleg.edu.in

Seminar on Sustainable Library

A National Seminar on 'Sustainable Library' is being organized by the Department of Library & Information Science, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, during January 24 - 25, 2020. For details visit: http://www.jaduniv.edu.in/upload_files/scroll_info/1575634611.pdf

NISCAIR Training Programmes

National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) is organizing two training programmes on (1) Dspace Software for Design and Development of Institutional Repositories - Advance (January 20 - 24, 2020); (2) Library Automation and Networking February 24 - 6 March 6, 2020). For details visit: <http://www.niscair.res.in/researchandeducation/hrd>

International

Conference on Gender, Health, Information

The 1st Multidisciplinary International Conference on the 'Social and Life Sciences' (ICSL 2020) on 'Gender, Health, Information and Environment' is being organized by the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (FLASS), in collaboration with Faculty of Life Sciences, East West University, Dhaka, Bangladesh, during February 27 - 29, 2020. For details visit: <http://ikm.ewubd.edu/icsl/>

IFLA News Media Conference

The 2020 IFLA International News Media Conference, organized by IFLA News Media Section and hosted by the Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas y de la Información de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), will be held in Mexico City, during March 5 - 6, 2020. The theme of the conference is 'Capture and Preservation of Born Digital News Media'. A meeting of the IFLA News Media Section Standing Committee will also take place on March 4, 2020 at the same venue. For details visit: <http://iibi.unam.mx/IFLAmidia>

Conference on LIS

The Social Sciences Division (SSD) and the Computer Unit of Athens Institute of Education and Research (ATINER), Greece, will hold its Annual International Conference on 'Library and Information Science' as part of the Annual International Conference on Social Sciences during July 27 - 30, 2020. For details visit: <https://www.atiner.gr/library>

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

IFLA Honours and Awards 2020

Nominations have been invited by IFLA for various honours and awards for the year 2020. The last date for submitting nominations is February 28, 2020. For details visit: <https://www.ifla.org/honours-awards/call-for-nominations>

IFLA Green Library Award 2020

Application has been invited for IFLA Green Library Award 2020. The finalist will be recognized for their outstanding submission. The award includes € 500, sponsored by De

Gruyter publishing house, and will be presented at the 86th IFLA World Library and Information Congress to be held in Dublin, Ireland. Applications must be submitted before January 15, 2020 to: matti.k.jarvinen@hel.fi. For more details visit: <https://www.ifla.org/node/92672>

NDLI Conducts Reading Olympiad

The National Digital Library of India (NDLI) conducted its first ever Reading Olympiad for higher educational institutions of Coimbatore district at PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore, says a *The Covai Post* report. It was jointly organized by the Departments of General Library and Hindi of the institution. The Olympiad 2019 comprised of seven reading related competitions namely Quiz, Debate, Role Play, AdZap, Poster Making, Pebble Painting and Video Books. Almost 300 students from 50 different colleges across the district participated in the event. This was a pilot project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources. This project has been developed to provide support at all academic levels including researchers. The secretary of PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Dr. N Yesodha Devi, welcomed the gathering. Mr. S Seran, Educational Officer, Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education and Development presided over the event. Ms. P Geetha Priya, Personal Assistant (General) to the Collector of Nilgiris District, was the guest of honour. Dr. Vignesh Sornamohan, Chief Strategic and Outreach Officer, NDLI, explained the objectives of the NDLI and Reading Olympiad 2019. NDLI Reading Olympiad will be conducted annually and overall winners of the Olympiad will be given a rolling trophy. Kumaraguru College of Technology bagged the Rolling Trophy for 2019. For original report visit: <https://ndlproject.iitkgp.ac.in/news/media-coverage/first-ever-reading-olympiad-higher-educational-institutions> or <https://www.covai-post.com/coimbatore/first-ever-reading-olympiad-for-higher-educational-institutions/>

Hidden Treasure in Ludhiana College

Stacked in four almirahs amid the vast library of Gujranwala Guru Nanak Khalsa College in Civil Lines, Ludhiana, scores of heritage books shifted from Pakistan's Gujranwala in 1953 are hidden treasures that not many students have tapped. The college's Sant Teja Singh Library offers its students a curated collection of 62,000 books. Among them are 1,600 vintage books - available in English, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu - some as old as 1832, says a story by Deep Sharma Sood in *The Hindustan Times*. Established in 1889, the Khalsa Committee started Khalsa High School in Gujranwala, Pakistan (now Gujranwala Guru Nanak Public School, Ludhiana) and Guru Nanak Khalsa College. But after Partition in 1947, the college was re-established in Ludhiana in 1953, and renamed Gujranwala Guru Nanak Khalsa College. Along came a huge collection of books on social sciences, political science, philosophy, history and fiction from countries like Russia, France, the US and the United Kingdom. Though they have failed to catch the eye of students, the variety is impressive including *The Federal System of Rajputana* (1832), *The*

Prisoner of Zenda by Anthony Hope (1894), *Heredity Race and Society* by Lloyd S Woodburne (1904), *Comedy in Three Acts* by Harcharan Singh (1942), *The Transfer of Power to India* by E W R Lumby (1945) and *Studies in Medieval Indian History* by P Saran (1952). A board stating "Our heritage books from Gujranwala Pakistan" is erected in the library's reading area to allure students, but in vain. While around 150 books are issued to students daily on an average, the vintage books find not a single taker. Interactions with the students visiting the library revealed their disregard for the literary wealth. "My interest lies in reading books related to my course. I regularly borrow these books for notes. With so much pressure to excel in studies, I don't have time to read anything else," said Jaspreet Kaur, a student. Others cited ignorance. Puneet Chawla, a second-year BA student, said, "I visit the library daily to read newspapers, but was not aware of the heritage books. The college authorities must create awareness regarding the precious collection." Aware of students' apathy, college principal Arvinder Singh, said, "We plan to set up a special area centrally, showcasing these books, to encourage more students to read them." For original report visit: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/hidden-treasure-of-vintage-books-waits-to-be-discovered-at-ludhiana-college/story-aWEQZIKbWCj2zWZL2Yg0BO.html>

Human Chain Shifts Library Books

The volunteers stood shoulder to shoulder, forming a human chain that spanned more than a quarter-mile - longer than five football fields. More than 650 people came to the Norman, Okla., Central Library Branch in USA recently after the library system put out a call: Help us move books from the just-shuttered library branch to the new one across the park. So the crowd - initially all holding hands - passed the library's collection of fairy tales and folk tales person-to-person about 1,700 feet, from the 53-year-old Norman Public Library Central Branch to the new, gleaming \$39 million library building, according to a story by Allison Klein in *The Washington Post*. "Some people were giddy," said Pioneer Library System spokesman Keith Merckx. "And some people called it bittersweet because of their attachment to the old building." Sally Mae Johnston was both. She showed up to the "book brigade" with her husband. The couple has lived in Norman for 30 years after relocating for his job at the time as an assistant department manager at Walmart. "One of the first things I did when I moved here was get a library card," said Johnston, who declined to give her age, saying, "I'm sticky about that." She said that she saw the call for help moving the books on *Facebook* and that it was her husband who initially said he wanted to go. Johnston, who belongs to two book clubs at the library, agreed right away. After all, it's been a staple in her life for 30 years: In addition to the hundreds of books she has borrowed, she registered to vote there, learned how to use a computer there and took a Spanish class that taught her enough to keep up with a telenovela. "It's my hometown library, and we wanted to be part of history," said Johnston,

who also worked at Walmart and retired 12 years ago as a manager in the crafts and fabrics department. She said she was charmed by the GoPro video camera that was affixed to the book "Chicken Little," the tale of a chicken that is smacked in the head by a falling acorn and then believes the world is coming to an end. Johnston joked that once Chicken Little is in its new home, it would no longer have to worry about the sky falling. For full report visit: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/10/31/about-people-formed-human-chain-move-kids-books-one-library-another/>

800 Libraries Closed in Britain

Almost 800 libraries have closed since the Conservative-Lib Dem government implemented austerity in 2010, new figures reveal. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (Cipfa) annual survey of the UK's libraries, excluding Northern Ireland, shows that there are 3,583 library branches still open in the UK - 35 fewer than last year. Since 2010, 773 have closed, says a report in *The Guardian*. The closure of almost a fifth of the UK's libraries over the last 10 years comes against a backdrop of a 29.6% decline in spend, said Cipfa. National spending on the service topped £1bn in 2009/10 but dropped to under £750m in the last year, which saw a 0.4% increase on the 2017/2018 spend. The number of paid librarians has also plummeted. In 2009/2010, the point marking the start of the Tory-led government's austerity drive, there were 24,000 salaried staff working in libraries. Last year (2018), there were 15,300 employees and more than 51,000 volunteers. As the number of branches and paid staff has declined, so have library visits: there were 226m visits to libraries over the last year, compared with 315m in 2009/2010. Cipfa chief executive Rob Whiteman said that while spending had increased slightly in the last year, the figures showed a sustained trend where local councils on tight budgets had been forced to redirect funding to priority services such as social care. For full report visit: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/dec/06/britain-has-closed-almost-800-libraries-since-2010-figures-show>

Silent Revolution in Remote Village

The quaint little houses in Nainital's Seem village, appear to be an uncanny depiction of 'Little boxes on the hillside,' the iconic Pete Seeger song. Home to barely 362 residents, literacy is quite a recent concept in this serene mountain hamlet. Schools exist, as per government policy mandates, but as is the case in most remote areas, student attendance and the quality of education are both inadequate. But thanks to Jaya and Atul Shah, there is a silent literary revolution brewing in Seem, today, says a story by Sayantani Nath available on thebetterindia.com website. While the little ones and their elder siblings trek for hours along the winding mountain paths to attend school, they have little exposure to the bigger world beyond the towering hills where knowledge and experience are now transmitted in digital codes and algorithms. It was, therefore, serendipitous that Jaya Shah, a social worker from Mumbai, chose to retire in Seem along with her husband, Atul, in early 2016. Within a few months,

she started noticing how the children were deprived of a wholesome learning experience. Their education was limited to the pages of hand-me-down textbooks and outdated curriculum. Jaya decided to collect a few children's storybooks and start a makeshift library in one spare room of their bungalow. "The idea was to create a cosy space for the kids where they can come and learn while having fun," shares Jaya. With help from their family and friends, the couple arranged a bookshelf, a soft board and 17 donated books; and opened the doors of the 'library' that very day. Word spread fast. One by one, curious faces started peeping through the doors of this 'alien' place, where they could find colourful books outside their syllabus, read them, and even take a few home! On the first day, the tiny library welcomed 35 kids, who did not take long to tell their friends about this fantastic new place. The following day, 50 children turned up at Jaya's doorstep, all thrilled to explore the library. Jaya entrusted the children with the task of choosing the perfect name for their dreamland. "At first, I thought they would come up with a Kumaoni name, but to my utter surprise, they decided to christen their library as 'Happy Children's Library', simply because this place made them incredibly happy," she recounts. The resources now seemed insufficient, so Jaya reached out to Angelique Foundation, a non-profit foundation known for their immensely popular 'Pustakalaya' or community library project. With their support, Happy Children's Library was furnished with multiple racks of crisp, new books as well as educational games and puzzles. Happy Children's Library has found a source of support in Angelique, while funds and book donations from Jaya's friends and acquaintances have kept pouring in. Acknowledging the steady relationship, Jaishree, an employee with the Angelique Foundation, says, "The locals were so fascinated by Jaya's library that people would visit from miles away. Taking a cue from this, we have built four more community libraries in adjoining village schools." Today, Jaya's library records an attendance of around 40 kids every day, often surpassing the schools they study in. On special days, when the library hosts any creative workshops or interactive activities, the footfall crosses 60 for sure. Her present book tally stands at a whopping 1400. For full story visit: <https://www.thebetterindia.com/198127/uttarakhand-couple-literacy-village-children-education-hero-inspiring-india/>

New World for First Time Readers

As the school bell announces the end of the day, 10-year-old Sarita quietly settles down in a nook of the class to open a book. She struggles with some words in "*Dum Dum Ki Kursi*", a collection of rhymes by Usha Chhabra, and turns to her friend Sachin for help. Together, both of them are able to pronounce the words, and their faces light up with a smile. The Class 4 students at a government primary school in Uttarakhand's Poth village are the first in their families to read, according to a story by Prashant Jha in *The Times of India*. Children in cities may be falling out of love with books, but libraries are sprouting in some of the remotest

villages in the Himalayan hills, training first-generation learners. Altogether 1,647 such libraries have opened up a new world for first-time readers in the hill state. For full story visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/quiet-library-revolution-in-uttarakhand/articleshow/71735399.cms>

Revival of Karnataka School Libraries

If one goes by Karnataka's District Information System for Education (DISE) data, 98.6% of government schools in the state have a library. But walk into any such institution and the library the teacher points to is just a locked rack with books gathering dust - some gnawed at by termites - and having barely anything to do with children, says a *The Times of India* report. At the government lower primary school, Horamavu, books in the dusty rack include biographies of Jijabai, Surdas and Ramadasa. A few kilometres away, the lower primary school at Jayanthi Nagar hosts a similar collection comprising Nandalal Bose, Gautam Buddha, Ranadheera Kanteerava. So-called libraries, functioning out of cupboards or racks, are a pointer to the abysmal infrastructure in government schools - some are even bereft of proper classrooms. That most books available to students are not in sync with their reading abilities smacks of myopic planning on the part of authorities, showing no thought has gone into the selection process. Books open windows to the world and restricting kids' exposure will only scuttle their all-round development. Be it maintenance or manpower, the government needs to find long-term solutions to problems plaguing institutions so that children have a brighter future. Vinoda TN, programme associate of Room to Read, which launched its programmes in Karnataka in 2017, recalled how engaging teachers for the programme was the biggest challenge they faced. "Keeping a library active would mean maintaining records and thus, more administrative work. The teachers' priorities were different - they wanted to finish the syllabus, maintain attendance records and do other routine work and didn't want more on their platter. We had to coach them on how to make libraries engaging, tell stories and get children hooked to books," explained Vinoda. NGOs trying to revive libraries are focusing on revamping the reading space, making it exciting and introducing a new set of books. "States like Delhi and Maharashtra have introduced a very effective procurement method where publishers can upload their books online and schools can select the books they think might interest students. This can help in building a good collection," said Suzanne Singh, chairperson, Pratham Books. For full report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/dysfunctional-libraries-in-govt-schools-stymie-kids-reading-habit/articleshowprint/72013282.cms>

Thatched House Library in Assam Village

In an exemplary venture, villagers in far-flung Borbam village (Borbari) under Hatibondha Gaon Panchayat in Tengakhat Development Block in Assam have collectively set up a unique thatched house library called 'Kuhi Paat',

says a story published in *The Assam Tribune*. 'Kuhi Paat' literally means tender leaf in Assamese and symbolically it implies new beginning. The library was thrown open for the public recently. Kuhi Paat or the thatched house library is out of the ordinary due to the fact that lectures, interactive sessions and motivational talks will also be hosted in the said library. As of now, the library provides various books of diverse interest like comics, story books, pictorial books, novels, newspapers, magazines and other subject-specific literature in Assamese, Hindi and English. Gradually, the library will also cater to the farmers by providing them with books and literature on various farming activities like Krishak Bondhu. Any one visiting the library can have access to the books, Anjan Nag, who is instrumental in executing the project, told *The Assam Tribune*. Anjan Nag is a former medical representative and a documentary photographer. He also served the IT sector in different capacities. Borbam is Anjan's ancestral village. He was shocked to discover that the village which he left some 30 years ago is still the same while the rest of the neighbouring villages have progressed both in the literacy and trade fronts. Anjan said that he had felt the need to be with his aging parents and hence came back from New Delhi to his hometown Dibrugarh. "After coming here, I frequently visited Borbam, my ancestral village. I spend time there and interact with the people. I realised that my ancestral village had hardly made any progress in the past couple of decades. Our village has around 40 families. Most of them are wage earners and farmers. The literacy rate is very low. After I posted a few photographs on social media, a friend of mine suggested opening of a community library in the village. I liked the idea and began to plan accordingly with the elderly men, women and youth of our village. My desire was to create an environment where particularly children would love to spend more time with books. As the entire community endorsed the idea and with their collective support we came up with 'Kuhi Paat', said Anjan Nag with contentment writ large on his face. For full story visit: <http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep0219/state053>

Endowment to Support LC Services to Blind

The Library of Congress has recently announced a major endowment in support of the work of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS). Established by Susan D Diskin in honor of her late mother, the Tiby Diskin Memorial Fund will provide resources for the Library to expand its services to individuals with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The first initiative made possible by this gift is the digitization of the Library's braille music scores and instructional materials - the largest collection of its kind in the world. Many of the scores in the collection are rare and fragile; some date back to the late 19th century. NLS will use the funds to develop a unique braille digitization tool that uses 3D laser technology. "We are so excited to receive

this generous gift from Dr. Diskin and honored by her recognition of our work,” NLS Director Karen Keninger said. “It will allow us to advance our efforts to digitize NLS's world-class braille music collection much faster and more accurately than we had ever anticipated - a real benefit to the students, teachers, performers and music lovers who use our braille materials.” Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden added, “we are grateful to Dr. Diskin for choosing the nation's library to honour her mother's memory. This fund will help NLS fulfil its vision 'That All May Read.' “ For full announcement visit: <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-19-120/new-endowment-to-support-national-library-service-for-the-blind-and-print-disabled/2019-12-18/>

Free Library in Mohali Park

In a novel initiative, senior citizens started a free open library in Leisure Valley Park at Phase IX in Mohali, says a *The Tribune* report. The library has books, magazines and periodicals. It was inaugurated recently by 91-year-old T C Katoch and Tejwant Kaur, an elderly woman. Col. T B S Bedi (retd), who took the initiative, said the interested readers could take any books of their choice at any time of the day to read. “It's a voluntary initiative of its kind in Mohali. The objective is to create and promote more interest in reading good literature,” said the senior citizens. A number of participants have donated books from their collections and planned to regularly donate more and more books for the library, they added. For original report visit: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/now-free-library-in-park-466221>

Students Demand 24x7 Library Access

The students of Punjabi University, Patiala, sat on an indefinite protest recently demanding round-the-clock access to the varsity's library reading rooms, says a *The Hindustan Times* report. The students initiated the protest near the library after a large number of students from different hostels complained of failure of the varsity management to fulfil their demands. The protest was carried under the banner of Joint Students' Forum. Currently, the university students can access the library services till 9 pm. Sandeep Kaur, a member of the Punjab Radical Students' Union, said that they had put forward their demands in front of the authorities on multiple occasions, but the officials showed reluctance to even consider their demand. “The authorities had assured us in October that timings of the library hours will be changed, but no action has been taken so far,” she said. She added that the students were facing a lot of problems in finding a peaceful place to study, especially during exams. Following their protests, the university authorities initiated talks with the representatives of the students unions. For full report visit: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/chandigarh/punjabi-university-students-protest-seek-round-the-clock-access-to-library/story-8b0Vher6aXBA4f9GIKX9jM.html>

TECHNOLOGY NEWS

AI Tool to reign in Fake News

The researchers have developed a new artificial intelligence tool to rein in fake news and facts that are becoming increasingly viral on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, etc., according to a post on *9scroob.com* website. With the help of this artificial intelligence tool, fake news spreading on social media networks can be restricted. This AI tool has been developed by researchers at Waterloo University, Canada, with the help of modish artificial intelligence algorithms. After posting to social media networking sites through this artificial intelligence algorithm, it can be ascertained that no more posts have been posted on the same subject. Prof. Alexander Wong of Waterloo University presented his research during a colloquium. He revealed that if the posts were useful, it would be allowed accurately. But, if other documents pertaining to the post on which the post had been made were not found correct, it would be taken up for a made-up name and other facts. The tool equipped with artificial intelligence will filter fake posts and fabricated news. After filtering fake and misleading news, these tools will not allow any post to be posted on social media platforms. According to the claims of the researchers, these artificial intelligence tools can work 90 per cent accurately. This was proven to be a key factor for this research. The researchers stated that during its experiment, they found that 9 times out of 10, the tool identified fake posts. The researchers were working on this tool from 2017. For original post visit: <https://9scroob.com/new-artificial-intelligence-tool-will-flag-fake-and-misleading-news-on-social-media>

New WhatsApp Features

Following are the new and upcoming features of WhatsApp, according to a *The Hindustan Times* report:

Call Waiting: WhatsApp recently introduced call waiting feature for its Android users. The feature, as the name implies, alerts users about an incoming call and gives the option to accept or reject it. The feature was earlier available only to iPhone users.

Dark Mode: Possibly the most awaited feature on WhatsApp, a Dark Mode will allow users to invert the colour scheme of the app. Hints of Dark Mode have been spotted in the beta versions of WhatsApp on Android and iOS for quite some time. The feature, which appears to be ready for wider roll-out, is still going through some changes. The most notable change is the addition of battery saver mode. According to recent beta builds, WhatsApp will give users three options - light theme, dark theme, and battery saver mode. The last mode will be available to Android 9 and below smartphones. Smartphones with the latest Android 10 and above will get an option to change the colour scheme depending upon the device colour scheme.

Self-destructing messages: WhatsApp is said to be working on a Snapchat-style self-destructing message feature. As the name suggests, users will be able to retract a message after a certain period of time. Note this feature is separate from the existing "delete for everyone." According to reports, WhatsApp will give users multiple options of setting time intervals for self-destructing a message - 1 hour, 1 day, 1 week, 1 month and 1 year.

Multiple devices support: Right now, you can use WhatsApp on only one device at a time. Soon, the company will allow users to run the instant messaging app on more devices with a single account. The process includes WhatsApp giving registration notifications to allow one to activate the same account on another device. Note the feature will be different from WhatsApp Web which essentially mirrors your app on the desktop.

For original report visit: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/tech/whatsapp-s-top-new-upcoming-features-call-waiting-dark-mode-and-more/story-hAfQLdbEx4R89Ah1NxQoNI.html>

SPECIAL FEATURE

Library Langars !

You might have seen, or at least heard of, *Langars* being run mostly by the Gurudwaras not only in Punjab, but also in other parts of the country and even abroad. These *Langars* serve free meals to all visitors irrespective of religion, caste, gender, economic status or ethnicity. The schools in the state of Punjab recently organised another type of *Langars* recently to ignite the quest for reading books among the school children. The man behind the idea of organizing such *Langars* - Library *Langars* or Book *Langars* - was Education Secretary of the state Krishan Kumar. During his visits to schools in different districts he noticed that a good number of books embodying rich knowledge on different subjects were lying unused in locked almirahs. In some schools he himself took out the books from such almirahs and distributed them among the students and asked for their feedbacks. "The glowing faces of the students after having books in their hands as well as their zeal to provide feedback about the stories read by them was a wonderful experience", Kumar said.

This pleasant experience prompted him to initiate a drive to make such books available freely to the students who were eager to read books beyond their textbooks. He urged the teachers of the government schools to dedicate a month - July 15 to August 15 this year - to Library *Langars*, as he termed his initiative. Kumar said that the schools had been asked to organize Library *Langars* to ensure that all books stored in library almirahs were made accessible to the students. "Library *Langars* will not only inculcate reading habits but also encourage creativity and boost their understanding of topics from different subjects in their curriculum. Besides, the habit of reading books would also

help promote our culture by bringing the students closer to our good traditions", he said. The Education Department also exhorted the teachers of the schools to donate books to the school libraries. Non-teaching staff and NGOs could also donate books to the libraries.

During the *Langar*, the students were given two books each to read, but they were welcome to take more. The books were displayed on counters so that they could choose which ones to pick. There were daily readings too every day, during the morning assembly and free periods. Teachers were also encouraged to read books to their students. Education Secretary Krishan Kumar himself visited many government schools to see how the project was being implemented. Under his supervision, the old, rusty locks of almirahs were broken, and out came the books that had been languishing there for decades. He also played the role of a story-teller at one such school, reciting the adventures of 'Akbar and Birbal' to a rapt audience. "The aim is to make the students of government schools all-rounders and books their best friends to gain knowledge," said Kumar, adding that they were purchasing more reading materials for the children. "Once we inculcate the habit of reading among our children, nothing can stop them from creating a glorious future for themselves," said Kumar. There are approximately 20,000 government schools in Punjab. According to reports, close to 70 per cent of them organized Library *Langars* till the first week of August.

Newspaper reports suggest that this drive by Kumar has been quite a success. Within just three weeks, around 20 lakh books that had been gathering dust in the old almirahs of the government schools in the state reached students through Library *Langars*. Not only teachers and staff of the schools, but even local people contributed to bring change in the library environment. One such example is the library of the government school located at Kangraur village in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district, which has witnessed a positive change as a result of this drive. The small room of the school library of this nondescript village has not only been spruced up with eye catching paintings and poems inscribed on the wall but the stock of books has also been enriched by Mohan Artist, a book lover resident of the village.

Nevertheless, these Library *Langars* are not the first *Langars* involving books. A *Langar* of books, possibly the first of its kind, was organized in Ludhiana in 2013. This *Langar* was organized by an NGO, Sukrit Trust, during kisan mela organized by Punjab Agricultural University, where instead of meals books were distributed free of cost by the student volunteers of the university. Another *Langar* involving books was organized in Chandigarh on May 26 last where a total of 500 young children participated and a total of 2500 story books, general knowledge books, inspirational books, biographies of prominent people, travel, science and quiz books, etc. got collected and distributed. This event, known as *Kitaban da Langar*, was organized by Yuvsatta-an NGO, Chandigarh's State Legal Services Authority-SLSA, Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights-CCPCR and Earth Day Network-India, as a part of Read

Chandigarh campaign.

Incidentally, reading of at least two books in a month from the school library was made mandatory for every student in the state's government schools by Punjab Education Department in an order issued on June 3 last year. The schools had also been asked to stock their libraries with quality books. Library *Langars* will go a long way to help the students in this regard. They will be able to study even more number of books if books are made available to them by their school libraries.

Organizing Library *Langar* or Book *Langar* is indeed a good idea. There are many school libraries in different parts of the country with locked almirahs full of unused books. It will be wise for those schools to organize such *Langars* for developing reading habit among the students. The state governments may also think of issuing orders similar to the one issued in Punjab to inculcate reading habits among the students.

[Sources:<https://m.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/government-schools-to-hold-library-langar-802453>, <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/library-langar-over-20-lakh-books-make-their-way-to-the-arms-of-children-in-just-3-weeks-5878428/>, <http://www.babushahi.com/regional-news.php?id=89190&headline=>, <https://www.nyooz.com/news/ludhiana/1389537/boost-to-library-langar-staff-asked-to-donate-books/>, <http://www.indian24news.com/india/to-encourage-students-to-read-punjab-education-secy-asks-govt-schools-to-organise-library-langar/830320-news>, <http://indiannewscalling.com/sunday-magazine/news/82852-kitaban-da-langar-books-donation-drive.aspx>, <https://www.snmiasacademy.com/pcsa/library-langar/>, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ludhiana/Better-farming-tips-and-a-langar-of-books/articleshowprint/18920204.cms>, <http://indiannewscalling.com/sunday-magazine/news/82852-kitaban-da-langar-books-donation-drive.aspx>, <https://indianexpress.com/article/education/punjab-reading-2-books-a-month-from-school-library-must-for-every-student-teachers-to-ensure/>]

NEW LIS LITERATURE

[Note: Publishers of books enlisted here and/or any new books in LIS may send copies of such books to the Editor, IASLIC Bulletin, for review]

Indian

1. DASGUPTA (Kalpana). Where Knowledge is Free: The Journey of a Librarian. 2019. Allcap Communications, Kolkata. ISBN: 9789353615628.
2. HUSSAIN (Akhtar). Information Retrieval Systems: Managing Libraries in Neo-Information Society. 2019. Manmkin Press, New Delhi. ₹995. ISBN: 9789386677419
3. NIGAM (Deepmala). Cataloguing Practice CCC and AACR-2R. 2019. Ess Ess Publications, Delhi. ₹1950. ISBN: 9788193431177
4. SINGH (Niraj Kumar). RFID for Libraries: A Practical Approach. 2019. Ess Ess Publications, Delhi. ₹700. ISBN: 9789387698192

OBITUARY

Prof. C P Vashishth, former Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi, Delhi, passed away on October 6, 2019. Born on January 2, 1936 in the Sahaswan town of District Budayun in Uttar Pradesh, he rose from a modest background to become one of the most respected Professors at the Department of Library & Information Science, University of Delhi. Prof. Vashishth was very closely associated with Delhi Library Association and served as its General Secretary for two terms and President for four terms. He also served as the Registrar and the first Principal of School of Library Science of DLA and served as the editor of its organ *Library Herald*. A festschrift (in 2 volumes) entitled 'Information Communication, Library and Community Development' was brought out in his honour in 2004. Prof. Vashishth was a life member of IASLIC. IASLIC deeply mourns his death.

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BOOK POST