

REACH LADAKH BULLETIN

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Brief News

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LITTLE STEPS



STAY INDOOR



WASH YOUR HANDS REGULARLY



SNEEZE OR COUGH IN YOUR ARMS

BIG PREVENTION AGAINST COVID-19

THE REALITY

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Reach Ladakh's show 'The Reality' will be releasing soon.

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Correction and clarification

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No positive COVID-19 case in ten days, says Commissioner/Secretary Health



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The cases of coronavirus have come down to 10 in UT Ladakh and no positive cases have been reported over the last ten days said, Rigzin Samphel, Commissioner/Secretary Health on March 29.

To accommodate fresh cases arrangements have been made at Mahabodhi Karuna Charitable Hospital in Leh and GNM School in Kargil in UT Ladakh.

Talking about the equipment, Rigzin Samphel said, "100 ventilators- 50 each for Leh and Kargil districts is expected to arrive soon."

With the increase in the number of positive cases in Srinagar, UT Administration of Ladakh appeals to those who had travelled from Srinagar to Ladakh on March 18, 19 to stay under home quarantine by staying away from everyone including their family for 14 days.

Besides, District Administrations of Leh and Kargil has identified migrant labourers stranded in Ladakh and were given free ration yesterday on March 29, to 5000 labourers in Leh district and 350 in Kargil district. A mechanism has been formulated for a continuous supply of free ration to such labourers during the period of lock-down.

He further added that Dr. Nordan Odzer is working in Nubra valley as a volunteer on the appeal of the UT Administration, and he hopes that other retired medical doctors of the districts would also consider their appeal.

Talking about the pilgrims and students studying out of Ladakh, he said that the students' welfare is among the top priorities of the UT Administration. Rigzin Samphel informed that they can contact Sumera Shafi, Resident Commissioner Ladakh in Delhi who is appointed as the Nodal Officer.

LG Mathur addresses people of Ladakh to combat COVID-19



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: In an address to the people of Union Territory of Ladakh on March 28, R.K. Mathur, Lieutenant Governor has expressed his gratitude to the people of Ladakh for their cooperation with UT Administration in their fight against COVID-19.

LG appreciated their sincere adherence to the guidelines issued because of the novel coronavirus outbreak and in observing the Lockdown to contain its spread in the region.

He said that dedicated teams of health professionals in Ladakh are working day and night to combat the novel coronavirus, making the best use of medical facilities in Leh and Kargil districts.

He also mentioned about the tireless efforts put in by government functionaries and police personnel performing their duties

in ensuring complete lockdown and also ensuring the availability of essential commodities to the people during this time.

He said that the UT Ladakh is also taking measures to help the migrant labourers by providing them free food and other basic amenities.

LG has lauded the invaluable support given by all the religious organisations and the voluntary support extended by individuals and civil society organisations like the Merchant Association, ALTOA, Hotel Association and others in this time of crises.

He appealed the people of Ladakh to stay cautious and continue their patience and support during the Lockdown period of 21 days in the country.

LG expressed his hope that united Ladakh can combat the pandemic of COVID-19 novel coronavirus.

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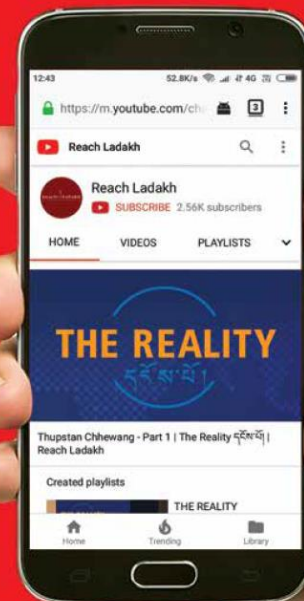
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IN FOCUS

Dambu : A serious threat to Ladakh's fragile ecological region

In Ladakh, livestock rearing is a major activity for livelihood, contributing significantly to its economy. But its staple food crops suffer greatly with weed pressure as under-subsistence agricultural system (with very low land holding ranging from 0.5-1.4 ha per household averagely) in which weeding is not a priority but total crop+weedy biomass add to livestock feeding in a region with stark, treeless and barren, with rocky slopes with no water.

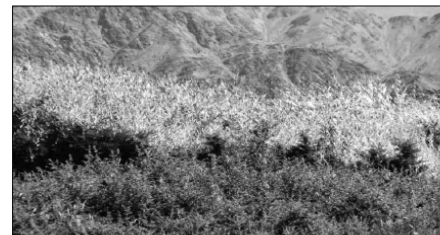
Weeds drastically reduce the staple crop yields. In addition, weeds are commonly considered a threat to biodiversity, yet interactions between native and exotic species in grasslands are poorly understood. On the other hand, expansion and intensification of land use in recent decades is resulting in major changes in biodiversity, especially when invasive weedy species dominate the landforms and summarizing into the cultivated areas in a changing climate. In addition, the invasive weedy species possesses climatic resilience and pose a major threat to native biodiversity. In the cold arid region, major invasive weed-*Phragmites australis* of poaceae family comprises the most common perennial, rhizomatous, stoloniferous and tall (2.0-3.0 m) grass, distributed in whole of Ladakh region along the Indus belt. It is locally known as Dambu and has profusely seed-production potential and spreads fast.

During a survey carried out, it was recorded that it thrives well in soils having higher pH, salinity, fertility and textures, and attains high productivity even around seabuckthorn community. It is a transitional species of two closely attached ecosystems such as aquatic and terrestrial and commonly occurs in marshy wetlands adjoining to Indus belt. It is a well-known environmentally resilient species in a changing climate. In short-seasons like that of Ladakh, it sprouts efficiently from the last week of June and attains adjustments to the variations in temperature, soil nutrients and available oxygen (wetlands). It has a high transpiration rate with rhizomes buried deep in the soil up to 2-5 feet; help protect against frost and fire. High transpiration rate growing under flood-like conditions display an adaptive feature, protecting it from waterlogging.

In a changing climatic condition, it has intermediate plant growth habit of C3-C4 photosynthetic intermediate ecotypes evolve in dry land



Dambu problem in wheat at Chushot in a ratio of 70 (Dambu):30 (wheat)



Dambu in seabuckthorn stand. No-dambu in Alfalfa (Aul) stand

and C3-C4 intermediate ecotype in saline environment have also been reported as it also can be seen in a Spituk wetland of Leh where it is surviving under a high salinity condition, not allowing any other crops. This weedy grass is a palatable green forage and quite suitable as an alternative fodder for lambs growing with some minor additives that keep protein and energy on the demanded requirements. Farmers are worried but used to it for utilizing it as fodder for winter security. In addition, the removal of toxic heavy metals from the aquatic environment is one of the priorities of the environmentalist all over the world. It has high metal removal potential and fast growth, accumulating metal in above and below-ground biomass.

Dambu has recently being utilised for mitigating water pollution. It has been the most preferred research plant for pollution mitigation. Efforts have been made to carry out the study on land use and land cover by this invasive species of Leh district, showing an area of 1883.58 ha area which covers very potential and prime agricultural land of Leh region. This study would reveal that in these recent decades, land use continues to intensify in formerly occupied areas and expand into what were formerly natural habitats and this weed may make

its inroads to the utilizable lands of villages like Chushot, Palam, Choglamsar, Stakna, Phey and Spituk, and affect their biodiversity to a significant extent.

In a cold arid region like Ladakh, where tourism is another livelihood option, we require a strict quarantine system to maintain the Himalayan ecosystem and its biodiversity.

You can send your comments at: omsai.msr@gmail.com

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Saugat Biswas issues advisory regarding movement of vehicles from Zojila

Trucks/tankers carrying essential commodities to be allowed to cross Zojila pass from 29th March



Reach Ladakh Correspondent

LEH: The movements of trucks/tankers carrying essential commodities to be allowed to cross Zojila pass from March 29, along with protocol to be followed during the transaction of the vehicles. Saugat Biswas, Divisional Commissioner/ Secretary Transport UT Ladakh, issued an advisory on March 29.

Following protocol will be followed during the transition of the vehicles into Ladakh:-

1. Only one driver and a helper will be allowed with each of the loaded trucks/tankers. Any driver or staff found showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be turned around with or without his vehicle from Meena marg COVID-19 check post.

2. Medical camp with screening facilities will be established at Meena-Marg by the District Administration Kargil for the screening of each driver and supporting staff thoroughly. Besides, the registration of drivers and helpers indicating their permanent address, contact number, origin and destination shall be recorded by the Incharge, Police Post Meena-Marg.

na-Marg.

3. The trucks carrying food and vegetable items for Kargil district will be escorted in double escort system from Meena-Marg, to be organised by the IGP, Ladakh and will terminate at Khree Sultan Chow Stadium Bemathang distribution depot where the trucks will be offloaded. The Trucks carrying food grains of FCI will terminate at FCI Central Godown, Kargil. The escorts will be on guard and the vehicles will not be allowed to stop anywhere en-route to Kargil.

4. Assistant Labour Commissioner, Kargil will provide the required labour force for offloading the trucks at Khree Sultan Chow Stadium Bemathang, out of the registered labour force available. The empty trucks after offloading will park at, Bemathang Kargil under Police guard.

5. Vehicles coming to Leh will be allowed to move in a convoy and will be escorted under a double escort system to be organised by the IGP, Ladakh. The convoy will not stop anywhere other than at the designated camps en-route to Leh. The camps will have facilities of

public convenience and light refreshment only.

6. These designated camps will be established by the respective District Administrations at Meena-Marg, Wakha and Likir.

7. On entry of the convoy in Leh town, they may break-up and move towards different locations in smaller convoys. IGP, Ladakh will facilitate separate police escorts for these smaller convoys which will stay with the vehicles till their departure from Leh.

8. On arrival at Leh, the trucks carrying food items will terminate at Choglamsar distribution depot where the trucks will be offloaded. The trucks carrying vegetables will also be offloaded at Choglamsar. The Trucks and Tankers carrying food grains of FCI and POL will terminate at FCI Central Godown, Leh and IOCL/ HPCL Depots respectively.

9. Police escorts will ensure strictly that the drivers and helpers will not interact with the local inhabitants both in Kargil and Leh, including labourers at any point including the point of offloading.

10. Assistant Labour Commissioner, Leh will provide the required labour force for offloading the trucks at Choglamsar, out of the registered labour force available. The empty trucks after offloading will park at Bomb Guard, Leh under Police guard.

11. The same protocol will be followed at the time of departure of the trucks/tankers from Kargil and Leh and the empty trucks will depart in a convoy escorted by the Police.

12. The Police escorts will see off the convoy at zero point at the Zojila pass.

13. The Ganderbal District Administration shall ensure the smooth passage of all vehicles at Sonamarg keeping this SOP in consideration.

SoulSpeak

P.P. Wangchuk

Soft is always stronger than hard!



Just as love is more powerful than hatred, and goodness is stronger than evil, we do say that truth triumphs over untruth. What I am trying to drive at is that it is always the positivity that gets the upper hand in the long run.

In this regard, German author Hermann Hesse writes in his book, Siddhartha: "Soft is stronger than hard, water stronger than rocks, love stronger than force." Do we find it very hard to digest even when it is quite true? Most of us know and understand this kind of realities of life that shape or reshape our courses. And yet, there is always a temptation to try the uglier side of the reality, thereby spoiling the chances of getting on to our mission-target.

We face daily so many situations and turns, and at times we are trapped in a debilitating dilemma. Those of us who look at the brighter side of the picture before us do manage to outdo the temptation to go with the devil. And the unfortunate ones are left out badly trapped in the vicious circle of misery and pain.

All that one needs to be triumphant is to look within with sincerity and a sense of purpose. If that is done, we would be always in a position to see the brighter side and take the right course.

That is why Monica Carolina, the gaming super-star, says: "I think it will be OK. I have found my own force. When I don't know where to turn, it will direct me back on course." That is the 'force' that comes forth when you look within. Sincerity pays, and one always gets a chance to undo the wrong done because of any reason that is not wilful.

We also have Greek tragedian Sophocles, in Antigone, saying: "All men make mistakes but a good man yields when he knows that his course is wrong, and repairs the evil. The only crime is pride." That is the lesson one has to learn and keep in mind, always.

The punch line: Never ever there is a possibility that one can't do a thing with a strong willpower.

Courtesy: WongWorld
The writer is a New Delhi-based Editor-at-large, columnist and professional speaker

DAMBU: A SERIOUS THREAT TO LADAKH'S FRAGILE ECOLOGICAL REGION

M.S. Raghuvanshi¹, Anurag Saxena², Dipanker Saha³, Enoch Spalbar⁴, Ngawang Dorjay⁵ Vikas Gupta⁶ and Anil Kumar⁷

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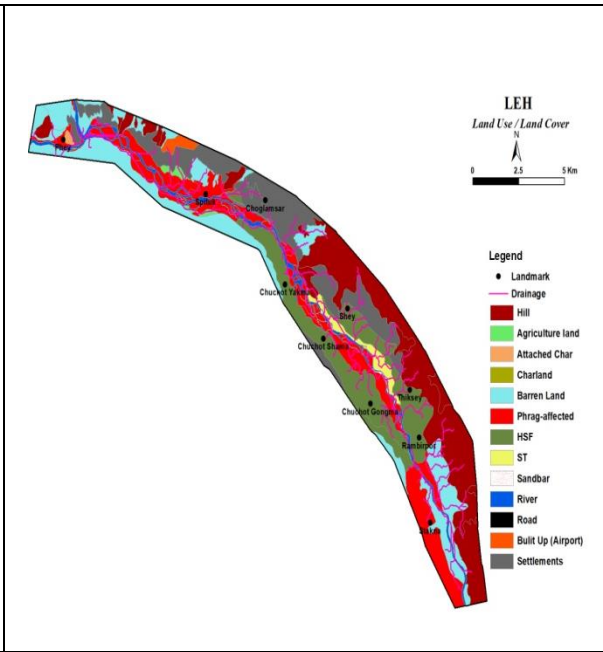
⁷HMAARI, SKUAST-K, Leh-Ladakh

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In Ladakh, livestock rearing is a major activity of livelihoods, contributing significantly to Ladakh economy and income generation, alleviating poverty. Further, staple food crops suffer greatly with weedy pressure as under subsistence agricultural system (with very low land holding ranging from 0.5-1.4 ha per household averagely) in which weeding is not a priority but total crop+weedy biomass add to livestock feeding in a region with stark, treeless and seemingly barren, with rocky slopes in an amazing range of brown, grey and mauve tones, steep cut valleys, hard clear light and high snow covered mountains with no water. Weeds not only alleviate its soil weed seed bank but also significantly and drastically reduce the staple crop yields. In addition, weeds are commonly considered a threat *to biodiversity*, yet interactions between native and exotic species in grasslands are poorly understood. On the other hand, expansion and intensification of land use in recent decades is resulting in major changes in biodiversity, especially when invasive weedy species dominate the landforms and summarizing into the cultivated areas in a changing climate. In addition, if invasive weedy species possesses climatic resilience and pose a major threat to native biodiversity. In Cold arid region, major invasive weed-*Phragmites australis* of poaceae family comprises of the most common perennial, rhizomatous, stoloniferous and tall (2.0–3.0 m) grass, recorded distributed in whole Ladakh region along the Indus belt, lakes, extending from cold temperate regions to wetlands in Ladakh region. It is locally known as DAMBU has profusely seed production potential and spreads vegetatively by a vigorous system of rhizomes and stolons. During survey carried out, it was recorded that it thrives well in soils of having higher pH, salinity, fertility and textures, and attains high productivity even around seabuckthorn community. It is a transitional species of two closely attached ecosystems such as aquatic and terrestrial, and commonly occurs in marshy wetlands adjoining to Indus belt. It is well-known environmentally resilient species in a changing climate. In short season like Ladakh, it sprouts efficiently from last week of June and attains adjustments to the variations in temperature, soil nutrients and available oxygen (wetlands). It has high transpiration rate with rhizomes buried deep in the soil upto 2-5 feet; help provide protection against frost and fire. High transpiration rate growing under flood like conditions display an adaptive feature, protecting it from waterlogging. In a changing climatic conditions, it has intermediate plant growth habit of C3–C4 photosynthetic intermediate ecotypes evolve in dry land and C3–C4 intermediate ecotype in saline environment have also been reported as it also can be seen in a Spituk wetland of Leh where it is surviving under a high salinity conditions, not allowing any of the crops. This weedy grass is a palatable green forage and quite suitable as an alternative fodder for lambs growing with some minor additives that keep protein and energy on the demanded requirements. Farmers are worried but used-to for utilizing it as fodder for winter security. In addition, removal of toxic heavy metals from the aquatic environment is one of the priorities of the environmentalist all over the world. It has high metal removal potential and fast growth, accumulating metal in above and below ground biomass. Dambu has recently being utilised for mitigating water pollution. It has been the most preferred research plant for pollution mitigation. Efforts have been made to carry out the study on land use and land cover by this invasive species of Leh district, showing an area of 1883.58 ha area which covers very potential and prime agricultural land of Leh region. This study would reveal that in these recent decades, land use continues to intensify in formerly occupied areas and expand into what were formerly natural habitats and this weed would intensify the utilizable lands of villages like Chushot, Palam, Choglamsar, Stakna, Phey, Spituk etc. and affect its biodiversity to a significant extent in a place where water scarcity is a major issue for cultivated lands of resource poor farming community of subsistence agriculture of Ladakh region. In cold arid region of Ladakh where tourism is another livelihood option, requires strict quarantine to maintain HIMALAYAN ECOSYSTEM and its BIODIVERSITY.



Dambu problem in wheat at Chushot in a ratio of 70 (Dambu):30 (wheat)



Weed mapping using Remote sensing & GIS- High resolution satellite data Sentinel data with 10 m resolution for land use and land cover mapping



Dambu in seabuckthorn stand
No-dambu in Alfalfa (Aul) stand



Wheat harvested with Dambu