

Citizens can now become drone pilots with any government issued identity and address proof

Exercising the power bestowed upon it by section 5, sub-section 2 of section 10 and sections 10A, 10B, and 12A of the Aircraft Act, 1934 (22 of 1934), the Ministry of Civil Aviation has notified the new Drone (Amendment) Rules 2023 for drone pilots. After the amendment, it has now been made clear that a government issued proof of identity and a government issued proof of address i.e. Voter ID, Ration Card or Driving License can now be accepted to apply for a Remote Pilot Certificate if the drone pilot does not have a passport.

The prerequisite of having a passport was becoming a hurdle for aspiring drone pilots especially in the agricultural sector across rural India. This effort is to further liberalise, promote and facilitate drone operations across the country and make India a global drone hub by 2030.

The rule is effective from the 27th of September 2023.

Kill Pollution Before It Kills You

In the grand tapestry of existence, humanity stands as both the weaver and the woven. Through the loom of time, we have crafted magnificent civilizations, invented marvels, and unlocked the secrets of the universe. Yet, in our quest for progress, we have also woven a darker thread into the fabric of our world - pollution. It is a silent assassin, lurking in the shadows, and, poised to bring about our own downfall unless we take resolute measures.

The term "pollution" encompasses a spectrum of environmental toxins that have infiltrated our lives through our surroundings. From the noxious fumes of industrial chimneys to the microplastics loitering in the oceans, pollution manifests in various forms, each one insidiously chipping away at the health of our planet and ourselves. It is a ticking time bomb, and the countdown is underway.

Consider the insidious embrace of air pollution, for instance, which robs us of the most fundamental of human rights - the right to breathe clean, life-giving air. In many bustling metropolises, where towering skyscrapers scrape the heavens and urban sprawl knows no bounds, the air we breathe has become a toxic cocktail. This is not a mere inconvenience but a direct assault on our respiratory systems. Our lungs, those delicate repositories of vitality, are now battlegrounds where pollution wages a relentless war, leading to respiratory illnesses, reduced life expectancy, and untold human suffering.

Water pollution, too, has left an indelible mark on our existence. Picture the once-pristine rivers that have been reduced to stagnant cesspools, their waters fouled by industrial effluents, agricultural runoff, and untreated sewage. These polluted waters do more than just taint our scenery; they threaten our health and disrupt ecosystems. Toxic chemicals and heavy metals contaminate our drinking water sources, causing a myriad of health problems, including gastrointestinal diseases and neurological disorders. Meanwhile, aquatic life teeters on the brink of extinction as their habitats are transformed into aquatic wastelands.

The plastic pollution crisis serves as another glaring example of the environmental quagmire we find ourselves in. Each year, millions of tons of plastic waste find their way into our oceans, where they persist for centuries, breaking down into microplastics that infiltrate the food chain. Marine creatures ingest these microplastics, and as we, in turn, consume seafood, we unknowingly ingest the very pollution we have unleashed. The consequences are dire, with plastic pollution posing a grave threat to marine life and ecosystems, while also impacting human health.

The consequences of pollution extend far beyond these examples, touching virtually every aspect of our lives. Noise pollution disrupts our mental well-being, light pollution obscures the celestial wonders that once inspired humanity, and soil pollution imperils our food security by degrading the very foundation of agriculture.

Pollution is a clear and present danger, a relentless adversary that corrodes not only our physical well-being but also our collective conscience and our interconnectedness with the natural world. When our rivers run black with toxic sludge, when our forests turn to ashes under the relentless march of deforestation, and when our oceans choke on plastic refuse, we bear witness to a desecration of the very elements that sustain us. Pollution is a betrayal of the sacred pact between humanity and the Earth, an affront to our moral compass, and a testament to the short-sightedness that has become our trademark.

The inescapable truth for all of humanity is crystal clear: pollution is not a mere theoretical concept; it surges beyond geographical boundaries, socioeconomic divisions, and political doctrines. The cognitive dissonance that permits us to isolate our environmental offenses, relegating them to the outskirts of our awareness, must be dismantled. Pollution is not a predicament of the future; it is a crisis of the here and now, and it calls for our collective genius, our moral resolve, and our unwavering commitment.

The task at hand is daunting, but it is not insurmountable. In facing the hydra-headed monster of pollution, we must first acknowledge its complexity and interconnectedness. Pollution does not exist in isolation; it is but one facet of a larger web of environmental challenges - climate change, habitat destruction, and resource depletion, to name a few. To kill pollution, we must embark on a holistic quest to regenerate our planet.

This requires a fundamental shift in our relationship with nature. We must transition from being mere consumers to becoming stewards of the Earth. This means harnessing our collective knowledge to develop innovative solutions that address the root causes of pollution. It means championing sustainable practices in agriculture, industry, and energy production. It means reimagining urban planning to prioritize clean, efficient public transportation and green spaces. It means investing in research and technology that can mitigate the effects of pollution and rehabilitate ecosystems that have been ravaged by our negligence.

Advocacy for policies and regulations that hold individuals, corporations, and governments accountable for pollution is vital. Environmental legislation should not be viewed as a hindrance to economic progress but as a safeguard for the very foundation of our civilization. By ensuring that the cost of pollution is factored into the balance sheets of industries, we can incentivize the transition to cleaner, more sustainable practices.

To kill pollution before it kills us, we must foster a cultural shift in our society. We need to educate ourselves and future generations about the profound consequences of pollution and inspire a sense of responsibility and stewardship. Our choices as consumers have far-reaching implications and wield our purchasing power accordingly, favoring products and companies that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices.

(The author is HoD, Environmental Sciences, Govt PG College Rajouri).

Breast Cancer Awareness: Early detection saves life

■ DR SUSHMA DEVI

Breast cancer, a disease that knows no boundaries, strikes women and even men from all walks of life, transcending age, race, and socioeconomic status. It is a silent predator, often lurking undetected until it reaches an advanced stage, making it crucial to raise awareness about this life-threatening condition. Breast cancer awareness is not just about wearing pink ribbons; it's a call to action, a rallying cry for early detection, and a plea for better support and research funding.

October is designated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, during this month, various activities such as awareness campaigns, community events, or simply sharing information on social media, and fundraising initiatives are organized to educate people about breast cancer and support breast cancer patients. The theme for the year 2023 is "Keeping Her in the Picture," which serves as a heartfelt appeal to all individuals to pay close attention to the well-being of the important women in their lives. It's a call to action for people of all genders to actively participate in reminding and encouraging their cherished ones, including wives, mothers, sisters, and close friends, to regularly conduct monthly breast self-examinations and undergo routine mammographic screenings. These proactive measures are crucial for early detection and intervention in this potentially life-threatening condition.

The most common questions and concerns about breast cancer are as follows:

Q) What are the symptoms of breast cancer?
Recognizing the symptoms is crucial. These may include a lump in the breast or armpit, nipple discharge (especially if it's bloody), skin changes like thickening, scaling, or redness, and the presence of skin ulcers.

Q) Who is at the high risk of developing Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer risk factors can be categorized as non-modifiable and modifiable. Modifiable risk factors are those where the chances of breast cancer in the future can be avoided by adopting certain lifestyle practices. These factors are obesity with BMI > 30, nulliparous women/ first pregnancy after 35 years of age, age at first childbirth > 35 years, use of HRT (hormonal replacement therapy) for more than 10 years, smoking, alcohol consumption, and Radiation exposure. So, by adjusting the above-mentioned factors and following a healthy lifestyle, you can decrease the risk of breast cancer in the future.

A non-modifiable factor is age, as with increasing age incidence of breast cancer increases. Female gender is another risk factor



as breast cancer is also seen in males, but females have more chances of having this disease than males. Family history with first-degree (mother, sisters, or daughter) relative having breast cancer also increases risk. Also, 5-10% of cancers are hereditary, with BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations increase the risk. Early menarche (first menstrual cycle), and late Menopause (last menstrual cycle) is also a risk factor.

Q) How can we make an early diagnosis of breast cancer?

"The adage 'prevention is better than cure' holds exceptionally true in the case of breast cancer. Regular breast self-exams, clinical breast exams, and mammograms can detect breast cancer at an early, treatable stage."

a) Self-Breast Examination: Women over 20 years old are encouraged to perform monthly self-breast examinations, preferably about a week after their menstrual period. This involves feeling your own breast tissue that can help in identifying asymmetry or any other abnormalities. There are lots of videos demonstrating the procedure of breast self-examination on social media, from where you can learn this method and detect any abnormality as mentioned in the

symptoms.

b) Clinical Breast Examination: Your doctor plays a vital role in spotting unusual changes in breast tissue. Women should schedule clinical breast exams with your doctor every three years after turning thirty.

c) Screening Mammogram: This is an X-ray of the breast that utilizes very low levels of radiation to detect breast cancer. It can identify breast cancer at very early stage even before the appearance of symptoms that can be detected by clinical examination. Women are recommended to undergo a screening mammogram annually starting at the age of 40 to detect any abnormalities in the breast tissue.

Thus, educating individuals, particularly women, about the importance of self-examinations and routine screenings is paramount. Knowledge empowers individuals to take control of their health and potentially catch breast cancer in its infancy when it is most treatable.

Q) What are the treatment options of breast cancer?

In the management of breast cancer, the first-line approach typically involves surgery, and there have been significant advancements

in surgical techniques.

Breast conservation surgery is an option for early-stage breast cancer. During this procedure, the surgeon removes the breast lump along with a 1cm margin of surrounding breast tissue.

Another option is a modified radical mastectomy, where the entire affected breast is removed. However, it's essential to understand that even in such cases, efforts are made to preserve the shape and contour of the breast. This can be achieved by using flaps, which are tissues from the patient's own body, or with the assistance of implants. Therefore, patients should not fear the loss of their breasts entirely, as modern surgical techniques prioritize both cancer removal and aesthetic outcomes. After surgery, further treatment includes chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and hormonal therapy. The decision for this therapy depends on the histopathology report of the removed tumour tissue.

Q) What are the ways to prevent breast cancer?

This includes adopting a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet, regular exercise, maintaining an ideal body weight, and stress management. Such practices can contribute to a more robust immune system and a better quality of life. Quitting smoking and excessive alcohol intake also decreases the future risk of breast cancer. Encouraging breastfeeding, which is protective against breast cancer. Some of the birth control pills and hormonal replacement therapy also increase the risk of breast cancer, so you should always ask your doctor if there is any component in your therapy that may increase the risk of breast cancer.

In Conclusion, Breast cancer management is a comprehensive and ongoing process that aims to address all aspects of the disease, from diagnosis through treatment and beyond. We must foster an environment where individuals feel comfortable discussing their experiences, fears, and questions. This open dialogue can help break down the barriers that prevent people from seeking timely medical attention and support. It is time to unite in our efforts to promote breast cancer awareness, destigmatize the disease, and provide unwavering support to those impacted by it. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of countless individuals and strive for a world where breast cancer is not a dreaded diagnosis but a preventable and treatable condition.

(The author is Associate Professor, Department of General Surgery, AIIMS Jammu).

Freedom of expression never means spitting the venom

■ SHIV KUMAR PADHA

The fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution of the country are a bonanza of gifts for the citizens of Bharat. Besides others, the rights, covered under the category of fundamental rights chapter, freedom of expression is the only right which gives voice and words even to the deaf and dumb citizens of the country. There are many kinds of democracies in vogue in different countries of the world, but freedom of expression which the citizens of Bharat enjoy is unique and of its own kind in the world. Freedom of expression is like a long rope, which, if utilized judiciously and with care, can prove a success otherwise it becomes a hanging noose for the whole society. It is wisely said, 'wounds of the swords heal but not the bitter words. In civilized societies the decency of one's language is an indicator of his civility, decorum, prudence, propriety and courtesy. One can make a friend of a foe with humble words and vice versa. India, being a biggest and strongest democracy of the world, expects from its statesmen, parliamentarians, legislators, intellectuals and even from the common man, mannerism, etiquettes and decency in their speech and behavior overtly and covertly.

Since the last one decade the nation is experiencing a great upheaval and fall in the standards of speech, use of inappropriate, insulting language, passing derogatory, defamatory remarks against each other by the politicians with a sole purpose of tarnishing each other's image by the character assassinations and mudslinging game. The standard of the Indian politicians has never been so low as it is seen these days where the disgruntled politicians, in their endeavor of toppling the elected governments, lock, stock and barrel, do not hesitate in passing the blaspheming and seditious remarks against other religions, their gods and their own country only to please a particular community at the instance of their mentors sitting in the hostile countries with their sole aim of the destabilizing integrity, sovereignty and tranquility of Bharat. Not to talk of the politicians, our social and general media, in the race of earning TRP and come in their good books, go to the extent of aggravating the situations and making it more inflammable and hate filled by making mountain of a molehill by playing and replaying, the same provocative captions time and again with their exaggerative and biased commentaries on the big and small screens. Many times these unscrupulous politicians, having taken an oath of the constitution of Bharat dozens of times, succeed in their endeavor of fragmenting the delicate fiber which helps keeping the nation united and unified in spite of its character of unity in diversity.

In the wake of the forthcoming parliamentary elections in 2024 the race of hate speeches, spitting venom against the targeted community, political, security forces, and all the pillars of Indian democracy is gaining momentum every day. The political leaders in league with their sympathizers in other countries are sparing no efforts in bifurcating the Indian society on the bases, castes, sub-castes, privileged and non-privileged classes, languages, beliefs, faiths, regions and religions. As the parliamentary elections in the country are drawing near the actual intentions and faces of

our politicians, hidden behind the deceptive mask, is being exposed day by day in their action and speeches. Taking the benefits of freedom of expression the politicians, are in competition to overtake and get an edge over their accomplices in the use of abusive, vulgar, filthy and insulting language against the community considered as a main hindrance in the way of their reaching the parlor of power by hook or by crook. The cheap and the blasphemous and seditious statements being given by the persons considered as the senior statesmen of the country do not conform to their political experience, size and stature, allegiance for the country and its constitution they have sworn in many times. There are infinite examples of the statements given by the so-called Indian politicians where they have passed blasphemous remarks against the gods and epics and their authors of a particular targeted community. Day in and day out the pages of the sacred books are burnt in the broad day light brazenly and with impunity. A particular religion is compared with potassium cyanide and with the mosquitoes and other flies spreading dengue and malaria. The priests and the headmen of the particular community are branded as debauch. Hats off to the Indian society which never falls in the vicious and treacherous traps of these antinational elements in the guise of the nationalist.

It is a pity that even after 75 years of India's independence majority of our most respected and revered parliamentarians, legislators and the country's renowned statesmen, in order to gain political mileage, feel pride in taking the sides and justifying the barbarous

acts of society's/nation's most wanted, declared and absconding culprits involved in the cases of stone pelting, arson, plundering, setting public and private property ablaze, taking part in seditious activities, creating an environment of terror in the peaceful society. These political lawyers take it their pleasure and privilege in providing them free legal aid and contest their case in the courts of the country while ignoring the shrieks, woes and agonies of the victims of those riots.

A set of self-proclaimed philanthropists of the country have initiated a drive against their own democratically elected governments outside the land and tarnishing the image of India in the international fora. These leaders, out of their jealous attitudes, have set a negative narrative against India and its government at a time when India is emerging as a third economy in the world, when the status of India has never been so high as it is now among the most popular, powerful and developed countries of the world. These responsible politicians must give hundred thoughts before uttering even a small syllable against their own country rather than they must exhibit allegiance to the republic of India from the core of their hearts. It is the beauty of a democratic government where our representatives can exchange hot but decent words and sometimes come to the blows but they must restrain themselves from making the statements which result in hate and enmity in the society. One thing must be always kept in mind by every true Indian, country first, political parties second and the religion last.

(The author is social activist).

YOUR COLUMN

Delay in Appointment of Judges

Dear Editor,

A bench of the Supreme Court told the Attorney General that the government should not test our patience. Today we are calm but this peace may not last in the next hearing. Commenting on this, Justice Sanjay Kaul, the second most senior judge, said that even today a total of 70 cases of appointment, transfer and promotion of judges are pending with the government, some of which are from last November. The Attorney General was asked to come back on October 9 after asking the government for a clear reason for this delay. This anger of the Supreme Court bench was not without reason.

For some consecutive years, the government has been condemning the collegium system and wants to end it. From the Minister to the Vice President, everyone is speaking against it not only in the House but also on public platforms. The immediate reason for the bench's anger was the latest incidents of violence in Manipur. In fact, a decision of the High Court is believed to be the reason behind the start of violence in this state. The Supreme Court condemned this decision. A few weeks later, Delhi's second-most senior judge was recommended for the vacant post of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. But the government did not respond and the state's justice system continued to deteriorate.

The Supreme Court Collegium also knows that the government acts on some names and on others there is inordinate delay. Because of this, many junior lawyers become senior judges and senior and better lawyers refuse to become judges out of resentment. The judiciary is deprived of good future judges. In view of the allegations of transparency in the collegium, the CJI recently said that a large team has formed its opinion after looking at the quality of the decisions of the judges for promotion in the last three years. However, the government should avoid such conflicts.

A Nawas Kollam Kerala

Street Library

Dear Editor,

A street library, also known as a little free library or a book exchange, is a small structure typically located on a street corner or in a public space where people can take or leave books for others to enjoy. These libraries are often built in the shape of a small house or cabinet and are often decorated to catch the attention of passersby.

The concept of street libraries began in 2009 when Todd Bol of Hudson, Wisconsin, built a small replica of a one-room schoolhouse in honor of his mother, a former school teacher and book lover. He filled the structure with books and put it on a post in his front yard, allowing neighbors to freely take or leave books. The idea quickly spread, and now there are thousands of little free libraries around the world. Street libraries promote literacy, community engagement, and a love for books. They are often run and maintained by volunteers, who take care of organizing the books, ensuring there is a variety of genres and age ranges available. Some street libraries even host events such as book clubs or storytelling sessions to further foster a sense of community. These libraries operate on a simple principle: "Take a book, leave a book." Anyone can borrow a book from the street library and return it when they finish reading. People are also encouraged to donate books they no longer need or want, ensuring a constant rotation of reading materials for everyone to enjoy.

Street libraries can be found in urban areas, suburban neighborhoods, and even rural towns, providing access to books for all. They promote a sense of sharing and community spirit, as people take pleasure in discovering new books and contributing to the literary collective.

Vijay Garg