



IASLIC NEWSLETTER

Indian Association for Special
Libraries and Information Centres



December 2020

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Quote of the Month

"In the nonstop tsunami of global information, librarians provide us with floaties and teach us to swim."

— Linton Weeks,
American Journalist

Appeal to Readers

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

Email: chatterjeeamitabha@yahoo.co.in

IASLIC ACTIVITIES

IASLIC 29th National Seminar

The 29th National Seminar of IASLIC could not be held as scheduled during October 27 - 29, 2020 due to pandemic. The new dates and venue of the seminar will be announced in due course on IASLIC website and in the newsletter. Papers for the seminar are still being accepted. The last date of acceptance will also be announced in due course. For 'Call for Papers' detailing facets and sub-facets of the seminar theme and those of the themes of SIG meetings, please see *IASLIC Newsletter* April 2020 issue or visit IASLIC website.

CONFERENCES / SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS

National

Conference on Innovation in Library Services

The 7th National Conference of Chandigarh Librarians' Association will be held in virtual mode on December 12, 2020. The theme of the conference is 'Digital Convergence and Innovation in Library Services'. For details email to: gsecretary.cla@gmail.com

Workshop on Koha

An online Workshop on 'Library Automation through Koha in Google Cloud' is being organized by LIS Link during December 14 - 20, 2020. For details visit: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdQ_noGif1qvSIH05UKUMZxrsImnpapIF13IguqFGuHnxZU-w/viewform

International

SALIS 2020 Conference

SALIS 2020: International Virtual Conference on 'Challenges and Opportunities to Libraries and LIS Professionals in the Changing Global Scenario' will be held during December 28 - 30, 2020. For details visit: <https://salis2020conference.blogspot.com/>

Conference on Data Analysis Tools

The School of Library and Information Science, Central University of Gujarat, is organizing a Virtual International Conference on 'Statistical Tools and Techniques for Research Data Analysis (ICSTRDA -2021)' during January 10 - 17, 2021. For details visit: <http://www.cug.ac.in/events/pdf/FinalPoster.pdf>

Conference on Future of Library

The 7th International Conference of Asian Special Libraries (ICoASL 2021), organized by Special Libraries Association (SLA) Asia Community, will be held at the National Library of Korea, Seoul, South Korea, during May 12 - 14, 2021. The theme of the conference is 'Envisioning the Future of Library in the Post-Coronavirus Era'. For details visit: <https://connect.sla.org/asia/events/icoasl2021>

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

World's First Scientoon Book

Cartoons are most effective at communicating with human beings. They not only tickle us but are also capable of delivering tough messages in a simple, subtle and riveting manner. Human mind is hard wired to take their messages on board ahead of other forms of communication. A 'scientoon' is a cartoon communication based on science. Scientoons are meant to inform and sensitize people to science and scientific concepts in an intelligible and interesting way. World's first scientoon book entitled *Bye Bye Corona*, written by 'scientoonist' Dr. Pradeep Srivastava, former Senior Principal Scientist at CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow, was released recently at a function held at Raj Bhawan, Lucknow, by Ms. Anandi Ben, Governor, Uttar Pradesh, says a PIB press release. The book has been published by Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous agency under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. Dr. Nakul Parashar, Director, Vigyan Prasar, and Nimish Kapoor, scientist and head of publication division, Vigyan Prasar, are the chief editor and editor of the book respectively. The 220-page book contains comprehensive information on novel coronavirus pandemic, its symptoms and its prevention through precautions. 'Bye Bye Corona' also has a very interesting chapter on the 'Art of Living with Coronavirus' highlighting the methods to deal with the virus in day-to-day life if it is here to stay for a longer time. The Book offers a perspective insight into the intricacies of the deadly pandemic without scaring the reader. "The basic purpose of this book is to make people aware of COVID-19 in an engaging way. I drew few scientoons and posted them on my facebook. Dr. Nakul Parashar (Director, Vigyan Prasar) noticed them and tossed the idea of developing a book of scientoon on coronavirus. I planned for a 50-page book initially, as I was working single-handedly on the project. After having realized the vastness of the subject, I decided to seek toon contribution from more people. The final version of the book has 220 pages," said Dr. Pradeep Srivastava, the author. Other than him, six student scientoonists, namely Ms. Lakiesha Inacia Coehlhlo E Costa, Ms. Da Costa Maria Scimran Blossom, Ms. Priyanka Shanke, Ms. Samaradini Paigankar, Ms. Selcea Savia Da Costa and Mr. Prathamesh P. Shetgaonkar from Parvati Bai Chowgule College, Madgaon, Goa, also contributed to the book. Another contributor is Vishal Mulia, a school teacher in Gujarat. "Post its launch in India, the book would soon be released in Brazil under Brazil-India Network programme and would possibly be translated into Portuguese language" informed Dr. Srivastava. It is further planned to make a 3D version of this book, so as to facilitate its multi lingual adaptation across India and abroad. For more details visit: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1668450#:~:text=and%20interesting%20way,-,World's%20first%20scientoon%20book%20entitled%20%E2%80%9CBye%20Bye%20Corona%E2%80%9D>

%2C%20written,Ben%2C%20Governor%2C%20Uttar%20Pradesh

Book-a-Librarian Service

Spokane County (USA) Library District's Book-a-Librarian service is now offered remotely by phone and via online video sessions. This service helps library customers discover the tools, skills, and strategies they need to successfully do the things they want to do, says a story on www.cheneyfreepress.com website. Some examples of the services provided during a one-on-one Book-a-Librarian appointment include: Learning how to download the latest best-seller to your smartphone; Discovering strategies for finding the best educational content for at-home student learning; Getting help filing for unemployment benefits. For an individualized appointment, library customers are matched up with a staff person who has specialized knowledge in the customer's topic or area of interest (this may take a couple of days after submitting a request). That staff person spends about 30 - 45 minutes going over the topic or question, showing the customer the best resources available through the library and elsewhere, and helping customers learn how to continue to find and use those resources once the appointment is over. At this time, the Library District is complying with social distancing guidelines and not offering in-person appointments. A remote or virtual Book-a-Librarian appointment can be scheduled by calling any library found at www.sclld.org/locations or by submitting the online form at www.sclld.org/book-a-librarian. For original story visit: <https://www.cheneyfreepress.com/story/2020/10/22/education/book-a-librarian-service-offers-individualized-assistance-at-a-distance/27316.html>

Library to de-stress COVID Patients

In a novel initiative, Chamarajanagar district administration has set up a library at the Dedicated Covid Health Centre (DDHC) in Santhemarahalli of Chamarajanagar taluk in Karnataka, to help Covid-19 patients to de-stress and also to divert them from Covid-related anxiety, says a report by Gayathri GR in *Deccan Herald*. There are more than 700 books at the hospital and the patients under treatment can avail them. Books written by Jnanpith awardees, popular novelists, poets and litterateurs are available here. It is the idea of Deputy Commissioner M R Ravi, who visited the centre last week. He directed the officials to set up a library for those who are interested in reading books, during their brief stay here. Thus, the Health Department took measures in this regard and collected around 700 books in different genres. Books on water conservation, theatre, health, yoga, medicinal herbs, and also for children are available in the library. Books written by the DC, Ravi himself, on personality development is also available. The DC said, "The officials were directed to begin a small library, with interesting books to enable the Covid patients to pass their time, during the treatment at the centre. The patients are requested to make use of the facility." For original report visit: <https://www.deccanherald.com/state/karnataka-districts/library-to-de-stress-patients-at-covid-centre-905725.html>

Yashoda's Library

Yashoda was deeply saddened when she was asked to pay a fine by a library for returning the book late. She did not understand why she had to pay a fine for a book that she wanted to read. However, she started receiving books from various people after her father took to Facebook to narrate this incident. When she received a pile of books, she thought of starting her own library in the house. She set up the library after her parents allowed her to take the top floor of their house, says a story in the English edition of *Mathrubhumi*. 'Yashoda library' currently has a collection of more than 6000 books and is an important space for hundreds of book lovers. The library membership is free. There will not be any fine imposed if a book is returned late and there is no monthly fee either. These are the major highlights of Yashoda's library. She is a high school student at Mattancherry TD High School in Kochi. "I felt very sad when I was made to pay the fine. How can the poor people pay fine," she asked while recounting the incident that led to all this. BJP leader Kummanam Rajasekharan sent 108 books after getting to know about the incident, she said. Yashoda's father's friends also sent her several books. The top floor of the house near the Mattanchery temple now has almost all important works of Malayalam literature. Yashoda is supported by her father Dinesh Shenoy, who is an artist, mother Brahmaja and brother Achyuth. She studies in the library after returning from school in the evening. Meantime, she also distributes books to those visiting the library. The pandemic happened when the library was about to enter its second year. Nobody is allowed to enter the library under the current circumstances. Instead, books are distributed by Yashoda in front of her house after making sure they have applied sanitizers. Returned books are distributed again only after disinfecting it by keeping it in a special room for a week. For original story visit: <https://english.mathrubhumi.com/news/good-news/librarian-yashoda-shenoy-age-13-1.5052330>

Library Architecture raises Footfall

Why do people go to libraries? The most obvious answer is to read books. But a library in Kerala is attracting readers not just with its humungous collection of over 7,000 books, but also with its design marvel, says a report by Arjun Raghunath in *Deccan Herald*. It is more than a year since the Lal Bahadur Vayanasala and Granthalayam (library), which is over fifty-year-old and located at Karayil near Payyanur in Kannur district, has got its building designed in the form of a bookshelf. But even now people from distant places are visiting the library to see its unique architecture. President of the library Appukuttan Karayil said that the design of the library building is even attracting people from the nearby Kasargod district. It is true indeed, as the reader base of the library has seen an increasing trend over these months. The library was set up in 1967 with the initiative of freedom fighter K C Kunhirama Poduval. The initial building of

the library gave way for public development activities later and the library was functioning in a rented building for quite some time. A few years back a fresh initiative was taken to construct a new building. Veteran sculptor KKR Vengara proposed this unique design for the library building. Covers of popular books, mainly Malayalam, were also used for the design. Artisan Sreedharan C V led the construction of the building. The new building was inaugurated in 2019 February. Since then many have been flocking the library to see the building design. At present, the library has a collection of over 7,000 books, mostly Malayalam, said Appukuttan. Recently an upcoming bookshop at Aluva, near Kochi, had even grabbed the attention of even renowned Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho owing to its unique design in the form of a bookshelf. One of the four books modelled was Paulo Coelho's 'The Alchemist'. For original report visit: <https://www.deccanherald.com/national/south/this-kerala-library-attracts-readers-with-its-unique-architecture-875223.html>

NEHU Scientists build Book Sanitising Machine

An Auto Book Sanitising Composite Machine, a first-of-its-kind device, was recently unveiled at the central library of the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) in Shillong, Meghalaya, according to a post by Myithili Hazarika on *theprint.in* website. It works in an auto-controlled mode to sanitise all kinds of books without causing damage to their material. Up to 150 books can be sanitised in a single cycle of about 45 minutes and at a minimal cost of 20-30 paise per book. The device was developed by a team from the Department of Biomedical Engineering and the Department of Basic Sciences & Social Sciences, NEHU, in just two-and-half-months. For original post visit: <https://theprint.in/neye/shillong-university-library-unveils-first-of-its-kind-book-sanitising-machine/516035/>

Roadside Self-Help Library

To keep the youth away from visiting wine shops and rather inculcate the habit of reading, a 30-year-old Arunachal Pradesh woman has set up the first roadside library, says story available on *dailyhunt.in* website. "I bought books of all kinds worth ₹ 10,000 and spent another ₹ 10,000 to make the wooden 'Self-Help Library'. I have kept 70-80 books there and the rest are in my room. I have been asking the kids to visit the library by offering them chocolates," Ngrurang Meena, who hails from Arunachal Pradesh's Nirjuli town in Papum Pare district, told *The Times of India*. Hinting at the regressive development model being followed in the state, she pointed out that there were more wine shops and bars than bookstores and libraries. "I am the first woman from my family to pursue higher education. As a tribal kid growing up in the border state, I had little access to books and libraries. Reading and writing were limited activities and confined only to classroom textbooks. Although we have a few government libraries in the state, my siblings and I never had the chance to visit any during our childhood," said Meena. She said that she started the initiative so that people

could be encouraged to take up similar activities in other areas of the state. Meena shared that the idea to start the street corner library dawned on her after she saw a little post-box-like structure with books in it set up somewhere in Mizoram. "Although my inspiration is Mizoram, I realise that Arunachal is very different. Kids have poor writing skills. I want students of Classes IX-XII to improve them by reading more," Meena said. Meena's street library doesn't have a glass door to protect the books from theft. Anyone can visit the library and read books free of cost. As of now, the library has received books from two donors. For original story visit: <https://m.dailyhunt.in/news/india/english/the+logical+indian-epaper-tlogin/30+yr+old+woman+sets+up+free+roadside+library+in+arunachal+pradesh-newsid-n214320666>

Thatched House Library

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', according to a story 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 was still the same while the rest of the neighbouring villages had 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>

Thrown Books get New Life

While cleaning their homes before the festive season, people discard a lot of used books, Ahmedabad based Shahin Foundation has created a library of 3,000 such educational books which students can either borrow or keep for themselves - for free, according to a story in *The Times of India*. "Anybody can walk into our library and choose whatever book he or she wants. They can either return the books or keep them for themselves. We have got these for free and students can have them for free," said Hamid Memon, founder trustee of Danilimda-based Shahin Foundation. According to Memon, on an average, about a dozen students - from school to postgraduate level - visit the library and either refer to the books or take them. "The collection is only growing. As of now, we have 3,000 books. And although students have been taking books that they require, the number has been increasing every day," Memon said. Recently, the foundation donated 111 books to Faruq-e-Azam school in Juhapura area of the city. "We have been appealing to institutions and other schools as well. They can visit our library and take educational books that might be of value to them. At the same time, if they wish to donate educational books to us, we will be more than willing to accept," Memon said. The foundation began a "Scrap for Education" programme recently, under which people have been donating their books generously to the foundation. "These books also come in handy for about 800 students, who are being given coaching free by the trust. Many of them are doing their bachelor's, master's and other courses," Memon said. For original story visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/books-thrown-teachable-moment-grabbed/articleshowprint/79105278.cms>

Teacher sets up Library for Dalit Children

In the wake of the Karnataka Government's decision to suspend 'Vidyagama', children from a socio-economically disadvantaged background have been affected greatly, hopes of continuity in their education dashed. Taking cognisance of their situation and to ensure that their learning continues, Priyadarshini Sharanappa Amadihal, a lecturer at a government college in Dhannur in Bagalkot district, started a library with her own money - ₹ 10,000 - in Ambedkar Nagar, a locality in Ilkal town mostly populated by Dalits, for the benefit of the children there, says a *The Times of India* report. A youngster in the locality has been tasked with overseeing the operations of the library. The setting up of a library for the children in Ambedkar Nagar seems like a natural step to take for Priyadarshini, who has been offering her books to students at the college she works at for the past decade. Ample support from her father Sharanappa Amadihal and husband Uday Kumar Dhammannavar gave her the necessary encouragement

to go ahead with setting up of the library in Ambedkar Nagar. "When I approached the Babasaheb Ambedkar Dalit Hitarakshana Vedike, the organization members and residents of the area welcomed me like a daughter. The library itself was inaugurated recently in a simple ceremony," Priyadarshini told *TOI*. Basappa Mudhol, a senior citizen and member of the Vedike, said that the library stayed open two hours in the morning and three hours in the evening. Although he did not have the benefit of education - an illiterate, he called himself - he is determined to ensure that the ensuing generations reap the rewards of learning. "When madam (Priyadarshini) approached us with this proposal, we drew up a list of children attending schools and colleges and convinced parents to send their wards to the library. We have about 20 chairs at the Ambedkar Bhavan, where the library is housed. Anand Shivanagutti, a resident of neighbouring Basav Nagar, donated two bookshelves to the library and another philanthropist donated a table," Basappa said. For full report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hubballi/govt-college-lecturer-sets-up-library-in-dalit-colony/articleshowprint/78898669.cms>

Goa Library Waives Late Fine

The Goa State Central Library has waived off all fines accrued on books borrowed from them but not returned due to the lockdown, says a *The Times of India* report. "Members can return the books they had borrowed whenever they can," library curator Carlos Fernandes said. He said that the priority was to ensure that the readers followed MHA guidelines instead of just travelling to return the books they had borrowed earlier. After two months of lockdown, the Goa State Central Library reopened its doors to the public in mid-May. The library charges a late fine of ₹ 1 per day post the date of return. By scrapping the overdue fee, it is now one of several libraries around the world that has adopted a no-fee or amnesty policy in the wake of the lockdown. Since the lending section reopened, the library is receiving returns by readers who had borrowed books in March, just days before the lockdown was imposed to contain the spread of Covid-19. The books are quarantined and disinfected before being returned to the shelves. Fernandes said that the library staff were following a strict cleaning process. For original report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/no-fines-for-late-returns-at-central-library/articleshowprint/75957944.cms>

Higher Education Digital Library in UP

Uttar Pradesh authorities have launched on September 5 a Higher Education Digital library that will enable students to access the best content free of cost. Students enrolled in higher education institutions in any part of the state or the country will have access to audio and video lectures and best study materials prepared by experts for free, just at a click of a mouse, says a *The Times of India* report. The digital library will

offer students a rich collection as around 1,700 teachers from 23 state universities have already uploaded over 35,000 e-content materials on 134 subjects. "The digital library is a unique initiative in higher education. Now, students can access the study materials created by experts from anywhere and anytime and hence education will not be confined to the boundaries of campuses and time," Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma, who is also the state's Minister for Secondary and Higher Education, said. He said: "students, who cannot afford expensive journals and books for studies and research, will benefit by this initiative that does not cost anything. The students will have access to study materials in English and Hindi prepared by best teachers of the state universities". The Higher Education Department has also announced a helpline number to assist the students in case they have any query related to the e-contents available in the digital library. Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education, Monika S. Garg said: "The digital library is a boon for students, especially during pandemic times. Subject-wise content is available for students to study and download for free." She said, the digital library became possible in less time with the support of officials of the National Informatics Centre. Over 61,500 people have already visited the portal. For full report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/up-launches-higher-education-digital-library/articleshowprint/78924496.cms>

Karnataka E-Library App

The 'E-Library' app that Karnataka Government had launched came to the rescue of many book lovers in the times of Covid-19, providing them access to not just one but various libraries across the state. Consequently, people who downloaded the app were able to browse bookshelves in government libraries across Karnataka while seated at home. The app has certainly received an overwhelming response in Belagavi, with 11,000 book-lovers downloading it, says a *The Times of India* report. The Department of Public Libraries launched the application in March, but very few users downloaded the app in the weeks immediately after its launch. However, growing awareness and the extended lockdown resulted in patronage for the app increasing, particularly after users learnt that it gave access to books in all public libraries. With 11,000 downloads, Belagavi stands sixth in the state in the number of users for the app: 'E Sarvajanika Granthalaya'. Users can access, in addition to a whopping 38,024 books, 5,829 videos, and 59,990 e-journals. Moreover, there are more than 5,800 books and other study materials for the children. Each public library - there are 10 in the district - in Belagavi has been provided with two computers and four tablets. Visitors to the library can use these devices to read the books they like. Deputy Director of the district and central library Ramayya G said that the initiative helped the tech-savvy readers of the present generation. "Even elderly citizens who cannot step out of their homes can read books of

their choice on their phones or tablets. Several students have utilised the application extensively,” Ramayya said. For full report visit: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hubballi/e-library-app-receives-encouraging-response-in-belagavi/articleshowprint/78339490.cms>

TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Apple may Launch Search Engine

Apple may soon launch its own search engine to compete with Google. As per latest reports, Apple is building a Google Search engine alternative. The latest iOS 14 update has hinted at Apple's own search engine as the Cupertino-giant has displayed its own search results, says a report by Ankita Chakravarti available on www.indiatoday.in website. As per a *Financial Times* report, Apple is extremely secretive about its internal projects, but around two years ago, the company 'poached' Google's head of search, John Giannandrea. This is being speculated as to the starting point of the project. Apple has also posted job openings for search engineers inviting them to “define and implement the architecture of Apple's groundbreaking search technology.” The report further reveals that the marketing experts, who are monitoring Applebot, Apple's web crawler, have witnessed a lot of activity recently. One of the experts, Suganthan Mohandas, told *Financial Times* that the Applebot had appeared “a ridiculous number of times” on his clients' websites in recent weeks. “When the crawl rate increases, that tells us that they are trying to gather more information,” he said. It was noted that Apple in iOS 14 had sidelined Google for some of the search functions. “Queries made in the search window accessed by swiping right from the iPhone's home screen—which Apple calls the “Today View”—show an Apple generated list of search suggestions rather than Google results. These results include “autocomplete”-style suggestions generated by Apple, showing that it is learning from its 1bn users most common queries,” the *FT* report read. Google was founded more than 20 years ago so it would not be easy for Apple to develop one in a matter of a few years. Despite the resources, the process will take time. For original report visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/technology/news/story/apple-likely-to-come-up-with-its-own-search-engine-to-take-on-google-1736116-2020-10-29>

Google Maps to Show Landmarks

Google has announced improvements for Google Maps which is a widely used app for navigation, according to an *India Today Tech* report. Last year, the company introduced a Live View feature for Google Maps based on augmented reality. Live View makes use of a smartphone's camera and GPS to give visual cues. As Google blog post noted, “Arrows and directions are placed in the real world to guide your way, helping you identify exactly where to make those tricky turns or which way to start your walking journey.” With new updates in Google Maps, Live View AR directions will also identify landmarks so to give users an idea of where they are in a city. The landmarks could be

popular buildings, iconic places, or easily spotted parks. For now, the landmarks will be coming to the following cities: Amsterdam, Bangkok, Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Dubai, Florence, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Kyoto, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Milan, Munich, New York, Osaka, Paris, Prague, Rome, San Francisco, Sydney, Tokyo and Vienna. 'Landmarks' in Google Maps is rolling out very soon for Android and iOS users. Other than this, Google has added the Live View button in more places throughout the Maps to make sure people use it more often. In addition to directions, the AR button will appear when navigating by transit. For original report visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/technology/news/story/new-feature-in-google-maps-will-show-landmarks-1727552-2020-10-02>

Demand for National App Store

App developers and entrepreneurs in India have started demanding a national app store alternative to Google Play, which has so far dominated the app ecosystem in the country, according to a story by Jagmeet Singh available on gadgets.ndtv.com website. The call for an alternative started shortly after Google announced a 30 per cent fee for the apps that are there on Google Play but are not using Google's billing system. The latest move comes just less than a couple of weeks after Google briefly pulled mobile wallet app Paytm from the Play store for violating the platform's rules for content. Google has reportedly also called out Zomato and Swiggy for the same reason as Paytm. Paytm co-founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma is leading a team of app developers and entrepreneurs to bring an Indian alternative to Google Play. The move to build an alternative to Google Play began after Google announced that it would enforce the existing rule of taking a 30 per cent cut from in-app purchases made via the Play store for all listed apps. The company mentioned in a blog post released recently that nearly 97 per cent of app developers already use Google Play's billing system. Google Play store debars stalkerware apps that track others without consent. “India needs a local app store long term, else 30 percent tax will eat up most businesses. Is anyone trying to build one?” tweeted Harshil Mathur, CEO of payments gateway RazorPay. Nonetheless, the decision to bring an Indian app store alternative to Google Play is not just limited to help app developers retain their revenues from in-app purchases. It is also to get an independent platform specifically to support local apps, Vishal Gondal, founder of healthcare platform GOQii, told *Gadgets 360* over the phone. For full story visit: <https://gadgets.ndtv.com/apps/news/indian-alternative-to-google-play-demand-app-store-developers-entrepreneurs-2303972>

SPECIAL FEATURE

Sea of Knowledge beneath a Desert!

It was just after the nuclear tests at Pokhran in Thar desert of Rajasthan in May 1998, when the Missile Man of India and late President of the country A P J Abdul Kalam, the then Scientific

Adviser to Defence Minister, was returning to Delhi with his colleague Dr. K N Raj and other members of his team, he came across an ashram at a hamlet named Bhadariya near Jaisalmer. At the insistence of Dr. Raj, who mentioned about the amazing services being rendered by the ashram to the local tribal people, he decided to drop in at the ashram to have a glimpse of its activities. And he was awestruck at what he found there. Among the things that impressed him, was a library located beneath a temple of Bhadariya Mata, the local deity. He later narrated about his experience in his 2011 book 'Target 3 Billion' thus:

“Bhadariya was a small hamlet and we could locate the ashram easily; but what was difficult was to believe what we saw there. It was a large place, filled with greenery in the middle of the desert in Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan. Upon seeing us, the head priest of the ashram, Baba Sri Bhadariya Maharaj greeted us and took us to see the unique library he had created. He then took us down the staircase into an underground chamber which led to the library. We were pleasantly surprised to find the room remarkably cool and filled with more than 2 lakh books belonging to different subjects, different languages and different times in history. Some of them were even handwritten on parchment. Baba Sri Bhadariya Maharaj told us that due to the architectural design of the building, even when the outside temperature soared, the library remained naturally air-conditioned. He showed us books that were hundreds of years old and told us that the ashram had conserved traditional knowledge from earlier times”.

The library that mesmerized the late President has now grown into one of Asia's largest libraries, with over 9 lakh books and other documents and seating capacity of 4000 users at a time, and being visited by around 60,000 people - mostly scholars and researchers - from across the world every year.

The main driving force behind setting up of this unique library was Harbans Singh Nirmal, who was born in 1930 in a well-to-do family of Firozpur in Punjab. A pious man, Nirmalji left home at an early age to pursue the life of a sanyasi. In 1959, while wandering in search of a suitable place for meditation, he arrived at Bhadariya, a non-descript village in Thar desert region, located around 50 kilometres from Pokhran in Jaisalmer district. He liked the place and decided to stay on there. He lived in a cave near the temple of Bhadariya Mata and did rigorous penance for nine years following which he came to be known as Bhadariya Maharaj and also as Nirmal Maharaj. He set up an ashram near the temple and formed Jagadamba Seva Samiti Trust, through which he initiated development of the site and construction of some people oriented facilities. The underground library is one such facility.

The library is located 16 feet below the temple complex. The underground location of the library keeps it cool needing no air-conditioning even during sweltering summer days when the temperature above hovers around 50 degree centigrade. The library was started on April 21, 1983 with around 4000 books, collected by Nirmal Maharaj through purchase and gift. And

soon more books started pouring in. According to some sources, the collection of books actively began only in 1998 and during last 22 years it has crossed the mark of 900000 and it is still growing. According to local villagers, Bhadariya Maharaj stayed in the library for years and read most of the books available in the collection till he passed away in 2010. The collection has books in many languages and from different regions of the world and on various subjects including science, astrology, astronomy, epics and history. The library also has constitutions of various countries, books on law, atlases and multitude of dictionaries in several languages. Besides books, the library also has a rich collection of manuscripts, old books in Persian, Sanskrit and many old languages of the world. Mool Singh, who works at the library, says: “Bhadariya Maharaj started the library with an aim to open a research university. He kept on collecting all sorts of books on diverse subjects and religions. Books in almost every language can be spotted here. Books, even on Ayurveda and Allopathy can be found. He was a believer of all religions and had love for all languages and that is reflected in his collection.”

With its unique architecture, the library is divided into five parts - two 356-foot-long galleries and two 220-foot-long galleries and 18 rooms. The books are neatly arranged in 562 shelves with glass sliders. The interior of this library is very beautifully designed. The corridors are full of embedded wooden frames holding a plethora of books. At the end of each aisle, there is a mirror, reflecting the upcoming adventure that awaits ahead in the world of books. The pastel shades on the wall have appealing charm. The tranquil environment is conducive to serious reading for long hours. The library is so well maintained that it is difficult to find any particle of dust at any corner. The Jagadamba Seva Samiti Trust manages the library and the villagers and devotees take care of the library. The trust spends ₹ 6 to 7 lakhs on its maintenance annually. Presently, the management is focusing on digitization and proper cataloguing of books. “Soon we will be able to make our collection online for easier reach to people,” said Jugal Kishore Ashera, head at the library, while talking to newsmen.

The vast and varied collection of the library can help the researchers a lot. But it is still not known to many. It must be brought to the notice of the academic community throughout the country. If you are a researcher, try to explore the collection: You may discover some hidden gems from this sea of knowledge beneath the desert. Many of you who have visited Rajasthan might not have visited this temple of learning just because you had no information about it. So next time when you plan to visit Rajasthan do not miss the opportunity to have a glimpse of this treasure trove.

[Sources: <https://www.tripoto.com/jaisalmer/trips/did-you-know-about-this-underground-book-library-in-rajasthan-having-over-900k-books-5ed0f027e85c2>, <https://curlytales.com/rajasthan-has-one-of-asias-biggest-libraries-housing-900000-books/>, <https://samacharabharati.org/a-miracle-in-rajasthan->

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OBITUARY

Prof. Bijoy Pada Mookerji, former Head, Department of Library and Information Science, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, passed away on October 14, 2020, after a brief illness. Born in 1933, Prof. Mookerji obtained Certificate in Librarianship from Bengal Library Association in 1957, Diploma in Library Science from University of Calcutta in 1959 and Associateship in Documentation from DRTC, Bangalore, in 1970. He started his professional career at Hooghly Women's College Library and worked in several other organizations, viz., Jaykrishna Public Library, Uttarpara, Hooghly; Howrah District Library; Calcutta University Library; and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur Library; before joining DLIS, Jadavpur University, in 1978 as a faculty member, from where he retired in 1999. He proved himself to be a very popular teacher of cataloguing. He served in various capacities in Bengal Library Association. He authored two books and published many papers in professional journals and edited books. Prof. Mookerji was a life member of

IASLIC and was associated with its various activities. He delivered Ranganathan Memorial Lecture, 2004 on the topic 'Libraries are Laboratories'. IASLIC deeply mourns his death.

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]

Foreign

1. KOEN (Diane) and LESNESKI (Traci Engel), *Eds.* Library Design for the 21st Century: Collaborative Strategies to ensure success (IFLA Publications No. 179). 2019. De Gruyter Saur, Berlin. \$ 114. ISBN: 9783110614657.

(Contains the best papers presented by award-winning architects and international thought leaders from the academic and public library sector at satellite conferences and seminars, as selected by the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section)

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(Brings together international authorities who have explored the social, institutional and user impacts of e-legal deposit)

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