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रक्षा विज्ञान पुस्तकालय
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Centre may offer sops for military

To soothe ruffled feathers over the decision to open cantonment roads to civilian traffic

The government is actively considering various steps to assuage the palpable discontent in military circles that has recently worsened because of the opening of cantonment roads to civilian traffic.

Sources indicate that several possible steps are being discussed, among them restoring rations to military officers in peace areas and easing the opposition to non-functional upgrade for them. Besides, the government may refine the decision to open cantonment roads.

Free rations for military officers in peace postings were withdrawn last year in the wake of the pay commission recommendations from July 1, 2017. However, in recent times, the government has introduced the provision to pay them a sum slightly less than ₹100 a day with retrospective effect. However, even this amount has not really impressed military families, because this rate is based on the wholesale prices and not the retail cost. There has been widespread demand for reintroducing rations.

The Army headquarters is believed to have recommended reintroducing the rations, and sources indicate that the government is positively considering it.

The government softening its stand against providing the NFU would provide increased salary and status for a significant number of military officers vis-à-vis their civilian counterparts, who already enjoy it. The case is before the Supreme Court on an appeal of the government against the Armed Forces Tribunal order that went in favour of military officers.

Hoping for a review

Meanwhile, there is much anticipation in military circles about the government's promise to review the decision to open cantonment roads to civilian traffic.

The Army has drawn up a set of suggestions, taking into consideration the suggestions of officers and their families. Military families have been most vocal against the opening of the roads. The Army is expected to suggest a system of passes for civilians who need to use cantonment areas regularly.

Scientists are close to producing clean water from thin air

A substance called a metal-organic framework acts like a sponge to draw moisture out of the air

Scientists have figured out a way to harvest water from dry desert air using only the sun's heat. The device could be a game-changer for approximately 2.1 billion people around the world who lack immediate access to clean drinking water.

The device is made of a porous material called a metal-organic framework (MOF) that's housed within a clear plastic box. In simple terms, water vapour from the atmosphere condenses on the MOF material, which absorbs it like a sponge. As the water evaporates, it gets trapped and collected by the device. A group of scientists at the University of California, Berkeley who created the device tested a proof-of-concept last year, and recently tried a prototype out in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The device produced around seven ounces of water after the researchers left it outside for one full day and night. While that's not enough to hydrate you, the researchers said it's relatively easy to scale up the device

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sun, 24 June 2018

World's 'smallest computer' is here. It is smaller than a rice grain

Researchers at the University of Michigan in the US have come out with the world's "smallest computer" -- a device measuring just 0.3 mm to a side, completely dwarfed by a grain of rice. Unlike traditional desktops that retain their program and data with or without a power back-up, these new micro-devices lose all prior programming and data as soon as they are switched off, Xinhua news agency reported. "We are not sure if they should be called computers or not. It's more of a matter of opinion whether they have the minimum functionality required," said David Blaauw, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, who led the development of the new system. In addition to the RAM and photovoltaic, the new micro-computing device -- Michigan Micro Mote -- has processors and wireless transmitters and receivers.

As the Motes are too small to have conventional radio antennae, they receive and transmit data with visible light. A base station provides light for power and programming, and it receives the data.

The computer can report temperatures in minuscule regions, such as a cluster of cells, with an error of about 0.1 degree Celsius. The system is very flexible and could be remained for a variety of purpose. The device can help in oncology research.

THE HINDU

Sun, 24 June 2018

A library that celebrates parallel literature turns 40

Nestled in Tamar Lane, off College Street, Little Magazine Library is a bright yellow building. The small entrance to this home-turned-library in Kolkata opens up to wall after wall of books. Seated in the midst of these mountains is founder Sandip Dutta, the owner of the library that turned 40 on Saturday.

His quest to open a library of this kind, which would eventually host poet Mahasweta Devi and other literary figures, began on one of his many trips to the National Library in 1972, when he was 21.

"When I walked into the National Library, I saw the little magazines thrown on the floor. Dust and worms had wrecked most of them," he said.

Mr. Dutta launched his archive when the country was taken up by the little magazine movement in the 1970s. It made its way across Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal, nurturing marginalised, less-known writers. In Bengal, the movement gathered steam through post-modernist Bengali literature.

Periodicals prosper

The coming of the Hungry Generation writers popularised periodicals like *Krittibash* (edited by Sunil Gangopadhyay and Dirac Majumdar), *Sebum Patra*, *Kali Kalam*, *Kobita Saptahiki* (edited by Shakti Chattopadhyay) and *Kallol*.

Initially, Mr. Dutta organised an exhibition, which showcased about 750 little magazines from his collection. By 1978, he had set it up, and was working to clear the confusion about what the magazines meant: “People often take ‘little’ in this case to mean ‘for children,’ but few realise it is a non-commercial, parallel establishment that celebrates artistic voices.”

The venture started off with 1,500 magazines and was known as ‘Library and Laboratory for Bengali Little Magazines.’ It later became the ‘Kolkata Little Magazine Library and Research Centre,’ housing about 60,000 periodicals, 1,600 of them digitised. It also houses research material on 60 topics: from film, music, politics and feminist theory to subaltern studies.