

State govt will fully cooperate with NCPDR efforts: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that since ancient times, India has had its own special character and ideal culture, which is why India is called the Vishwa Guru. We wish everyone well with the principle of "Live and let live". The role of Guru in our system has been to take us from darkness to light. Yadav said that education has a paramount place in life. Education is more important than any position and status. Lord Krishna pursued education on the land of Madhya Pradesh and during the war of Mahabharata, he completed the scriptures with his soul. The Gita has various aspects. The army's discipline could be observed in the education imparted in Gurukuls. Life and

death are permanent. The time in between is to live a meaningful life with a smile and enthusiasm. Yadav today participated in the workshop organized by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights at TIT Excellence College, Anand Nagar, Bhopal. Yadav said that the workshop has been organized by the Commission on an important topic. The state government will fully cooperate with the efforts of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. Efforts will be made to ensure that no child stops going to school. No child must be forced to be a dropout under any circumstances. Every student has the right to education. The Chief Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi communicates with students before the examinations to boost their confidence. He has

increased the importance of education through the new education policy. Many facilities are being provided to the students. Prime Minister Modi brought a new education policy to India. Today India is leading in the world in many fields. Chief Minister Yadav also recalled the steps taken to protect Indian students on the initiative of Prime Minister Modi during the Ukraine war. Chairman National Commission for Protection of Child Rights Priyanka Kanungo said that education works to change the entire generation. It is important to bring children living in adverse circumstances into the mainstream. Children's education was affected adversely when parents went to other states for employment. Now in other states also textbooks are made available to students in Hindi. If a child is absent from school for 30 days,

efforts are made to find out the cause and find a solution. At the outset, Kanungo welcomed Yadav and presented him with a memento. Saplings were presented to the guests. Labor Minister Prahlad Patel said that the interests of the workers in the state are being taken care of on priority. All resources are being made available for education to the children of deprived sections studying in the residential schools run in the state. Madhya Pradesh will become a state with no child labour. For this, the help of all government agencies related to the education sector, voluntary organizations, and experts in this subject will be taken. Patel said that we will endeavor to send school dropouts from families of deprived class and laborers back to school. Participants from 6 states Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Dadra Nagar Haveli-Daman-Diu, Gujarat,

Maharashtra, and Goa attended the workshop. Subject experts and scholars in the field of education discussed the situation of school dropouts in the workshop. Also, discussions were held regarding reducing the trend of children dropping out of schools in the state. Other organizations and public representatives also participated in the workshop. Chairman Madhya Pradesh Child Protection Commission Dravinder More and Member Secretary of National Child Commission Rupali Banerjee, Secretary School Education Sanjay Goyal, Commissioner Public Instruction Shilpa Gupta, Labor Commissioner Dhanaraju S, officials of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, officials of the Education Department, and representatives of voluntary organizations were also present.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav inaugurates a workshop of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights at TIT college in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

Gates of all the dams in Bhopal opened in past 24 hrs

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In the wake of heavy rains in Bhopal, Upper Lake, Kaliyasot Dam and Bhadbhada have overflowed, while the gates of Kolar Dam have also been opened. Now only Kerwa Dam is such, which is 30 percent empty. The gates of Kerwa Dam will also open after 1-2 days of heavy rains in the catchment area and Sehore district. All the gates of Bhadbhada Dam were closed on Saturday. This happened due to no rain in the catchment area of Upper Lake. Light rain occurred in Bhopal on Saturday. Due to heavy rains, 181 government schools of Berasia and Phanda were closed on Saturday. However, many private schools of Bhopal also gave leave to lower classes of the school. So far, more than 28 inches of rainfall has been reported in Bhopal, which is 75 percent of the

season. Heavy rains started from Thursday night itself, which continued throughout the day on Friday. Due to this, a water logging situation arose in many areas. At the same time, good water also came in the water sources. After the gates of Kaliyasot dam were opened, the Kaliyasot river overflowed, 20 families of Samardha Tola on the river bank were shifted to a school. Every year, houses get flooded here. Kolar Fire Officer Pankaj Khare said, the drain culvert in Pipaliya Kesho village was also overflowing at night. Due to this, 6 members of 2 families were rescued. Kolar SDM Ravi Shankar Rai and other officers were present on the spot. On Friday, all 13 gates of Kaliyasot dam were opened. Actually, as soon as the water level in the Upper Lake came to 1666.80 feet, one gate of Bhadbhada dam was opened.

By 6 pm, 6 out of 11 gates were opened. Five gates were closed late at night. However, 7 gates remained open on Saturday. Some gates may be closed on Sunday. Kaliyasot Dam in-charge Nitin Kuhikar said that the water level in the dam is being maintained at 502.22 meters. Therefore, after maintaining this much water, the rest of the water is being released through the gate. Kerwa Dam is currently about 30 percent empty. Four out of 8 gates of Kolar Dam near Bhopal have also been opened. All the gates were opened by a total of 7 meters. Dam in-charge Harsha Jainwal said that it is raining continuously in the catchment area. Due to this, the water in Kolar Dam is also increasing. Therefore, four gates were opened. After the rain stopped, the inflow of water was reduced. Now water is being released from two gates.

District Collectors asked to remain alert regarding extreme weather conditions

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

District collectors across the state have been issued instructions to remain alert regarding the extreme weather conditions developing due to heavy rainfall. It rained heavily in 25 districts including Bhopal. Two more gates of Bargi Dam were opened in Jabalpur. Now water is being released from 9 sluice gates, 9 sluice gates of Tawa Dam were also opened in Narmadapuram. Due to this the water level of Narmada river is continuously increasing. One gate of the dam built on Johila river in Umaria was opened for the first time in the season. On Saturday, the highest rainfall in the state was recorded in Rewa. One and a half inches of water fell here. One and a quarter inches of rain was recorded in Jabalpur. Apart from Bhopal, it rained in

Betul, Dhar, Guna, Narmadapuram, Indore, Khandwa, Pachmarhi, Ratlam, Shivpuri, Ujjain, Satna, Seoni, Sidhi, Tikamgarh, Umaria, Malajkhand, Chhindwara, Narsinghpur, Sagar, Damoh, Rewa, Mandla and Nowgong. Water is flowing two feet above the bridge of the outer river connecting Vidisha and Ashoknagar. Natural springs have burst in Raisen. A red alert for heavy rain has been issued in 5 districts on Sunday. IMD Bhopal said that cyclonic circulation has become a low pressure area around Jharkhand and West Bengal. The monsoon trough is passing through the center of this low pressure area through Sidhi, Gwalior i.e. northern part of Madhya Pradesh. Another trough is active in these areas through east-west. Talking about the south-west winds, it is bringing constant moisture, which is affecting the state.

Due to this, heavy rain has been continuing since late Thursday night, which will continue for the next 2 days. The weather department has also issued an alert for this. The system will move forward on Saturday. It will affect the southern and central parts. Therefore, there is a red and orange alert in many districts. Almost the entire state will be wet. During this time, there is also a possibility of lightning and floods. There is a situation of waterlogging and floods in Madhya Pradesh due to continuous rains. Due to this, the government has instructed the collectors to remain on high alert mode. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that there should be no lack of coordination to deal with the challenges of excessive rainfall and floods. Flood control rooms should work 24 hours in all the districts, and if necessary, the general public

should be warned immediately so that no accident occurs anywhere. Chief Minister Yadav has instructed to exercise extra caution on culverts and bridges, so that vehicles and those crossing the culverts do not have to face any unpleasant situation of flow. In the instructions given to the collectors, it has also been said that in case of waterlogging and accident situation around dams, ponds and other reservoirs, restrictions can also be imposed on the movement of people. Where there is a possibility of an accident due to heavy rains and waterlogging on rivers and culverts, instructions have also been given to install boards there. The government has said that in every situation, the focus of the officers should be on the safety of life and property. The field staff was also asked to make these arrangements. The Public Works Department should collect information about

such bridges where accidents have happened in the past. The administration should make security arrangements on such culverts and bridges built on roads. If water has to be released from dams, alert the affected districts in advance. Divers teams should also be deployed at such places. For this, coordination should also be maintained with the local people. Vehicles should not be allowed to move on bridges or culverts where water flow is fast. Make necessary security arrangements on the routes to those religious places and also at those places which are near water sources or rivers. Keep a vigil in view of safety at places where water level may rise during rains. In case of a flood like situation, select high places in cities and rural areas where flood waters cannot reach and people can be shifted if needed.



Water flows out after the thirteen sluice valves of Kaliyasot dam opened in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

BHEL receives order for demonstration of firing in a gas turbine, 1st in country

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has received the first ever order for the demonstration of methanol firing in a Gas Turbine at the 350 MW Kayamkulam Combined Cycle Power Plant (CCPP) of NTPC installed at Alappuzha district in Kerala. This will be the first such demonstration project of its kind in India. Significantly, this demonstration will pave the way for reviving unutilised gas turbine sets in the country which are inoperative due to unavailability of natural gas and naphtha. Notably, Kayamkulam CCPP comprising two gas turbines of 115 MW each and one steam turbine of 120 MW was set up by BHEL on turnkey basis in 1998-99. BHEL's scope in the contract includes technology support, supply of equipment and associated auxiliaries along with erection and commissioning. The methanol firing demonstration is planned in two phases. In the first phase of 12 months duration, the methanol firing demonstra-

Significantly, this demonstration will pave the way for reviving unutilised gas turbine sets in the country

tion is planned at 30-40% load of the machine. After the successful demonstration of the first phase, a demonstration at 100% load is proposed to be carried out in the second phase. BHEL has presently secured the order for the first phase. Key equipment for the project like Tank, Fire Protection & Detection System, Piping and Erection & Commissioning along with technology support will be provided by BHEL's Hyderabad based units. BHEL has been a reliable supplier of equipment and services in the gas turbine-based power segment for nearly four decades, with a portfolio of over 7,500 MW of gas turbine-based power plants installed across the country.

Rajeev Jain takes over as MD, NHDC



Bhopal: After proposition to the post of Executive Director on May 01, 2024, Rajeev Jain has taken over as Managing Director, NHDC on August 01, 2024. During his tenure, Rajeev Jain has worked with perfection in various fields and has played significant role in the commissioning of Chamera-1 HE Project. During the commissioning he has done an exemplary work in Dam & Power House. In addition to above, he also played an important role in the land acquisition work in Liaison Office, Pathankot. During his posting at Corporate Office, Faridabad while holding the post of Senior Manager, in the Planning Department, he was selected as Chief Engineer on deputation in Navratna Company, REC.

AIIMS Bhopal organises street play to create awareness on organ donation

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

In a significant effort to promote the noble cause of organ donation, the Department of Anesthesia at AIIMS Bhopal organized a street play on Saturday. This event was part of the Organ Donation Day celebrations aimed at raising awareness about the critical need for organ donation in India. The street play, performed by a dedicated group of MBBS students, nursing staff, and doctors, effectively conveyed the life-saving message of organ donation to the public. The performance highlighted the alarming disparity between the demand and supply of kidney transplants in India. Every year, approximately 7.5 lakh kidney transplants are required, but only 11 thousand kidneys are available through organ donation. This stark contrast underscores the urgent need to increase public awareness and participation in organ donation. Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh emphasized the profound impact of organ donation,

stating, "Organ donation not only gives life to an individual but also to an entire family. By organizing such events, AIIMS Bhopal is committed to running an effective program to promote organ transplantation in the country and the state. Through organ donation, a person's organ can continue to live and give new life to another even after death." The play underscored the importance of organ donation as a permanent solution to the increasing cases of dialysis in India. While dialysis serves to purify the blood, it is not a long-term solution. Kidney transplants, made possible through organ donation, provide a permanent solution and significantly improve the quality of life for patients. AIIMS Bhopal, through its dedicated efforts and initiatives, continues to play a pivotal role in promoting organ donation and transplantation. The institution is committed to educating the public, dispelling myths, and encouraging more individuals to come forward and pledge their organs.

Kathak and Bharatanatyam at Bharat Bhawan



STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Two dance performances were given at Bharat Bhawan on the second evening of the Bhavanubhav festival based on dance arts organized by Music Center Anhad. On one hand, art lovers got the opportunity to become aware of the nuances of Kathak dance. At the same time, the presentation based

on ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu in Bharatanatyam left me mesmerized. At the ceremony, Amita Khare, Shweta Devendra and fellow dancers gave a beautiful presentation focusing on dance and music. In this dance music session which lasted for about two hours, the dancers incorporated various postures of Bharatanatyam along with traditional Kathak in their dance and presented them

on stage. In this, the dancers played the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu like Pisces, Vaman, Parashuram, Varaha, Ram, Krishna etc. In the next phase of the ceremony, Kathak dance performance by Amita Khare took place. Amita started the presentation with Ganesh Vandana. After this, a presentation based on Jhaptal and Miyan Malhar was given.

State government committed to empower women: CM

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav affirmed the state government's dedication to empowering women...

ditional Rs 250 will be given separately alongside the Ladli Behna Yojana funds. This bonus will benefit 1.29 crore women across the state.

gram, Ladli Behnas presented a big Rakhi to the Chief Minister and tied the Rakhi to his wrist. The Chief Minister planted a mango sapling in the open jail premises of Narsinghpur.

importance of values. Drawing on Swami Vivekananda's address to Americans, he noted that our culture embodies a sense of equality. Unlike other places where law enforcement is necessary to maintain order, India relies on its intrinsic values to guide behavior.

students in pursuing higher education. He also confirmed that all welfare schemes currently in place will remain active, with no program being discontinued. Additionally, the Seekho-Kamao scheme will offer youth opportunities for internships, providing valuable work experience.



Minister for Cooperatives Vishwas Kailash Sarang goes through an exhibition of Cooperative products in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo



Indore Divisional Commissioner Deepak Singh accompanied by Indore collector Ashish Singh, inspected Indore collector office and reviewed the working and records of different sections and reviewed the disposal of revenue cases which are registered in different ADM office SDM office and Tehsil offices.

Four children killed as a wall collapses on them

Four children and a woman and a child sustained injuries after a wall of an abandoned building collapsed on them while they were returning home from school in Madhya Pradesh's Rewa district on Saturday.

The incident occurred near a private school under Garh police station limits

way home when the wall of an abandoned building nearby collapsed on them, Mahendra Singh Sikarwar, Inspector-General of Police, Rewa zone, told reporters.

the time. When they were pulled out of the debris, four had died. A woman and another child sustained injuries and were referred to Rewa for further treatment, she said.

Coaching centre operators meet

Meeting with coaching centre operators was held by MP Nagar SDM on fire safety and parking.

holding classes in the basement. On Saturday, MP Nagar SDM Ashutosh Sharma held a meeting of all coaching institutes. They were given a month's time regarding parking and fire safety.

action will be taken to seal them. One person will have to be deployed on every floor of the coaching, who will be able to guide to deal with emergency situations.

Habibganj police nab 2, solve Rs 5.25 lakh robbery near Parul hospital

Habibganj police have nabbed two robbers who have looted Rs 5.25 lakh near Parul Hospital on Friday.

of complainant Ahmad. Before withdrawing the money, Ahmad took Anas to the bank in his own vehicle. From here, he withdrew Rs 5.25 lakh by withdrawing the cheque.

A student was robbed of Rs. 5.25 lakhs in broad daylight in Bhopal on Thursday. Two accused came on a scooter, first hit the victim's scooter due to which they fell and then stabbed him in the back to scare him.

Accused Altaf and Alfaz committed the robbery at a short distance. Anas and Ayan were standing far away and watching the crime. It was already decided that in case of any problem at the spot, both of them would come to help.

The police have arrested four accused in the case. The main accused is a close friend of the student. He had hatched the entire conspiracy of the robbery.

A customer had recently paid by cheque after buying marble. Ahmed had gone to the bank to encash the cheque from his house in Malviya Nagar. He was returning home after taking money from the bank in MP Nagar Zone-2.

Police Commissioner Harinarayanchari Mishra said that based on the student's suspicion in the case, the police detained his close friend Anas Ali (23) late at night. He told the police that he had confessed to the robbery with his friends Altaf Ansari (20) resident of Aishbagh, Alfaz Khan (24) resident of Talaiya and Ayan Riyaz (20) resident of Talaiya. He was aware that complainant Ahmad would go to MP Nagar on Friday afternoon to cash the cheque.

I, Anjali Singh Lalwani Alias Anjali Singh Alias Anjali D/O Anand Singh W/O Kunal Lalwani R/O A-44 Alkapuri Huzur Bhopal Madhya Pradesh-462024 Changed My Name To Anjali Singh. PD(649)A

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES BHOPAL. NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) NIT No. AIIMSBHOPAL-TENDER/NIT/24-25/009 Date: 04/08/2024

HINDUJA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED. Corporate Office: 167-169, 2nd floor, Near Little Mount Metro Station, Saidapet, Chennai - 600015. Regional Office - 101-B, 1st Floor, NRK Business Park, Vijaynagar, Indore(MP) - 452010. DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF SARFAESI ACT, 2002

"This journey of education and breaking stigma around HIV is something that will have a legacy everlasting"
— Gareth Thomas



OVERCOMING HIV STIGMA YOUTH BREAKING BARRIERS

In the face of deep-seated stigma and discrimination, young people living with HIV in Goa, are finding hope and resilience through the Human Touch Foundation. **SHOBHA SHUKLA** explores their personal journeys and examines the collective efforts that are transforming their lives and challenging societal norms

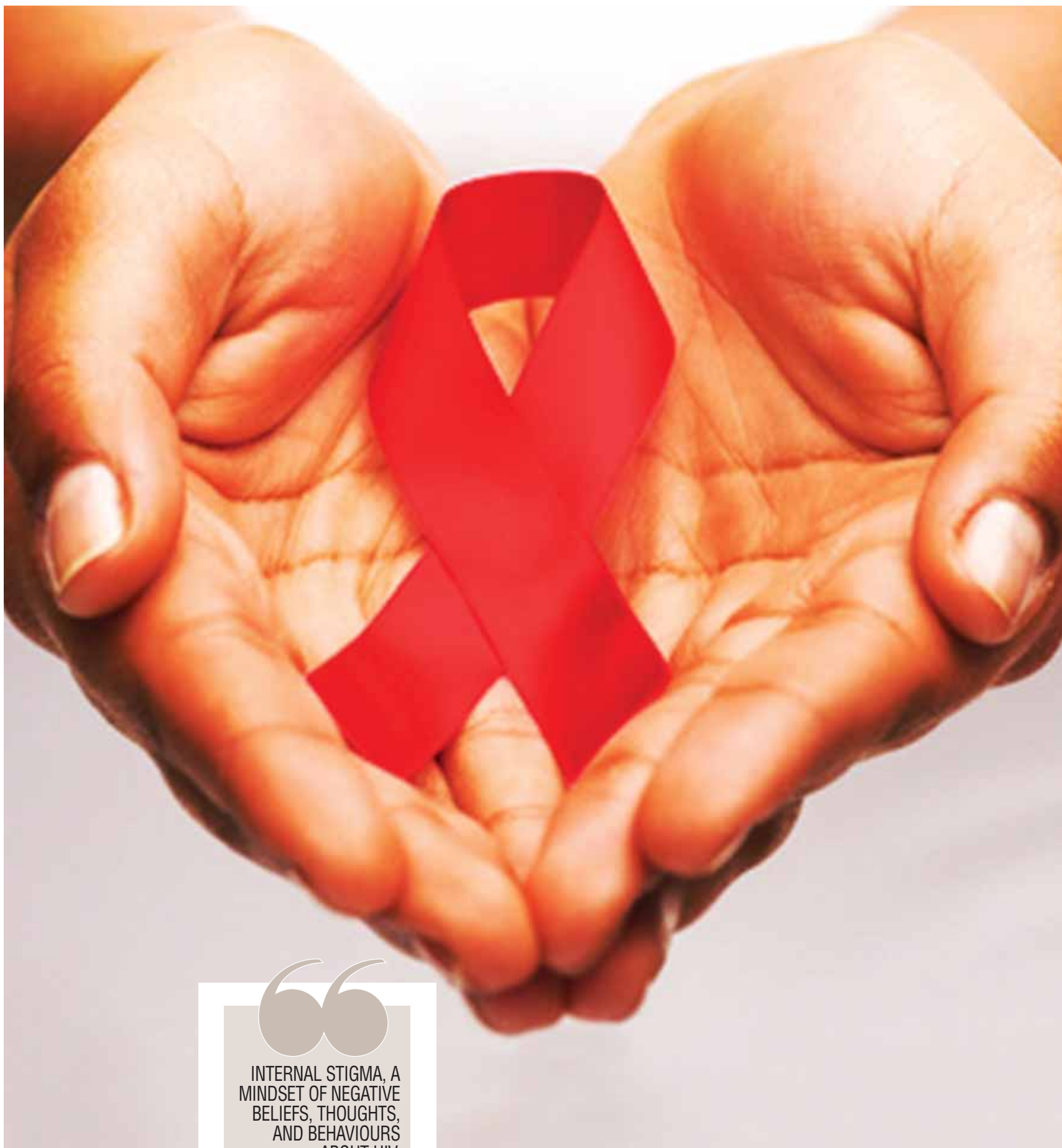


SHOBHA SHUKLA

Living with HIV often comes with a heavy burden of internal and external stigma. For many young people, this fear of discrimination can be paralyzing, affecting their ability to live normal lives. HIV-related misconceptions remain a significant barrier for those living with the virus, impacting their mental health, relationships, and opportunities in life. However, through the dedicated support of the Human Touch Foundation, these youths are not only overcoming their fears but also becoming advocates for change in their communities.

THE WEIGHT OF STIGMA

A young person living with HIV shared, "As a young person living with HIV, I had self-stigmatised myself due to the fear of discrimination... fear of discrimination if I dare disclose my HIV positive status to others... this fear had stopped me from living life like a normal person." This sentiment, echoed by many, underscores the profound impact of internal stigma. Internal stigma, a mindset of negative beliefs, thoughts, and behaviours about HIV, manifests as shame, guilt, feelings of contamination, reduced self-efficacy, self-loathing, low self-esteem, and self-rejection. "Internal stigma happens when we internalise external stigma and judgements and believe that they are true. Internal stigma also happens in the absence of external stigma and discrimination," explained Nadine Ferris France, CEO of Beyond Stigma. A youth shared his trauma, "I and my youth peers have confronted HIV-related stigma and discrimination in schools, workplaces, and societal levels. Sometimes, it is the teachers who were not cooperating or discriminating against them. The fear of disclosure – which means sharing our HIV positive status with family members, friends or others in society – the fear of being discriminated, is faced by many... the fear if we would be thrown out of the house or will our friends unfriend us..." The Human Touch Foundation, based in Goa, India, is dedicated to supporting young people living with HIV. The organization provides a comprehensive range of services including mental health counselling, nutritional support, educational and vocational training, and medical assistance. By fostering a supportive community and empowering youth-led initiatives, the foundation addresses stigma and discrimination at multiple levels. Their efforts ensure that those living with HIV can lead healthier, more fulfilling lives while advocating for broader societal change. A young girl living with HIV



shared how the Human Touch Foundation helped her overcome her fears of stigma and discrimination: "From my childhood I have been touched by Human Touch Foundation which helped me overcome my fears of stigma and discrimination related to disclosure – and helped me in various ways." She added, "As I am living with HIV, I faced a lot of stigma and discrimination from my own family as well as from society. People in the society told the family to not let me come out otherwise I will spread the virus to their children. I even faced it in my relationship with one guy. I knew him for one year and had shared everything with him but still he blamed me that I got infected because I have been sleeping with others." Despite these challenges, she found a supportive community within the Human Touch Foundation, which provides a range of services including nutritional counselling, mental

INTERNAL STIGMA, A MINDSET OF NEGATIVE BELIEFS, THOUGHTS, AND BEHAVIOURS ABOUT HIV, MANIFESTS AS SHAME, GUILT, FEELINGS OF CONTAMINATION, REDUCED SELF-EFFICACY, SELF-LOATHING, LOW SELF-ESTEEM, AND SELF-REJECTION. "INTERNAL STIGMA HAPPENS WHEN WE INTERNALISE EXTERNAL STIGMA AND JUDGEMENTS AND BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE TRUE. INTERNAL STIGMA ALSO HAPPENS IN THE ABSENCE OF EXTERNAL STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION," EXPLAINED NADINE FERRIS FRANCE, CEO OF BEYOND STIGMA

health support, and job opportunities.

PERSONAL TRIUMPHS AND COLLECTIVE SUPPORT

Another young person recounted their journey: "I got to know my HIV status at the age of 13. I was with my relatives because I had lost my parents. That is when I first felt being stigmatised and discriminated against by my own family. For example, I was told not to use the common family nail cutter because if any blood comes out while cutting my nails then it can put others at risk. Or sometimes there were separate utensils for eating food. It used to hurt me." Finding support through the Human Touch Foundation, this individual connected with peers facing similar challenges and received guidance from Peter Borges, the foundation's CEO. "Peter Sir helped me a lot from the very beginning. He helped me with my documents too. We used to

have residential camps back then too, with adolescents living with HIV. I learnt a lot from these camps. Doctors were involved in these camps where we learnt a lot about HIV and how can we overcome problems we face."

THE POWER OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP

The Human Touch Foundation emphasizes the importance of youth-led initiatives in the HIV response. "Youth are the best equipped to lead the response to HIV," said a young intern at the foundation. Sandhya Chavan, Lead for Adolescent Health and Wellbeing, highlighted the comprehensive support provided: "We at Human Touch Foundation provide a range of youth-led services, such as mental health counselling, psychosocial support, help them avail a range of social protection schemes, nutritional packages, medical help, or treatment adherence support, among others." Masooma Sheikh, a

counselling psychologist at the foundation, stressed the need for proper mental health services in HIV care centres and a holistic approach to support young people living with HIV.

A BEACON OF HOPE AND RESILIENCE

As the Human Touch Foundation celebrates its 15th anniversary, its impact is evident in the lives it has touched. Peter Borges reflected on the journey: "Human Touch always had something different to offer when it came to support system or ecosystem which surrounded HIV care and support. For example, young people themselves speaking at different conferences including AIDS 2024 is so important. Lately, the realisation has grown over us about the importance of resilience: we must focus more on building the resilience of the young people. Issues like relationships or livelihoods cannot be missed while young counsellors themselves provide

mental health services." The foundation continues to address various needs, including relationships, sexual and reproductive health, substance abuse, TB and HIV co-infection, and child sexual abuse. Their commitment to non-institutional care and resilience-building for families and communities remains steadfast. The Human Touch Foundation has also been instrumental in initiating viral load monitoring in Goa and ensuring the uninterrupted supply of antiretroviral therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic. They offer free vocational training for young people with HIV, helping them build skills and secure employment. Dr. Kashyap Bandodkar, a volunteer with the foundation, emphasized the importance of humane and holistic care: "Usually patients appear as a 'number or statistic' in a report. But experiences (like Human Touch) tell us the life story behind those numbers or statistics. This help us – doctors – provide better care because I believe that humane and holistic care is so key." The Human Touch Foundation's journey and the stories of those it supports underscore the importance of tackling HIV-related stigma and discrimination through empathy, education, and comprehensive support. Their work serves as a beacon of hope and a model for other organizations worldwide. Despite significant advancements in the treatment of HIV, societal stigma continues to pose a major challenge for those living with the virus. The personal stories shared by young people in Goa highlight the persistent fear of discrimination that can prevent individuals from living their lives to the fullest. Internal stigma, which manifests as self-loathing and low self-esteem, often results from the external judgments and prejudices of society. Organizations like the Human Touch Foundation are making remarkable strides in addressing these issues. By providing comprehensive support services, fostering youth-led initiatives, and promoting resilience, the foundation is helping to dismantle the barriers that stigma creates. Their work emphasizes the importance of empathy, understanding, and community in overcoming the challenges faced by people living with HIV. However, the fight against stigma requires collective effort. It is crucial that society as a whole becomes more informed and compassionate towards those affected by HIV. We must reject discriminatory attitudes and instead offer support and acceptance. By doing so, we can create an environment where individuals living with HIV can thrive without fear of prejudice. Only through such a unified approach can we hope to eradicate the stigma associated with HIV and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy, fulfilling life. (Shobha Shukla is Managing Editor and Executive Director of Citizen News Service (CNS) and a health and development justice advocate. She is Coordinator of Asia Pacific Regional Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media) and Global AMR Media Alliance; views are personal)

LIVING IT UP IN JAIPUR

Jaipur, a bustling hub of commerce and culture in North India, is famed for its grand palaces, majestic forts, and exquisite crafts. Known globally for its intricate artwork and stunning jewellery, the Pink City exudes charm with its vibrant colours and rich artistic heritage. Alongside its historical grandeur, contemporary spaces reflecting local elegance have emerged as the city continues to evolve and thrive

BY **AKANKSHA DEAN**



JAIPUR, is a delightful place to visit with its colourful palaces, historic forts, lively markets showcasing local crafts, and diverse food options. It's a city that offers something for everyone. The pink city is also home to luxurious hotels and unique restaurants. Stroll along streets lined with palaces, temples, and the occasional cow. Indulge in royal culinary delights, explore exquisite jewellery shops, and discover a weekend of tranquillity amidst the bustling vibrancy.

TRADITION MEETS CONTEMPORARY

Nestled near Amber fort off Delhi-Jaipur highway, The Leela Palace Jaipur sits with the backdrop of Aravalli hills amidst 8 acres of gardens. This hotel aims to impress guests with luxury while maintaining a cosy atmosphere. Royal opulence can be felt in the wood panels, windows, and artwork, yet there's a touch of modernity. The design reflects local artistry, from ancient Thikri mirror engraving to Shekhawati canvases on the walls. Traditional meets contemporary in a blend of comfort and grandeur at this splendid hotel. Stepping into the Leela Palace Jaipur feels like entering a world of extravagance and refinement

deeply rooted in history. This stunning hotel offers a range of accommodation options, including rooms, suites, and villas - all meticulously designed to provide a lavish experience. The Royal Plunge Pool villa is a highlight of my stay, radiating a sense of lightness and luxury. The spacious layout, complete with cosy armchairs, indulgent day beds, and a private pool, makes me feel like royalty. The attention to detail was exquisite, from the walk-in wardrobe to the marble-trimmed bathroom with a tub, not to mention the plush robes and organic toiletries provided. And for those seeking the epitome of luxury, the Maharaja suite exceeds all expectations with its grand living spaces, luxurious bathrooms, and stunning Palace views. One of the standout aspects of my experience at Leela Palace Jaipur is the warm and welcoming presence of Sharad Puri, the General Manager. His humble approach and dedication to ensuring guests feel at home set the tone for the genuinely gracious service throughout the hotel. The meticulous butler service, provided by a dedicated team of footmen in true Leela Palace style, adds an extra touch of luxury to my stay. In terms of relaxation amenities, the expansive spa and well-equipped

gym are truly remarkable. One can also enjoy exploring the local area with running maps provided by the hotel, along with the option to use bikes for leisurely rides or even embark on a customized cycling safari itinerary. Situated close to the capital, the hotel offers a perfect base to explore Jaipur in all its splendour, with historical sites, vibrant bazaars filled with textiles and handicrafts, and renowned silver and gemstone markets just a stone's throw away. My stay is a seamless blend of opulence, comfort, and exceptional service, making it a truly unforgettable experience.

INDIA'S ONLY CANDLE LIT RESTAURANT AND MORE

From its impressive design and stylish interiors to the refined culinary offerings and carefully curated immersive experiences, Leela Palace Jaipur epitomizes authentic Indian luxury. As my eyes wander through the architectural marvels of the Sheesh Mahal, I find myself at Mohan Mahal, the Indian specialty restaurant glowing softly with candlelight. The ambience is crafted with 350,000 pieces of Thikri mirror, meticulously assembled by artisans over three years, creating an aura of refined elegance. Being India's only candle-



lit restaurant, it is truly a delight for the senses. The royal cuisine from Rajasthan and Awadh served at Mohan Mahal is a blend of simplicity and artistry, with standout dishes like the Seekh kebab dressed with barley. Breakfast is equally splendid, presented on beautiful tableware and featuring a selection of à la carte favourites. In the afternoons, I enjoy a delightful tea service at the Jharokha bar, where expertly crafted cocktails are served till late. I am particularly impressed by the Martini concocted by the talented mixologist, who



shares stories of mixing drinks for royalty. For a more intimate dining experience, Hawa Mahal offers a private rooftop setting where both the views and flavours are rich with captivating charm. Truly The hotel creates memorable moments that capture the essence of Indian indulgence, blending traditional rituals with modern hospitality seamlessly. **ALL VEGETARIAN** Burrowed discreetly within the vibrant Johri Bazaar, known for its jeweller's market, the intimate Johri Restaurant seamlessly blends into

the bustling surroundings. Tucked away on a tranquil lane just off the main colonnaded street, which played a pivotal role in securing the city's spot on the UNESCO World Heritage list, this hidden gem welcomes all guests. Attached to a charming five-suite boutique hotel, The Johri, the restaurant offers a unique dining experience that harmoniously intertwines with the heritage and allure of the historic marketplace. Savouring Jaipur's iconic zero-sized peas here is a revelation. Despite its fame that stretches as far as Dubai and Japan,

these peas had somehow escaped my taste buds back in Delhi. The petite yet incredibly sweet and flavourful green peas are beautifully served alongside corn and spinach on a generous plate. Chef Somu Kumar has expertly crafted a menu that celebrates local and regional flavours with organic, seasonal, and vegetarian ingredients. Signature dishes like paan patta chaat and Dal Johri add a timeless charm to this culinary experience. Indulge in expertly crafted dishes that stay true to their origins, whether presented in a classic style or with a modern twist. The Jackfruit Nihari and truffle cheese kulcha stuffed with mushroom and local cheeses offer a burst of flavours in every bite. Accompanied by Missi roti and palak kofta in cashew gravy, the menu caters to diverse palates. Dietary preferences are accommodated, with gluten-free and Jain-friendly options like sangri ki shammii kebab and mirchi ka halwa.

Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.



Indulge in Pure Joy

Step into a world of craft brews and culinary delights at BeeYoung Brewgarden, the latest hotspot in South Delhi's vibrant social scene

Delhi's social scene has a new star. The BeeYoung Brewgarden, nestled in the bustling heart of South Delhi at The Panchshila Rendezvous. This lively venue is set to redefine your nights out, offering an unparalleled blend of craft beer, exquisite cuisine and endless entertainment. Whether you're a local or a visitor looking for a memorable night out, BeeYoung Brewgarden promises to deliver an experience that is both dynamic and delightful. As you step inside, you're transported to a European getaway, with chic barn-style ambience and lush, vibrant décor. The carnival-like atmosphere is inviting, with alfresco seating and stylish indoor spaces perfect for both intimate gatherings and spirited weekend celebrations. It's a setting where every detail contributes to a sense of revelry and relaxation. At the heart of BeeYoung Brewgarden is its commitment to craft brewing excellence. The menu takes you on a culinary journey, artfully pairing finely crafted brews with gourmet dishes designed to delight the senses. Each dish reflects an immersive culinary art approach, where flavour and presentation come together to create unforgettable dining experiences. With a global array of flavours, local and seasonal specialties cater to South Delhi's cosmopolitan crowd. The emphasis on quality ingredients and creative recipes ensures that every visit offers something new and exciting for

even the most discerning palates. Entertainment at the Brewgarden is as diverse as its menu. Enjoy a blend of games and nostalgia with options like Bocce Ball, Cornhole and vintage arcade machines, providing endless hours of competitive fun. The venue hosts live sports screenings, vibrant music performances and sets by an in-house DJ, ensuring a dynamic atmosphere that keeps you engaged throughout the evening. Whether you're in the mood for a lively party or a serene escape, BeeYoung Brewgarden caters to all your social needs. The soul of BeeYoung Brewgarden is its namesake beer, India's first crafted strong beer, known for its smooth, citrusy notes and crisp finish. BeeYoung Beer embodies the youthful spirit of India, with every sip reflecting the Kimaya Himalayan Beverages' dedication to quality and innovation. For those looking to immerse themselves in a world of craft brewing, vibrant social scenes and exquisite dining, BeeYoung Brewgarden is the place to be. It's where the art of microbrewing meets community and celebration, promising unforgettable experiences with every visit. **Address:** The Panchshila Rendezvous, Panchshila Park, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi, 110017 **Timings:** 11 AM - 12 AM **Instagram:** @beeyoungbrewgarden **Price For Two:** INR 2500/- (Approx) **For Reservations:** +91 9354431386

Modern Twist on Classic Gastropubs

Embark on a culinary journey with Monkey Bar's latest gastropub sensation, blending contemporary design and inventive dishes for an unparalleled experience

In a city that's no stranger to culinary innovation, the revamped Monkey Bar emerges as a beacon of excitement and fresh perspective. Nestled within the iconic pyramid glass building in Vasant Kunj, this beloved gastropub has returned with a vibrant new look and a promise to elevate the dining experience. Monkey Bar, which first captured attention in 2012, was instrumental in popularising the gastropub concept in India. Now, it's back with a renewed vision, blending its signature charm with contemporary flair. The space has been transformed into an 'Urban Tropical Dreamscape,' reflecting a design ethos that is both inviting and dynamic. The lush greenery and bright, cheerful hues of yellow and sage green infuse the venue with a sense of energy and warmth that's perfect for any time of day. The menu at Monkey Bar is where the true magic happens. It's a celebration of flavours, seamlessly melding the familiar with the innovative. From classic favourites like their renowned burgers to new, exciting dishes such as Methi-spiced Prawns and Jackfruit Tacos, the culinary offerings are designed to surprise and delight. Each dish is crafted with a blend of regional Indian spices and global influences, providing a taste experience that is both unique and accessible. One of the standout features of the revamped Monkey Bar is its new coffee programme. The introduction of three distinct categories, 'The Usual Suspects', 'You Do Your Brews', and 'The Unusual Suspects' offers something for every coffee lover. Whether you're in the mood for a classic Espresso or something more adventurous like the Nitro



Cold Brew, there's a brew to suit every palate. This thoughtful addition enhances the café's appeal, making it a versatile destination for everything from morning pick-me-ups to evening relaxation. The bar menu, crafted by Lead Mixologist Harish Chhimwal, continues Monkey Bar's tradition of inventive cocktails. By incorporating local ingredients and innovative techniques, the drinks menu offers a refreshing take on both classic and contemporary cocktails. The new creations, such as the Manga Mule and Rasam ki Kasam, provide a unique twist on traditional flavours, demonstrating a commitment to both creativity and quality. The revamped Monkey Bar is more than just a place to eat and drink; it's a space designed for enjoyment and connection. With its lively atmosphere, interactive elements like a pool table and Instagram-worthy spots such as the quirky banana sofa, the venue encourages guests to relax,

socialise and make lasting memories. This thoughtful redesign makes it clear that Monkey Bar is committed to providing a comprehensive, engaging experience for its patrons. The new Monkey Bar offers a delightful fusion of tradition and innovation. Its updated menu, inventive drink options and vibrant atmosphere ensure it remains a top choice for those seeking a memorable dining experience. For anyone looking to explore new flavours, enjoy expertly crafted drinks or simply unwind in a dynamic setting, Monkey Bar's latest incarnation promises to be an exceptional destination. **Wallet Factor:** Meal for two with alcohol: INR 1800 plus taxes | Meal for two without alcohol: INR 3000 plus taxes **Open 7 days a Week: Sunday to Saturday - 1pm to 1am. Address:** Monkey Bar, Local shopping complex, 11 Vasant Kunj, Next to mini cooper-110070 **Instagram:** monkeybarind **Facebook:** monkeybarind

Redefining Coffee Culture

Discover a fresh take on coffee with First Coffee, blending innovation and indulgence to cater to the modern coffee lover's palate

Step into a revolution in coffee culture with First Coffee, where each cup is more than just a beverage - it's a celebration of bold flavours and innovative experiences. This fresh, dynamic brand is transforming the coffee scene with a blend of artisanal quality and modern flair, setting a new standard for coffee lovers everywhere. Founded by Sohrab Sitaram, a distinguished name in Delhi's food and beverage world; Shiv Dhawan, a serial entrepreneur with a passion for innovation and Chandini D Purnesh, the visionary behind the Harley Estate, First Coffee brings together expertise and enthusiasm to craft the ultimate coffee experience. Their beans, sourced from the renowned Harley Estate in Chikmagalur, promise an exceptional taste journey, reflecting the lush landscapes and rich heritage of the estate. First Coffee's appeal extends beyond its premium blends. The cafés offer a stylish, minimalist setting that caters to both quick stops and relaxed hangouts. The design ethos emphasises clean lines and a vibrant atmosphere, creating a space that feels both contemporary and inviting. The menu showcases First Coffee's dedication to flavour and creativity. Dive into the 'Untamed Espresso' for a bold start or savour the 'Cold Blooded Brew,' a daring concoction that combines cascara syrup with a robust coffee base. For a whimsical twist, try the 'Jelly Jolt Affogato,' where coffee meets ice cream and jelly in a delightful fusion. Classic offerings like 'The OG Cold Coffee' are given a modern twist, ensuring there's something for every palate. Tea enthusiasts can also rejoice with the unique blends available. The 'Teaminator,' a refreshing mix of hibiscus and watermelon syrup and 'Cascara Thunder' offer bold new takes on traditional favourites. The Boba Nova collection is particularly exciting, featuring the 'Mango Boba Bomb' and 'Lychee Loca Bomb' for those who love a playful and fruity twist. First Coffee stands out as a game-



changer in the coffee industry. The brand's focus on combining artisanal quality with innovative offerings makes it a notable player in the market. The variety of options, from bold espressos to playful boba teas, caters to a wide range of tastes and preferences. Moreover, First Coffee's commitment to sustainability adds a layer of ethical responsibility that enhances its appeal. This brand isn't just offering a cup of coffee; it's creating a vibrant, inclusive coffee culture that resonates with modern consumers. It's exciting to see a brand that balances exceptional quality with social consciousness, setting a high bar for others in the industry. In a world where coffee culture is evolving, First Coffee stands out as a beacon of quality and creativity. With its commitment to exceptional brews and a vibrant coffee experience, it's more than just a place for your daily caffeine fix, it's a destination for those who appreciate the art of coffee. Embrace the revolution and make First Coffee a part of your daily routine. Your taste buds and your coffee cravings will thank you. **Instagram:** @yourfirstcoffee **Price for Two:** INR 450/- (only beverages) **Locations:** DLF Cyber Park, Gurugram; Pacific Mall in Pitampura; Pacific Outlet Mall in Jasola.



BK SINGH

A RECIPE FOR DISASTER IGNORED WARNINGS AND THE PERILS OF UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Despite advice in 2020 to relocate 4000 families from landslide-prone areas, Kerala proceeded with a mega hydro-electric project nearby. Incessant rains led to devastating landslides, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable development and better disaster management

The flooding and landslides in Kerala since 1991 had reportedly claimed several human lives, till the state witnessed the worst disaster of its kind at Mundakkai, Wayanad in the wee hours of 30th July. In 2020 State Disaster Management Authority advised relocation of 4000 families from landslide-prone areas that included Mundakkai. State did not heed the warning and on the contrary, has proposed a mega hydro-electric project involving an underground tunnel barely two km from the site of the current horror.

Incessant rains of 572 mm in 48 hours have led to two major landslides, one at 2.00 am at Mundakkal followed by another at 4.00 am at Chooralmala towns trapping hundreds of families. The debris further covered Vellarmala GVH school. The landslide also washed away the bridge connecting Chooralmala town with Mundakkai & Attarmala. So far 126 people have been found killed, 196 injured and more than a hundred missing or marooned in swathes of slush, mud and misery triggered by continuous and heavy rainfalls for two days. Dead bodies have also been found at Pothukal village that were carried by flowing water for 20 km in the Chaliyar River. High Tension lines and transformers of the Mekkadi electrical section have also been damaged and resuming power in the area has been a challenge. Landslides washing away the bridge have posed further challenges for relief and rescue operations, though all state and central agencies are putting up their might to remove debris, find survivors, treat the injured and move the people to safer locations and camps. Rescuers are crossing the river in spate with the help of the ropeways but mist, bad weather and unstable terrain are making it more difficult. Army has rushed to set up Bailey Bridge to the site, which has been moved on the road from Chennai.



This deluge affected adjoining areas of Karnataka and left the Kapila River in the Mysuru district in spate, after 80,0000 cusecs of water were let out of the Kabini dam, severely affecting the traffic between Karnataka and Kerala. Kodagu roads were also flooded and many persons stuck were rescued. Landslides also occurred repeatedly on the Shiradi Ghats section of NH 75 connecting Bengaluru and Mangalore holding the traffic for several hours and eventually re-routing them via Kodagu and Sampaji Ghats. A few weeks earlier a landslide had occurred near Ankola, Uttar Kannada district along the newly widened National Highway burying moving vehicles underneath that claimed a dozen human lives, and many others went missing. Next to the Himalayas, the

Western Ghats have the most fragile ecosystem and despite the disasters striking frequently, we have not mended our ways and continued to engage in unsustainable activities in the name of development. The entire Ghats section from Gujarat to Kerala once had luxuriant tree/forest cover that provided the source and the catchment of several east-flowing and west-flowing rivers – a key lifeline for everyone in peninsular India. With the changes in land use patterns, the integrity of the catchment of the rivers is compromised, resulting in many of the streams and rivers becoming seasonal. People who have enjoyed the perennial flow of water in the streams in the past have now been suffering for their basic needs for drinking, agriculture and plantations.

Western Ghats comprise undulating terrain and diverting lands comprising tree growth for cultivation of tea, coconut, banana, coffee, spices etc is never sustainable. Kerala has lost its natural forests at a very fast pace and individuals, public and private agencies have grown plantations for quick cash. Some areas are also encroached. Proponents of such projects argue that destroying forests and growing bananas, tea, cashew coconut etc provide employment and help in GDP growth. This perception is highly misplaced. Such projects are not evaluated on a long-term basis. There are hardly any methods to work out an economic valuation of forests destroyed in the process. When a heavy downpour occurs for days, it causes landslides, landslips, destroys houses, roads bridges etc. To rebuild the

infrastructure we need to further spend money. The infrastructure destroyed in 2018 and 2019 in the Kerala flood disaster was rebuilt by spending more than 50,000 crores rupees. If the true environmental cost is considered, none of the plantation projects of growing tea etc would be viable. Labourers of tea gardens as well as banana and coconut gardens must be re-skilled and their services can be utilized for manufacturing etc. 2018 floods in Kodagu Karnataka, a district adjoining Wayanad, also played havoc with the life of the people. I have discussed the reasons for flooding and landslides in this region, in my book, "Changing Land Uses – Shrinking Streams and Carbon Sinks". Like Wayanad, Kodagu is again a hilly district covering an area of nearly 4200 sq km. However only 1750 sq km was reserved as forests and

Protected Areas, leaving another 1000 sq km occupied by habitation and agriculture; the remaining 1450 sq km had still quite a luxuriant tree cover until the 1980s. These were wooded areas under the control of the Revenue Department of the state, and the tree felling in such areas was regulated by the Karnataka (Preservation) of Trees Act, where forest officers were empowered to grant/ deny permission for the removal of trees. There is evidence on record to suggest that some officers had connived with the timber merchants and granted permission to remove tens of thousands of trees every year. This has resulted in compromising the ecological security of the region leading to frequent disasters of the type we are experiencing. The only solution that comes to everyone's mind is to stop

destroying the natural forests and making any changes in land use. There is a proposal to tag the Western Ghats as Eco sensitive area, but both governments of Kerala and Karnataka have yet not come on board. Unless they mend their ways the disasters would keep on striking more frequently and would be more destructive. Finally, let the column also deal with the reasons why there are heavy downpours for days in this warming world. The world at present including India is faced with heat waves, wildfires and heavy downpours leading to flooding. The uncontrollable wildfires in Canada, California and other parts of Western world are the consequences of global warming. Leh in India, which is located 3 km above the mean Sea level has the airfield at the highest altitude in the country and has been registering 32 degree Celsius temperature for some days in the last week of July. Due to such unusual temperatures, the air at this altitude gets rarefied and engines cannot develop the thrust required for takeoff. For the first time, all flights to and from Leh have remained suspended for these days.

High downpours are functions of higher rate of evaporation from Sea surfaces. As the Sea surfaces warm, evaporation increases leading to excessive moisture-laden clouds in the atmosphere. Once the conditions are favourable, it leads to heavy downpours. It can have very dangerous consequences in urban centres, as we have recently seen the drowning of three students in the basement of Rau coaching centre, Rajendranagar Delhi. The Civic Agencies must re-model the stormwater drains to take the load of 100 mm of rain per hour. These drains were originally designed for 25 mm of rain per hour. Building bylaws should also change; Basements should have only huge sumps and Parking space for vehicles and nothing else.

(The writer is Retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Karnataka; views are personal)

Unveiling the misogyny in fairytales: A feminist critique

In the enchanting world of fairytales, age-old stories have woven themselves into the fabric of our culture, shaping our perceptions and understanding of the world around us. Yet, beneath the guise of magic and fantasy lies a troubling reality: the portrayal of women through archaic tropes that perpetuate harmful stereotypes writes **SULAGNA MOHANTY**

In the enchanting world of fairytales, age-old stories have woven themselves into the fabric of our culture shaping our perceptions and understanding of the world around us. Yet, hidden beneath the guise of magic and fantasy lies a troubling reality; the portrayal of women through archaic tropes that perpetuate harmful stereotypes. If seen from a feminist lens, tropes like the witch, the evil stepmother and the damsel in distress reflect and reinforce harmful stereotypes about women and limit and distort our understanding of women's experiences.



SULAGNA MOHANTY

It is essential to challenge and dismantle these harmful stereotypes to create a more inclusive and empowering society for women. By portraying women in positions of authority as capable, compassionate and supportive, we can inspire future generations of women to aspire to leadership roles and contribute positively to society

withcraft and executed in brutal witch hunts. These women were often healers, midwives or other powerful figures in their communities targeted for their knowledge and independence. The fear of witches and the persecution of women accused of witchcraft spread to colonial countries like India where women were often accused of witchcraft and subjected to violence and even death. Even today, women in some parts of India are killed in the name of witch hunts accentuating the lasting impact of this harmful stereotype. This concept of the witch reflects society's discomfort with powerful women and is a reminder of the importance of challenging stereotypes and celebrating women's autonomy and strength.

Further, the portrayal of the evil stepmother in fairytales not only vilifies women in positions of authority but also perpetuates a harmful narrative of competition and division among women. By pitting a woman against another woman, society creates a "divide and rule" policy where women are encouraged to fight among themselves rather than unite for their common rights and goals. This stereotype undermines the credibility of women in leadership roles by painting them as inherently



dangerous and untrustworthy. It diminishes the achievements of women by suggesting that their success comes at the expense of others developing a culture of suspicion and mistrust among women. Moreover, the depiction of the evil stepmother discourages young girls from aspiring to leadership roles as it reinforces the idea that women in power are to be feared and avoided. Instead of inspiring girls to pursue their ambitions and dreams, this stereotype instills fear and self-doubt, limiting their

potential and opportunities for growth. It is essential to challenge and dismantle these harmful stereotypes to create a more inclusive and empowering society for women. By portraying women in positions of authority as capable, compassionate and supportive, we can inspire future generations of women to aspire to leadership roles and contribute positively to society. The damsel in distress trope exemplified by characters like Cinderella, Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty portrays women as

helpless victims in need of rescue by a male saviour. This narrative diminishes women's agency by suggesting that they are incapable of taking care of themselves and solving their problems. It also underpins the idea that a woman's ultimate goal in life is to find a man to rescue and protect her. In Cinderella, the titular character is rescued from her life of servitude by Prince Charming who saves her from her oppressive stepfamily and offers her a life of luxury and love. Similarly, Rapunzel is locked

away in a tower by a wicked witch until she is rescued by a prince who climbs up her hair. Sleeping Beauty is cursed to sleep for a hundred years until she is awakened by true love's kiss. These stories send a harmful message to audiences particularly young girls by implying that women are incomplete without a man to rescue them. They fail to acknowledge women's strength and ability to overcome challenges on their own. By perpetuating this trope, these stories emphasize outdated gender

roles and limit the potential of women to be seen as capable and independent individuals.

Hence, it is time to challenge these harmful tropes and create new narratives that empower young girls and women and celebrate their diversity and strength. Instead of portraying women as either wicked witches, evil stepmothers or helpless damsels, fairytales must depict women as complex, multifaceted individuals with agency and autonomy. By telling stories that reflect the diverse experiences and identities of women, we can create a more inclusive and empowering narrative for future generations. One must realise that the witch, evil stepmother and damsel in distress tropes in old fairy tales are not harmless storytelling devices; they are powerful tools that shape our perceptions of women and their place in society. By examining these tropes through a feminist lens, we can begin to challenge and dismantle the stereotypes they perpetuate paving the way for a more inclusive and empowering narrative for women everywhere. It is time to tell new stories to our kids; stories that empower and inspire women to embrace their true selves and rewrite their destinies.

