

# THE BEACON

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## NIMHANS hosts mental health santhe

Nidhi B

**BENGALURU:** In an effort to raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention, the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience (NIMHANS) collaborated with other mental health organisations to organise Mental Health Sante 2.0 on February 20th at its convention centre.

This initiative, known as Mental Health Santhe, is an anti-stigma campaign that aims to bring together various organisations working in the field of mental health and suicide prevention. This campaign was aimed to increase public awareness about the numerous organisations that support mental health and suicide prevention, and the assistance and therapies they offer. "We have more than 70 stalls here that are genuinely exhibiting the work that they are doing to address suicide and mental health," said KS Meena the head of the organising committee and the professor head of the Department of Mental Health Education NIMHANS.

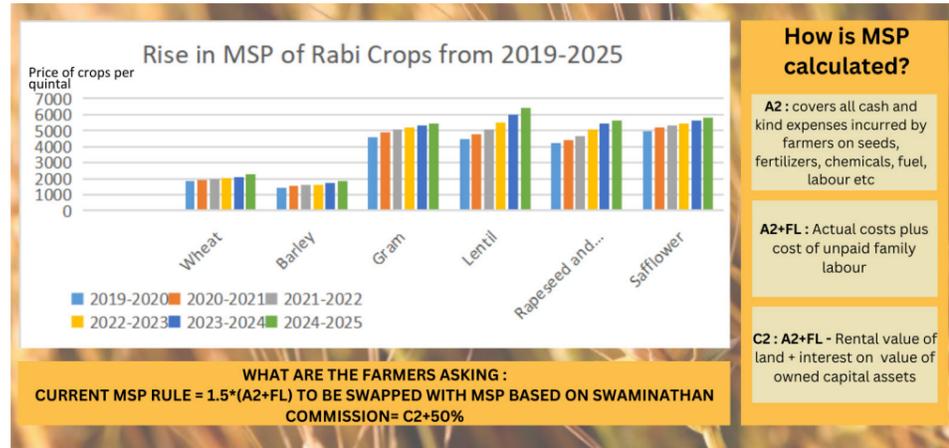
Speaking to The Beacon Janaki Aithal, a clinical psychologist from Manasa Neuropsychiatric Hospital, stated that the Mental Health Santhe initiative is an excellent way to raise awareness about their services. These services include inpatient and outpatient care, as well as internship opportunities for students starting from class 11. Aware of these concerns and that there are solutions available for them.

## Legal MSP: A look at both sides of the coin

Pratham Basu

For more than two weeks now, the "Delhi Chalo" protest march, initiated by over 250 farmers' unions, under the Kisan Majdoor Morcha (KMM) and Sanyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), has continued demanding a legal guarantee for the purchase of crops at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

In 2021, following prolonged farmer protests, the government revoked the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act implemented in 2020. Subsequently, assurances were made to establish a 'Committee on MSP'. In 2022, Sanjay Agarwal, former union agriculture secretary, led a



YoY growth in MSP prices of Rabi crops from FY 2019 to FY 2024

Pratham Basu

panel of economists, farmers, and union leaders to address MSP concerns. However, the committee fell short of providing substantive solutions to the farmers' demand for legalising MSP.

The farmers have now presented a list of twelve demands, including legalising MSP norms based on the Swaminathan Commission's (C2+50%) recommendations, debt

waivers, pensions for farmers, extending Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act (MNREGA) employment to 200 days, and disengaging from the World Trade Organization (WTO). They also seek justice for the Lakhimpur Kheri killings of 2020, accountability for those involved, and other compensation-related demands.

Farmers, rallying on

tractors towards Delhi, want the government to meet their demands. Criticising Haryana Police's use of pellet guns, droning-in of smoke bombs, and stringent barricading to deter protestors, Sarwan Singh of SMM warned of retaliation, urging Parliament to address MSP issues at once. Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal deemed the recent 5-year MSP contracts

unreasonable, vowing to persist in peaceful protests.

The farmers' demands, however, face several challenges. Currently, the government only buys rice and wheat out of the 22 crops under MSP at a support price due to the availability of cheaper imports. Legalising MSP could disrupt private procurement, leading to price hikes and inflation, estimated to reach revenue expenditures to the tune of 10 lakh crores for the procurement of MSP crops. Moreover, the Shanta Kumar Committee found only 6% of farmers benefit from MSP, with recent estimates at a slightly higher 10%, but still leaving 90% without benefits. Additionally, enforcing MSP laws is complex as not all markets are regulated, private players resist paying higher prices, and inadequate infrastructure hinders storage and export competitiveness, further increasing the fiscal burden on the government.

## Rising water demands worsens ground water depletion in B'luru

Dattatraya Dutta

**BENGALURU:** The city of Bengaluru, once aptly regarded as 'the city of lakes', now finds itself amidst a struggle to manage its freshwater resources because of rapid urbanisation. This has led to rising groundwater depletion, as indicated by a Water Labs research paper.

The research paper suggests that the total demand for freshwater supply in Bengaluru is approximately 2,632 MLD (Megalitres Per Day). As per the World Population Review, the city has a population growth rate of 2.94 per cent. This demand



Representational Image

BBC

would further inflate in the future, given the rising population of the city.

The study suggests that groundwater accounts for nearly 50 per cent of this water demand with a supply of 1372

MLD, while the rest comes from the Cauvery (1460 MLD).

This is concerning because the groundwater recharge rate through natural water bodies remains as low as 148 MLD because of rapid urbanisation,

which continually erodes what's left of the green spaces and water bodies in the city.

The research paper further suggests that the total wastewater produced by the city is approximately 1940 MLD. Around 63 per cent of this is treated by centralised treatment plants, 13 per cent by decentralised plants and the rest 24 per cent goes unused. There is an opportunity for the government to invest more capital to scale up the potential of wastewater usage in the city, which could minimise the dependency on groundwater, thus solving freshwater shortage issue.

## PRO Association revives cadets

Anu Priya M

**BENGALURU:** The PR Association of St Joseph's University announced the return of TEDxSJU Bangalore, scheduled for March 20, 2024, with the theme 'Through the prism.' The event's revival was recently discussed by Kiran Jeevan, the faculty coordinator of TEDxSJU and PRO of St Joseph's University.

The planning team recognised the need for a larger follow-up after successfully hosting a TEDx event in 2014. "Obtaining

licences is quite challenging since only students may apply. After giving it some thought, we formed a small team, and I requested them to apply for a licence.

Fortunately, we were granted the licence on our first attempt," said Kiran Jeevan. Although the details of the speakers remain undisclosed, excitement is building due to the team's promise of a diverse range of speakers from various sectors. To help the organising staff refine their skills before the event,

seminars and presentation sessions will be conducted. Apart from focusing on theme curation and adherence to TEDx's quality criteria, the faculty coordinator shared insights on the challenges faced. The students' strong motivation, gained through thought-provoking talks, is driving TEDxSJU Bangalore this year, he said. He also spoke about the importance of having speakers who can genuinely connect with the audience on a deeper level and speak from the heart.

## Language harmony at SJU

Kessiah Joseph

**BENGALURU:** Embracing linguistic diversity, the Department of English and Linguistic Association of St Joseph's University conducted an event called International Mother Language Day (IMLD) on Wednesday aimed at honouring and exploring different mother tongue languages.

IMLD was received with enthusiasm as it offered a platform for students to come together and share their experiences in their mother tongues. Despite the dominance of languages like

English and Hindi, the event focused on celebrating all the languages spoken in our country. "A lot of people are not comfortable with their mother tongues, but I also feel like you get aware of other languages too. You end up talking to a lot of people," said Ishwarya Katte, joint secretary of the association.

A group of fifteen people, along with teams representing different languages, came together and participated in reciting poems, singing songs, and telling folk tales in their mother tongue.

## Paper leak: NCC exam cancelled

Sinchan Saha

**BENGALURU:** Certificate-C examinations, the highest level certificate for the National Cadet Corps (NCC), were cancelled all over India after question papers got leaked, said Arun Kumar, an ANO officer from the NCC exam department.

On February 18, Sunday, the C-level certificate exams had to be cancelled after it was accidentally revealed by a cadet that they had already received the paper. The cadet said the exam would be easy, revealed Kumar.

"This time the department set an extremely tough paper for the first time in 10 years. The surveillance of the exam halls has been made stricter to avoid any sort of malpractice; the cadets had to prepare well. Any cadet who is caught will be suspended on the spot," he explained.

As the practicals are completed, the re-examination for the theory paper will be conducted on March 3, mentioned Kumar.