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Indo-Nepal: United by culture

Nikita Priya

Two ancient stones from Nepal have been sent to India as a symbolic gift in support of the construction of the enormous statue of Lord Ram in Ayodhya. As a sign of harmony and cultural interchange, the cultural exchange has drawn a lot of attention and is warmly appreciated.

The 30 tonnes of Shaligram stones were moved from the Gandaki river bank of Nepal to Ayodhya. The stones' arrival signifies a significant advancement in the construction of the temple, and their use in the idols' creation increases the temple's spiritual significance.

Diwesh Subedi, a journalist from Nepal, discussed the statue's significance for Hindus not only in India but also around the world as a religious and cultural emblem. "The usage of stones from a temple in Nepal will only strengthen the bonds of cultural exchange and unity between the two nations," he said.

He further commented on the relationship between Nepal and India, which have been strained in recent years, saying that initiatives like the gifting of the stones show that there is still a strong cultural connection between the two countries.

He discussed the decision-making process behind gifting the stones. "We carefully considered the implications of the gift and sought the input of the local community before making a decision. It was important to us that the gift was seen as a symbol of cultural exchange and unity, and not as a political statement," he said.

The STP tragedy: Deaths or murders?

Shariq Ahamed

Bengaluru: Holding candles and banners, people took part in the candlelight vigil organised by Bahutva Karnataka, demanding justice for Mr. Ravi and Mr. Dileep, who lost their lives while cleaning a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) of an apartment complex. The security guards closed the main entrance gates of the apartment and stopped the organisers from making the residents aware of the issue.

Following the tragic deaths of Mr. Ravikumar and Mr. Dileep Kumar, a candlelight vigil was held outside Prestige Falcon City apartments near Konanakunte cross, to demand justice and compensation for the victims' families. The fatal incident occurred on Sunday while the victims were cleaning the same apartment complex's STP.

Vinay Srinivas, an activist



Bahutva Karnataka representatives protesting with placards

Shariq Ahamed

representing Bahutva Karnataka, said that these workers' deaths must be acknowledged because they are nothing short of murder. "The workers died due to the smell and no air supply. It is unjust and unfair and cannot be labelled as death but murder," he added.

According to reports, 88

Safai Karmacharis have lost their lives in the last 15 years due to manual scavenging. Maithri, a representative for Bahutva Karnataka, condemned the nation's caste structure for perpetuating one minority performing this grueling and degrading work.

"The exploited communities like Dalits and oth-

er backward communities have to do this work, and it only comes to the forefront when somebody dies, but this is happening day in and day out," said Maithri while speaking to The Beacon.

"The police have registered an FIR under section 304A, calling it a death by negligence, but when these

workers were sent into a place full of decay and no oxygen, it is evident that it's a danger, and the workers may lose their lives. So, this cannot be brought down under negligence, and the FIR has to be registered under section 304 part two," she remarked.

Maithri highlighted the urgency to stop manual scavenging and urged the government to ensure proper prosecution. She emphasised the need for compensation and to identify and rehabilitate all the people who are still compelled to do this work because of economic vulnerability.

"We stand here demanding justice and an end to this caste-ordained and barbaric practice that continues even today," said Maithri while addressing the crowd. All 88 names of the workers who died due to manual scavenging were read out during the event.

SJU inspires fellow Jesuit institution

Dhamini D

Campus: St Joseph's University has a vision for the institution in the next five years, said Rama K, IQAC coordinator of Loyola Academy, Secunderabad, Telangana.

The dignitaries from the Loyola Academy visited St. Joseph's University on Tuesday. They were oriented to the functioning of the university and its productions as they aspire to become a university by the year 2024.

Speaking to The Beacon, Rama expressed her fascination with the university's digital resources and learning centre. "Wondering what



The team from Loyola Academy

Special Arrangement

differentiates SJU from the rest is its workforce and facilities such as the library and its automated facilities." She spoke about the presence of an active workforce in the university that has created a systematic and home-like atmosphere for the students.

Describing the purpose

of their visit, she explained how Loyola is preparing for NAAC and aiming to become a university within two years. The visit is assisting them in identifying potential areas for growth and development at their institution.

Rama discussed the changes they plan to imple-

ment and highlighted the need to focus on the well-being of the non-teaching staff. "We have a small number of non-teaching staff at Loyola. Therefore, they have to be provided with an environment to work along with financial assistance," she added.

She stated the advantages of Loyola Academy acquiring university status. The academy looks forward to boosting better placements, added privileges, and higher salary packages for staff. They are also planning to expand the research facilities to increase the intake of research guides.

Waste collection just a tap away

Sreeja Deb

The Solid Waste Management (SWM) division of the BBMP is gearing up to develop an app with an interface that will allow people to track the garbage-collecting vehicles

To track garbage vehicles' fleet, the BBMP introduced Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in 2019. Later that year, GPS tracking was also installed which lasted for three years. According to reports, it was hard to determine the distance travelled due to GPS trackers being broken.

Residents and waste collectors have experienced difficulties as a result of the SWM's inability to always find the auto-tippers.

SWM has created an in-house app with new capabilities that will track the experience in real time in order to provide total transparency.

Speaking to The Beacon, Indranil Seth, Environmental and Sustainability Consultant, said, "This is a good initiative. The only thing is that the app shouldn't have any openings through which users could abuse it. The primary goal is waste collection, not just the app or digitization."

Unveiling the truth of drug quality

Yachi & Ishika

Bengaluru: Despite the death of many children in India due to the quality of drugs available in the market, the country's conscience doesn't seem to be shaken, said Prashant Reddy Thikkaravaru, a lawyer and author of the book 'The Truth Pill: The Myth of Drug Regulation in India.'

The Bangalore International Centre (BIC) on February 7 hosted a panel discussion to address India's drug quality crisis and problems in the pharmaceutical business.

In the past few months, nearly 90 children have died as a result of the two horrific tragedies in Gambia and Uzbekistan. The deaths in both countries have been linked to "Made in India" cough syrups. In Dec 2019 and Jan 2020, there were cases of adulterated cough syrup killing about 11-12 children in a district of Jammu. The issue barely got any media coverage outside the local newspapers.

"There's too much regulatory failure. The drug inspectors are corrupt and incompetent.

And there is a disinterest in the public at large about the drug quality, which somehow stops the journalists from highlighting such events," said Prashant. He emphasises the necessity for the pharmaceutical industry to recall a drug if the quality is compromised.

"We're a country that has a huge shortage of doctors, and with the rate at which research is done, it becomes really difficult to come up with evidence-based medicine," said Rajani Surendar Bhat, a medicine physician.

Govt amends Agnipath scheme

Angeline Claudia

The Indian Army on Saturday made certain amendments in the recruitment process of the Agnipath scheme. Candidates wishing to join the force now have to undergo an online standard admission examination (CEE) and undergo physical and medical testing.

The Agnipath scheme, launched on June 14, 2022, by the government of India, initially followed a different order. The previous system involved a massive administrative burden, with thou-

sands of candidates waiting at more than 200 screening facilities around the country. Thus, this new procedure will help minimise the administrative and logistical load.

Speaking to The Beacon, Rachita, an Agnipath aspirant, said, "I think writing the exam first is a better way of recruitment, this way, I will know where I stand and what my capability is because, as a soldier, I think both are equally important to have good knowledge about the country and about what is happening nationally or internationally."