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'Healthy is not boring'

Angeline Claudia

Bengaluru: Bhoomi College in Sarjapur is striving to develop a meaningful and inspiring learning environment that tackles the challenges of environmentally and socially conscious lifestyles in the modern world. The College, in partnership with Savera Naturals, a natural farming initiative, held a session on art and fireless cooking as part of their program.

The workshop held on Saturday included the founders of Savera Naturals, Merwin Fernandes and Regina Fernandes sharing their insight on holistic plant-based nutrition to heal and reverse chronic diseases naturally and attain prime health.

Highlighting the importance of healthy eating, Merwin Fernandes, said, "There is always a notion that healthy cooking is boring, not tasty, and lacks variety, whereas when it comes to plant-based food and nutritious eating, the sky is the limit. With them, you get real flavours and variety. I think we don't recognise the taste of the fruits and vegetables that we consume. Hence, to bring back the natural taste and natural nutrients is the goal."

Fernandes further stressed on the need for youngsters to make the right choices when it comes to eating and not blame the genes or fate. "We live in modern times where despite wealth and a better standard of living, societies are heavily malnourished. There is an excess of calories, but a total deficit of nutrients, which leads to diseases becoming a norm."

Protest calls for restoring peace in Manipur

Yachi Jebisow

Bengaluru: The silence of the chief minister of Manipur on the question of imposing president's rule and the prime minister touring the world whilst the people of the state continue to suffer were questioned by Margaret Alva, the former Governor of Rajasthan during a peaceful protest held in Bengaluru.

On July 15, the All Karnataka United Forum for Christian Human Rights (AKUFCHR) held a demonstration at Freedom Park to voice support for the victims of violence in Manipur, which continues to be torn apart due to an ethnic conflict between Meities and Kukis that broke out on May 3. The demonstration, attended by a large number of citizens, religious leaders and other community leaders, witnessed passionate speeches and calls for



Protesters at Freedom Park

Special Arrangement

immediate action to address the situation in Manipur.

Highlighting the urgency of the situation and the importance of community engagement, Alva said that the violence in Manipur has reached alarming levels, and the public cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of their fellow citizens.

"We unite in solidarity to send a strong message to the authorities that enough is enough. It is time for immediate action to bring peace and restore justice in Manipur," she added.

Archbishop, Peter Machado, stressed the significance of helping the people of Manipur, who are

in great need. He commended schools and colleges for their efforts in offering free housing and education to the affected. He also highlighted the importance of praying for political figures who have taken action to assist the victims and lauded religious leaders across different faiths who attended the event.

He further said, "Our nation is like an entire body, and if one finger is broken, the entire body will suffer. Therefore, if Manipur is currently hurting, the entire country is actually suffering."

The demonstration further brought into focus the recent acts of violence and persecution that people and communities in Manipur have been subjected to. Participants carried placards and posters with messages like "Peace for Manipur," "Marching for Harmony," "Manipur Citizens' Lives Matter" and many more. They chanted slogans demanding an end to the bloodshed.

The protest sparked media and public discussions on peace and justice in Manipur, with participants hoping for collective change and restoration of harmony and security.

GST Council revamps tax landscape

Kannika S

The fiftieth meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, marked a significant step in India's tax reform journey. The Council made several key decisions aimed at enhancing the tax system, supporting various sectors, and addressing pressing economic challenges.

The GST Appellate Tribunal will start operating on August 1, 2023, with rules for appointing its president and members recommended by the Council. The provisions of the Finance Act, 2023 regarding the Tribunal will be notified by the Centre

for smooth functioning. The chief secretary of Maharashtra will be part of the Search cum selection committee as per Section 110(4)(b)(iii) of the CGST Act, 2017.

The Council focused on uniform taxation in cinema halls by standardising the GST rate for food and beverages served there, benefiting consumers and the cinema industry.

In a bid to support startups, the Council exempted GST on satellite launch services provided by ISRO, Antrix Corporation Limited, and New Space India Limited, with a possibility of

extension to private sector organisations.

Another significant decision was made to add RBL Bank and ICBC Bank to the list of entities exempted from Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST). This move aims to reduce transaction costs and stimulate banking and financial activities.

To generate revenue for compensating states and considering health implications, the Council rationalised and increased the compensation cess on items like pan masala and tobacco products.

GST rates for utility

vehicles were revised to promote sustainable practices, amending the compensation cess notification to encompass specific criteria for eligible vehicles.

The National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021, and certain imports for personal use, including Dinutuximab (Quarziba) medication and medications for treating rare diseases, were considered in the Council. Food for Special Medical Purposes (FSMP) imported by Centres of Excellence for Rare Diseases or suggested by Centres of Excellence mentioned in the exemption.

Nurturing nature together

Jeba Janet

Bengaluru: The Garden City Farmers, a community organisation promoting gardening among urban residents, recently organised a two-day Urban Garden exhibition called 'Oota from your Thota' (food from your garden). The event, held at St. Francis Xavier Girls High School, aimed to encourage sustainable living and foster a green lifestyle.

The late entomologist Dr Viswanath BN Narayan, who initiated the Garden City Farmers in 2008, played a crucial role in establishing the foundation of the event. As the 42nd edition approaches, Dr Narayan's vision and commitment to sustainable living continue to inspire and guide the event, said the organisers of the event.

Dr Rajesh, the president of Garden City Farmers, highlighted that the exhibition was designed to promote the concept of 'grow what you eat, and eat what you grow.' The event not only focused on gardening but also aimed to educate and empower urban individuals about sustainable living practices.

Dr Rajendran Hegde, an entomologist, emphasised the exhibition's primary objective to provide education and resources for urban residents to adopt sustainable living practices.

Trans rights soar at 'Queer Awaam'

Sreeja Deb

Bengaluru: There is a severe lack of information and awareness about the LGBTQIA+ community in the villages. People with feminist inclinations dress up as men with the identity of Jogappas in North Karnataka to hide their identity, said Riyana Raju, the co-founder of 'Queer Awaam'.

One of the first transwomen from St Joseph's University, Bangalore, Riyana Raju is the 'Queer Awaam' co-founder. It is a queer-run platform that hosted a panel discussion



Stalls at Queer Awaam Instagram

on July 15 at Koramangala Social for an Empowering Evening for Trans Rights. 'Queer Awaam' also conducts events in the local language and spreads awareness about the community at the grass-root level.

"We ask the government, the gram panchayats,

or a higher authority to sensitisation programmes in villages to promote awareness and normalise events like these because politics now play a significant part in society," she said.

It is a platform that steps forward for those who need our support. We observe Pride Month for a whole 365 days instead of just 31 days. Events like these help empower the community people as they get the opportunity to showcase their talents by putting up stalls and various performances, she added.

Celebrating sustainable fashion

Dhamini D

Bengaluru: Deliberating on Bengaluru's flourishing sustainability movement, Ayesha Rahman, founder of Oryngam, a plant care brand, commended the city's commitment to environmental consciousness. With an emphasis on embracing a responsible way of life, she spoke on the remarkable synergy between the city's diverse community and its growing importance in driving eco-friendly practices.

The event was hosted at Lahe Lahe in Indiranagar on the 15 and 16 July. Curated by Meghna Khanna of The PreLoved Co., a sustainable

fashion brand, the event featured community-led stalls, upcycling workshops and captivating documentaries on fashion. Speaking to The Beacon, Rahman said, "This festival has brought together people who respect the process and understand the environmental impact of their choices." She added that it allows consumers to explore sustainable choices with respect and appreciation for the process.

While recognising the role of consumers in driving change, Rahman highlighted the need for government and businesses to take greater responsibility.