

# THE BEACON

PRACTICE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE PG STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Friday, 13 September 2024 / St Joseph's University / Vol:17 Issue: 31 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

## Report amplifies muffled voices

Irene G & Sai Lakshmi P.G

The individual complaints related to sexual harassment of women within the Malayalam film industry went unheeded until the Hema Committee Report revealed the rampant abuses, opined Muktha Chand, a member of the Women in Cinema Collective (WCC). "Only when the Hema Committee Report, headed by retired Kerala High Court Judge Justice K Hema, was released did it show the severity of it all, giving women a platform and the courage to speak up," she said.

The 295-page report, submitted in 2019, was released last month. It recorded testimonies of hostile working environments from 80 women from the Malayalam film industry. This brings to light the societal attitudes that discourage women from speaking out. Chand said women fear speaking up against directors' harassment, as that might lead to more harassment.

"Women came out when they felt it was a safe space to speak. When they're speaking out alone, it's very difficult because they're constantly asked many questions." The way people view sensitive issues like this is very different, with its sensationalising nature in the media. She emphasised the need for stricter industry rules and regulations to prevent harassment and exploitation of women.

## Labelled suicide, evidences suspect foulplay

Prachi P

The authorities have paved the way for conspiracy of framing a student's murder as a suicide where the institution is tampering with all the evidence, says Shailendra Kumar, brother of Saumya, a 23-year-old M.Tech student from IIT Guwahati who allegedly committed suicide last month.

In an interview with The Beacon, Shailendra Kumar, her brother, said, "A professor called my father and said your daughter has committed suicide. My father told them to take her to the hospital and to leave the room locked. We urged them 5-6 times to keep the room locked until we reached and not to displace the body. When we reached there at 9 pm, we found no equipment, just clothes



Students protest at IIT Guwahati

Special Arrangement

and some small items. The authorities were not present, no Dean, HOD, or warden. There was only the college security and police force."

As Saumya weighed 113 kg, her brother questioned how she could have hung from a 1 cm thick rope. Shailendra said that there was neither any academic pressure nor economic pressure

she suffered. The family alleged that they were not allowed to have a look at the body for a long time, and the institution never cooperated. "They had taken her body to the private hospital mortuary without our consent. We have a recording of repeatedly saying that you should lock the body there as it is. We found the door open, but after that,

there was nothing in the room. It was a completely hazardous condition. And second thing, we told them that if you take off her body, then you must have shot a video of it, show me that. They were properly denying. When I insisted on it, he said I can show a video of your sister. In that video, the condition of her was like when we offer Salah on

our knees. She was in that condition on the bed. It didn't look like someone had hung herself."

The college administration should be held accountable for tampering with evidence. "If it was a suicide case, why was her nose bleeding with no visible marks on her neck, which could indicate suicide." It should also be noted that the post-mortem report was delayed, and the family allege that the police have been unresponsive. "The students have been warned not to give any official statements," Shailendra said.

Perumal Alagarsamy, the Dean of IITG, handled the event insensitively as he tried to prevent the staff, students and faculty from commenting on the incident, said Shailendra Kumar.

## Borewell contractors play hide & seek with citizens

Dibyaroop G

**BENGALURU:** Residents of Prestige Whistling Palms, Whitefield, are concerned over the rise of illegal paying guest (PG) accommodations, which are depleting the area's already water-starved aquifers.

In Whitefield, illegal borewell drilling has escalated in the past few months. On September 7, 2024, residents of Prestige Whistling Palms confronted a few contractors drilling a borewell in the area upon which they were 'flashed' a letter from the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) but refused to provide a copy of the letter

to the residents. Following this incident, the residents contacted the local police and the BWSSB to question the letter's validity.

The BWSSB responded quickly, sending an inspector to the site the next day. The borewell diggers claimed that the permit was given by the Karnataka Groundwater Association (KGWA); nevertheless, they couldn't produce an authorisation letter. The residents suspected a forgery of government letterhead.

George (name changed), a legal advisor, noted that impersonating a government office is a criminal offence under

section 170 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), potentially leading to fines and imprisonment. He also noted that several contractors work under expired permits to undertake drilling.

BWSSB engineers inspected the location to cease the drilling and decided to issue a notice to the landowner for illegal drilling. The engineers clarified that even though the owner was constructing an illegal PG with a Cauvery River water connection in the area, they would still need approval for digging borewell application.

"People need to be vigilant. People need to take

action. That's the only way authorities take action," added Sandeep (name changed), a resident.

According to the Karnataka Ground Water (Development and Management Regulations and Control) Act, 2011, the owner must obtain permission from the authorities to drill borewells. The BWSSB provides approval only after a thorough assessment of the area and the need for new borewells in the area. Under sections 33, 34, and 109 of the IPC, violators may face legal action and a maximum punishment of six months of jail time.

## Celebration meets sustainability

Katherina S

**BENGALURU:** As Ganesh Chaturthi festivities kicked off vibrantly last week, Bangalore's Pottery Town was abuzz with environment-conscious customers eager to buy eco-friendly Ganesh idols for their celebrations.

Divya, a potter whose family has been in the business for years, highlighted the rise in sales of clay idols. "Almost everything has been sold now, and the crowd is increasing yearly because they want to be more eco-friendly," she said.

Nisha, a long-time customer, pointed out that



Eco-conscious customers at Pottery Town

Katherina S

clay idols are traditionally used since they are easily disposable. Not just old customers but also new customers have acknowledged the benefits of choosing clay idols. "This is my first time buying a clay idol, and it feels good knowing that my celebration won't harm the environment," said

Rutuja, a customer who has made a conscious choice.

Third-generation potter Murli also runs an online business to sell clay idols to customers who cannot visit the shop in person. He mentioned that the service is mainly used by older people and individuals who need more time to visit the store.

## Fumigation fuels bird extinction?

Prachi P

**BENGALURU:** A troubling trend of decline in the bird population, particularly pigeons and crows, has emerged in metropolitan areas nationwide, raising concerns among environmentalists and citizens. Activists pegged the cause of avian extinction in the increasingly polluted urban landscapes.

Vasant Raj Ranka, Treasurer of Shri Shankeshwar Parshwanath Jain Kabootar Daana Seva Samiti, expressed his concern, saying, "There can also be a possible increase of such deaths because of the fumigation

process, which is used to curb diseases such as dengue." He said another potential culprit was the radiation from mobile communication towers. According to him, the installation of 2G spectrum towers initially impacted the bird populations, but the advent of 4G technology has exacerbated the issue.

"The pigeons, along with any other bird, increase the beauty of the atmosphere. It will benefit the birds if we think of ways to reduce radiation which will save their lives and preserve natural habitats."

## Hepatitis A under control says official

Sai Lakshmi P.G

**Kozhikode** is witnessing an outbreak of Hepatitis A infection, with 42 confirmed cases. So far, the origin of the infection has been traced to the Konneri area of Calicut.

"Control measures are in progress to manage the situation," said Dr Rahman, the Health Inspector, confirming that the outbreak is under control. He further told the citizens to stay calm and take precautions. "The illness began as a typical flu and turned to be a terrible migraine, where frequent vomiting and extreme tiredness were observed. And hepatitis test was done only after two blood tests," said Tanas, an infected patient.

Dr Rahman explained that Hepatitis A is a common disease. Only one patient was seriously ill; however, he was discharged two days later. He also added that he had a high concentration of liver enzymes in his blood as Hepatitis A is inflammation of the liver.