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Delineating 2023 G20 Summit

Parvathi Nair

CAMPUS: While speaking at a special lecture held as part of the G20 University Connect Lecture Series, Ambassador JS Mukul said that one of the substantial aspects of India's presidency of the G20 is the inclusion of African countries.

Former ambassador of the Government of India and Professor Emeritus, School of Business and Director of International Relations, JS Mukul, who served as Sous Sherpa for the 2023 G20 New Delhi Summit spoke about India's Presidency of the G20 and the outcomes of this year's summit at the lecture held at St Joseph's University on Friday.

He said that the African Union has become a permanent member of the G20 at India's behest, making them the 21st member of the forum. He said that the issue of including African countries has been attempted to be redressed on a permanent and sustainable level. It's a major decision and India's presidency and the summit will be remembered. The move is also aligned with India's theme of Vasudeva Kutumbakam.

While speaking to The Beacon, the Ambassador said that the G20 summit and the display of an 'Incredible India' would have a lot of collateral advantages in terms of tourism. While talking about the success of the summit he said that the G20 was taken to all the nooks and corners of the country through various programmes. "This programme, the University Connect program is a good example; Y-20, the Youth-20 also connected 2.6 million youth in our country," he added.

Mudpipe Fire: A wake up call for safety

Sherin Johnson.

BENGALURU: Following the massive fire at the illegally run Mudpipe Cafe, 76 establishments within the BBMP jurisdiction were inspected on Tuesday, and notices were issued to 17 establishments, 6 of which are from the south zone. After the massive fire gutted Mudpipe Cafe in Koramangala on October 18, 21 restaurants and pubs were closed for non-compliance with safety guidelines and other violations. The inspection was carried out in seven zones under the BBMP, which included five in Bommanahalli, 13 in East, 15 in Mahadevapura, 21 in RR Nagar, 15 in South, five in West, and two in Yelahanka. "Preliminary investigations at the Mudpipe Cafe have pointed towards several factors



Aftermath of massive fire outbreak

Sadhika Dasgupta

that can have contributed to the catastrophic fire, including a potential gas leak, the use of hookahs, fire pans, and a tandoor station. However, the lack of proper fire safety measures within the premises exacerbated the situation," the official said. Another official pointed out the cafe's lack of an emergency exit and the

storage of approximately 12 gas cylinders within the premises as critical factors that contributed to the severity of the blaze. This incident has exposed a dire need for stringent safety measures but also unveiled a worrying trend of illegal rooftop cafes plaguing the city. Immediate actions have been initiated for a special drive to inspect

safety measures in different buildings across their area by the Fire Station and Emergency Care Unit in Ashok Nagar. "The well-known cafes like Gilly's Resto Bar, and Cafe Azzure located at Mahatma Gandhi Road are also under risk; hence investigation is going on, to check the NOC," said, Arun P, a fire department official.

The revelation that Mudpipe Cafe operated without the necessary NOC highlights regulatory lapses. The BBMP had drawn flak for failing to verify the business activities of the cafe owner. "The delayed intimation to the fire services due to the panic situation added to the challenges faced by firefighters," said Aakash, a resident of Koramangala. He also recounted the horrifying moment when a gas cylinder burst, igniting the massive blaze. "Amid this tragedy, Bengaluru stands at a crossroads, faced with the choice of either learning from its mistakes or allowing such incidents to become tragically routine. The time for action and change is now", said a resident of Koramangala while talking to The Beacon.

Commercial raids uncover a tax evasion scam

Amrutha GP

BENGALURU: In a series of raids on the well-known non-vegetarian hotels in Hoskote, the commercial tax officers discovered massive GST evasion via different UPI payment codes.

A team of vigilance wing employees conducted many surveys and reconnaissance operations based on a tip, as well as made test purchases as undercover customers.

The search was led by C Shikha, the Commissioner of Commercial Taxes of Karnataka. A group of about 50 surveillance personnel raided different shops

across Hoskote. When a proprietor's home was searched, 30 separate QR codes were found.

Further investigation revealed that a famous biryani vendor in Hoskote had over Rs 1 crore 45 lakh hidden at his home. Since there is no set quantity of money that can be kept at home, this wouldn't count as unlawful but one is still expected to justify and give account for its source.

The participating hoteliers failed to issue invoices, bills of sale, or other necessary records for the supply of food goods. A similar raid by the commercial tax au-

thorities was carried out in Chickpet last week and they discovered large tax evasions there as well.

While talking to The Beacon, Harish, a regular local brand masala supplier to the hotels, said, "I was surprised to see officials standing outside the condiment store because I had heard that a few of the biryani shops that we supply to had been raided by officials. Seeing them outside our house took me by surprise."

"We opened the shop as usual and served the officers disguised as customers. The owner was unable to give them the bill on their payment

following which they raided his shop and his residence as well. A total of Rs 1.45 crore was seized from the residence of the shop owner," told Nanjundappa (name changed), a waiter at the biryani shop.

The person who leaked the information to tax officials remained unknown. The investigation found that the hotel owners failed to keep accounting records and failed to issue tax invoices and bills of sale for their food products. The representative claimed that the department is concentrating on remediation of the tax evasion pattern.

Transportational gains with India's first RRTS

Shruti Srivastava

With the aim of greater connectivity amongst small towns and districts, India's first Rapid Rail Transit Service (RRTS) has been inaugurated in Ghaziabad.

On October 20, the PM inaugurated the 17-km priority section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor of Namo Bharat in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. RRTS is a high-speed train, designed to reduce the intercity travel time between Sahibabad and Duhai Depot.

While addressing the people, the PM said, "Today we are dedicating this rapid rail to the people of India. I got the opportunity to travel in the Namo Bharat train today, and the experience was surreal."

In attendance were Yogi Aditya Nath, the CM of Uttar Pradesh, Anandiben Patel, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, and Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister. CM of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah, was also present for the virtual inauguration of Bengaluru Metro's new line.

National Capital Region Transport Corporation Ltd (NCRTC) on Sunday tweeted, "With over 10,000 passengers on its very first day including women, senior citizens and children amongst the first passengers, the response has been phenomenal and the excitement shows no signs of slowing down."

Pyramid state structure: A myth?

Rhea Sundara Raju

BENGALURU: Earlier it was believed that there exists a pyramid state structure in the society, meaning that there are some rich people and many poor people. This book elaborately explains that this metaphor is factually wrong and more importantly emotionally wrong, said Shashank Mani, the founder of the Jagriti Movement at the launch of his book.

"Middle of Diamond India" authored by Shashank Mani was launched on Sunday at the Bangalore International Centre. The book talks about the hidden stories of those in the middle class, who are ignored because



Shashank Mani addressing the crowd

Rhea Sundara Raju

of their location and language. It examines India's revolutionary past, its culture, its citizens, its innovators, and its spirit and speaks of a diamond-shaped India as opposed to an earlier hypothesised pyramid one.

While talking about the concept of Indian society in the book, Mani said that the vast majority in the middle are neither

rich nor particularly poor. "This is not the middle class, this is the emerging middle class. 80 crore people and 20 crore of them are rich, and about 40 crore people are poor, they need the government, they need donations, they need fees, but 80 crore people are capable of doing something for themselves. That is the India this book talks about," he added.

New studio for BVC students

Diva Batavia

CAMPUS: Taking one more step towards augmenting the hands-on learning experience of the students, the School of Communication of St Joseph's University unveiled a new Studio for the BVC students on October 20 in the basement of the Science Block.

The studio was inaugurated by Fr Arun along with Dean of the School, Fr Richard Rego.

Sr Michelle, a faculty member of the School recited a hymn while the ribbon-cutting ceremony and blessing of the studio took place. It was preceded by prayer recitation and speech by Fr Arun

and Shabin, a faculty member.

The preview theatre was inaugurated by screening a short video. Fr Richard Rego said, "This new BVC studio has been built on a pre-existing studio. With the help of Fr Arun and the efforts of the faculty members, we were able to set up this studio."

Talking to The Beacon, a first-year student from BVC, said, "The new studio will be beneficial for us. It would be beneficial for our career as well as our study time in the university."

The faculty members and the first-year students of BVC and other combinations under the School were present.