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B'luru running club picks up pace

Anoshka Heri

BENGALURU: Stride Run Club, a newly launched running group in Bengaluru, has gained popularity since its inception in September 2024, garnering over 35 participants in three weeks. The club conducts runs every Sunday morning at Agara Lake Park, HSR Layout, and it opens its doors to people of varying fitness levels, said Sidharth Yadav, the club's founder, in his conversation with *The Beacon*. People can register for runs via a Google Form link on the club's Instagram page. Basic information about oneself and one's fitness level is collected. The group meets at 7 AM, runs for 45 minutes, and ends its session with breakfast at a nearby local eatery. Yadav explained that working in a group fosters motivation and decreases the intimidation associated with working out. "A lot of people who were scared of taking the first step... tell me that when they do it in a group, it's easier for them," he mentioned. Poornima Bhola, a senior clinical psychologist at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), advocated for running clubs like the Stride Run Club. "In a world where loneliness is a global health concern, running groups, with their inclusive philosophy, can build social connections and motivation," she told *The Beacon*.

Gurez in darkness; power promises fail

Kohsheen Raina

Due to frequent electricity cuts, Gurez, a valley in Kashmir, has been dark for most of the year. This has kept the valley and its inhabitants from the rest of the country. This village has the Krishna Ganga Dam built over it, yet it faces electricity outages, leading to power cuts at least 18 hours a day. While talking to *The Beacon*, Farid Kalu, a local activist, said, "Electricity has always been a problem for Gurez; the winters have turned out to be even more severe due to the power cuts." This part of Kashmir stays under an electrical lockdown for at least six months a year. It has significantly affected the development of Gurez. Education, business,



File Photo

Mongabay India

and even domestic livelihood have been limited due to this. "Even if the dam is built on Gurez, the connection goes to Bandipore. The construction has created plenty of environmental havoc in the region. The winters have become warmer, yet without

electricity, it is not humanly bearable; during February and April, there was no connection at all," stated Maj Kalu, a worker from the electricity department. Earlier, Gurez used diesel generators to power the village; it was also connected to

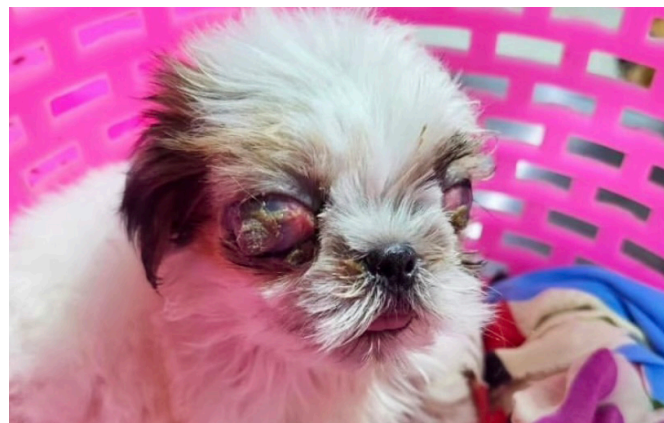
the grid for a short time for the first time after Independence, but the connection could not be maintained because of the poles toppling down due to heavy rainfall and snow. "The diesel generators gave us electricity for six hours every day, but ever since we've

been getting power from Bandipore, it has been very uncertain," said Maj Kalu. The stated deadline for electricity in Gurez was September 2024, but the locals don't see any progress in the conditions. "The authorities promised us 2 MW of electricity, but we still live in darkness, underground connection would be established. Yet no real progress has been witnessed." According to EnPress research, "There are fewer migratory birds visiting Kashmir valley due to the sudden shift in temperatures and extreme changes in the topography due to these gigantic constructions, robbing Gurez of its environmental significance and disturbing its natural habitat."

Profit-driven breeding exploits vulnerable dogs

Sharon D

BENGALURU: Unethical breeding practices are on the rise as the demand for certain dog breeds continues to grow, remarked Dr Gayathri Janardhanan, a veterinarian at CARE, expressing concerns about the shifting trends in dog breeding. Motivated by profit, breeders exploit these animals by continuously breeding them without rest. Once the dogs can no longer reproduce, they are abandoned, often ending up in shelters in poor health. "People need to understand that these are not commodities for making money. They need to realise that these are



Retinal deformation due to inbreeding

CARE

living beings as well," said Mr Keerthan Vignesh, an animal activist and chief manager at Charlie's Animal Rescue Centre (CARE). He added that the conditions these animals endure are often

deplorable, with many found malnourished, sick, and neglected after being discarded by breeders. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Dr Janardhanan emphasised that the shift in demand puts additional pressure

on shelters already dealing with abandoned dogs from other once-popular breeds. "Many breeders have started buying and breeding miniature poodles, and the demand is rising. In two or three years, our shelter could be filled with miniature poodles, just like how we now have so many shih tzus and pugs," she said. The cycle continues as new dog breeds rise in popularity, with breeders taking advantage of trends at the cost of animal welfare. As a result, shelters like CARE are struggling to cope with the growing number of abandoned dogs once they are no longer useful for breeding.

Wadiyar's vision vs growth

Diya Daniel

BENGALURU: The city's charm and structure, built on careful planning and vision, is now being eroded by rapid, unregulated growth, said Maharajkumari Kamakshi Devi, daughter of the late Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, the last Maharaja of Mysore, while expressing concerns about the current state of Bangalore at a panel discussion at Indiranagar's Bangalore Room on Sunday, September 22. The discussion, moderated by Maya Chandra, co-founder of Maya Films, focused on the Maharaja's 50th death anniversary and his contributions to modern Bangalore, including the founding of the Jakkur Flying Academy, his support for Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. His role in planning the Jayanagar township, recognised as one of Asia's most significant and best-designed urban developments, was also highlighted. The royal family expressed their views on reforming the city. "We hope the city rises to its former glory, incorporating thoughtful urban planning that aligns with its rich heritage. His dream for Bengaluru was to see it prosper, growing in harmony with its environment," Kamakshi Devi told *The Beacon*.

India's economic divide multiplied

PV Ananth M

BENGALURU: India is a 50-50 democracy, remarked economist Karthik Muralidharan during a panel discussion on economic freedom and justice at the Bangalore International Centre (BIC). The event, held in collaboration with DAKSH as part of the "We the People" series, focused on issues of economic development, governance, and the government's role in addressing economic inequality on Sunday, September 23. The panel discussion, co-chaired by Harish Narasappa, co-founder of DAKSH, elaborated on topics related

to economic development, policy regulation and state governance. Focusing on the roles of the central, state, and local governments in addressing economic disparities, Narasappa noted that economic freedom operates on two levels, predominantly on moral justice and a civilisational framework. "The judicial system's role is to balance the growth of both economic and welfare departments, and by doing so manage the public fund in equity and efficiency," he said. Narasappa added that the Constitution's biggest success

is the ability of the marginalised to claim the state, and its biggest flaw is the state's inability to compensate the marginalised's claims. Discussing the initial flaws in the Constitution that have precipitated the current economic divide, Muralidharan also emphasises the economic disparity that can only be eradicated by well-planned schemes such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA), he advocated for a "Well-controlled decentralisation of government with more power to the local government."

India checks-in double gold

Swaminathan S

India won accolades at the 2024 Chess Olympiad in Budapest, clinching double gold in both the Open and Women's sections. It marked a historic feat in Indian Chess as the team secured their first-ever Gold. D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi, and Praggnanandhaa, the young prodigies, lead India to crush the powerhouses. The world championship contender Gukesh secured India's victory without any defeats. In the post-match interview given to Chessbase India Gukesh said, "Winning gold for India is a dream come

true." India continued the victorious path in the women's section, finishing in a tie with Kazakhstan, but clinched the gold based on tiebreaks. The new additions, Vantika Agarwal and Divya Deshmukh played phenomenal chess to achieve the feat. Vantika pointed out that this victory is for the whole country and it's a testament to how far women's chess has come. The Head Coach Viswanathan Anand, expressed his pride: "This is only the beginning. India has proven itself as a global chess powerhouse."