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Amoeba cases spark advisory

Sheza C

With the rising cases of Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM) in Kerala, caused by Naegleria Fowleri, commonly known as the brain-eating amoeba, Dr Shameer VK, an associate professor at Government Medical College, Calicut, explained the seriousness of the spreading disease.

He cautions people, as there is a risk of diving in contaminated water and stated that people with weak immune systems have a higher risk of getting infected.

The Karnataka government had recently issued an advisory to the Sabarimala pilgrims, who will be travelling from mid-November to mid-January, to be more cautious around ponds and lakes during their journey.

Dr Shameer also shared his views on the Karnataka notice, by commenting, "There are some religious rituals like diving into the water which can allow water to enter the nose ... make sure the water that gets into the nose is sterile." He also mentioned that the Kerala government is taking precautions to ensure that people with all brain infection symptoms are quickly diagnosed and treated.

Abhinav, a Sabarimala pilgrim, stated that they are exposed to ponds and lakes like Bhasma Kulam, where there is a risk of bacterial outbreak. He also added that they will continue their journey as usual, though with more care at the ponds and rivers along the route,

Fr. Swebert leaves behind a legacy, inspires excellence

Angel Hannah George

BENGALURU: St. Joseph's University bid farewell to a visionary who helped shape the university for over eight years, following his sudden demise on November 20, leaving the community in deep shock and sorrow. Fr. Swebert D'Silva (68), the pro-chancellor of St. Joseph's University and rector of Arrupe Nivas, passed away at St. Philomena's hospital, Bengaluru, following a cardiac arrest.

Fr. D'Silva was a kind-hearted disciplinarian who dedicated his life to education. He served as the director of St. Joseph's Law College, Bengaluru (2017-2020), and as Principal of both St. Aloysius Pre-University College, Mangaluru (2001-2007) and St. Aloysius College (2007-2017). He joined St. Joseph's University in 2020,



Funeral ceremony of the late pro-chancellor Fr. Swebert D'Silva at St Joseph's University

Jeevan

where he played a crucial role in securing the passage of the university bill. "He had a lot of enthusiasm for the mission of education. He wanted St. Joseph's to be one of the best universities, commented Dr Victor Lobo, the vice-chancellor of St. Joseph's University, while talking to *The Beacon*. His journey as an academician and administrator reflects a lifetime of commitment

to nurturing young minds and strengthening educational institutions. His unwavering dedication left a mark everywhere he served. "He was an excellent administrator who treated everybody equally in the institution," reflected Dr John D'Silva, former director of St. Aloysius College, Mangaluru, who worked with Fr. D'Silva for nearly 22 years. He described

Fr. D'Silva as "a straight-forward, humane, down-to-earth, 24-carat Jesuit" who was instrumental in all the developments in St. Aloysius Campus, Mangalore.

His care for the poor and marginalised was often highlighted by his colleagues from various institutions. He had a great vision and desire to educate more students, and he pursued this mission

wholeheartedly until his final days. He practised discipline with compassion and acted as a moral and spiritual anchor in people's lives, leaving a lasting impact on everybody he has worked with.

The funeral ceremony held on November 22 stood as a testament to the legacy he left behind, as students, colleagues, family and friends gathered in large numbers to bid farewell to him. It is a profound loss for the institution, which now mourns a longtime visionary who helped shape it in countless ways. "He lives in people's memories, and we have to carry his vision forward. With that vision, he lives in our hearts and minds," remarked Dr Lobo. As both an administrator and a spiritual leader, Fr. D'Silva's absence will be felt deeply in the years to come.

Beedi workers intensify protest over wages

Joswin Pereira

Thousands of beedi workers, the majority of them women, are staging a continuous dharna in front of the Mini Vidhana Soudha, demanding implementation of long-pending minimum wages and payment of arrears that have been denied for six to eight years. The protest, led by the South Canara Beedi Workers' Federation (SCBWF), an affiliate of the Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU), has drawn widespread support from allied labour groups, farmers' unions, and social organisations.

Union leaders allege that although a 2018 tripartite



Beedi workers protesting in Mangaluru

Joswin Pereira

agreement between the government, owners and unions revised minimum wages, factory owners "accepted it only on paper" and never implemented it. CITU district president BM Bhat said workers have been underpaid by nearly Rs 40 per

1,000 beedies for six years. He added that after cuts, workers receive only Rs 300 and in some places, less than that, instead of the legally mandated Rs 330-plus, calling it impossible for families to survive on such wages. According to Sunil Kumar

Bajale, CITU district general secretary, the 2024 government order only worsened the situation by favouring owners, and even the reduced rates have not been enforced.

The unions have demanded full implementation of proper minimum wages, payment of arrears, and revision of the salary scale upwards rather than downwards. Workers have warned of a siege at the assistant labour commissioner's office in Bengaluru on November 28 if the labour minister's meeting on 27 November fails to resolve the issue.

AMR 2.0 promise to strengthen accountability

N Rishika

BENGALURU: India's plan to combat Antimicrobial Resistance faltered due to weak enforcement, uneven laboratory support, and poor inter-departmental coordination, according to Dr Sharath.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, he said, "Tertiary hospitals adopted stewardship guidelines, primary and secondary centres struggled without clear protocols or diagnostic facilities".

This gap in implementation has underscored the need for a stronger and more accountable framework-one that the newly launched National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) 2.0 now seeks to deliver, warning that antibiotic resistance has to become one of the country's most urgent public health threats.

He also highlighted that the prevalence of antibiotic misuse, particularly unchecked pharmacy sales and excessive use in poultry and industry, has only accelerated resistance.

AMR continues to push up deaths, treatment delays, and healthcare costs. Experts warn that without swift action, routine infections could soon become untreatable.

Researcher flags weather instability

Vedasmriti PR

BENGALURU: Climate researcher Dr Kieren Hunt, speaking at the Bangalore International Centre on Monday, warned that western disturbances- the weather systems responsible for winter rain and snow in northern India- are increasingly interacting with the summer rain, a shift they directly linked to climate change.

Hunt presented new findings showing a record of 17 western disturbances during the 2025 monsoon, compared to the usual two to four, leading to extreme rainfall and flood events across northern India.



Dr Kieren Hunt at Bangalore International Centre

Vedasmriti PR

Experts said that these systems also play a major role in clearing air pollution through rain and ventilation winds, accounting for nearly 75% of the recent improvement in northern air quality. However, they cautioned that western disturbances forecasting remains highly uncertain, leaving farmers and disaster agencies with limited

early warning. The systems are also associated with lightning, cold waves and post-harvest crop losses. While climate models indicate western disturbances may weaken later this century, Hunt said the future of winter rainfall in the Himalaya remains uncertain and demands urgent research and a stronger forecasting system.

Vendors await market allotment

Yashaswini J

BENGALURU: As renovation work at the Malleswaram flower market enters its final stage, vendors on Sampige Road share their concerns, as they are still not informed about their new shop allotments, despite the reconstruction being almost complete, according to the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA). The vendors say they still have no clarity on when they can return to the rebuilt market. In 2012, they were relocated to temporary spaces with a promise to return to their original locations in the

old markets. Those who heeded the decision and submitted were given spaces near the old Malleswaram bus stop, leaving others to relocate to different markets, says Vanamma, a vendor who has been there for more than 50 years.

"They will definitely give our shop back, but we don't know when or how much the rent will be," commented Ramoji Rao, who has been a vendor there for 40 years. He also added that officials are expected to conduct a meeting soon to decide the fate of vendors in owning shops.