



At NSoJ, our learn in the newsroom concept is unique for a media school. To give an opportunity for a would-be-opinion maker to make his or her voice heard loud and clear, we are happy to announce **Slant 2015**. The event is open to final year undergraduate students.

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THIRD ISSUE

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VOLUME 01 | ISSUE 03

As abled as anyone else

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NSoJ student describes heart-felt plight of disabled children and the society's way of treating them. She describes how they are as abled as anyone in the society. This was supported by a visit to Spastic Society of India.

Misconception persists

P2

A well-known human rights and child rights activist in Karnataka, Mr Mathews Philip spoke to NSoJ student journalist on issues such as torture in custody, encounter killings, domestic violence and child abuse. He informed the students about the POSCO act for child protection and how can media help.



Jammed

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In our city we cannot help but brave the heavy traffic. One has to plan and time a drive out or an appointment according to the traffic. The increase in number of vehicles has created more traffic jams. Few glimpses of the much talked about jams!!

A getaway into the clouds

P4



An avid traveller describes her weekend getaway to Nandi hills. Why are the hills named as Nandi hills? How to reach there? What to look for and what to expect from this quick getaway from the city.

Protest through writing, not by returning awards



By NSoJ Bureau

Aclaimed author and novelist Anita Nair believes it is not enough to merely return literary awards to protest intolerance. "Writers must write more" instead, she said at an interaction with student journalists at the National School of Journalism, Jakkur, Bengaluru.

A Sahitya Akademi awardee herself, she felt returning such awards is not only a subjective act, but also one that disrespects the Akademi jury. "Returning awards is a very intellectual exercise--it has no relevance to the people on the street. Writers protest best through writing. What we need to do is to take the message to the ground root level, by writing in regional languages. It's a hollow protest unless it results in some action," she stressed.

Ms Nair knows well what it takes to walk the talk. She regularly critiques contemporary and social issues in international publications such as Al Jazeera as well as in her column The Tongue Set Free for The New Indian Express. "In India, I am seen as a novelist first so I am not often asked to write journalistic pieces," she said, ruefully.

Yet she is no armchair critic, she does extensive research, both for her novels and her journalistic writing.

Early years

Ms Nair, who was born in Kerala and brought up in Chennai, said she always wanted to write. "Originally, I wanted to become a journalist. In fact I dropped out of college in order to pursue my dreams. So, at 19, I was a stringer. One of my assignments was to interview a famous, but very reclusive flautist. Armed with just a door number, and the name of the village, I walked up and down roads for hours under the scorching sun until I found his home. I got my interview too, because the musician was dumbstruck (I think!) at my having turned up at his door," she laughed. That interview is one Ms Nair cherishes,



I encourage not just creative writing but also to raising issues through one's writings.

even today.

But the fact that she never completed college came in the way of her getting an actual newspaper job. "I did apply for a job at The Indian Express (before the newspaper split into North and South editions), but I was told I lacked a "proper" education and relevant experience, for the job". Ironically, today her work (from the novels to her other writing) gets published in newspapers across the world.

That setback did not deter her. She wanted to write, more than ever. So she joined an advertising agency. "I was good at my job, and after I became a mother, I planned my work such that, I would have more time for my son, as well as time to do my own writing. I tried every permutation and combination, when it came to work schedules," she laughed.

But the effort paid off—she brought out her first collection of short stories (Satyr of the Subway) and novel (The Better Man). "By then I was also nearly done with my second novel," she said. Since 2001, she has been a full time writer. Today, she has authored five novels, with her sixth (Alphabet Soup for Lost Lovers) releasing in January, two mythology books, two childrens' books,

and collections of essays and poetry. She also runs a comprehensive writing and mentorship program to help budding writers. The program, Anita's attic, is open to 12 writers at a time who are handpicked by Anita. She also helps them get their work published.

"This is the world. Half of it is lit by the sun and the other half remains in darkness. It is the same

withwith life. There is good and bad and it's our duty to remain in the light, be good."

To know more about Ms Nair's novels, how she does her research, forms her characters etc, what inspires her, log onto www.nsoj.in





By Ashwini Nagaraja

“We have cerebral palsy, so what? We can walk, but may be often slow and awkward, don't stare at us. We can write as well as any of you, but may be slow and need more time, give us a helping hand and not your pity, give us a level-playing field, not a dingy corner. We demand our place under the sunshine. We are the beloved children of our parents, admired students of our teachers. Some of us have become doctors, lawyers, teachers, poets and managers.”

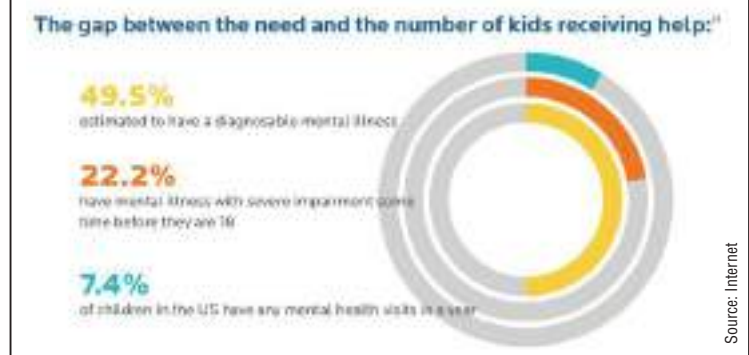
Did you hear them, the voice of those innocent children, you the so-called “educated”, elite and “normal” people who label them as “different”?

When you cannot label a heart patient, when you can sympathise with a cancer patient, why do you label a person suffering from a brain disorder? Why don't you understand that brain, like any other part of the body, can be prone to diseases, and when a person has a “brain disorder”, it is our duty to get them treated, help them to come out of the “shock” and the “trauma” they have undergone, and not criticize them or offend them.

Meet Prassanna, the little boy who could win anybody's heart with his smile. He was born with cerebral palsy besides being a premature baby. He has suffered 20 percent brain damage. He cannot walk or

As able as anyone else

It's wrong to label them as disabled



speak. But you cannot make out those deformities in him. And so was that little girl who was in her wheelchair. They might be bound to their wheelchairs, or they may not be able to move on their own, but they are free from prejudices and biases that “normal” people have. They are happy in their own beautiful world where there are no differences.

I have a word to the parents of differently abled children. Please do not lose hope on your child, for he/she will slowly but surely win. Want evidence? Here I am, Ashwini, a hydrocephalus survivor. All through my childhood, I was referred to by my teachers as an abnormal girl, and my principal always thought I was mentally retarded, and that her prestigious school had no place for someone like me. I never used to interact with my classmates and I used to stay away from others. I never spoke to my classmates for I believed they were far more “intelligent” than me, or they were all “normal” kids, and I was different. I always hoped that

someday somebody would pat my back and say “You are a genius” and that day did come: one man finally agreed that I was a genius. He said: “you are a genius, you must be that eighth wonder that god has created”. I wanted to jump with joy that day, but could not for I was in the hospital and could hardly move. That was, Dr. Thimappa Hegde, well-known neurosurgeon.

If a senior doctor could “discover” a genius I me, there will be many like him who could identify the talents of “autistic” children, without calling them special or differently abled. My sincere thanks to the Spastics Society of India for its yeomen service to children who need attention and help. The society believes that “inclusion is changing the minds of the game so that everybody can play and everybody can win...”

It's time that we accepted the “special child” as part of the mainstream and worked for improving her/her condition. ●

‘Misconception persists on rights violations’

By Khushboo Aneja

There is a lot more to human rights violations than police highhandedness or atrocities perpetrated by the defence forces in certain regions of the country. According to Mr. Mathews Philip, executive director, South Indian Cell for Human Rights Education and Monitoring (SICHREM), there is a misconception among Indians about human rights violations.

A well-known human rights and child rights activist in Karnataka, Mr. Mathews Philip spoke to NSoJ Bureau in an exclusive interview recently, the first in the series of weekly interviews with achievers. He has been working as a rights activist in Karnataka for the past 30 years. His NGO has focused on the issues such as torture in custody, encounter killings, domestic violence and child abuse.

Mr. Mathews Philip touched upon a range of issues such as child abuse, child rights, human trafficking and juvenile justice. He ended his interview with a request

to people to not discriminate against sexually abused women and children.

Later, speaking to the student-journalists of the National School of Journalism, Bengaluru, Mr. Mathews Philip shifted the focus of the interaction shifted from problems to solutions.

How can media help stop violations?

“People might get out from the claws of law but once they are shamed by the media that is, in itself, a punishment”, he said. “If media can also bring awareness while reporting a human rights violation case it will be really helpful,” he said.

Asked how one can bring to light cases of violation and how victims need to be treated, he said, “we get calls on our helpline but we can't go directly to the place as that would be trespassing. So, we first contact the concerned NGO and the police station”.

The interactive session included real-life cases to sensitise students about the state of mind of victims of abuse. He said, “Sometimes the victim is not in a state to file a report for three to four days and that makes it hard to file an FIR later on.” ●



“People might get out from the claws of law but once they are shamed by the media, that in itself is a punishment. If media can also bring awareness while reporting a human rights violation case it will be really helpful.”



Bengaluru had 55.59 lakh vehicles as on March 31, 2015. Over the last decade, vehicle population has spiked in the city. In 2001-2, the city had 15.9 lakh vehicles, a number that rose to 34.9 lakh in 2009-10. In the five years since, the total number of vehicles has gone up by 20 lakh.

If you are a true Bangalorean, it's safe to say that you would encounter one or more of these traffic jams that get you wishing you had wings to fly. But until evolution catches up with the human race, we are forced to go through the tiresome hours of looking at a sea of vehicles in front of us. ●

Good Vehicles wait behind the Zebra Crossing allowing a safe passageway for pedestrians. A rare sight!

Bad Bikers spill over onto the footpath, putting pedestrians at risk.

Ugly Metal barricades obstruct flow of traffic on the already clogged roads.

Ugly Ungainly manholes often cause pile ups.

Sad Pedestrians are forced to seek safety on the medians as traffic whiz past.





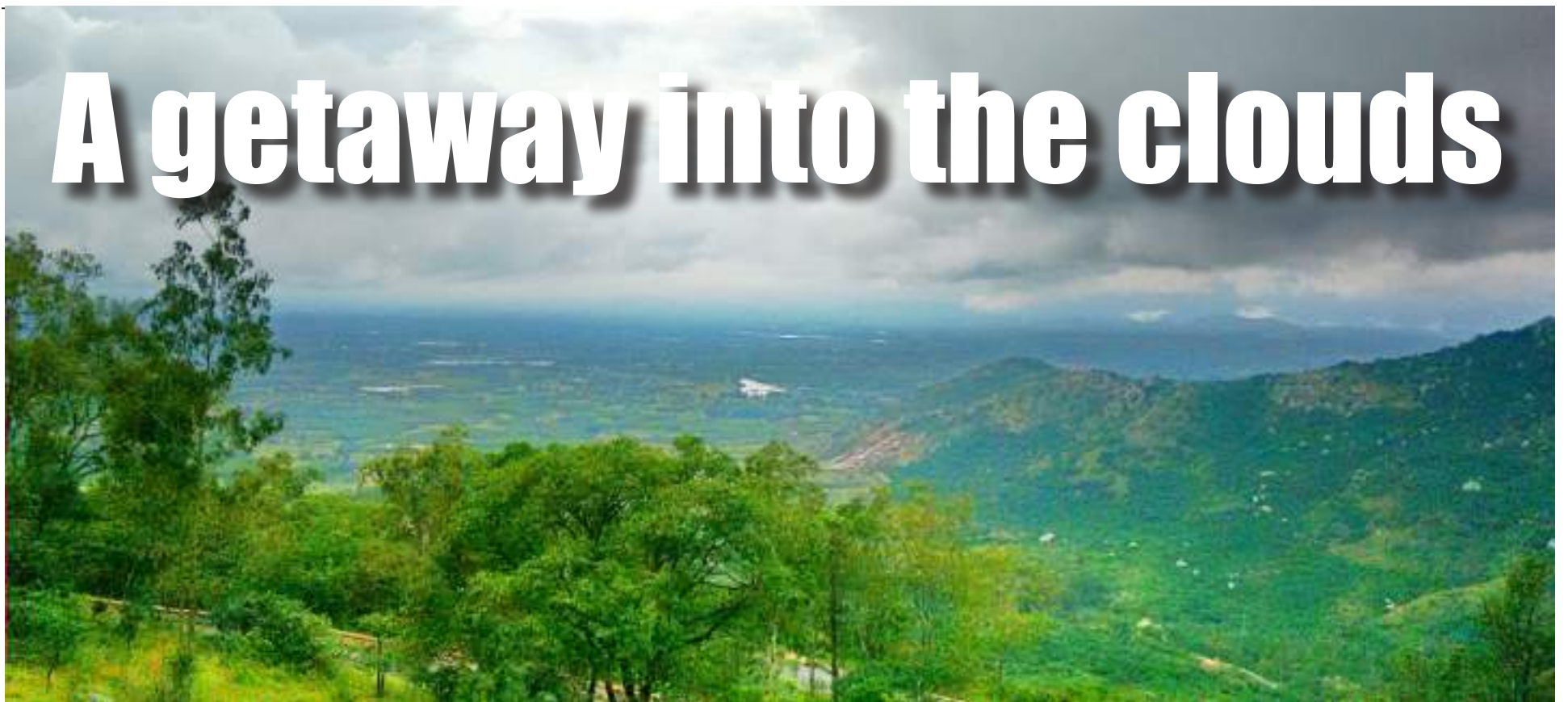
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A getaway into the clouds



By Namrata Srivastava

This weekend was the first spare weekend for us since July. We wanted to go out somewhere close by and worth spending a day. So, when a few friends of mine asked me to accompany them to Nandi Hills, I immediately said yes. I had heard about Nandi Hills before and had thought it was just another place on the outskirts of Bangalore.

Nandi hills, a cluster of small hills, is at an altitude of 1478 metres. It is about 60 kms from Bangalore's Kempegowda bus station. The route is simple with a number of sign boards both on NH7 (Hyderabad express highway) and the

Things you can do at Nandi hills

- **Parasailing:** Parasailing is a fun activity, in which you are attached to a parachute, which is towed by a motor boat. As the parachute lifts up in the air, you get a bird's eye view of your surroundings. Qualified and trained instructors make this activity safe.
- **Camping:** This activity for teams teaches teamwork skills, resource management, planning, communication, and leadership.
- **Hiking:** Nandi Valley offers two rewarding hikes – the stone steps and rough tracks at the hills, and the more wild and scenic route at Chennagiri. The upward climb on either route takes one to heights of about 800 feet. Resting every muscle in your body. Bird's eye views of the surroundings, some great photo-ops, and a feeling of bliss, await you at the summit.

road leading to Nandi hills.

We had already crossed almost three-quarters of the journey but there was no sign of the hills. This bothered me along with the fact that the shorter the distance left, the steeper would be the ride. I asked my friend how far the hill was, to which he said it was right next to us. I noticed that the area I thought was covered with fog (it was raining the whole morning) was actually the hill. Soon I discovered that it was not clouds but was our destination. We had to climb 529 m to reach Nandi Hills.

We suddenly saw two huge cliffs at some distance. The turns and steepness were not scary. One big turn and we were there at the

entrance to the hills. There's a gate 475 metres away from the hill top. All the bikes have to be parked there, while cars can be driven to the top after obtaining a pass. It was like a small plateau where everyone waited to see the mist clad hills.

Hill fortress

Nandi Hills or Nandi Durg is an ancient hill fortress. Legend says that, Yogi Nandeeshwara performed penance here, and therefore it was named after him. Nandi Hills is also commonly called Nandidurga because of the fort built here by Tipu Sultan. Another reason for its name may be because the hills resemble a sleeping bull (Nandi). It later became a retreat for of-

ficials during the British Raj. Francis Cunningham built the summer residence here for Sir Mark Cubbon.

The clouds were blocking the hills. It was quite cold and I could see the clouds pass over me.

There's a huge cliff sloping into the gorges and the only thing one can see is layers of snow-white clouds (yes clouds, not mist) below you. We walked on the edge of the cliffs to get to the other side. There are no boundaries along those edges. Fencing on the edge of the cliff would affect the view. This is also a dangerous location too as there was nobody to warn the visitors of walking in the misty cliff side. ●

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THE WRITE WAY

We would love to hear from you. Share your thoughts and feedback with us. Please write to: nsojpost@nsoj.in

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We invite final-year undergraduate students in any discipline to express your courage, independence, curiosity, open-mindedness, your ability to communicate and your engagement with society, your country and the world.

Submit a 500-word story on any of the topics listed below

- "Make in India" campaign: PR exercise or FDI driver?
- Corporatisation of sports leagues in India (IPL, HIL, Pro Kabaddi and ISL): can India become a sports super power?
- Does mainstream Indian cinema (Bollywood, Tollywood, etc.) reflect the culture, values and aspirations of modern India?
- India in the villages versus urban India: development, social justice and poverty.

The three best entrants as determined by NSoJ will win the prestigious NSoJ Award for Outstanding Journalism Potential. The top 10 entrants will qualify for generous merit scholarships to pursue a postgraduate diploma in journalism at National School of Journalism. Send in your entries by January 15.

All entrants must submit their stories by email to slant@nsoj.in in a portable document format (PDF). In your email, please include the following details:

1. Name
2. College / University
3. Undergraduate course details (for example, BA in English Literature, BE in Mechanical Engineering etc.)
4. Mobile number

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