metroplus







Climate crisis is

real. It is time to switch the narrative towards seasonal, locally available produce for sustainability, say speakers at the recently-concluded four-day Nilgiris Wild Food Festival



Towards food security Snapshots from the festival. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

THE COSMOS P2



danced rhythmically to a tune played on drums and pipes.

Going native

from cities taking inspiration

should change. Such events

We can also effectively use

story-telling tools and social media to achieve this."

At the *habba*, as the

variety of wild foraged

communities showcased a

red, black, and wild ginger,

black turmeric(that has high

tubers like noorai kizhangu,

kaatu kizhangu, and churuli

greens, Irula men and women

medicinal value), millets, wild

produce, including varieties of

from indigenous communities

usher in a change in consumer

behaviour and lifestyle choices.

While Chef Thomas Zacharias's Mumbai-based Locavore champions for regional cuisine in India where he brings together story telling, working with local produce, and nurturing connections between people within the Indian food system, he pushes the idea of deliciousness on what is available on our plate. "We fail to have 'profound respect' for seasonal produce. Without using avocados, lettuce or asparagus, we have created over 180 items on the menu with local, seasonal produce. We partner with organisations like the Keystone Foundation to talk about food tourism to a niche audience

that understands and respects food. We make it fun."

Earlier during the festival, Irulas S Sivaraj from Bangalapadigai and R Kannan from Arakkot took participants on a walk to ancestral lands in the southern Nilgiris to showcase the heirloom produce and traditional farming practices.

A refreshing lime drink was followed with snacks like steamed noorai, and rayan kizhangu (sweet tubers) foraged from the forest.

'The tubers have medicinal value and are believed to strengthen the uterus, especially for new mothers. Our ancestors practised cross-cultivation, and along with raagi and saamai, they cultivated 16 varieties of crops including mustard, dals, beans , and greens including amaranthus, povi keerai, and seengai keerai, and tubers," says S Sivaraj.

After a forest walk at Garikur, a halt at Porivarai Centre that educates the visitors on some of the traditional music instruments like arakol, what follows is a satisfying Irula meal with raagi kazhi and pumpkin sambar, thinai rice and mixed vegetables sambar, and naatu kozhi gravy.

USA

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 2

Wild vision

> K Jeshi jeshi.jeshi@thehindu.co.in

he United Nations has declared 2023 the International Year of Millets. The energy-efficient crop, can be grown with minimal use of resources. "It's ironic that we find millets only at an occasion like a Wild Food Fest," says Chef Thomas Zacharias leading an enriching conversation on wild foods and communities on a sunny winter morning at habba, a celebration at the green campus of The Keystone Foundation in Kotagiri.

It is a part of the four-day Nilgiris Wild Food Festival, put

together by The Nilgiris Foundation (TNF), a not-for-profit organisation established internationally to create awareness on the eco-development initiatives in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve. TNF is also a sister concern of The Keystone Foundation that works at the grassroots with tribal communities of the Nilgiris for over three decades. "The festival is a charity event by the TNF singularly aimed at raising awareness towards wild foods, food systems and changing the way we look at food," says Ramya Reddy,

climate-changed future.

director, TNF.

While the UN is urging

countries to rely on locally

opened a dialogue on wild,

local and seasonal foods

production industry in a

produced grains, the festival

including millets, conservation

and sustainability in the food

A new narrative "Climate crisis is real," says Zacharias, adding that "it's time to switch the narration." "We are disconnected on where our food comes from. The power dynamics of people

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Cosmic wonders The Mango Astronomy Calendar launched by Obuli Chandran, SIVA SARAVANAN S

gravity, force and light. We also use examples to teach geometry and trignometry."

Mango Education has a full-fledged curriculum in Astronomy and Astrophysics for students from grade 3 to 9, which they offer on a tie-up to private schools in the city. "We teach the subject as an extra-curricular activity, take students on star gazing trips to Mudumalai and Ladakh."

They also reach out to Government school students through a number of outreach programmes as a part of 'Naalaya Vignani' initiative along with the Regional Science Centre in Coimbatore, developed by National Council of Science Museums with the active support of Tamil Nadu Science & Technology Centre (TNSTC).

"We have mapped the science exhibits at the Regional Science Centre according to the curriculum of students."

He also talks with pride about Mango Science Radio, a WhatsApp initiative launched during COVID-19.

"We had 7,000 subscribers from across the country. We posted short clips on fascinating stories related with science.For example, did you know that Neptune is the only planet found

using mathematical calculations?" The calendar features 12 astro images including deep sky objects, star clusters, nebulae, and eclipses shot by Obuli over the years.

He adds, "We want to bring a sense of wonder and make people look up at the cosmos."

To know more, call 9952243541 or visit https://themango.co/ calendar2023

Priced at ₹599 (₹499 till *Ianuary* 10), the calendar can be shipped across India.

Sustainable

fashion

Eco Clothing, a

For the love of dance forms

Ektha, a space where dancers explore and exchange their knowledge, presents a standalone show

<u>K Jeshi</u> jeshi.jeshi@thehindu.co.in

t's a platform that brings together anyone interested in dance," says Saritha Lakshmi, the artistic director of Ektha, a space where a bunch of young dancers in Coimbatore meet to simply dance.

"We collaborate and choreograph together and the outcome is organic. We record the video. The creative process inspires us as there is constant learning from each other," explains Saritha, who is also the director of GD School.

It was during her education stint in the UK that Saritha got exposed to the concept of choreographing dance as a team.

"Dance is my passion and as dance captain at the Bharatanatyam Society there, I understood we can change the dynamics of dance by choreographing together while performing at shows. I came back and started Ektha four years ago."

They are putting together Anjali an evening of dance, their first standalone show that brings together as many as 14 dancers, mostly from Coimbatore, where they will perform Kathak, Bharatanatyam, and folk dance

The objective of Ektha is to popularise classical dance forms of India. "Dancers from different backgrounds, dance schools and styles come together. More like a dancer's potluck if you will, where each one brings something to the table and in the process everyone has a lot of fun," says Subiksha Siva,



THE HINDU

Celebrating dance The team at Ektha. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

one of the participants.

For Aashikha Manikanth, it was an opportunity to get back in touch with dancing after a break. "Also, celebrate and revive my passion. I'm also glad for having had the chance to try different art forms and to have met so many wonderful dancers

Vajra Balaji agrees with Aashika. "Ektha is a space for dancers to come together to share the joy of dancing and also to create a fresh perspective of the art. The best part is that immaterial to the age or experience, there is a space for every dancer to put forth their ideas and choreograph a piece," she adds.

On January 8, the event Anjali - an evening of dance begins at 6 pm at Sarvaa Ballroom, The Grand Regent. There will be a dance Workshop by Aayana Dance Company by Madhava Mamava from 10 am to 1 pm on January 7 at Sarvaa Mini Hall at the same venue. The workshop fee is ₹1100. The participants can also perform the item with the group at the event.

For more details, call 9952630555 or visit @ekthadance on Instagram for registration

Keep an eye on the sky

Keep your telescopes ready as this with plenty of celestial events. The recently launched Mango Calendar

educator, who has launched the Mango Calendar 2023, themed on astronomy. Important celestial events like eclipses, planetary conjunctions, and meteor showers are highlighted along with their brief descriptions. For example, the hybrid solar eclipse occurs on April 20. It is a solar Making science fun eclipse, wherein some parts of the world will witness it as total solar,

As for the meteor showers, the Lyrids meteor shower that shoots about 20 meteors per hour at its peak can be visible in the evening skies on April 22 and April 23. On May 5, one can observe a

penumbral lunar eclipse - when the moon moves through the penumbra, or the faint, which is the outer part of Earth's shadow. Meanwhile, a partial lunar eclipse

eclipse, while in others parts it

will be seen as an annular solar

K Jeshi

jeshi.jeshi@thehindu.co.in

tunning meteor showers,

full moons and eclipses will light up the sky all

through this year. While

usually there are 12 full moons

every year, this year, there will be

13 full moons, with two occurring

in August. The second full moon

appearing on August 31 is also called The Blue Moon, like the

phrase 'once in a blue moon',

"It's time to look up and observe the sky," announces Obuli

Chandran, a science and maths

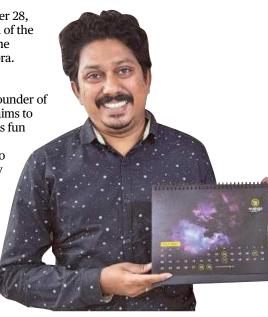
according to NASA.

vear is set to be a sky-gazer's delight 2023 has all the details

will be visible on October 28, where only one portion of the moon passes through the darkest shadow or umbra. Obuli, who is also the founder of Mango Education that aims to make science and maths fun

calendar's objective is to make people, especially children, get excited about astronomy. "When you mention 'black hole', everyone is intrigued. Using black hole as an example, we lure them into understanding complex science like

for students, says the



with millets, milk, coconut and

Food raconteur Rakesh

food. "The panchamirtham

temple is made with hill

banana, honey, and dates.

flour) which is intricately

connected with tribal

There is also thenum thinai

maavum (honey and fox millet

communities there. We have

rice varieties. At one of my

popups I made risotto with

karunkuruvai rice which

became an instant hit."

over 350 varieties of indigenous

"Plant-based food is the way

forward," says Chef Abhijit Saha

whose restaurant Glass Kitchen

and Bar in Bengaluru features

clean menu, interesting flavour

combinations and sustainable

dining with a focus on farm to

fork. "It is about eating right,

and healthy, and conscious food

choices." Chef Abhijit and Chef

Arup Kakati, corporate chef of

Udhagamandalam presented sit

down multi-course lunch and

dinner meals at Le Cafe, Little

where the menu featured items

like lemongrass infused tart-lets

tapioca crisp to wild mushroom

Adds Pratim Roy, founder of

and bamboo shoot pickle on

ravioli and blue peas tea and

The Keystone Foundation, "In

an era of climate change where

there is uncertainty looming

over quality food, the Nilgiris

passion fruit granita.

Earth in Udhagamandalam

The Littleearth Group in

served as prasadam in Palani

Raghunathan reckons his duty

is to tell the story of indigenous

sugar) kept coming.

Clean and green Vegetables and greens at the festival. SPECIAL



Wild vision

CONTINUED FROM » PAGE 1

ild greens, tubers, flowers, and seeds, the uncultivated food that grows in hidden valleys and mountain slopes ensure food security. It is the bonus crop, says Lethika George, environmentalist and organic gardener, taking forward the discussion on the impact of climate change on agriculture. "I have an acre of food forest where out-of-season rains have ruined my crops. But, wild greens and wild mushrooms still spring to life. Millets and greens are passed off as poverty food. It has to become food for everybod. For that to happen, the way we eat has to change," urges the Kodaikanal-based author.

Along the same lines, Snehalata Nath and Mathew John, founder-directors of Keystone Foundation, agree that degraded cash crop lands can be converted as wild areas with a thriving bio-diversity."This will help understand what wild species provide in terms of food and ecosystem services. Once documented, availability and consumption can increase," says Sneha.

At sundown, a 10-course Badaga tasting platter put

together by Chef Suresh Belliraj and his family at the picturesque restaurant by the lakeside in Aravenu, took us on a trip down forgotten food traditions as soulful Badaga songs performed by a three-member music troupe, including singer Belli Raj, played at the venue. "I grew up on ragi with sandagais (garlic and tree tomato chutney) and ganje (barley) porridge. Some of the dal varieties like salligai (black masoor dal) have vanished from our food scene," says the chef. While the menu tasting session kicked off with bella kapi (coffee with jaggery), other items like uppu korai (roasted and salted beans), spinach on toast, tender bamboo shoots, pothihittu (wheat pancakes), bread and chicken curry, hatchikai (dessert



Mi<u>llets and greens are</u> passed off as poverty food. It has to become food for <u>everybody</u>

LETHIKA GEORGE

sustainable fashion brand based in Delhi,

presents an exhibition in the city. On sale are kurtas, tops, dresses, kaftans, pants, palazzos, dupattas and more starting at ₹1000. The brand works with artisans across India to revive hand block printing, flower printing, kalamkari, and chikankari using internationally-certified organic fabrics and toxic chemical-free colours. On till January 8 at Pralochna Designs, TV Swamy Road, RS Puram. For details, call 8190920000.



For art's sake

Art Street is back and it's going to be extra special as art curated by a panel of artists will be on display. Street art and graffiti that add a pop of colour to everyday walls have transformed many streets as powerful tools of change in the city. Begins on January 7 at Scheme Road, Race Course from 10am



Celebrating the farmer

Thiru Sengoda Gounder Educational Trust and Sri Shakthi Institute Of Engineering and Technology host their fifth annual Velan Thiruvizha. The event features agricultural exhibition with stalls on new tools that will improve farming practices. A native breed cattle exhibition is part of the event, in which over 500 cattle and livestock will be showcased. There will be competitions for different types of bulls, such as Mayilakaalai, Sevalaikaalai, and Karikaalai. On the second day, there will be a rekla race in which over 300 rekla trucks have registered to compete under various categories. Folk dances such as Oyilaatam, Mayilaatam, and Poikalkuthiraiaatam will be conducted. Entry is free. On at Sri Shakthi Institute Of Engineering and Technology L & T Bypass road, today and tomorrow.



digital content across social media platforms, presents the Yuvan House Party, a live musical concert by Yuvan Shankar Raja. Actor and musician Premji, and singers Hari Charan, Swetha Mohan, Rahul Nambiyar, Super singer fame Divakaran, Ranjith, Hari Priya, and many other singers are set to perform at the event. Tickets are available on Bookmyshow. The concert is on at 6pm onwards today at CODISSIA Grounds.



Dots and lines

Learning space Nemishala presents a kolam and rangoli workshop for children. It is to be conducted in three batches: for children aged six to 9; aged 10 to 14, and those aged 15 and above. The sessions are priced at ₹300, ₹450, and ₹550 respectively.

The workshop is on at West Periasamy Road, Vincent Colony, RS Puram, 10am onwards today. For details, call 9843169448.



Laugh away

Actor and comedian Karthik Kumar is set to present his show Aansplaining in the city. The stand-up comedy show is organised by Round Table India and Ladies Circle India as part of its fund raising initiative. Tickets are available on Bookmyshow. On today at 7pm at Sitra Auditorium,

Avinashi Road.



Food, crafts, and culture

Explore the culture, crafts, and cuisine of the Nagarathars, also known as Chettiars, in the Chettinadu Thiruvizha held in

association with Coimbatore Vizha. The event features over 80 stalls highlighting Chettinad architecture, food, craftsmanship, jewellery, sarees, and traditional games. Replicas of nine temples that are auspicious to the Chettinad people will also be displayed at the venue. Entry is free, and a special pass is priced at ₹1000, using which one can cook Chettinad food, make Aathangudi tiles, play traditional games, and have one meal of their

On today and tomorrow at CODISSIA Trade Fair Complex Hall D, Avinashi Road.





STEPOUT



Radiant lehengas, saris and blouses and matching jewellery sourced from across India will be on display at Go Glam Shopping exhibition. It also features bridal wear and accessories. A number of NGOs that make sustainable products are also participating. Till January 8 at Suguna Auditorium. Entry is free.

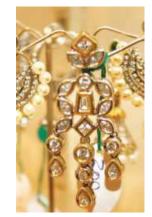
Remembering a music legend

Till January 8 from 6.30pm onwards at

Valankulam

Born in Elapully near Palakkad in Kerala, on 24 June 1928, M S Viswanathan started his film journey at Jupiter Films, a major film production house that made some of the biggest Tamil hits in the 1950s and 1960s like Manohara and Thangapathumai. Along with violinist TK Ramamoorthy, the musical duo transformed the way music is used in south Indian cinema. As a tribute to the *Mellisai Mannar*, music lovers can come and sing their favourite MSV song.

On January 8 at Savithri's RM AV Studio, Ramnagar from 4pm to 8pm. For information on pre-registration of tracks call or WhatsApp 9843023270/9442212348



Add that dazzle

Choose from a wide range of gold, diamond, antique and Naga jewellery at the ongoing jewellery exhibition put together by Buoyant Media. There will be temple jewellery, bridal, and kundan collections. Till January 8 at The Residency towers, Avinashi Road from 11am to 8pm. For details, call 9500288222











Branches: R.S Puram | Bus Stand | Cross Cut Road | Arts College Road | Sri Lakshmi Complex | Mettupalayam Road Sri Valli Complex | People's Park | Town Hall | Peelamedu | Raja Street | Ganapathy | Avinashi Road | Prozone Mall Airport | Sundarapuram | Kuniyamuthur. Upcoming Branches: Thudiyalur | Avinashi (Bye Pass)





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• Aditi Balan in a still ARRANGEMENT

the project either has a novel idea or a well-experienced team. Moreover, the character should be prominent; even if it has just five minutes of screen time, her presence should add value to

The actor just wrapped up a project with filmmaker Thangar Bachan in which she acts alongside veteran filmmaker-actor Bharathiraja. "That was a really enriching experience, to just see someone like Bharathiraja sir act," says Aditi, who will also be seen in the upcoming Samantha-starrer Shaakuntalam.

For Story of Things, streaming on Sony LIV, it was the concept by writer-director George K Antoney that intrigued Aditi. The series explores the relationship between material things and humans, and Aditi's segment in the series, Cellular, features a mobile phone that has a mind of its own. "I loved the very name of my character,

Cellular deals with guilt and possessiveness, with the central focus being on the relationship between a possessive mother (played by Gautami Tadimalla) and her daughter. The obvious route that any such story would take is to touch upon the complicated relationship that we share with our mobiles. Given

Vannamayil; she's a young girl from the suburbs."

all the reality hits brought about by the pandemic, the story might even get more relatable, but Aditi says that Cellular sticks to its story and does not touch such tangents.

Post the pandemic, almost all of Aditi's projects have been for OTT. "I am glad, she says, adding that she believes streaming platforms will only strengthen in 2023. Aditi wishes that 2023 brings her more work, in particular, a light-hearted role to play. Being someone who does not want to be chained to a pattern, she hopes to find projects in other languages too.

Marching ahead

head of the 2023 Veterans Day celebrations, national award-winning film director Ananth Mahadevan has announced his next venture, titled Veterans Of War - The India Story.

Written and directed by Mahadevan and produced by Ashvin Gidwani of AGP World, the 75-minute documentary film will celebrate 75 years of Independence and feature real



Ananth Mahadevar

life stories of Indian armed forces' gallantry awardees. Veterans Day is commemorated every year on January 14; the parade for this year, scheduled on January 8, will be the venue for the final sequence of this docu-film.

Everything has a story

Aruvi star Aditi Balan on her upcoming anthology that explores the relationship between human beings and things

Bhuvanesh Chandar bhuvanesh.chandar@thehindu.co.ir

t seems like Tamil content creators are not using the actor in Aditi Balan to full potential. After her break-out performance in 2016's Aruvi, Aditi is yet to make a feature film in Tamil and she agrees that it has something to do with the wrongful notion that she only prefers doing roles that are serious.

"When people meet me in real life, they are surprised to see me as a jovial individual. All the scripts I got after Aruvi were in the same victim-revenge zone. So, I am unable to show my other shades," she says.

This is even more surprising considering that the parameters with which Aditi chooses her scripts are not far-fetched or too much to ask for.

"I never wanted to stick to just female-centric scripts or a particular genre either. I would prefer if





