

MIST LGBTQ NEWSLETTER



November 2024 – December 2024

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UNDP-Supported Policy Brief Launched by Mist LGBTQ Foundation to Advance LGBTQ+ Legal Equality

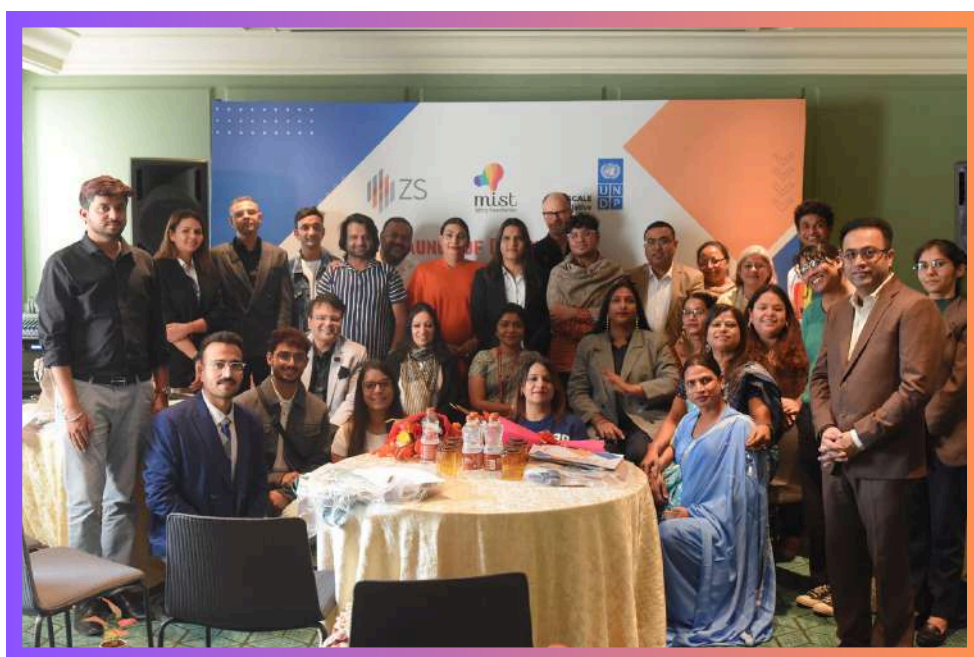
New Delhi, India – On November 27, 2024, Mist LGBTQ Foundation, in collaboration with the UNDP Scale Initiative and ZS Associates, launched a comprehensive policy brief titled "Uniting Diversity – Shaping the Future of Legal Equality for LGBTQ+ in India."

This landmark document is the culmination of an extensive eight-month research process, involving regional consultations with over 100 community leaders and a nationwide survey of more than 250 individuals.



The launch event, held at Opal Hall, The Connaught, New Delhi, was graced by the presence of Ms. Radhika Chakravarthy, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

The policy brief offers actionable recommendations to policymakers, legal professionals, and civil society organizations to create a more inclusive and equitable legal framework for the LGBTQ+ community. This significant milestone marks a major step forward in the ongoing struggle for LGBTQ+ rights in India.



Pune Community Unites for **Transgender Day of Remembrance**



Pune, India – On November 22, 2024, Mist LGBTQ Foundation, in collaboration with community partners Qutcast, Shikhandi, Muktaa Foundation, CYDA, and Girl Up Jeevika, organized a candlelight vigil to commemorate Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) at Sambhaji Garden, Deccan, Pune.

The event honored the memory of transgender individuals who have lost their lives to anti-transgender violence.



Shyam Konnur, Founder and CEO of Mist LGBTQ Foundation, emphasized the importance of community solidarity and commitment to a future free from violence and discrimination.

The vigil saw attendees from all walks of life come together to light candles as a symbol of hope, resilience, and unity in the fight for equality and justice.

The event served as a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by the transgender community.

Mist LGBTQ Foundation Participates in Workshop on Advocacy and Social Justice

Mumbai, India - Mist LGBTQ Foundation was invited to participate in a workshop hosted by Nazariya QFRG in collaboration with One Future Collective. The event, held on November 15, 2024, at Sarvodaya Seminary, St. Pius College, Goregaon, aimed to enhance advocacy skills and promote social justice.

Susmit Bansode, Advocacy Coordinator at Mist LGBTQ Foundation, represented the organization at the workshop.



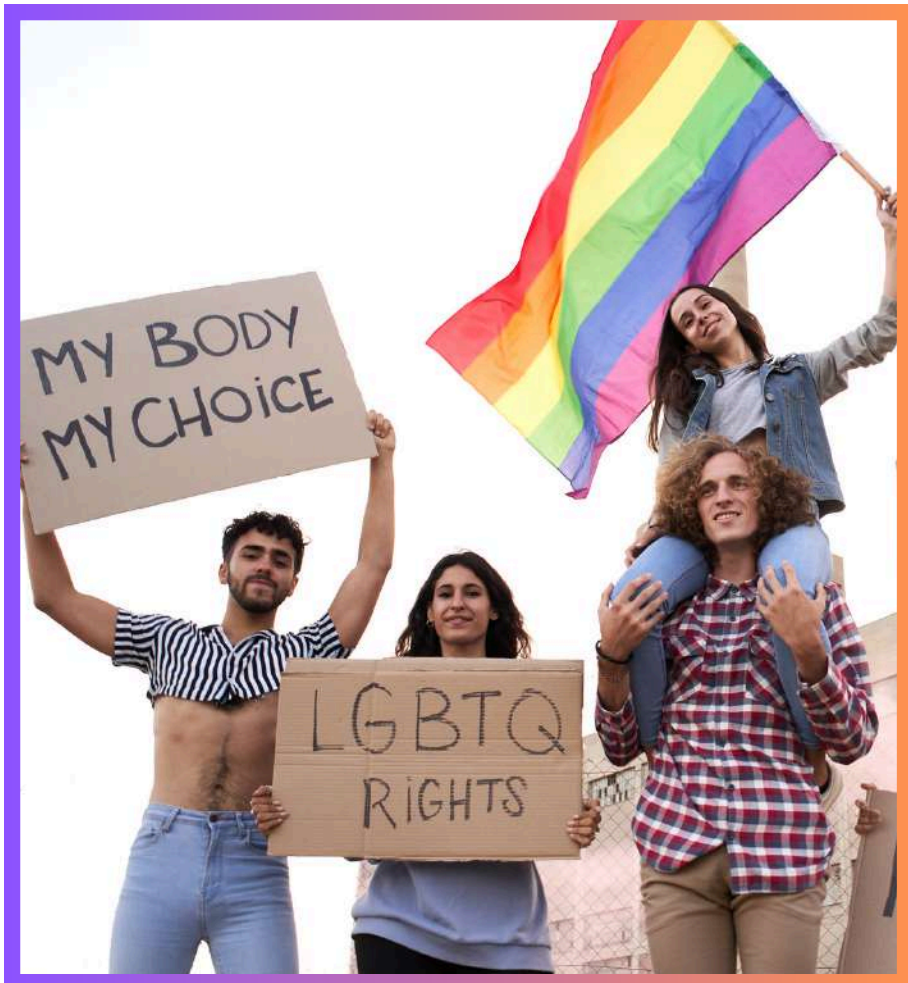
The event featured interactive sessions, insightful discussions, and networking opportunities, focusing on advocacy, gender equality, and social justice.

The workshop explored topics such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and its connection to grassroots advocacy work, as well as the significance of advocacy in the context of Beijing+30.

The event concluded with a call to action, emphasizing the importance of collective responsibility in creating a more inclusive and equitable society.



Mist LGBTQ Foundation Meets with **Ministry of Social Justice** to Foster Inclusivity



In November 2024, a significant meeting took place between the Indian Ministry of Social Justice and Mist LGBTQ Foundation. Shyam Konnur, Founder and CEO, and Sriram Sridhar, Executive Director, represented Mist LGBTQ Foundation, engaging in discussions that aimed to promote inclusivity for the LGBTQ community in India.

The meeting highlighted the importance of community consultations and the creation of policy briefs in shaping a more inclusive India for LGBTQ individuals

The policy brief, a result of meticulous community engagement, is poised to play a pivotal role in advocating for LGBTQ rights and challenging existing societal norms.

Mist LGBTQ Foundation also showcased its ongoing efforts and sustainability projects, underscoring its commitment to empowering the LGBTQ community.

Personal anecdotes of being LGBTQ in India added a poignant touch to the discussions, emphasizing the need for continued support and understanding



World AIDS Day Marked with Drag Bollywood Night

Pune, India - On December 1, 2024, Mist LGBTQ Foundation organized a unique event, "Drag Bollywood Night," to commemorate World AIDS Day. The event, held at C-Dock Restaurant and Lounge, aimed to promote HIV awareness, testing, and prevention among the young LGBTQ+ community.

The event featured performances by renowned drag artists, including Legendary Karma, Morgana Silom, Lady Bai, and Beyonce The Drag Queen. The artists not only entertained the crowd but also emphasized the importance of HIV prevention, timely testing, and living positively. Their powerful messages resonated with the audience, creating a safe space for dialogue and education.

The event saw a significant turnout, with approximately 170 attendees. Thirteen individuals utilized the free HIV testing services provided at the venue, while 70 others availed of the service through the event's promotional efforts. Six attendees expressed interest in enrolling for PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), highlighting the growing awareness and demand for HIV prevention strategies.

The event was sponsored by PEPFAR, USAID, and EpiC, with Grindr serving as the media partner and Project Accelerate as the testing partner.

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The success of the event demonstrated the potential of creative outreach initiatives to drive public health outcomes. By combining entertainment with education, the event not only educated but also empowered key young populations to take charge of their health.

The event's impact was evident in the feedback received from attendees. Many expressed appreciation for the seamless integration of entertainment and health education, while others highlighted the empowering messages conveyed by the drag performers.

The event's success has set a benchmark for innovative HIV awareness campaigns in India.



Kolhapur Hosts First-Ever Queer and Allies Art Festival

Kolhapur, Maharashtra - On December 14, 2024, the city of Kolhapur witnessed a vibrant celebration of creativity, diversity, and inclusivity with the Queer and Allies Art Festival (QAAF). Organized by the Mist LGBTQ Foundation, in partnership with ABHIMAAN Kolhapur and supported by SAATHII, the event brought together members of the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies for an evening of art, music, and self-expression.

The festival, held at Hotel 3 Leaves, featured an array of activities, including art exhibitions, stage performances, film screenings, and an open mic night.

Attendees also had the opportunity to engage with LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs and support their businesses.



In addition to the cultural events, QAAF also focused on health and wellness, offering workshops and resources on sexual health.

The festival provided a safe and inclusive space for individuals to express themselves and connect with others.

The event was a resounding success, with attendees praising the organizers for creating a welcoming and celebratory atmosphere.

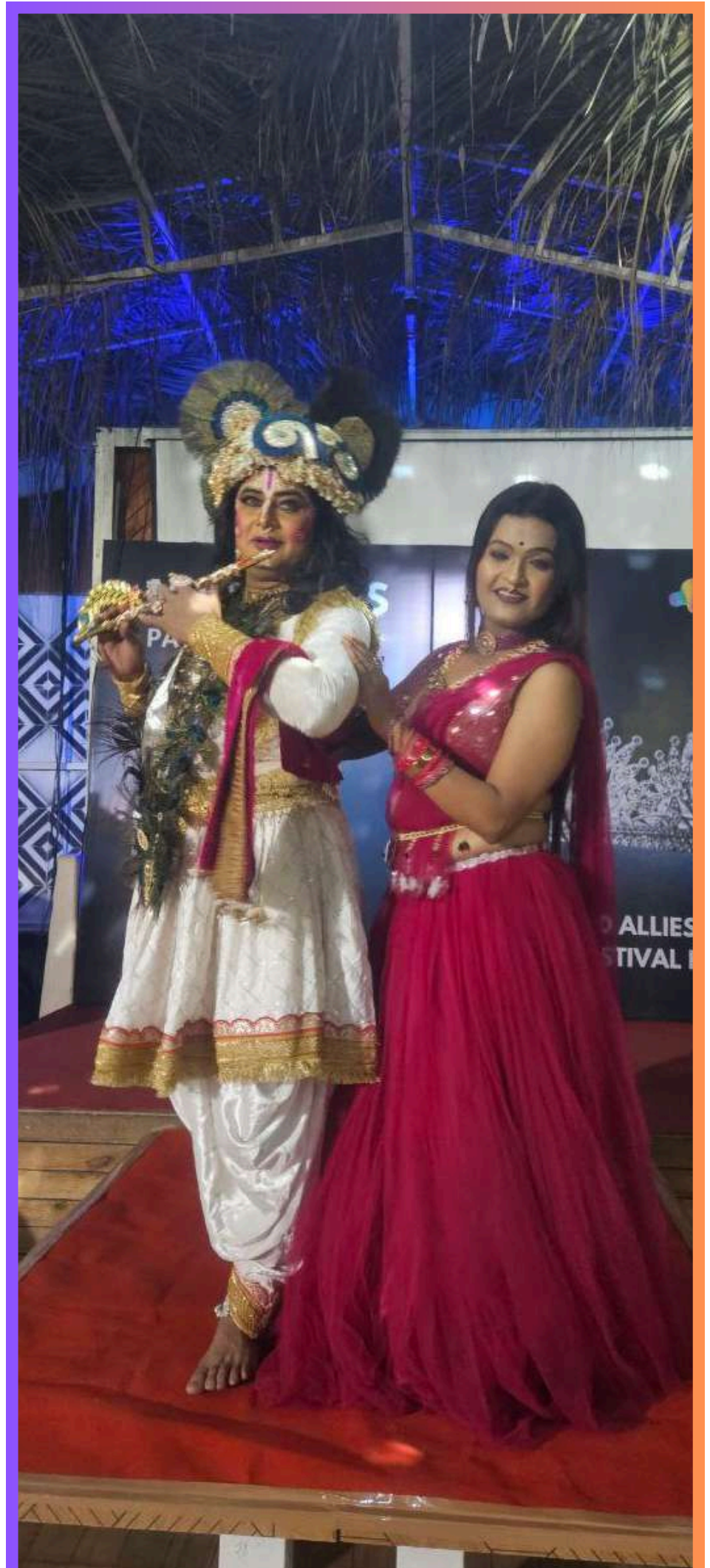
QAAF Kolhapur marked an important milestone in promoting diversity and inclusivity in the city, and it is hoped that the event will become an annual celebration.



Queer and Allies Art Festival Pune Celebrates Diversity and Inclusivity

Pune, India - On December 22, 2024, the Queer and Allies Art Festival Pune (QAAF Pune) brought together members of the LGBTQ community and their allies for a day of love, acceptance, and celebration. The event, organized by Mist LGBTQ Foundation, and supported by the transcend project of The Humsafar Trust, was held at Bottle Forest, Koregaon Park Annexe. The festival featured a flea market with LGBTQ entrepreneurs, film screenings, live performances, and a pageant.

The QAAF Pune was a resounding success, with attendees praising the organizers for creating a welcoming and celebratory atmosphere. The event provided a platform for the LGBTQ community to express themselves and connect with others. Mist LGBTQ Foundation's efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity in Pune were evident throughout the event.



Mist Trans Pageant 2024 Celebrates Trans Representation and Inclusion



Pune, India - On December 22, 2024, Mist LGBTQ Foundation presented the Mist Trans Pageant 2024, a flagship event of the Queer and Allies Art Festival Pune. The pageant aimed to promote trans representation, inclusivity, and awareness, providing a safe and empowering platform for the trans community. The event featured multiple rounds, including a talent round, Q&A round, and different outfits rounds. The pageant showcased the diverse skills and talents of trans participants, challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity.



Queerbazaar Shines at World AIDS Day Event

Queerbazaar, an initiative of Mist LGBTQ Foundation, showcased its vibrant pride merchandise at the World AIDS Day program in Indore, hosted by NACO. The event was attended by esteemed guests, including Ms. V Hekali Zhimomi, Additional Secretary & Director General of NACO, and Shri J.P. Nadda, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare.

Their encouraging words inspired Queerbazaar to continue making a difference in the HIV and health space. The event marked a significant milestone for Queerbazaar, and the organization expressed gratitude to PEPFAR, USAID, EpiC, and FHI360 for their support.



Queer Community Comes Together for Magical Christmas Dinner



Pune, India - On December 24, 2024, Mist LGBTQ Foundation hosted a Secret Santa dinner at Stories Cafe, Lohegaon. The event brought together numerous LGBTQ community members and allies for a night of fun, friends, and festivities. The evening featured games, karaoke, a delicious dinner, and a Secret Santa gift exchange.

The event was a resounding success, with attendees describing it as a "memorable night" filled with joy, laughter, and community spirit.



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