

PRIDE EDITION NEWSLETTER



May-June 2025

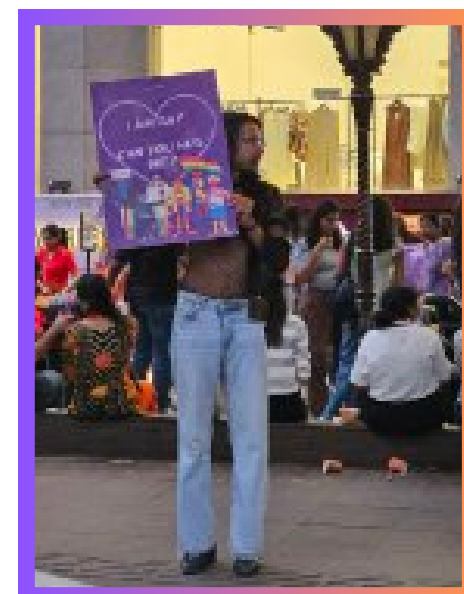
Page 1

Mist LGBTQ Foundation Celebrates International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia with 'Free Hugs' Event

Pune, May 17, 2025 - Mist LGBTQ Foundation marked the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) with a heartwarming 'free hugs' event at Kalakar Katta on FC Road, Pune. As the first event of Pre-Pune Pride, the initiative drew a good response, sparking meaningful conversations about gender identity and sexuality.

The event provided a safe space for people to connect and learn about the LGBTQIA+ community. Many attendees expressed curiosity about the community, seeking to understand the experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals. By fostering dialogue and acceptance, the event highlighted the importance of visibility and awareness in promoting inclusivity.

Mist LGBTQ Foundation's efforts to create a platform for connection and understanding were well-received, setting a positive tone for the upcoming Pune Pride celebrations.



Mist LGBTQ Foundation Hosts 9th Edition of Out & Loud – Pune International Queer Film Festival



Mist LGBTQ Foundation organized the 9th edition of the Out & Loud – Pune International Queer Film Festival (PIQFF), which took place from May 23rd to 25th, 2025, as part of Pune Pride Week. The festival celebrated queer lives, stories, and joy through a diverse selection of international and Indian LGBTQ+ films, performances, and conversations. The three-day event featured film screenings, panel discussions, and an awards ceremony, with free entry provided for all screenings. The festival was held at Bottle Forest, Koregaon Park Annexe on May 23rd, and Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe Rangamandir, Yerwada on May 24th and 25th.



The event showcased a variety of films, including shorts, documentaries, and narratives, providing a platform for the LGBTQ+ community to express themselves and connect with others. By promoting inclusivity and creativity, the festival achieved its goal of celebrating queer identities and fostering dialogue.



Pune Pride Organizing Committee Hosts Vibrant **Flash Mob at Amanora Mall**

On May 24, 2025, the Pune Pride organizing committee, led in part by Kunal Shah, conducted a dynamic flash mob at Carnimax Arcade, Amanora Mall, Hadapsar. The event, held between 5:30 PM and 6:30 PM, was part of the Pre Pune Pride 2025 celebrations. Mist LGBTQ Foundation, in collaboration with other NGOs and organizations, organized Pune Pride, promoting inclusivity and diversity. The flash mob aimed to raise awareness and support for the LGBTQ+ community, fostering a sense of unity and acceptance.

The event showcased the community's vibrant spirit, setting a positive tone for the upcoming celebration



Pune Pride Organizing Committee Creates **Vibrant Posters** for Pride March

On May 31, 2025, the Pune Pride Organizing committee and volunteers collaborated to design a diverse range of posters for Pune Pride 2025. The posters showcased a mix of educational content, representations of gender identities and sexualities, and legal demands, exemplifying the freedom of speech. The creative initiative highlighted the community's commitment to awareness, inclusivity, and advocacy. The posters will serve as a powerful visual representation of the community's spirit, promoting acceptance and equality for all.



Pune Queer Sports Club Fosters Inclusivity Through Sports



The Pune Queer Sports Club, founded by Vallabh Jagtap, has grown to over 180 members since its inception last year. The club provides a safe space for queer individuals to play sports without fear of judgment or exclusion. Members participate in various activities, including cricket, football, basketball, table tennis, swimming, and chess. The club's inclusive environment has allowed members to reclaim space and joy, breaking down stereotypes and building strong friendships.

Notably, the club organized a badminton tournament last June as part of Pre-Pride celebrations, which drew over 30 participants. The club's commitment to inclusivity is reflected in its operating model, with no membership fees and a focus on fair play.

Members bring their own equipment and share costs for ground bookings, promoting a sense of community and cooperation.

The club's impact extends beyond sports, providing a platform for queer individuals to express themselves freely. As one member said, "This is the first space where I can be fully myself and still be competitive." With its grassroots approach and dedication to inclusivity, the Pune Queer Sports Club is a beacon of hope for the LGBTQ+ community, promoting acceptance and empowerment through sports.



Vibrant Voices, Unapologetic Pride: Pune Pride Parade 2025 Celebrates Diversity and Inclusivity

The Pune Pride Collective, comprising several organizations and individual contributors, organized the annual Pune Pride Parade 2025 on June 1, 2025. The vibrant procession, which marched through JM Road and FC Road, was a bold assertion of community rights, featuring volunteers carrying the Pride Flag, Dhol Pathak, and placards with messages of equality, acceptance, and resilience.

The parade showcased the community's creativity and sense of belonging, with participants dressed in extravagant outfits and striking makeup. The Dhol Pathak's infectious energy and the giant rainbow Pride Flag carried by community members added to the festive atmosphere. Participants sang and shouted Pride slogans, including "Prem Manhaje Prem Asta, Tumcha Amacha same asta" (Love is Love, it's ours or mine).





Organizers and participants emphasized the importance of sensitization and awareness about queer community rights, suggesting the inclusion of sex education and information on different sexual orientations in academic syllabi. Anil, a member of the Mist Foundation, noted that "Pride means living my life to the fullest, without being a victim of stereotypes and judgments." The event's success was attributed to the cooperation of the Pune Police, and organizers plan to make next year's event even grander.

The Pune Pride Parade 2025 reaffirmed the city's commitment to inclusivity and diversity, providing a platform for the LGBTQ+ community to express themselves freely and assert their rights. The event was a celebration of the community's resilience and a call to action for greater acceptance and understanding.



Courtesy - Oshwin Kadhao

Trans Employment Mela 2025: A Step Towards Inclusive Workplaces

The third Trans Employment Mela (TEM) was held in Delhi on June 18, 2025, aiming to secure dignified job placements for transgender and non-binary individuals. Sriram Sridhar and Susmit from Mist LGBTQ Foundation represented Mist at the event, which featured job interviews, workshops, and performances. The Mela saw participation from 17 companies and over 160 candidates, with some securing job offers. The event promoted workplace equity and inclusivity, highlighting the need for holistic support systems for transgender individuals.



Love Triumphs: Sriram Sridhar and Shyam Konnur, Co-Founders of Mist LGBTQ Foundation, Tie the Knot



In a heartwarming celebration of love and commitment, Sriram Sridhar and Shyam Konnur, co-founders of Mist LGBTQ Foundation, exchanged vows on June 13, 2025. The couple had a beautiful wedding ceremony in Pune, blending Hindu and Christian traditions. Their special day was marked with vibrant festivities, including a Haldi ceremony, Mehendi, Sangeet, and a warm reception.

The couple's journey to marriage was not without its challenges. During the pandemic, they faced a health scare that highlighted the importance of legal recognition of their relationship.

Despite waiting for the Supreme Court of India to rule on marriage equality, they decided to get legally married in Germany, ensuring their bond was recognized by law. Later they Married again in Pune with family and friends.

Their wedding was a testament to their love and courage, surrounded by friends and family who witnessed their bond. Shyam emphasized that marriage is a celebration of love, which should be enjoyed by everyone freely, regardless of sexuality. The couple hopes to inspire young queer couples and show that true love knows no boundaries.

As directors of Mist LGBTQ Foundation, Sriram and Shyam have been instrumental in promoting LGBTQ+ rights and awareness. Their marriage is a beacon of hope for the community, and they look forward to living a life filled with love, domesticity, and everyday moments.



Courtesy – Oshwin Kadhao

QueerBazaar Illuminates Pride Month with Vibrant Presence



QueerBazaar, an online custom queer merch store initiated by Mist LGBTQ Foundation, made a splash at various flea markets during Pride month in June 2025. Anil Malla, Senior Associate for Web Sales and Social Media, represented QueerBazaar at these events, promoting the platform's unique offerings. QueerBazaar showcased its products at The Lalit Mumbai, CSGMR Karnataka's Preetiya Habba, Kitty Su Mumbai's Queernival Flea market, and Bangalore Creative Circus.

At these events, Anil highlighted QueerBazaar's commitment to supporting the queer community by providing a platform for other queer businesses without charging any platform fees. This initiative aims to empower queer entrepreneurs and promote inclusivity. With its vibrant products and dedication to community support, QueerBazaar is becoming a beacon for queer expression and entrepreneurship. By participating in these events, QueerBazaar is spreading love, acceptance, and pride, one stall at a time.



Mist LGBTQ Foundation Spreads Love and Acceptance through Innovative Events

Mist LGBTQ Foundation during Pride Month organized and curated a series of impactful events in collaboration with prominent companies like Dell, Goldman Sachs, Wolters Kluwer, and Cummins. These events, held across various locations, aimed to promote awareness, acceptance, and inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community.

Through innovative activities like canvas painting, Pride carnivals, and flea markets, Mist LGBTQ Foundation sensitized people about the community's struggles and triumphs. Games, human libraries, and queer-owned business stalls added a fun and engaging element to the events. With thousands of attendees across these events, Mist LGBTQ Foundation successfully spread its message of "Love is Love" and supported queer entrepreneurs. By fostering a sense of community and acceptance, Mist LGBTQ Foundation continues to make a positive impact in the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals.



Support Mist LGBTQ Foundation: Donate Now to Sustain Critical Operations Amidst Uncertain Times

*When Support Fades,
Solidarity Shines Brighter*

The rollback of DEI policies in the U.S. threatens global support for LGBTQ+ initiatives, including Indian organizations like ours. To sustain our work in healthcare, employment, and advocacy, we seek your support.



Account Name - Mist LGBTQ Foundation
Account No - 921010049487188
Bank - AXIS Bank
Branch - Majestic, Bangalore [KT],
Bangalore - 560001
IFS Code - UTIB0000009

DONATE

In India, where LGBTQ+ rights are still evolving, and legal protections are limited, the withdrawal of global support could set back many community-driven initiatives that rely on external funding.

As we face uncertain times, we rely on your support to sustain our operations. Mist LGBTQ Foundation has been at the forefront of promoting LGBTQ+ rights and inclusivity in India. Donate to us today and help us continue our critical work, including advocacy, community support, and education.

Your contribution will make a tangible difference in the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals in India.



PRIDE FLAGS

 ORDER NOW