

AFMC hosts Thaikkudam Bridge for their first-ever Pune performance



— Rishab Sengupta —

Iconic Kerala-based fusion band Thaikkudam Bridge performed at Armed Forces Medical College on the 7th of May, in their very first concert in Pune. The show was held on AFMC's Parade Ground, in the late hours of the evening, for a crowd of over 300 people.

Thaikkudam Bridge is one of India's most celebrated musical acts. Formed in 2013 by violinist and vocalist Govind Menon for a one-off performance on Kappa TV, the band has grown to be a massive success, having performed over 400 shows in 19 countries. Their breakout hit "Fish Rock", a Malayalam rock song written by Menon about his love of eating fish, made them an overnight sensation in 2014. The video for Fish Rock now has over 25 million views on YouTube. The band also produced a rendition of the devotional song "Aigiri Nandini" for Bejoy Nambiar's 2017 film "Solo".

What has set Thaikkudam Bridge apart from other Indian fusion music acts is their refusal to stick to any one genre. With their 17 member (that's right, seventeen) lineup, each member having a unique area of expertise, they have been able to experiment with a variety of dif-

ferent genres and sonic possibilities over the years. Nowadays, they are probably best known for their songs that combine heavy metal with elements of traditional Indian (particularly Kerala) folk music.

The AFMC performance, which was hosted as part of AFMC's annual "Silhouettes" festival, saw Thaikkudam Bridge regale the audience with their evergreen hits like "Chekele" and Fish Rock, as well as newer originals like "Navarasam" and "Thek-kini". It was indeed a sight to behold for the band, witnessing fans in Maharashtra singing along to the Malayalam lyrics. The band even performed covers of popular Bollywood songs such as "Teri Deewani".

The performers certainly knew how to put on a captivating show. While bassist Vian Fernandes got the crowd riled up with his rapping and thumping basslines, guitarist Mithun Raju's blazingly fast and virtuosic guitar solos left some of them gawking. The band even broke into a coordinated dance towards the end of their almost two-hour-long performance.

Tickets for the show were sold out within 24 hours of going on sale on BookMyShow. Vian Fernandes stated in an Instagram post later on that he had never seen such a huge turnout outside of Kerala.

The Old School Kitchen Company – A café on two wheels at Osho Park

In a world where being tech-savvy has taken precedence over almost anything, 'old-school' is a hard quality to find. The pleasure that comes with re-visiting our roots and detaching from the increasingly overbearing nature of technology is hard to match. Stemming from the same school of thought, is Swapnil Shelke's venture, The Old School Kitchen Company. Swapnil started his own cafe on wheels outside Osho Teerth Park, in KP, Pune.

Every morning from 6 am to 9 am, Swapnil stands near his motorbike and sells fresh, homemade sandwiches and drinks. From the bestselling veggie sandwich to smoothie bowls and fermented drinks, the niche menu is made with lots of love and passion. He says that the main aim is not fancy ingredients and flavours. What matters is serving food that is simple, wholesome, and nutritious.

Eating here is an experience that cannot be compared to any other. Swapnil serves with a wide, warm smile along with personally handwritten notes to his customers. He interacts with the joggers and passers-by near Osho Park. His preparations start in the afternoon when he makes food in his cloud kitchen at home. He brews the drinks in the even-

ing and reads books on organic farming and start-ups in his free time. "Currently, I am a one-man army. I don't like to call myself a chef. I believe I'm an artist. I enjoy making food, interacting with people, and living my life like this. Building a small community and giving back to them is something that I very strongly believe in."

Swapnil, who is only 25 years old, started his business just three months ago. He has a degree in hotel management and worked as a bartender for a few years before he decided to start something of his own. A few specialties of the 'Old-School Kitchen Company' are their non-alcoholic fermented beverages - Kombucha, Ginger Soda, Pineapple Tepache and Beetroot Kvass. For the sandwiches and breakfast bowls, he sources the ingredients from local weekly markets. Storytelling and directly interacting with people is the way the company markets itself and keeps its followers engaged on Instagram. Their mission to serve good food with old school values truly sets them apart from other small businesses.

The restaurant on wheels takes orders from Swiggy and Zomato, Swapnil also personally delivers orders to his regular customers.

'Tis the season to... have mango milkshake?

— Yukta Patwardhan —

In today's world of coffees and colas, juices remain a niche passion restricted only to the health-conscious. Or so one would think. At the Symbiosis Viman Nagar campus, however, Symbi Juice Centre remains a crowd favourite even after the pandemic, eclipsing even the canteen in terms of popularity. "You can get juices and milkshakes at half the price you get them elsewhere," explains Yukta Kulkarni, a third-year ad student, "What's there not to love?"

The popularity of the juice centre can be attributed to the wide variety of fresh juices and milkshakes it offers at affordable prices. "Symbi Juice Centre is my lifeline in this wretched heat. If I could, I'd have juice for all three meals," Manasi Kulkarni from SCMC's AV batch declares. However, there's something much more fascinating than heat relief the students' beloved juice centre has to offer every summer.



"Mangoes are very clearly the superior fruit," claims Sanika Deshmukh from the design school. "Now think of that, but in milkshake form. Of course everyone is going crazy." The students of SCMC seem to have been anticipating mango milkshakes since early April, some of them going as far as to ask the juice centre staff when they would be available and then proceeding to hold a countdown to the expected date. Third-year Yashvi Shah has a good explanation for the students' eagerness. "Mango season is what, barely a few months every summer. You grow up feeling excited about it. With mangoes being so expensive these days, getting a mango milkshake for a reasonable forty rupees is like a dream come true for us college students."

Excitement for mango season is not a rare sight, but there's something infectious about the mango fervour at SCMC, making it impossible to not give it a try, at the very least.

MC Betwa: VN's rising star

— Sophia Navagaonkar —

Walking through the streets of Viman Nagar, one would never imagine a rapper standing guard at a housing complex. Meet Rahul Namdev, a watchman by day, and a rapper by night with a following of 8,000 people on Instagram – grown in just 6 months.

With lyrics that are inspired by his own personal struggles, his raps reflect life as he has seen it. From talking about when he could not afford more than one meal a day, to how cruel people can be, Rahul, aka MC Betwa, does not shy away from heavy topics. His favourite rap, he says, is the one he wrote about his mother after her passing.

The 24 year old left his village in Uttar Pradesh to escape poverty and came to Pune eight years ago in search of employment. Since then he has been working as a watchman while also doing other odd jobs like sweeping and washing cars. He was introduced to rap about five years ago. His friends were closely following Emiway and Raftaar's diss tracks, and would keep telling him about it. Rahul, who had never heard rap before, was immediately hooked.

MC Stan, whom he knew from before he was famous, is the inspiration for deciding on his own "hatke" stage name as he calls it - MC Betwa. "Betwa" is the term of endearment his father uses for him. "After all, who would listen to Rahul?" he laughs. His passion for rap made him go through hours of carefully analysing YouTube videos, till he learnt how to

write and perform. Five years of practice has led him to where he is now – even celebrities with millions of followers have been interacting with his videos. Since then he has been learning to write and rap from YouTube videos of other artists. Rahul is a fan of Tupac and Eminem (even though he doesn't speak English) who he calls "bhai" in one of his own raps out of gratitude for all that they've unknowingly taught him.



Even though his rap has been well received, he hasn't recorded a single song though he desperately wants to. Doing so is expensive, and the lack of monetary support has made such an idea impossible. In the meantime, he will continue posting on Instagram. When receiving praise for his achievement, he says with a smile, "8,000 is nothing, we still have to go up to 4, 5, 10 million!"

Entrepreneurs advise students at E-cell event

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keep in mind. Ms Vandana Vijay highlighted this as she described her journey of traveling to Ladakh and so did Mr Anurag who said it was people who propagated their legacy of "Kolhapuri Chappals" that set him to run his brand. Mr Samyadeep De spoke how tenacity, persistence, and clarity were the fundamentals in this world while Ms Shrishti Das spoke about adapting to changing mediums in content creation and becoming an influencer.

All the panelists offered a unique win-

dow into the world of entrepreneurship. The biggest takeaway from the event was that communication in this world was the equivalent to water and absolutely necessary.

In the words of the Director of SCMC, Sreeram Gopalkrishnan, the event was "a milestone for SCMC", it being the first flagship event of the E-cell since its inception in 2019. It provided all the students who are budding entrepreneurs to connect and peek into entrepreneurship.