

Myriad people flock to Indian city to swallow live fish with ‘miracle cure’ to asthma

By Mahesh Kumar and Ashwini Bhatia
The Associated Press

HYDERABAD, India — A mother encourages her daughter to fully open her mouth to swallow a live fish holding “the medicine” she believes will help cure her child’s asthma, as scores clamor about, gulping down their own fish and hoping for the best.

Each summer, on a day deemed auspicious by astrological calculations, people suffering from asthma and other respiratory ailments flock to the southern Indian city of Hyderabad to swallow a small live fish with its mouth stuffed with a secret herbal treatment that only one family can craft.

Legend has it that in 1845 a wandering saint presented a secret formula of miracle herbs to Veeranna Goud, a man living in the old city of Hyderabad, and instructed him to give it to asthma patients for free. Since then, Goud’s descendants, known as the Bathini family, have preserved the tradition and kept the herbal formula under wraps, shared only among male



descendants.

“My great-great-grandfather, Veeranna Goud, passed this secret formula to his sons and they passed it on to their sons and now we are the fifth generation to keep the tradition,” said Kakarna Alkananda, who helps oversee the distribution, though she is not privy to the formula.

It is said that the fish travels down the throat and relieves any phlegm or congestion.

“My mother has been taking this treatment for seven years now, and it has brought her much relief. She’s breathing easier, and her attacks have become less frequent,” said Aash Mohammed, who

PISCINE PROMISES. Kakarna Alkananda, a member of the Goud family, sticks out her tongue as she asks a child on her lap to keep her mouth open to receive a live fish stuffed with an herbal paste, in Hyderabad, India. Every year, thousands of asthma patients arrive in Hyderabad to receive this fish therapy from the Bathini Goud family, which keeps a secret formula of herbs, handed down by generations only to family members. The herbs are inserted in the mouth of a live sardine, or murrel fish, and slipped into the patient’s throat. (AP Photo/Mahesh Kumar A.)

travelled for more than 20 hours by train from the Indian capital of New Delhi with his family.

The Bathini family has to call the treatment “prasadam” which roughly translates as “an offering” after a local organization that works to dispel superstitious beliefs won a lawsuit forbidding them from describing the treatment as “medicinal.”

Still, the practice enjoys support despite objections from scientific groups and others who say there is no proof behind it, and even call it unsanitary.

People buy their fish from the government fisheries department stall on site. Though the treatment is free, each fish costs 40 rupees or about 50 cents. After collecting the live fish in a plastic bag filled with water, each person gives it to an attendant working with the Bathini family, who squeezes a yellow herbal paste in the fish’s mouth and helps them swallow it.

Thousands have used the “prasadam” this year, according to organizers.

The local government sets up the makeshift structure for the event while overseeing security and sanitation measures.

India asks for the return of its citizens who were recruited by the Russian army

NEW DELHI (AP) — India says it urged Russia to return Indian citizens recruited by Russia’s army after two were killed in the war in Ukraine.

“I want to assure you that the Indian government has taken the matter very seriously,” foreign secretary Vinay Kwatra told reporters.

India’s foreign ministry said it was in touch with Russian authorities to arrange the repatriation of the two Indians’ remains. Two other Indians died earlier

this year while fighting in Ukraine.

India has avoided voting against Russia at the United Nations or criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022.

India considers Russia a time-tested ally from the Cold War era with cooperation in defense, oil, nuclear energy, and space exploration. India previously said its authorities were in talks with Russia about the return of its citizens who it said

were duped into working for the Russian army.

Its federal investigation agency said it had broken up a human trafficking network that lured people to Russia under the pretext of giving them jobs, with at least 35 Indians being sent via agents.

Sri Lanka and Russia held talks in May to resolve the issue of Sri Lankans fighting alongside Russians in the war against Ukraine, after at least 16 were reported

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- JULY 1**
Doreen’s Place
(for residents only)
9-11 a.m.
610 NW Broadway, Portland
- JULY 2**
Blanchet House
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
310 NW Glisan, Portland
- Jean’s Place
(for residents only)
1:30-3:30 p.m.
18 NE 11th Ave, Portland
- Union Gospel Mission
2-3 p.m.
3 NW 3rd Ave, Portland
- JULY 8**
Mobile Showers
10-11:30 a.m.
4244 SE 91st Ave, Portland
- JULY 9**
P:ear
(for youth only)
9-11 a.m.
338 NW 6th Ave, Portland
- JULY 10**
Rosewood Initiative
12-3 p.m.
14127 SE Stark, Portland

- JULY 11**
Mobile Showers
12-2 p.m.
247 SE 82nd Ave, Portland
- JULY 15**
Doreen’s Place
(for residents only)
9-11 a.m.
610 NW Broadway, Portland
- JULY 16**
Blanchet House
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
310 NW Glisan, Portland
- Union Gospel Mission
2-3 p.m.
3 NW 3rd Ave, Portland
- JULY 22**
Mobile Showers
10-11:30 a.m.
4244 SE 91st Ave, Portland
- JULY 23**
P:ear
(for youth only)
9-11 a.m.
338 NW 6th Ave, Portland

- JULY 25**
Mobile Showers
12-2 p.m.
247 SE 82nd Ave, Portland
- JULY 26**
IRCO
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
10301 NE Glisan, Portland
- JULY 30**
Blanchet House
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
310 NW Glisan, Portland
- Union Gospel Mission
2-3 p.m.
3 NW 3rd Ave, Portland
- AUGUST 5**
Doreen’s Place
(for residents only)
9-11 a.m.
610 NW Broadway, Portland
- Mobile Showers
10-11:30 a.m.
4244 SE 91st Ave, Portland



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