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Politics enters university space

Vaishnavi Savant
BENGALURU: Lokesh Ambekar, the BJP spokesperson, criticised the government's decision to rename Bengaluru City University after Dr Manmohan Singh, terming it "unethical" and an attack on the long-standing name of the university. There is no link between the BCU and Dr Manmohan Singh, and it's an unnecessary move of the ruling party, he said. "Naming educational institutions after political leaders is wrong, and such political ideologies must stay miles away from academic institutes and practices," he said. On August 19, the Karnataka Assembly passed a bill under the Karnataka State Universities Act 2025 to rename BCU as Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University, honouring the late 13th Prime Minister of India, who passed away earlier this year. Speaking to The Beacon, Dr Jalaja KRI, Dean of the Commerce Department, said the government decided this without consultation with the university. However, she added, "Being government employees of a public university, we also obey whatever decision is taken by the government. We have to follow the orders. We have no right to oppose," she said. Dr Jalaja recollected that Dr Manmohan Singh introduced transformative policies and reshaped India's economy. "Since the university carries his name, it becomes a reminder of responsibility to rise to that level of impactful policy-making-initiatives that can truly benefit society and the economy at large," she added.

50% discount on traffic fines draws crowd

Diana Saldehna
BENGALURU: The 50% discount scheme introduced by the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP), in effect from August 23 to September 12, has turned out to be a win-win for both the public and the police. In just three days since the launch, BTP collected ₹11.75 crore in fines, clearing more than 4.17 lakh pending cases across the city. For thousands of vehicle owners, the scheme has come as a much-needed breather. Old fines that once seemed like an unending burden can now be settled at half the cost, giving families both financial relief and peace of mind. For the police, it has meant the recovery of long-pending dues, strengthening enforcement and improving compliance. The response has been overwhelming, with motorists lining up in large numbers to take



A commuter clears the fine successfully

Special Arrangement

advantage of the scheme. Speaking to The Beacon, Kathyayani Alva, Police Inspector at Wilson Garden Traffic Police Station, said the change was visible immediately. "Once people hear about the scheme, they voluntarily approach us. We witnessed many such cases just last week," she told The Beacon. She added, "For many, fines had

piled up to a point where it felt like a huge burden. With the 50% discount, the amount became manageable. People are relieved to get a chance to clear everything at half the cost, and this has made them act quickly."

The numbers on the ground show how effective the drive has been. At Wilson Garden Junction, two two-wheeler

riders came on different days and cleared 50 and 80 challans each for violations like riding without a helmet and signal jumping. On Lalbagh Main Road, a single car parked in a no-parking zone was found to have 101 pending cases. After being informed of the scheme, the owner cleared them all at once. At the same time, experts

caution that while such one-time concessions help reduce backlogs, frequent discounts could dilute the seriousness of penalties. If violators begin to expect relief schemes every few years, they may delay payments instead of complying promptly. Police officials too describe this initiative as a corrective step, not a permanent policy.

With the September 12 deadline approaching, BTP expects lakhs more motorists to make use of the scheme. Beyond the impressive figures, the drive demonstrates how citizen-friendly measures can bridge the gap between enforcement and compliance — making Bengaluru's roads safer, easing the worries of citizens, and reinforcing trust between the police and the public.

Holy Spirit school qualifies for Kho Kho nationals

Meinar Nahak
BENGALURU: Holy Spirit School in Bengaluru, affiliated with the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), has qualified for the Kho Kho national championships, scheduled from August 28 to September 2, with its under-14 boys' and girls' teams and the under-17 boys' team being selected. The players of the school will represent Karnataka at the national championship. The boys' team will compete in Hyderabad from August 28, while the girls' team will head to Kolkata on September 13.



Athletes with the principal and the coach

Meinar Nahak

Speaking to The Beacon, Principal M Shanti, who initiated the revival of sports in 2022, said the transformation has been remarkable. "When I joined, students played only during the games period. I wanted them to showcase their talents, so we formed a team. Within months, they

won regional and national trophies," she recalled. "Since then, the school has successfully hosted tournaments, earning appreciation from referees and officials for smooth organisation. Students now undergo daily practice in the mornings and evenings,

supported by summer camps and dedicated coaching. The journey has also won the support of parents and staff. "Initially, I feared opposition because of the syllabus. But now parents are very supportive," Shanti said. With consistent victories, recognition from the School Games Federation of India (SGFI), and teamwork, Kho Kho has become a matter of pride for the school. "Sports are not just about trophies. They build health, discipline, and confidence. That is what I see in my students," Shanti added.

HFMD cases rise in J&K

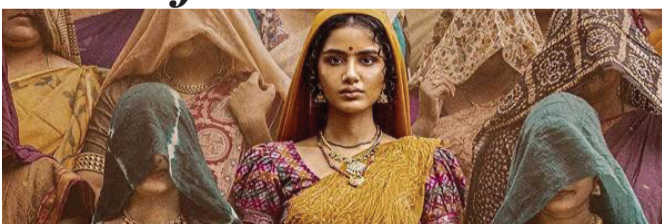
Samya Sharma

There has been a significant rise in Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) in Jammu with the onset of the monsoon. Health authorities estimate that HFMD accounts for 15–20 per cent of daily paediatric cases, raising concern over its rapid spread. Doctors warn that parents often confuse this with chickenpox and avoid seeking medical help. HFMD is a contagious viral illness caused by a group of enteroviruses predominantly affecting children under the age of 10. Symptoms include fever, painful mouth ulcers, and blisters on hands, feet and legs. Speaking to The Beacon, a paediatrician, Dr Pushpendra Sharma, said, "Awareness is as important as the treatment in controlling HFMD. Parents should be taught about the disease to help restrict its spread," adding that good hygiene, proper diet, and timely medication are key to managing the condition. Doctors emphasise isolation and improving immunity. They also urge the government and schools to issue guidelines to ensure the safety of children during this high-risk season.

Paradha powers feminist cinema

Jessica Maria

Paradha, directed by Praveen Kandregula, challenges the predominantly masculine narrative in the Telugu industry. Featuring Anupama Parameswaran, Darshana Rajendran, and Sangeetha Krish, it is a women-led social drama that explores the oppressive weight of tradition. The film is set in a fictional village where people believe that women need to be veiled, failing which the wrath of the village deity will fall on them. Parameswaran, who plays the character Subbulakshmi, accidentally breaks this



A poster of the film Paradha

Special Arrangement

norm and has to face the consequences. What follows is her journey of finding her individuality, alongside a fierce Rathamma played by Krish and an outspoken Amishta portrayed by Rajendran. Mridul Sujit's visuals and Gopi Sundar's music stand out, along with the performances—especially Darshan's in her

Telugu debut. However, the film does face pacing issues in the second half, though the first half remains engaging. Paradha questions patriarchy rather than just pointing fingers. Overall, it is a good watch for viewers who appreciate female-centric stories with social commentary that resonates emotionally.

Ownly offers fair price

Anamica Vinod

BENGALURU: Rapido's new food delivery platform, Ownly, is attracting attention in Bangalore for its transparent pricing and reasonable delivery fees, though customers and delivery partners say the app is in its early stages. Launched in a few areas this month, it aims to 'allow eateries to offer "offline prices" online', according to Financial Express. A student staying in BTM Layout commented on how she paid Rs 160 for a burger that cost Rs 200 on Swiggy.

Speaking to The Beacon, she said, "The price matched the restaurant's menu, and the extra was a Rs 25 delivery fee." However, she also expressed disapproval of the limited options on the app, stating that there were only a few restaurants to choose from. For riders, Ownly offers incentives and weekly bonuses. Javeed, a rider, said the platform's helpdesk is quicker because of Rapido's existing network. He added that partners would benefit from health insurance and fuel discounts.