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Deepfakes raise concerns

Ancy James

The advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has led to a significant increase in the number of deepfake content, raising concerns about online privacy for common people. With free AI tools becoming widely available, fabricated visuals that once needed expert editing can now be created by anyone, leaving many users vulnerable to harassment, identity theft, and manipulation. Conversations around deepfakes intensified after a manipulated video of Telugu actress Rashmika Mandanna spread online. The technology has advanced quickly and become so accessible that ordinary users like Jomol now face the same risks. Her experience reflects a larger problem: AI-generated images are becoming a mainstream tool for cyber harassment. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, India recorded more than 4000 cybercrimes against individuals in 2023, including 36 cases specifically tagged as deepfakes. Surveys show that three in four Indian internet users have encountered deepfake content in the past year. Students studying AI are seeing the shift firsthand. *Speaking to The Beacon*, Chaitanya Manoj of Jyoti Nivas College said, "Deepfakes have become so realistic that even people who study AI cannot always tell the difference". Another concern is law is not keeping up with AI advancement. Software engineer Varun Rathi commented that innovation moves in months, but our political systems move in decades.

Vintage rally brings Bengaluru together against drug abuse

Diana Saldehna S

BENGALURU: The Vintage Cars Rally 2025 event brought together thousands of people from across Bengaluru in support of a drug-free Karnataka on December 7. Students, citizens, and government officials participated enthusiastically, demonstrating the city's strong unity in the fight against drug abuse. Organised by Bengaluru City Police in collaboration with the Federation of Historic Vehicles of India (FHVI) and Paul John Hotels & Resorts, the rally began as a showcase of vintage cars but soon grew into a meaningful awareness campaign. Starting at the steps of Vidhana Soudha and ending at the Big Banyan Tree Ranch Resort, the 35-kilometre route was lined with people cheering, taking



HM Flagging off Vintage Car Rally 2025

Diana Saldehna S

photos, filming, and holding placards to support the cause. Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara, along with several senior Indian Police Service officers, flagged off the event. Throughout the rally, the message remained clear and consistent: drug abuse harms families, ends futures, and must be prevented through collective effort.

Speaking to The Beacon, Deputy Commissioner of Police Crime-02 Raja Imam Kasim P said that events like this help strengthen trust and cooperation between the police and the public. He encouraged citizens to report suspicious activities through official helplines and highlighted that community participation is essential to achieving

a drug-free society. FHVI President Dr Ravi Prakash, who has been associated with historic vehicles for 45 years, shared why vintage cars were chosen as the centrepiece. "People of all ages are drawn to these cars, and that naturally helps spread awareness," he said. The rally featured 60 classic cars and 30 heritage motorcycles,

supported by college students who performed skits and carried awareness boards at multiple locations. Rakshith Shetty, General Manager of Paul John Hotels & Resorts, told *The Beacon* that the rally was initially planned as a Christmas event but evolved into a social initiative after discussions with the police and FHVI. "We see many young people struggling because of drug abuse, and we felt it was important to step forward and support change," he said. The organisers announced that the rally will now take place every year, each time dedicated to a different social cause. With thousands sharing photos and videos online, the message extended far beyond the rally route, proving that real impact is created when communities work together.

Artisans of Impact 2.0 bring crafts at SJU

Meinar Efel Nahak

BENGALURU: On December 6, 2025, St Joseph's University, through "Artisans of Impact 2.0", opened its doors to startup artisans by organising a zero-cost marketplace that unites local artisans and urban customers with modern consumer values. Organised by the university's MA in Advertising and Public Relations (MA-APR) programme, the event transformed the campus courtyard into a lively marketplace, showcasing products from local startups and artisans, providing a platform to connect with new consumers. This second edition, built on last year's pilot, continued the

zero-cost model where artisans retained one hundred per cent of their earnings. Students managed every aspect of the event from logistics to publicity. Elizabeth Prakash, who leads the initiative, described the effort as a way to bridge rural artistry and urban markets by removing barriers like stall fees and market intermediaries. Event coordinator Shamit Shankara hopes the project grows in scale. "Last year generated about Rs 30,000 in a day, the goal now is long-term impact through visibility, engagement and a sustainable model for future batches," he said. This year's edition brought

together sustainable lifestyle brands and social enterprises. For Mujib Khan from Mitu Foundation, a non-governmental organisation producing reusable cloth sanitary pads, the event went beyond selling products. "It's also about creating awareness around sustainability, and students are mostly comfortable with our product and also showed support," she said. Artist and educator Poornima, whose stall featured botanical art and eco-friendly jewellery made from local flowers, echoed the sentiment that "Typical markets compete on price and mass production. She added, "Here, students appreciated handmade

works; they understood that each piece carries its own story." More than a marketplace, the event became a space for exchange and connection. Students learned about sustainable craft practices, gaining practical experience in event management, while artisans received direct feedback from urban consumers. With no middlemen, artisans retained full earnings and formed new col-laboration opportunities. Organisers also credited sponsors, including Ultacube, for contributing to the event's success, which made the experience valuable.

Bridge work trigger chaos

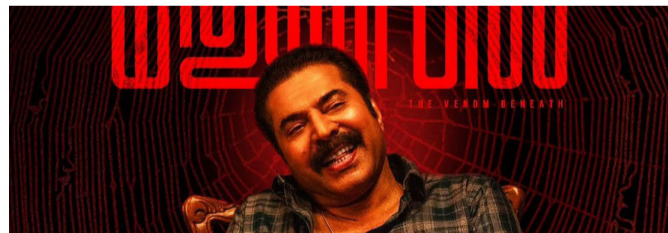
Jessica Maria

BENGALURU: With the Mullakal-Kidangamparambu Temple Festival just around the corner, concerns are increasing over traffic congestion in the area due to the demolition of a bridge near the district court in Alappuzha for reconstruction. This has created significant inconvenience for daily travellers, especially bus commuters, many of whom face unpredictable delays. *Speaking to The Beacon*, Anjali, a regular commuter, said the situation has affected her daily routine. "Earlier it used to take around 20 minutes to reach my workplace, now it takes more than 30," she said, noting that she often walks long distances to catch a bus or ends up paying more for auto rides nearly every day. Meanwhile, local businesses, both large and small shops in Mullakal, report a noticeable drop in customer footfall due to the inconvenience caused by the diverted traffic. Although construction is still underway, authorities have yet to introduce an effective alternative route, raising serious concerns that commuting difficulties may intensify further

Gripping thriller rooted in tension

Sanjana Shaji

Director Jithin K. Jose's *Kalamkaval* brings a nuanced tone to the crime-thriller genre. Set in rural villages in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the film examines how the personal motives of the antagonist get out of hand and evolve into a cat-and-mouse chase. The narrative is linear, and the plot is structured and divided into chapters. Mammootty delivers one of his finest performances while portraying the antagonist before the audience. Matching his intensity, Vinayakan plays



Special Arrangement

the protagonist, a police officer resolute in exposing the hidden force behind the spreading chaos. What stands out most in the film is its atmosphere. Cinematography by Faisal Ali shows Kerala and Tamil Nadu's rural areas in a dark, tight setting with rainy nights and shadows that feel alive. The background

score by Mujeeb Majeed intensifies the tension without overwhelming the visuals or dialogue. While some twists fail to impress, the film ultimately succeeds as a morally layered thriller. It favours realism over spectacle, encouraging viewers to question where the true threat lies.

SJU hosts Physics talk

Vaishnavi Savant

BENGALURU: Interacting with the students of St Joseph's University (SJU) on December 6, physicist Sidney R Nagel demonstrated how a droplet breaking apart follows the same rules of physics that shape stars and lightning patterns. Nagel, a professor at the University of Chicago and a Princeton graduate, visited the university to be part of the Einstein Lectures, a series of seminars celebrating the centenary of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, hosted by the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences

(ICTS) in association with SJU. Highlighting the importance of studying fluids, using real-world examples, he spoke about the "mystery of the breaking drop", explaining that physicists are still struggling to understand the behaviour of water. Nagel also conducted a live experiment to show that velocity plays a vital role in how liquids change shape under different conditions. He added that understanding liquids is crucial for improving technologies such as drug delivery and industrial use.