

# THE BEACON

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## Artisans find respect in Bengaluru

Tanvi Harbola

Indian Artisans find festivals such as A Hundred Hands' latest edition at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), HSR Layout, not as mere commercial platforms but as a place that offers long-overdue dignity and visibility to India's traditional craftspeople by connecting them directly with Bengaluru's increasingly discerning buyers. With the exposure at Festival of Handmade, an exhibition hosted by A Hundred Hands, Kashmiri silk carpet artisan, Suhail Hassan Malik said that he sold 200 pieces over 1.5 years in Bengaluru luxury sales, but for the "immeasurable respect" from globally exposed buyers who value direct artisan access over middleman exploitation. He explained, "What Bengaluru has given us is respect," "here, people understand the craft, the time and the history behind it, and that respect is more valuable than money." Bengaluru's consumers demonstrate a greater willingness to invest in handcrafted goods, says Malik, and added, "People here travel and understand the global value of art and craft. In return, they recognise the worth of Indian handmade products." In contrast, he also said, Delhi have offered limited engagement. "There, we sell. Here, we are appreciated. That difference changes everything," Malik reflects. Manjushree, a festival participant, notes that these kinds of shows generate incredibly human marketplaces that produce the kind of world we want to live in. Shree says, "Economically, there are drawbacks, but artisans have to reach elite spaces for direct-to-consumer engagement, not the other way around."

## Sakhi redefines ride-hailing by centring women drivers

Sruthi Lakshna

While most Transport Network Companies (TNCs) remain largely consumer-centric, Sakhi, a newly launched women-only auto service in Bangalore, adopts an employee-centric approach. Launched on February 14, it is designed exclusively for women passengers and is entirely run by women drivers and staff. The service currently operates through WhatsApp and a web-based platform, allowing users to pre-book rides and opt for subscription-based travel for a duration that suits their requirements.

The founder, Krishnavi Parekh, emphasised that, Sakhi provides constant support to its drivers, with the core team remaining accessible to them at all times in case of emergencies or difficulties during rides.

She said that Sakhi does not view success only in



A woman auto driver on duty in Bengaluru.

Source : AI generated in ChatGPT

terms of profit or scale, but rather, seeks to improve working conditions in a sector dominated by algorithm-led platforms and its model avoids surge pricing, reducing pressure on drivers during high-demand periods and allowing them to work without excessive stress as driver assignment is also handled carefully and manually, ensuring that drivers are not overbur-

dened or placed in unsafe or impractical situations.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Krishnavi said that in India, men have traditionally been seen as the primary breadwinners, and when they are unable to earn, women often step in to take on that responsibility. "There are many women drivers whose husbands passed away or were in accidents, because of which they had to step

in and start earning", she added. Several women drivers associated with Sakhi have chosen auto driving as a livelihood despite health challenges, reflecting the platform's inclusive approach towards employment.

With word spreading about the initiative, female drivers working for other ride-hailing platforms have begun expressing interest in joining Sakhi. Sakhi prioritises

the well-being of its women drivers by attempting to assign the same driver to subscription rides, creating familiarity, trust, and stability in their work routine, said Antony Shoba, a female driver currently working with another platform. She stated that she has faced several uncomfortable situations with male passengers who misbehaved. "Knowing my passengers are also women makes me feel more confident about accepting rides, especially during late hours".

Vaidehi, a woman driver with a physical disability, stated that the ride-hailing platforms she had previously worked for were not inclusive and often assumed she was incapable of driving. She further added that repeated rejection made her believe she was unfit to drive. She said, "Sakhi feels like a breath of fresh air because it does not compromise on inclusivity."

## India's cricket stance crosses political lines

Timeus Christian Sunder

Following the conclusion of the recent India vs Pakistan World Cup match, India's continued policy of non-engagement with the Pakistan team has sparked debate around the intersection of sportsmanship and nationalism. For activists and political observers, the behaviour of Indian players and staff toward the Pakistan team is seen to reflect a hyper-nationalist propaganda propagated under the guise of rivalry.

Under the leadership of Suryakumar Yadav and the coaching of Gautam Gambhir, this policy reportedly began during the 2025 Asia

Cup following Operation Sindoor and the Pahalgam terror attack. That was the first instance of lack of sportsmanship between these two teams in the history of their rivalry and has continued into the World Cup.

Cricket, and sport as a whole, is meant to be a unifying factor. "Sportsmanship is when you see teams shake hands and share a hug at the end and beginning of matches," says Shreyas, a student activist and member of the All India Students Association of Karnataka. "When this goes away, the entire sport starts to fall apart and becomes a pawn for the state."

Speaking to *The Beacon*,

Clifton D'Rozario, Karnataka State Secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation said, "Wars get fought on battlefields, not on cricket fields." Agreeing with his point, Vishnu Prahalath, a member of the Indian Society for Cultural Co-operation and Friendship (ISCUF), also added how the media frames cricket victories as military achievements. D'Rozario noted that attributing this shift solely to Gambhir ignores the larger structural issue, as modern cricket has become a tool for the state to manufacture aggressive nationalism.

According to D'Rozario,

this performative hyper-nationalism is just a symptom. D'Rozario and Prahalath agreed that this is not merely an anti-Pakistan sentiment, but a domestic anti-Muslim one. By portraying the players themselves as antagonists unworthy of a handshake, the cricket field becomes a stage to turn the majority against the minority, which D'Rozario warns is the defining feature of fascism.

While the line between sports and politics has always been blurred, this fundamental shift in Indian cricket suggests to political observers that there may no longer be a line.

## RTC determines farmers livelihoods

Aaryan Raj Pradhan

For farmers across Karnataka the Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops (RTC), which is also known as Pahanis, serves as the backbone of agricultural administration in the state. RTC is maintained under the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964. Now digitized through the Bhoomi portal, an official record for government departments to determine access to crop loans, insurance, subsidies and compensation during natural disasters. Every season, officials update the crop column, recording the varieties of crops grown on land. This entry determines eligibility for government aid. The RTC is designed to directly link benefits to genuine landowners and improve agricultural planning. Speaking to *The Beacon*, B.Padmavathi, a farmer from Chamarajanagar district said, "The scheme is a boon to the farmers and the government can monitor the planning of agriculture and shell benefits directly to the land owners." She warned that errors in recording could lead to legal complications and prevent the actual landowners from receiving government benefits, which could undermine the very purpose of the system.

## Wuthering Heights : Another failed adaptation

Zia Dewan

Emerald Fennell's "Wuthering Heights" adaptation, starring Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi, does a significant disservice to Emily Brontë's 1847 gothic masterpiece. The highly anticipated film tells the story of Catherine Earnshaw (Robbie) and Heathcliff (Elordi), an orphan who is brought home by Cathy's father. Fennell has omitted numerous major characters from the source material and significant deviations in the storylines of others. She also throws race out the window, casting people on



Still from the film Source: IMDb

the basis of aesthetics. The film is carried by its fancy production design that are visually pleasing but shallow storytelling. It almost feels like a modernised, dark, smutty Romeo and Juliet. The opening scene sets the tone with a

public hanging that is framed with charged, almost erotic, crowd energy. The erratic use of close ups on hands, mouths and breathing consistently transform ordinary actions into intense moments. Several scenes hinge on voyeurism, while also aestheticizing physical suffering. While the novel leans towards destructive passion, revenge, and classism, the film does a poor job of incorporating these ideas and works better as a stand-alone dark romance.

## Middle Eastern melodies meet India

Nancy Lalengmawii

A musical performance showcasing the journey of Middle Eastern sounds across continents took place at the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) on Monday evening. "From the Middle East" brought together artists to explore how ancient scales influence global music traditions and Indian classical music. The event featured a performance with the beautiful sound of the oud, Indian classical singing and modern guitar. Italian musician Luca Chiavinato led the event, joined by local artists Jagadeesh M R, Madhuri Jagadeesh, and singer Jataveda Banerjee. They

highlighted how Arabic music has shaped flamenco, jazz, and Indian ragas, proving that music changes when shared between cultures. The group, with members of Bengaluru's MoonArra, explored and played these connections live. For many in the audience, the event was both educational and emotionally immersive. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Robert, a Bengaluru-based musician, said that the evening reshaped his understanding of global music traditions, adding that the show revealed "a shared musical history we rarely acknowledge."

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