

THE BEACON

PRACTICE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE PG STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 / St Joseph's University / Vol:18 Issue: 79 / www.sjcdptcomm.wordpress.com

February temperatures break norms

V Priyanka

Experts predict potential wheat yield loss in early March as temperatures rise well above seasonal averages under clear skies and dry conditions.

In Delhi, the mercury reached 30–31°C; in Mumbai, 27–31°C; and in Ahmedabad, 34°C. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) also reported a 2–3°C increase across parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka, with only a slight dip forecast. Warmer-than-usual nights were observed in many regions, adding to concerns.

Climate activist Ajay Shukla said the spike is part of a broader climate pattern rather than a one-off event. He added, "Climate change is trapping more heat in the atmosphere. Because of this, even winter months are not as cold as they used to be." He noted that weak winds and limited rainfall have further shortened and softened the winter season.

The impact is already visible in agriculture. "Wheat needs cold weather to grow properly. When February becomes too warm, the crop matures faster, and grains may not develop fully," Shukla explained, warning of potential yield losses.

He added that smaller cities remain especially vulnerable due to limited cooling infrastructure, stressing that simple steps such as cooling centres, tree plantings, and improved water access can reduce risks, particularly with a possible El Niño in 2026.

Neerathon highlights Bengaluru's lake crisis

Ann Rose George

Bengaluru, once home to nearly 1,000 lakes, now has only about 412 remaining, said Dr Anand Malligavad at Neerathon 2026. The event brought together students, environmentalists, and residents under one shared mission to protect and preserve water for future generations.

Organised by the Wildlife Awareness and Conservation Club (WACC) in collaboration with St. Joseph's University and powered by Alpine Housing, the ninth edition of Neerathon was held on February 22 in Bengaluru. The marathon aimed to raise awareness about water conservation, promote sustainable practices, and strengthen a sense of collective responsibility towards the city's lakes and water resources.

The event was inaugurated by Dr Malligavad, popularly known as the "Lake Man of India"; Vice-



Neerathon 2026 flag-off

Chancellor, Dr Victor Lobo; and renowned open-water swimmer Sucheta Deb Burman. Dr Malligavad shared his journey from mechanical engineer to dedicated lake conservationist, having successfully rejuvenated 35 lakes in Bengaluru alone through sustained effort and community participation.

Emphasising the importance of water bodies, he remarked that building a

temple, mosque, or church serves humanity, but building a lake serves every species from fish in the water to birds and animals above it, thereby supporting the entire ecosystem. "We consume water 365 days a year; the least we can do is run for one hour as a gesture of gratitude," he said, urging participants to see the marathon as more than just a physical activity.

Recounting the city's

ecological history, he noted that while Bengaluru once had nearly 1,000 interconnected lakes, only around 412 remain today, many of them polluted and neglected. Expanding on his conservation efforts, he shared that his work now spans 12 states, where he has constructed 132 lakes and planted over five lakh trees. Encouraging collective action, he added, "If I can do this, imagine what we can achieve together."

Ann Rose George

Resumed safaris revive Bandipur livelihoods

Karan Siddharth G

Safari drivers, guides, and resort owners across Karnataka's Bandipur and Nagarhole tiger reserves are relieved by the state government's decision to resume operations, describing it as a financial lifeline after a three-month suspension that pushed thousands of families into debt and uncertainty.

This re-opening, authorised by Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Thursday, ended the 3-month ban imposed in November following fatal tiger attacks. Stakeholders estimated that the local eco-



Tiger in Bandipur Tiger Reserve

Disha Banthia

tourism sector suffered losses of approximately rupees three crore daily during the closure, hence the reopening marked the beginning of a desperate recovery effort. "Every day I used to come to the stand and see my jeep locked up... No trips meant zero income. We were forced to borrow just to buy

groceries," said Manjunath, a safari driver at Bandipur.

The resorts faced severe economic fallout due to the ban. "Jungle lodge, a resort in Bandipur, reported occupancy rates dropping by 50–80% as tourists diverted to wildlife sanctuaries in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The resort's manager, Prashanth

Shankhinamath, stated, "We slashed tariffs and offered packages, but the bookings just vanished... Eventually, we had to lay off casual staff because we simply couldn't pay them".

Although the reopening brings relief, it comes with strict conditions. The Forest Department has mandated the installation of dashboard cameras in all safari vehicles. Additionally, the number of tour vehicles has been capped, and safari hours have been reduced. Deployment of additional patrolling vehicles in village areas near forests has been mandated to

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Fr. Denzil Lobo SJ, winner of the 2 km category, said initiatives like Neerathon play an important role in educating young people about conserving water and protecting lakes. He concluded by reminding participants to "use water and not abuse it." With support from various partners, Neerathon 2026 ended not merely as a race but as a strengthened commitment to safeguard water for generations to come.

Student coordinator Poornima Sogarwal mentioned that the funds and profits generated from Neerathon 2026 will be directed to a non-governmental organisation to support further water conservation initiatives. She explained that the objective of the event extends beyond awareness, as the financial contributions will directly aid projects focused on protecting and rejuvenating water bodies.

Sports City sparks grassroots debate

Jencilin Elisabeth J

Tamil Nadu grassroots-level football coaches remain concerned about the unresolved problems, despite Chief Minister M. K. Stalin laying the foundation stone for the Rs 261-crore Global Sports City in Semmencherry, which was presented as a major boost to sports infrastructure.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Vignesh Kamaraj, an Under-13 football coach at FC Madras, stated that large government complexes often prioritise elite tournaments over daily access to training. "Grassroots football needs regular training pitches and coaching spaces and not just match venues," he said.

He points out that many grassroots-level players in areas like Vyasarpadi and North Chennai still train on grassless corporation grounds, with limited evening sessions and inadequate lighting. He emphasised the need for quality coaching and stable competitive structures, which eventually matter more than just constructing new stadiums.

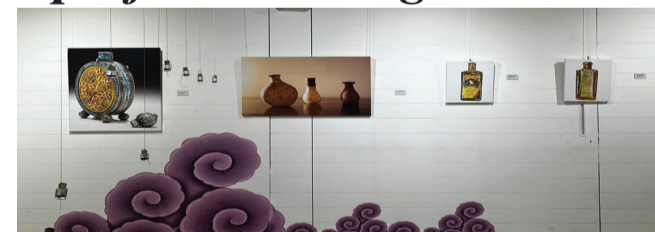
Kamaraj says the initiative will not truly benefit grassroots sport if the Global Sports City focuses only on state camps and major events, rather than on making football affordable for young players.

Reviving India's perfume heritage at BIC

Riya Vivek

The transportive power of smell becomes evident upon entering the room at the second edition of The Marg Foundation's exhibition 'Pravaha', as it traces the history of perfume in India through texts, paintings, records, and objects. The exhibit, taking place from February 22 to March 1 at the Bangalore International Centre, explores how we experience the world through our senses.

The theme, 'The Body as Space', unearths the journey of how scent entered cuisine, medicine, and worship, while exploring the process of perfume-making. It explores



Paintings of vintage perfume bottles

Riya Vivek

perfume's intersection with ritual and commerce, tracing the trade routes that carried oils and essences across continents.

The exhibition runs for eight days and features an installation titled 'Histories of Indian Perfume - On a Scented Trail'. The first day featured participatory and immersive workshops by Shubhra Chatterji and Nitish Jain, a

lecture-demonstration by Indu Antony, and a musical performance by Urupaanar.

In collaboration with MARG Magazine, the exhibition is free and open to all and will also feature a conversation with Industrialists James McHugh, Giti Datt, and Ahalya Matthan on Saturday, February 28.

Industry adaptations sustain exports

Rochelle Mary Marshall

BENGALURU: Experts state industry adaptation is the reason India's jewellery exports have stayed largely stable despite a sharp drop in shipments to the United States, as exporters shifted sourcing strategies and expanded into new markets to counter higher tariffs.

Recent data from the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) show India's gem and jewellery exports changing little between April 2025 and January 2026, as increases in key markets offset a decline in shipments to the US. Exports slipped 0.6% year on year in dollar terms, while rising 3.7% in rupee terms. Shipments to the US fell

45% after higher duties were imposed. However, stronger demand from the UAE, Hong Kong, Australia, and France helped balance the decline.

Industry players say adaptability has been key. "Traders have adjusted sourcing and product mix to manage costs, focusing on faster-moving and tariff-efficient goods," said Naman Jain, Sales Manager at the Antwerp World Diamond Centre. He noted that while some steps were short-term responses to tariffs, others are evolving into longer-term changes, reflecting the industry's adjustment to a shifting global trade environment.