

# THE BEACON

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

Friday, February 27, 2026 / St Joseph's University / Vol:18 Issue: 80 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

## Karate coach aims for national glory

**Nanasu Raghuram**

Mahalakshmi Varun has become the second karate coach from Bengaluru to pass the World Karate Federation (WKF) accredited coach certification exam, with the aim of training state and national level medallists and increasing student participation in WKF-recognised tournaments. The exam was conducted during the 2026 Karate 1 Youth League at Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, from February 12 through 15. Candidates were required to attend a seminar covering WKF rules, modern training methods, penalties in Kata and Kumite, athlete safety, and ethical coaching. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Varun said, "I had a very good experience. I got to meet and speak to coaches from different countries about their techniques and teaching styles," adding that she may pursue further certification as a referee on the WKF platform. "I want my students to not only become champions in karate but also strong, disciplined individuals in life," Varun emphasised. She has already begun applying new drills, footwork patterns, and competition strategies in her classes. "I now combine traditional Shotokan fundamentals with modern WKF-based Kumite strategies. The difference is in better planning, technical precision, and match awareness; it is more structured and competition-oriented," she said. On her students' progress, she noted visible improvement in their speed, reaction time, and confidence. "Monetarily, I don't gain much. Just that satisfaction of having accomplished something after years of learning karate, that enthusiasm is going to be my driving force," she remarked.

## Indian women's tennis lags globally

**Sruthi Lakshna**

Breakthroughs in Indian women's tennis remain rare at the international level, due to the absence of sustained support systems that allow players to survive the long road to the international stage. Indian tennis player Vaishnavi Adkar finished runner-up at the International Tennis Federation tournament in Bengaluru on February 22, becoming the first Indian woman since Sania Mirza in 2009 to reach the finals in the highest tier, the W100-level. The rare milestone has once again drawn attention to the structural challenges in Indian

## The ePlane Company envisions affordable airtaxis

**Kishan SG**

India's pioneers in electric Vertical Take-off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft, The ePlane Company, unveiled India's largest integrated prototyping and testing facility to build e200x, the nation's first compact electric air taxi. Professor V. Kamakoti, Padma Shri recipient and Director of IIT Madras, inaugurated the facility on February 26. The facility, located at IIT Madras Discovery Campus in Thaipur, near Chennai, has been instrumental in a deep-tech venture scaling by providing high-tech infrastructure to startups. The facility boasts 60,000 sq. ft. of testing ground, becoming the nation's first integrated plant focused on the serial production of electric aircraft, which would shape the regulatory blueprint for electric aviation in India. Prof. Satya Chakravarthy, founder and technical lead at The ePlane Company, ex-



Rendered e200x air ambulance

Source : ePlane company

pressed gratitude to IIT Madras for supporting them in fulfilling their vision of making flying as common and affordable as taking a taxi. "This facility is the engine of our commercial future," Chakravarthy said, signalling a pivotal shift in India's Urban Air Mobility sector from initial design concepts and subscale prototypes to flight-ready hardware and certification-grade full-scale prototyping. This space can

facilitate a leap forward for India's deep-tech hardware ecosystem. "This isn't just about moving people; it's about adding another layer of transport to the future of human mobility," Chakravarthy added. As ePlane Company works towards getting actual certification and a flight-testing framework, working closely with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), they aim to create uniquely engineered

air taxis for congested cities, while their competitors require larger spaces. The e200X requires only an 8m x 10m landing pad, aiming to make their first commercial application to cut critical medical transport times across India "up to 7x". The patented 8m x 10m landing pad and synthetic lift technology are set to achieve up to 35% higher energy efficiency for dense urban environments. The IIT Madras incubation

cell plays a major role in the growth of startups by providing a comprehensive support system, including infrastructure, talented, specialised engineers, and academic rigour, to ensure safety and physics long before the aircraft leaves the ground. The prototype revealed on February 19 was designed to create a "digital twin" and simulate it under complex, rigorous conditions to exponentially improve the safety and efficiency of the air taxi. The ePlane company is driving India's vision towards 'Viksit Bharat 2047' by becoming India's first air taxi company to receive Design Organisation Approval (DOA) and Type Certification (TC) application acceptance from the DGCA. Their collaborators, NVIDIA, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Dassault and CADFEM will power its advanced simulation, cloud infrastructure, avionics, and edge computing capabilities.

## Vasuki Vaibhav inaugurates Visages 2026 at SJU

**Tanvi and Kishan**

Kannada singer-composer Vasuki Vaibhav urged the city's youth to weave music, art, and culture into their daily lives, speaking as chief guest at Visages 2026, the flagship annual cultural fest of St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru.

The two-day event, held on February 24-25, themed "The Spirit of Namma Bengaluru," featured over 40 competitions across dance, music, theatre, fashion, media, and management. The fest welcomed teams from more than 50 colleges nationwide and Jain University, Jayanagar, emerged as the overall winners of the



Vasuki Vaibhav felicitated at Visages

Source: Special Arrangement

intercollege competition. At the inauguration, Vaibhav narrated a French folk story about construction workers, contrasting those who stay within their comfort zones with those who dare to pursue the "big dream," encouraging students to contribute to grand visions. Drawing from per-

sonal experience, he said, "As a student, I participated in singing and poetry competitions at St. Joseph's, which helped me gain confidence and shape my career." He marked the occasion with a performance of his 2019 hit 'Innuu bekagide.' The gathering was addressed by Vice-Chancellor

Dr Victor Lobo, and guest of honour Radhakrishna Holla, Director of the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry, alongside other senior university officials. Music dominated the event, with performances by Anurag Halder, rapper Killa K, folk band Swaraha, and South Indian rap artist Arivu, drawing massive crowds. Spontaneous jam sessions in the corridors captured the event's spirit. Student body governor Dr. Achuth A reflected, "Visages is, above all, a festival of culture, one that celebrates the sheer diversity of cultural arts in our country."

## Piled leaves on roads spike allergies

**Nanasu Raghuram**

As autumn leaves accumulate in heaps on city roads, doctors say prolonged exposure to the fallen leaves, combined with lifestyle changes, are contributing to a rise in allergy cases among people. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Dr M R Baliga from Bangalore, said, upper respiratory issues such as wheezing, allergic Rhinitis and skin allergies are common during this season, triggered by pollen and dust mites from fallen leaves. "Changes in surroundings, eating habits, living conditions and congestion in the city have made allergies more prevalent than before...these allergies cannot be prevented by just using masks, only early recognition and treatment can help" he added. The health concerns are tied to civic issues surrounding the disposal of fallen leaves, which often remain piled up on roads for days, increasing dust and pollen exposure. BBMP ward supervisor Lakshmana said, "dry leaves are heaped on roads because the Pushpak cart cannot accommodate them along with daily household waste".

## KTCDA amendment sparks alarm

**Nancy Lalengmawii**

Environmentalists raise concerns following a newly notified amendment to the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority (KTCDA) Act. The legislature passed the KTCDA Act on February 18. This act significantly reduces the green spaces around the lake, raising concern among environmentalists who warn of urban flooding, ground water contamination, and loss of livelihoods for fishing communities.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, environmental activist Sandeep Anirudhan said, "These lakes are the city's life-support system, not empty land parcels." Anirudhan warned that the amendment erodes the final legal shield for Bengaluru's

fragile ecosystem. "Small lakes may now have almost zero buffer. Once construction reaches the edge, encroachment follows," he stated, cautioning that without these zones, builder activity could erase half of the city's remaining lakes within a decade. Bengaluru, formerly supported by nearly 2,000 interconnected tanks that collected 20-25 TMC (Thousand Million Cubic feet) of rainwater, now depends heavily on the distant Kaveri River. Anirudhan notes that satellite data from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) indicates the green cover has dramatically decreased from 70% in 1970 to a mere 2% today.