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Dasara exhibition adds new attraction

Nanasu Raghuram

The Rajiv Gandhi Dragon Pond was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on January 5, 2026, at the Mysore Dasara exhibition, one of India's oldest annual exhibitions. The new attraction, introduced by the Karnataka Exhibition Authority (KEA), aims to draw visitors beyond the traditional Dasara period, featuring laser, fire, and smoke shows, marking a shift towards year-round engagement. "Our next motto is for the exhibition to happen year-round," said Ajay Shastry, anchor of Mysore Dasara Exhibition and a member of the exhibition's official communications team. The commercial stalls and the newly renovated Azeez Saith musical fountain emerged as key highlights of this season. "All 154 commercial stalls were designed in the Hoysala architectural style, reflecting a heritage theme," Shastry said. The authorities are also focusing on providing a platform for emerging artists. "Many A-1 artists get stages like Mysore Yuva Dasara, Yuva Sambhrama, or perform at the Mysore Palace. But for economically weak, budding artists... we give them the stage," he stated. Initially scheduled to conclude on Dec 20, 2025, the KEA extended and concluded the exhibition on Jan 5, 2026, recording a footfall of over 15 lakh visitors, averaging around 3,000 attendees daily. While sources indicate a further extension until January 14, no official confirmation has been made so far.

Kerala's Vibe 4 Wellness draws massive response

Farhana Abdul Rahim

The Arogyam Anandam-Vibe 4 wellness campaign recorded more than one lakh (1,03467) registrations for its first session. While Ernakulam and Kozhikode had the highest number of participants with more than 10,000 registrants, Kasargod and Malappuram had the lowest number with 4940 and 3013, respectively.

Conducted on January 1 and to be continued every Thursday for the entire year, the session is the Kerala government's latest initiative to improve. Vibe 4 wellness is the second phase of the 'Arogyam Anandam' campaign, a year-long health campaign launched in February 2025, with the first phase focusing on cancer awareness. The government has organised programs such as Zumba classes, yoga sessions, cooking classes focusing on healthy local delicacies, meditation

sessions, and walking clubs.

Speaking to The Beacon, Dr Bibin Gopal, the deputy director of health services, and the state nodal officer for non-communicable disease control program, Government of Kerala, said that while the state is leading in terms of health parameters, when it comes to non-communicable disease, Kerala is at the edge of the epidemiological transition zone. "If you look at the diabetes data, we have a prevalence of nearly 24% among the adults, and also 14% of pre-diabetics. That means if you total that, it becomes nearly 38% of the total population. So it's going to be one in two among the total population," he added.

He further explained that it is the same with hypertension, as nearly 38% of the total population has been affected and there has been a steep increase in the cases of renal diseases, heart attacks and

cardiovascular diseases and stroke. "If you look at the mortality also, nearly 52% of the people aged between 30 years and 70 years; they die primarily due to one of the complications of the non-communicable diseases," he pointed out.

The reason behind the initiative of Start Vibe 4 Wellness was that while Kerala has a well-established system for non-communicable disease (NCD) control, including NCD clinics, early detection, and free medicines, the control rates were not improving. Upon determining the reason, it was found that dietary and lifestyle habits have undergone drastic changes among the youth. "This is affecting the younger generation to a large extent... being a consumer state, Kerala, the younger generation they actually driven into junk foods," Dr Gopal opined, also raising concerns about the

rise in alcohol consumption in males and females.

Adding to these is the lack of exercise and increasing mental stress among youth. Dr Gopal said that only if we curb these four factors can Kerala achieve a good control rate for non-communicable diseases.

The sessions will be coordinated by the 'Janakeeya Arogya Kendrams' (JAK), the sub-units of primary care centres. JAK caters to a population of 5,000 people at every panchayat level and has collected information on every individual through a carefully planned survey called 'Shaili survey'. This two-round health survey, conducted with the help of ASHA workers, has helped the JAK identify individuals prone to diabetes, hypertension, and other diseases. A minimum of 20 people are selected from the list and encouraged to join the programs under the JAK club. The attendance is

registered, and the program will continue for a year with close monitoring. It will be reviewed every two months to further determine the participation rate and any required modifications.

The campaign is a joint collaboration including the AYUSH, education, sports, Local self-government, youth welfare, Women and Child Development, along with the Health Department. Dr Gopal added that around 10,000 yoga clubs under AYUSH will actively participate and conduct classes every week across the state. He emphasised that the success of this program depends on the people. "So we can only promote them, we can only provoke them to promote. However, the actual work must be done by the public. Then only the actual change is going to happen. So the change actually has to happen with the minds of people," he said.

Chitra Santhe balances commerce and culture

Timeus Christian Sunder

Generating an estimated Rs 4 crore in revenue for more than 1,500 artists with a footfall of over 5 lakh, Chitra Santhe remains a staple of Bengaluru's cultural calendar, growing each year.

Speaking to The Beacon, General Secretary Shashidar Rao said that, despite the commercial success, the sole purpose of Chitra Santhe is to promote art and artists, especially those who are unrecognised. "People who come from smaller towns and who are not so well-reputed, who are hobby



Artist at work

Timeus Sunder

artists, they never get a platform," Rao said, looking to the future, aiming to expand the festival's reach.

Joyanto Debnath, an artist from West Bengal, echoed this sentiment: "This is my first time, and I am enjoying the festival even though not many people are buying my work; it is

enough for me that I am able to display my work to so many people." He was glad to have the exposure even without the sales.

Unlike most commercial galleries, Chitra Santhe takes no commission and provides food, travel and accommodation for out-of-station artists. Sustained by

1.5 crore in government funding, Rao noted that they are also seeking private sponsorship to scale up.

Artists like Debnath are the reason why Rao and his committee hope to expand the festival to a two-day format, but logistics remain a hurdle. Kumara Krupa is an arterial road housing the Chief Minister's residence, Rao explained, citing the difficulty of closing the stretch for 48 hours. Despite these constraints, the committee remains committed to expansion, actively reviewing other venues to continue the festival's growth.

Bengaluru hosts IFF 2026

Tanvi Harbola

The India Fashion Forum (IFF), the country's largest business intelligence platform for the fashion retail sector, has officially opened delegate registrations for its 2026 edition. The two-day event will be held on January 28 and 29 at the Sheraton Grand Whitefield in Bengaluru. Speaking to The Beacon, Nikhil Behl, CEO of Images Group Fashion, said, "Bengaluru is becoming the next big fashion hub." He attributed the venue choice to the city's growing role in the fashion retail ecosystem, noting that large companies such as Reliance, Aditya Birla Group and Arvind Brands have a strong presence in the city, along with global brands like Levi's and Puma. Organisers expect over 700 brands to participate in this year's forum, which aims to address critical industry shifts ranging from artificial intelligence to sustainable manufacturing. IFF has successfully centralised fashion business power in India. This event provides corporate growth direction as CEOs and retail heads determine pricing strategies, mall expansions, and technology investments for the upcoming year.

Indo-Western trio perform at Bengaluru

Zia, Tanvi Harbola

On January 5, the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) became a living dialogue between continents. The Vishnu-Davis-Haleigh Project wove Indian classical fusion with Appalachian folk and blues.

Bengaluru-based musician Vishnu R performed alongside Davis Little on baritone guitar and Haleigh Morgan Black on violin. The evening's true protagonist was Vishnu's Navtar, a rare nine-string hybrid that lets Carnatic ragas breathe alongside Western harmonies. The band



Vishnu-Davis-Haleigh Project live at BIC

Zia Dewan

performed Kitchen Girl, Boil That Cabbage Down, Adi, and Lake Song—pieces shaped live through collective improvisation. "Every show is like clay," Davis said, with the audience as sculptors.

Vishnu then shared a story: when Pandit Ravi Shankar stepped onto the Woodstock stage with Jimi Hendrix, he tuned his sitar

for precious minutes. When he finished, the entire audience erupted in applause thinking they'd just witnessed a masterpiece called Tuning.

Muddu Kumar's percussion added depth to the magic as the concert closed with Maya by Shaktia tribute to tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain.

Karnataka Schools Boost Engagement

Kishan SG

The Karnataka government has directed principals of government schools to hold bi-monthly parent-teacher meetings (PTMs) following the success of the mega PTM drive held on November 14, 2025, across nearly 47,000 schools. The Department of School Education aims to sustain the momentum generated by the record turnout, with the midday meal scheme playing a key role in attracting parents to engage in discussions on student performance and school development. Gangamma BH, headmistress of the Government Higher

Primary School (GHPS) in Chandrashekarapura, a village in the Ballari-Vijayanagara district, said the school plans to conduct five PTMs each academic year. She noted that the biggest challenge is ensuring participation from daily wage workers. "We plan to work closely with gram panchayats and encourage parents to attend meetings, preferably on Saturdays," she said. Educators believe regular bi-monthly meetings will improve communication. The initiative is seen as a push to strengthen school-community ties and support children in rural areas.