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Experts question shipwreck compensation

Anamica Vinod

Environmental experts have raised concerns over the Rs1,227 crore deposit made by the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) before the Kerala High Court (HC) in addressing the damage caused by the May shipwreck off Kerala's coast, after the company's vessel flooded and lost stability, leading to it capsizing and sinking. The deposit was made as part of ongoing court proceedings after oil leakage and plastic cargo from the vessel polluted coastal areas. While the HC acknowledged the damage, experts say the effects on the sea and coast remain unresolved.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, environmentalist Sandeep Anirudhan said the deposit may help manage immediate response but cannot fully account for the harm caused. "Oil spills do not simply disappear but settle on the seabed, where they affect marine life over long periods," he said. He added that plastic breaks down into microplastics, which enter the food chain and impact fisheries. Giving legal context, HC senior advocate P Deepak said, "The amount is not final compensation for environmental harm but an interim security," adding that it was measured on a preliminary assessment of pollution control and clean-up measures.

The extent of damages caused by the shipwreck is still being studied, posing questions about whether legal remedies can compensate for the long-term ecological damage.

Students struggle despite mental health mandate

Vaishnavi Savant

BENGALURU: Campus counsellors across Karnataka have observed how students are struggling with issues from academic pressure to homesickness while the colleges await the six-month deadline set by the Supreme Court (SC) to implement mental-health norms. The rising distress has led students and faculty to question whether campuses are ready to offer the support mandated by the court.

On 8 January 2026, the Karnataka government issued a circular directing all schools, coaching centres, universities and other educational institutions in the state to begin implementing the SC's mental health guidelines. The circular states that institutions must comply with the mandate in the coming academic year. In July 2025, the



A mental health cell on a college campus in Karnataka

SC had established 15 national guidelines aimed at strengthening mental health support for the students, which included appointing trained counsellors and psychologists, establishing an organised mental health support system for students.

Experts have linked the growing concerns around students mental health to the increasing number of deaths by suicide. Dr Smita Sail, a professor at Amrita

Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Bengaluru explained how youngsters must be trained to navigate mental health and build emotional resilience. Speaking to *The Beacon* she said "We need to help our youth to identify the difference between normalcy and the real problems". Sail added that students at her university have faced psychological issues, including excessive academic workload and

failed relationships and that the institution often does not realise the severity of the situation until it is too late. Students expressed concerns about academic stress affecting their emotional well-being. Lee Shania Estebano, a master's student from RV University, Bengaluru, said her institution follows a mentor-mentee system in which faculty members are approached primarily for

academic concerns. Having moved to Karnataka, she added that homesickness and loneliness also make it harder to cope up with academic goals. Estebano pointed out how her peers avoid seeking professional help and would prefer to use their own self-coping techniques such as journaling.

Mental health professionals argue that early intervention is the key. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Ashok Kumar, a professional counsellor and psychologist, emphasised how important it is for teachers to understand warning signs concerning student behaviour, including suicidal thoughts and social withdrawals. "Students are assets for the nation; if they are mentally disturbed, it may affect their life and their families," he also stated that it is important for institutions to have expert counsellors who are well-trained.

Leadership lessons through stories at SJU

Meinar Efel Nahak

BENGALURU: Underscoring the importance of empathy, perspective, and social responsibility in effective leadership, Geshe Lodoe Sangpo, director of the Science Center at Gaden Jangise Monastic University, Mundgod, gave a talk at St Joseph's University (SJU) about compassionate leadership through stories and examples.

The university hosted the lecture on "The power of compassionate leadership in contemporary times" on January 12. The event was organised by ASPIRE, the Association of the Department of International Relations, Peace and Public Policy and the International Students Association (ISA) in

collaboration with the 108 Peace Institute, at the university campus.

To illustrate the importance of perspective-taking, the speaker shared the story of a physicist who fell into depression after being denied the Nobel Prize. The physicist later realised that his intense focus on professional success had come at the cost of valuable time with his family. This insight, the speaker explained, helped the physicist regain emotional balance through "analytical meditation," a reflective practice of reassessing life priorities.

The stories of a disappointed physicist and a child saving stranded starfish to show that

small shifts in attitude and action can create meaningful change, he added. Also, stressing the importance of self-compassion and emotional resilience, he urged students to value long-term social impact over material success and immediate recognition.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Matthew Behanan Cherian, ISA president and organiser, said "The programme was designed to promote compassion, kindness and emotional awareness, a theme he described as universally relevant across cultures". He added that the strong turnout and lively question-and-answer session reflected audience enthusiasm. "The event was extremely valuable,"

said ISA cultural head Tenzin Choenyi. Prior coordination with the Tibetan guests helped enrich the session and made the overall interaction far more meaningful, she added.

During the interactive discussion, global initiatives such as Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning (SEE Learning) and Community-Based Compassion Training (CBCT) were highlighted as educational frameworks designed to cultivate empathy, resilience and ethical awareness from an early age. The session offered participants practical insights into leadership grounded in compassion, perspective and social responsibility.

Parasakthi explores linguistic imperialism

Jessica Maria

Parasakthi, directed by Sudha Kongara Prasad, is a historical political drama set during the anti-Hindi imposition movement in Tamil Nadu in the 1960s. The film portrays the journey of Chezhayan, played by Sivakarthekeyan, as he becomes part of a larger struggle shaped by ideology.

In contrast to his usual commercial image, Sivakarthekeyan delivers a restrained and committed performance. The film also stars Ravi Mohan, Atharvaa, and Sreeleela in prominent roles, along with a few pan-Indian cameo appearances.

Through its focus on language, identity, and authority, *Parasakthi*



A poster of the film Parasakthi

presents a politically relevant narrative that resonates today. However, the narrative struggles with pacing issues and some supporting characters remain underdeveloped.

The technical aspect of the film excels. The production design, costumes and cinematography effectively bring

the 1960s to life. GV Prakash Kumar's music and background score add emotional depth to the story.

The ideology-driven film prioritises the message over entertainment. Viewers interested in historical and political dramas will find it worth watching.

J&K tenant rules unclear

Samya Sharma

Amid heightened security checks across Jammu, several tenants say they have only recently become aware of the mandatory tenant verification process, highlighting gaps in communication and enforcement.

Recently, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) police detained seven landlords for failing to comply with tenant verification guidelines, as part of security measures, which now include online verification through the 'Kirayedar' portal. However, the awareness

among residents remains limited. "I found out through the news. I didn't know such a rule existed, which makes it feel like the topic comes up only when Jammu is on high alert," Ruby Sharma, a paying guest resident, told *The Beacon*.

Landlords, however, say the reality is different. "It is mandatory, but it is only when important events like Republic Day come, and the security situation becomes very tight." He added that most people learn about it during random police checks, and the rule is rarely treated as a routine process.

Daily water supply affected

Sanjana Shaji

Nearly 3,000 families in Kanjur panchayat, Kerala have been impacted by a recent reduction in the operational hours of an irrigation pump, disrupting drinking water supply and agricultural activities.

For several years, the pump functioned for nearly 20 hours a day and served as the primary source of water for both drinking and agricultural use. Earlier, the extended operating hours ensured that the shutter system allowed water to reach even distant agricultural fields. However, since the hours were cut, residents say water flow has reduced sharply, affecting households and irrigation.

Manoj Surendran, a resident of the ward said if the situation continues people will lose their crops and eventually cause shortage of drinking water.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, P.B.Ali, the panchayat secretary, said "We are aware of the concerns raised by residents. The matter is being discussed with the irrigation department and we are looking for a solution to ensure adequate water supply".