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Republic Day marked at Manipal Hospital

Disha Banthia

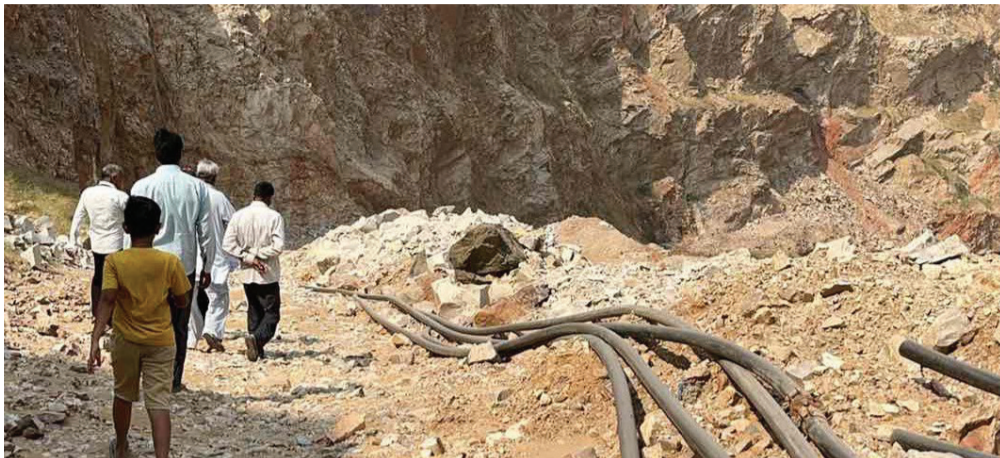
BENGALURU: Republic Day celebrations were held at Manipal Hospital, Millers Road, on January 26, with a flag hoisting ceremony organised within hospital premises in the early hours of the day to ensure that medical services remain uninterrupted. The ceremony began at 8 am on the ground floor of the hospital, presided over by the chief guest, Bipin Sanghavi, apartment president of Sai Charita Green Oaks, Nanjappa Graden, and his wife, who unfurled the National Flag. The hoisting was followed by the National Anthem, observed by hospital staff from various departments. Guests were presented with plants instead of conventional mementoes to reflect sustainability and responsibility towards the environment, in line with the hospital's values. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Karishma Choudhary, associate manager at Manipal Hospital, stated that the intention behind this celebration was to keep it simple and meaningful, creating an impact that would last longer. "We didn't want anything elaborate. Republic Day is more about the meaning than the scale of celebration," she said. She also mentioned that hosting the event early in the morning helped accommodate staff schedules without affecting patient care. She also noted that such observances play a vital role in bringing the hospital staff together. "Healthcare work can be exhausting. Small moments like this remind everyone of service and shared responsibility," she said.

Mining funds pile up in Rajasthan as DMFT spending lags

Disha Banthia

Nearly 41 per cent of mining-related development funds collected through the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) remain unused after the Rajasthan government allocated rupees 250 crores for the Green Aravalli Project, raising concerns about the centre's commitment to ecological conservation, according to official data from state and national government sources.

The DMFT is a statutory non-profit body created under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015, which helps direct mining leaseholder contributions towards welfare and environmental projects for areas affected by mining. Data from the DMF portal shows that it has collected over 9,299 crore rupees from mining companies over the years, of which only 7,261.19 crore



Residents walk through an abandoned mining site

People For Aravallis

rupees have been sanctioned for projects. Despite this, the actual implementation on the ground is rupees 5484 crore, leaving around rupees 3815 crore unused. A notable portion of sanctioned DMFT funds is directed towards infrastructure and basic services. The Public Works Department (PWD) accounts for the largest share, with rupees 3319 crore allocated for road-related projects. Water

supply systems have received rupees 875 crore, while women's welfare programs have received only rupees 14 crore. Environmental restoration initiatives, on the other hand, which include the Aravalli ranges, have received rupees 250 crore. This data indicates that a significant amount of funds has been allocated to infrastructural development rather than the Aravalli range, which has experienced

extensive degradation, including the reported disappearance of 31 hills. The flow of DMFT funds shows a gradual reduction at multiple stages. While Rs 9299 crore was collected, Rs 2038 crore has not been approved for any project. An additional Rs 1777 crore was sanctioned but has moved to the implementation stage. According to this data, delays at the approval and execution stages

have resulted in slowed development and restoration work intended for mining-affected communities and ecological zones. Between 2004 and 2014, the National Congress Party allotted Rs 1485 crore for ecological restoration-related projects in the Aravalli ranges but spent only Rs 980 crore, resulting in a 34 per cent shortfall. The Bharatiya Janata Party, from 2014 to 2025, allotted a significantly higher amount of Rs 4762 crore, of which Rs 3450 were spent, leaving an unspent balance of about 28 per cent. A sizable portion of funds remains unspent even as budgets expand, indicating that larger allocations do not always result in quicker or easier implementation. The information is based on data from the Rajasthan DMF Portal, the Ministry of Mines, state budget documents and the Comptroller and Auditor General Audit Report 2024.

AI reduces undetected diagnosis in healthcare

Anaina Kasim

Artificial intelligence is increasingly becoming a key tool in the medical field, helping doctors detect conditions such as minor tumors and early-stage fibrosis that can be difficult to spot in complex MRI and CT scans, while also identifying subtle and invisible anomalies at an early stage and significantly reducing chances of missed diagnoses, said Dr Noel Abraham, a general physician at Metropolitan Hospital, Thrissur. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched an online training programme



Representational Image

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on the use of AI in medical science, aimed at imparting basic AI knowledge to approximately 50,000 doctors. The programme, developed by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS), has already received over 42,000 registrations, which is a positive response from the medical

fraternity in the country. Dr Abraham said, "Apart from imaging, AI plays a crucial role in clinical decision-making, such as predicting sepsis or infections and organising data collection." He added that AI tools are already being widely used in radiology and diagnostics, where deep learning systems can scan

millions of images and identify pixel-level variations that may be undetectable by human observation. He also warned that many AI tools are online and owned by foreign companies, raising concerns that private health records could be stolen or seen by the wrong people. AI models can sometimes be inaccurate, risking compromised clinical judgment and even leading doctors to mistrust the technology, and stressed that strict regulations must be enforced before such systems are introduced widely to prevent the situation from worsening quickly.

Relief for bike taxi riders

Akhil Raj

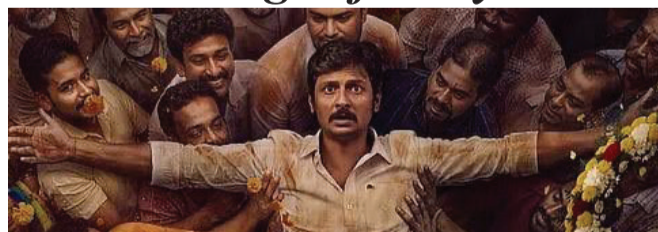
BENGALURU: After months of financial strain, bike taxi riders say the court's decision has allowed them to work without fear, bringing relief to their families, who depend on their income. The Karnataka High Court on January 23 lifted the state government's ban on bike taxi services, overturning a single-judge order passed on April 2 last year. The ban, which came into force on June 16, 2025, forced bike taxi platforms to suspend operations across the state.

For Anthony Alex, a bike taxi rider in Bengaluru, the months off the road were marked with uncertainty and loss of income. He said riders were less worried about being stopped by authorities but were more fearful of confrontations with auto drivers on the street. "Legal clarity has restored confidence in our work", he added. Auto drivers, however, remain concerned. "Metro services and free bus travel for women have already reduced our income," said Javed Pasha. "If bike taxis increase, survival will become harder."

TTT- Jiiva anchors one night family chaos

Aryan Arun

Jiiva's return to Tamil cinema with Nitish Sahadev's family drama *Thalaimaiyil* (TTT) arrives in cinemas, in the space of village politics and festivities, gaining strong box-office traction. The story focuses on the number of things that could go wrong between two neighbours in the span of one night. The major limitation of the movie is the screenplay. The conflicts in the narrative are easily resolved, leaving little room for layering or comedic timing. The dialogues seemed absent from the realistic, self-aware



Thalaimaiyil movie poster

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humour for which Jiiva is known and loved. Even with a strong supporting cast and fresh faces, the writing felt mechanical, rather than inventive. Yet, Jiiva's performance anchored the film, cutting through the chaos with calm authority, while the supporting cast delivered committed performances that elevated the material.

The film's visual and sound design are polished, with clean framing, bright colours and festive themes. The background score does its job but lacks memorability. Overall, TTT works as a one-time watch, serving as a reminder that Jiiva and the ensemble are capable of far better films with stronger writing.

Returning Ambaari poses safety concerns

Harivalagan E

BENGALURU: Commuters express safety concerns over open upper decks on the returning Ambaari double-decker buses. "It is scary to notice the trees and wires getting close to our heads and the sunlight hitting us when the bus was stationary," said Srinivas Naidu, a commuter. Bengaluru's double-decker Ambaari buses are back. Launched by KSTDC as a hop-on, hop-off sightseeing service, this bus makes a comeback after 30 years. The circular route starts at Ravindra Kalakshetra

and travels through the tourist destinations in Bangalore. Three buses were launched on January 21, each carrying over 40 passengers, with lower AC decks and open-top upper decks. Full-day passes cost Rs180, and this launch aims to boost tourism. "If they added a roof for the upper deck, it would feel a lot safer," emphasised Naidu. This is a good experience for tourists but for Bangaloreans it's just like travelling in a normal bus, he added.