

# THE BEACON

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## Marriage scheme skips family safety

Sneha Loitongbam

**BENGALURU:** Karnataka's SC Inter-Caste Marriage Assistance Scheme offers Rs 2.5- Rs 3 lakh to encourage marriage between members of the Scheduled Caste (SC) or the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and people from other castes. But activist Dr Isabella Xavier, who runs Sadhana Shelter Home in Dharwad, says the scheme fails to protect eligible couples once officials locate them during home inspections.

The scheme applies when one partner belongs to the SC/ST community and the other is a non-SC Hindu. Local officers, especially Tahsildars, visit the couple's home to verify caste certificates, income records below Rs 5 lakh, age proofs, and whether the couple lives together. "Government officers must visit the parents' house to confirm where the couple lives," she explained. "But after that, no protection is followed. The government fails to provide security for the couple or the family," she stressed, over the harm and consequences that come after the verification.

Of the 66 inter-caste couples her shelter has supported, many avoided applying for the scheme due to fear of violent retaliation from families. Dr Xavier alleged that 10-15 women and four men are killed each year over inter-caste marriages.

She also pointed out that the scheme excludes Dalit Christians and other converted SC members. "Dalit Christians like me are rejected by both the Social Welfare Department and the Church... Where do we stand?" she asked.

## Gulf countries function amidst Iran's retaliation

Sheza C & Dimple Maria

After an initial wave of panic, flight suspensions, remote work adjustments, and disruptions to oil and gas supplies, residents and officials in both Qatar and Kuwait say life is gradually returning to normal, with precautionary measures still in effect. The tensions began on Saturday afternoon when air strikes by the United States (US) and Israel targeted Iran. The attacks prompted Iran to retaliate by launching missiles and drone attacks on U.S military bases in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman.

Among the first sectors to respond to the sudden developments in Qatar were hospitals, where workers were instructed



Smoke rises over Qatar's industrial area after Iranian air strikes

Reuters

to extend their shifts. Khalid Muhammed (name changed), a health official at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), said that although they had to tackle the 12-hour shifts for two days, things have since returned to normal. Muhammed also pointed out that the medical teams across the hospitals are already trained to handle sudden situations. "Having navigated situations like the blockade in 2017, the

COVID-19 pandemic and successfully hosted the FIFA World Cup, I am confident that we have a robust system in place," he added. Afrah Ahmed, another health professional from HMC, echoed that, saying, "We are trained to respond calmly and responsibly, even in challenging circumstances."

The impact has also recently extended to the energy sector in these regions. Salman T, project

personnel in Qatar's leading petrochemical sector, said prices of LNG and crude could rise sharply in the coming hours due to the sudden disruptions.

Likewise, airports were affected, with around 8,000 transit passengers stranded at Hamad International Airport (HIA). However, airline teams have been coordinating internal updates with their staff efficiently to manage the

sudden flight changes, said Ajmal Roshan, a senior service agent at HIA.

A similar pattern unfolded in Kuwait, with many residents drawing parallels to the 1990 Gulf War. In contrast, Mathew Philip, a Kuwaiti resident, opined that this situation cannot be compared to the Gulf War. "During that time, people were forced to evacuate, but nothing like that has happened now," he added.

According to residents, the ministry has tackled the crisis effectively by implementing measures such as online classes for school students. Athul Abraham, another resident in Kuwait, said that while the situation is being closely monitored, his family has kept essential documents ready as a precaution. He also added that concerns remain only if the conflict escalates further.

## Devadasis and activists protest over pension delays

Shanmitha & Joswin Pereira

**BENGALURU:** Devadasi women and women activists from different districts of Karnataka protested at Freedom Park on Tuesday, urging the government to conduct a new survey to include the missing names in the beneficiary list and ensure regular pension payments. Jyothi Anantha Subba Rao, president of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), noted that the last comprehensive survey was conducted in 2007-08, leaving many newly identified women excluded from the official beneficiary list and unable to access pensions, housing benefits, and other



Devadasi women protesting at Freedom Park

Joswin Pereira

government schemes. Rao said the Rs 2000 monthly pension has not been paid consistently, affecting women who depend on it for basic needs. "Why should it be a secret? Is this some police department secret? Everyone in society already

knows who is a devadasi," she said, questioning why beneficiary lists are not publicly displayed.

Renuka K, secretary of NFIW, highlighted that the District Mineral Foundation (DMF)'s assurance that unfulfilled housing assurances

will be compensated. The women from the three districts without land to construct a house were promised Rs 12 lakh, and Rs 7 lakh to those who already have land. She also stressed the importance of education for future generations.

Rao urged women not to remain silent and asked them to check the beneficiary list and continue the struggle collectively. "Without struggle we cannot make them bend," she added, and the movement would continue under their organisation until justice is secured.

## Underground parking delay sparks concern

Yashaswini J

**BENGALURU:** City Market Traffic Police warns of parking violations in the KR Market area. Repeated violations will be subject to strict enforcement under Section 281.

The statement comes amid anticipation of the formal inauguration of the underground parking facility near KR Market, which is still under construction.

Henry Madan, a traffic police officer, said regulations can be particularly challenging since the surrounding commercial hub remains one of the city's most congested zones, with narrow connecting roads and high daily footfall.

The officer clarified that infrastructure decisions are handled by the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), while the traffic police's role is limited to regulation and enforcement. "Once the underground parking opens, violations will not be tolerated," he added.

Vendors at the market claimed previous parking disruptions affected daily business. "Customers did not come when parking was unavailable," said Tajuddin, a salesman operating in the market since 1998. He also pointed out that traders were not formally informed about construction and inauguration schedules.

## A sequel exploring sensitive realities

N Rishika

'The Kerala Story 2 Goes Beyond', directed by Kamakhya Narayan Singh, is a Hindi drama sequel to the controversial 2023 film The Kerala Story. The first phase of the film follows three young women from different states who want to pursue their goals, along with former lovers who later manipulate them into marriage and conversion to another religion.

The film portrays neighbourhoods as closed off. It uses dim lighting, tight camera angles, and background music to



The Kerala Story 2

filminformation.com

make them feel inherently dangerous. The film also uses the phrase "our daughters," creating a clear divide between "us" and "them." This narrative approach risks reinforcing stereotypes and deepening communal divisions. The film adopts a one-sided perspective that prioritises dramatic

impact over nuance. Even though the movie talks about real cases of abuse, it presents them as if they are a part of a big, organised plan by the entire community, which turns the film into a conspiracy story. This can create fear and lead people to see the entire community as a threat.

## Queer stories rooted in myth

P R Vedasmriti

**BENGALURU:** Literature today is revisiting the long-held discomfort around human orientations, which was once branded as "unethical", and now it is explored through myth, psychology and institutional critique. At a book launch event held at the Bangalore International Centre on March 3 2026, author Rashna Imhasly discussed how Indian mythology presents gender fluidity and same-sex love as not present-day phenomena but historically embedded realities.

The myths of Lord Shiva, Mohini, and Shikhandi revealed a third sex that became part of

cultural memory, acknowledging sexual diversity as part of universal harmony. Through storytelling and psychology, literature shows that queer identity is part of human well-being, not a flaw.

Rashna further reminds us that "the myth of this land was never meant to divide us," but to help us "hold the complexity of life within ourselves". Critiquing how colonial translations deleted homosexuality references and ongoing laws continue to restrict same sex unions, showing that exclusion often comes from selective readings and not from tradition itself.