

THE BEACON

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

Wednesday, 11 March 2026 / St Joseph's University / Vol:18 Issue: 87 / www.sjcddeptcomm.wordpress.com

Kerala vendors struggle in heat

Sanjana Shaji

Roadside vendors are among the most affected by rising temperatures in Kerala, as heat alerts across parts of the state raise concerns for people who work outdoors for long hours. Roadside vending is often the primary source of income for many families, with vendors spending long hours under the sun to earn their livelihood. Ramesh Kumar, a fruit vendor who operates a roadside stall in Kerala, said the heat has made his work more difficult than before. "By afternoon, the sun becomes very strong. I feel more tired these days, and sometimes I get headaches because of the heat," he said, adding that to cope with the conditions, he keeps a small umbrella over his cart and drinks water regularly throughout the day. Speaking to *The Beacon*, doctors say working for many hours in high temperatures can cause several health problems. Dr Sandhya Susan Varghese, a general physician at Ernakulam Medical Centre, said that people who work outdoors are more likely to experience dehydration and fatigue, which can worsen existing health conditions. "Severe dehydration, exhaustion and even heat stroke can occur when people stay in the sun for long hours," she added. With temperatures rising across Kerala, doctors have urged outdoor workers to drink plenty of water, stay in shaded areas whenever possible, and cover their heads and bodies to reduce the impact of extreme heat.

Parents raise concerns over rising school fees

Ancy James

BENGALURU: The hike in private school fees in Karnataka is becoming an increasing concern for many parents, as several institutions continue to raise tuition costs. While parents question the steep increases, school authorities argue that the revisions are necessary to address rising operational costs and maintain educational standards. However, teachers say the hikes are not reflected in their salaries.

Many schools across the city are revising their fee structure for the upcoming academic year. Parents and teachers say there is an increase every year, often cited as the school's need to maintain a good infrastructure, staff salaries, and extracurricular activities.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Aneesha Girish, a parent



Representational Image

whose child is studying in an international school, said, "Currently, I think, the increase is about 10%". The annual fee, which was about Rs 1.10 lakh when her son first joined Class 1, has now increased to around Rs 1.35 lakh in Class 4, while new admissions are charging Rs 1.45 lakh, she added, speaking about how this is affecting the

family's finances. "To pay the fees, we actually pledge the gold we have in the bank. Then we try to get it back by paying monthly instalments," she said, adding that she believes there should be regulations to control private school fees.

However, the school authorities say that the fee revisions are linked to the cost of maintaining

educational institutions. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Limna Justine, principal of Holy Spirit School and PU College, explained the reasons behind such decisions. "There has been a slight revision in the fee structure for the upcoming academic year. This decision was made after careful evaluation of the school's operational needs and

in line with government regulations," she said. Justine noted that several factors contribute to fee revisions, including staff salaries, infrastructure maintenance, learning resources, and extracurricular programs.

Meanwhile, many teachers say that despite increased fees collected from parents, their salaries have not improved significantly. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Jhimy Manu, a private school teacher, said, "School fees have been significantly increasing over the years... there is also an increase in the book fee as well," she said. She also added, "Private school teachers are one of the most underpaid professions you can ever have because handling a bunch of students, at least 40 to 60 in a class, is not an easy task at all."

Techie builds AI helmet to detect traffic violations

Diana Saldehna, S

BENGALURU: A prototype helmet designed by a Bengaluru-based software engineer to detect traffic violations has gained attention weeks after the idea first circulated online, prompting discussion about whether citizen-built technologies could help strengthen road safety enforcement.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Pankaj Tanwar, who developed the prototype, said the idea emerged from daily frustration while navigating city traffic. "I ride to the office daily and often see people violating traffic rules



The techie demonstrates AI helmet for traffic monitoring Diana S

very casually. One day, it became frustrating enough that I decided to build something of it," he said.

Tanwar said he spent a weekend developing the initial prototype. The helmet carries a small camera that captures an image every three seconds while the rider is on

the road. Using a fine-tuned YOLOv8 detection model running on a Raspberry Pi, the system scans the frames to identify vehicles and detect violations such as riding without a helmet, wrong-side riding or driving in the wrong lane. When a violation is detected, the system extracts

the vehicle license plate using optical character recognition, verifies the violation using AI models, and then generates a report. He added that the system currently records about 82 per cent accuracy.

Officials say citizens can already report traffic violations with proper evidence. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Abhishek Gowda M, a traffic police constable, said: "Complaints submitted through official platforms are reviewed before any enforcement action is taken, and an e-challan may be issued if the violation is verified by authorities."

Gulf tensions impact flights

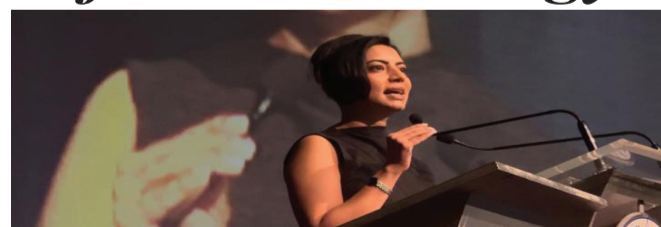
Samya Sharma

Flight disruptions across the Gulf region have left international travellers uncertain about their flight schedules, with many worried about whether the flights will operate on time or face delays. Amid ongoing conflict and rising tensions in the Middle East, flights passing through Gulf countries have been affected as several airlines adjust time schedules and routes. Passengers say changes in flight routes and schedules have made return plans difficult. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Fiza Manchanda, a student based in Canada who had travelled to India for personal reasons, said the uncertainty has made it difficult to plan her return. "If there were a clear update about flights, it would be easier to plan and adjust accordingly," she said, adding that the unpredictability has also been stressful for her family. With disruptions remaining unpredictable, passengers continue to monitor airline updates as they plan their travel arrangements and wait for clearer information.

Women redefine technology

Meinar Nahak

Women are shaping how technology is designed and applied, opined Dr Smrite Goudhaman, awardee of the Global 200 Women Power Leaders 2026 and adjunct faculty at Golden Gate University. Women in technology are shifting beyond representation toward influence, shaping innovations and their social impact. Speaking to *The Beacon*, she said women often bring a broader perspective to technology, adding that a "woman in action" is someone who designs



Smrite Goudhaman

Special Arrangement

solutions, drives innovation and raises ethical questions about how technology is deployed. Rather than viewing technology as a system to optimise, she said women see it as an ecosystem serving people, communities and future generations. She said her work reflects this approach, elaborating on how she designs AI-powered

solutions, teaches as an academic, and is completing her doctorate on how AI can improve workforce training while balancing family life as a mother. Addressing women, she added, "Do not wait for permission... your ideas, leadership, and courage can help build pathways for many more women to succeed."

Drivers resent taxi app

Vaishnavi Savant

Local taxi drivers in Goa have raised concerns about the government's recent proposal to regulate digital taxi booking platforms, which they say could impact their daily income.

The plan, announced by the Government of Goa during the state budget on March 6, aims to modernise the taxi sector by introducing a single digital platform for taxi bookings.

However, the proposal has created uncertainty among the local taxi

drivers, many of whom rely on daily rides as their main source of livelihood.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Om Naik, a taxi driver with Go Goa Cabs, said taxi driving has been the primary source of income for him and his family, and that the government should improve the taxi sector by providing proper arrangements for drivers. "If the app takes a commission from each ride, we may be left with very little profit. With rising fuel costs, it becomes difficult for drivers