

# THE BEACON

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## Auction notices issued to tax evaders

Tanvi Harbola

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has issued 70,000 fresh auction notices to property tax defaulters this week within the scope of a crackdown on unpaid dues. Officials say property tax remains the largest source of revenue for city corporations.

The notices are part of a wider drive against property tax evasion in Bengaluru. Officials are using drones and Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to identify properties that have underreported their size, additional floors or commercial use to avoid paying the correct tax.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Special Commissioner (Revenue) Moudgil rejected the idea that the crackdown targets middle-class property owners. "We are doing 100% checks in the field, and whoever has not paid property tax correctly will have to pay. Every defaulter or wrongdoer is the same, and we want each of them to pay," he emphasised, saying that enforcement applies equally to all property owners.

Activist Anirudhh said the recovered funds should benefit the entire city. "The money collected from tax recovery must be directed towards development across Bengaluru and not just the more affluent neighbourhoods," he said.

GBA officials said inspections across the city have intensified. "Each corporation team checks about 2,000 properties daily, and across the city, nearly 10,000 properties are inspected every day," Moudgil said. March 31, the end of the financial year, remains the deadline for property owners to clear their dues.

## World Cup stats reveals T20 cricket transformation

Timeus Christian Sunder

Twenty20 (T20) cricket has undergone a decade of evolution, transforming from a game of placement into one of pure power. This year's edition shattered a plethora of records, with an average innings total of 171.23, a massive 31-run gap from the 2016 World Cup, which had a meagre 145.25, becoming the highest scoring tournament.

Comparing all the matches played in India in this edition with the 2016 edition, when India last hosted, shows how much T20 cricket has shifted from cautious approaches to all-out boundary-hitting.

Most tellingly, Chart 1 shows that the average winning first-innings score jumped from 157.28 in 2016 to a massive 206.22 in 2026. The data clearly shows that what was considered a winning score

in 2016 would not even meet the baseline average in 2026.

In 2016, the difference between an average score and a winning score was just 12 runs, meaning even an average batting performance kept a team in the contest. This year, that gap shot up to 35 runs. Batsmen can no longer settle and play; they must ensure they go well above the average to win.

This change highlights a drastic increase in the average run rate from 7.8 to 9.04, which can also be attributed to a radical change in batting mechanics. The traditional anchor role has disappeared, as reflected in the tournament strike rate, which skyrocketed from 121.76 in 2016 to 142.75 in 2026.

Modern batsmen rely on finding the boundary as often as possible. Chart 2 shows that the steep decline in balls per boundary, from 6.5 in

2016 to 5.3 in 2026, pushed the boundary-run percentage (runs scored only on fours and sixes from the entire innings total) from 56.8% to 63.3%. This aggressive mentality shift is heavily skewed toward getting sixes rather than fours, with a huge decrease in balls per six from 23.9 in 2016 to 13.3 in 2026, while balls per four decreased only from 9.06 to 8.79. (Chart 2)

Consequently, teams batting first no longer build an innings; they step onto the pitch with a 250-run target in mind. The ultimate consequence of this all-out attack is reflected in the match results. The average margin of victory for teams defending a target more than doubled, leaping from 26.06 runs in 2016 to an overwhelming 54.86 runs in 2026, showing that modern teams aim to out-bat opponents rather than rely on economical bowling.

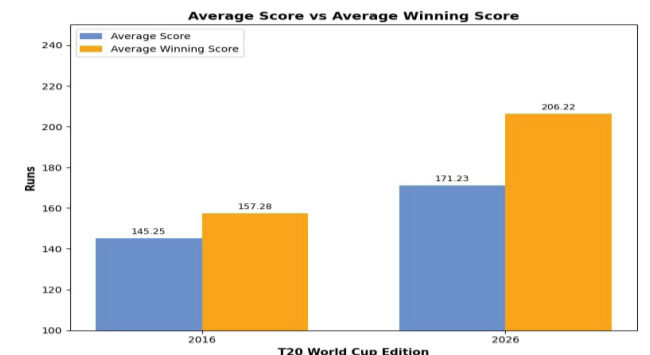


Chart 1: This chart compares the overall average innings score against the average winning first-innings score across the 2016 and 2026 tournament editions.

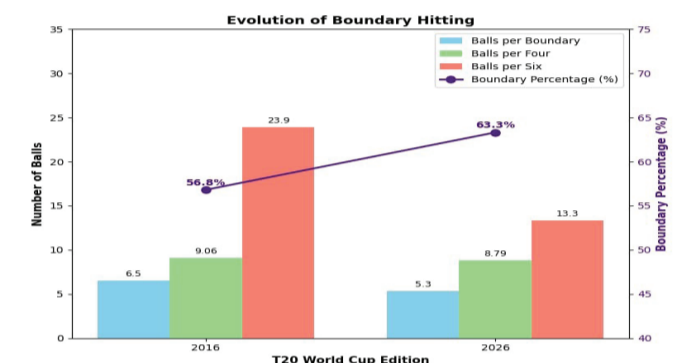


Chart 2: This chart shows the change in balls per boundary, four, and six alongside a line graph showing the overall boundary run percentage for the 2016 and 2026 T20 World Cups.

Source: espnricinfo

## AI tutors aid learning, but experts urge balance

Nanasu Raghuram

Mental health experts and teachers express mixed opinions on a child's cognitive development in the background of 'AI tutors' being proposed to be introduced in schools.

As presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the government plans to introduce AI-based personalised digital tutors, targeting students from Classes 8 to 12. The project is meant to support self-learning and concept clarification, while adapting to each student's level of understanding.

Explaining the possible effects of AI tutoring, Dr Mekhala Diwakara, Psy-

chiatrist, at Smart Virtual Clinic by BBMP, said that, along with various cognitive effects, increased screen time is also a major issue. She said, "More exposure to blue light from the screen affects the production of melatonin, the hormone required for sleep... when sleep is affected... it impacts memory consolidation," and further stresses the depletion of emotional and social skills. "Children might stop picking up social cues from their environment because there is no interaction. Peer interaction will drop. For everything, the answer will be AI," she said.

Dr Diwakara also opined that while resisting the use of AI would not be the solution, human tutors must be available, aware of what the AI is delivering, and focused on the other aspects needed for holistic development.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Aparna R, a math teacher and coordinator who worked at a private school in Bangalore, said, "Having been a teacher for 20 years, (it feels) technology can only supplement; it cannot substitute... a 'chalk and talk' method."

Aparna opined that using AI, especially in a subject like math, would threaten

problem-solving skills. "There isn't just one solution for a problem; you have to think alternatively...but today with instant pre-cooked answers, children find it difficult to make decisions, take disappointments, and handle failure," she said.

While accepting the government's initiative of AI tutors and opining it to be "helpful for kids," Sindhu Suresh, a parent of a 13-year-old, expressed concern about the overuse of digital platforms and said, "There has to be some monitoring, either from the parents' side or in the device itself."

## Pixar's Hoppers is fresh, original fun

Aaryan Raj Pradhan

In an era of boring, recycled, and unoriginal animated films, Pixar's Hoppers offers an original, entertaining story that builds on proven concepts. While it stumbles in pacing, it wins you over with Pixar's signature humour, charm, and emotional appeal.

Directed by Daniel Chong, the film centres on Mabel, a rebellious, animal-loving teenager whose conscience is transferred into the body of a robotic beaver, seeing the world through the eyes of an animal. She comes across King George, a loud and slightly dramatic beaver leader who



A still from Hoppers

Courtesy of Disney/Pixar

quickly stands out as one of the film's most memorable characters. Their hilarious exchanges act as the emotional core of the film, offering most of its genuinely charming moments.

The film dazzles with vibrant environments and adorable

character design, elevated by a score that fits each scene, helping both the fun and emotional moments land well. Although the narrative slows a little in the latter half, it never drags enough to detract from the overall experience.

## Grants drive research beyond labs

Kishan SG

The Shankuntala Grants by Pixxel, a Bengaluru-based planetary intelligence company, aim to empower women researchers in environmental science and climate resilience projects. The initiative also extends opportunities for women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) through funding, knowledge-sharing and community building.

Pixxel announced the Shankuntala Grants on International Women's Day. Partnering with Escape Velocity Grants run by Aakanksha Gaur and Paras Chopra, Pixxel will offer grants to fund fieldwork, pilot studies, data collection, equipment

and exploratory research.

Dr Nandhini N., a professor in the Department of Environmental Science at Bangalore University, addressed the limitations her student scholars face. The unavailability of locally available equipment, the cost of accessing expensive equipment, and sample outsourcing due to a lack of funds. Grants like this can "bring back their research temper," she said. Calling for sustained support of private grants, she added, "Educating the girl child is a fundamental right...with Pixxel's Shankuntala Grants for women in STEM,

## Liquor shop opens despite official closure

Zia Dewan

Days after the Bengaluru East City Corporation (BECC) sealed an illegal liquor shop in Whitefield following a five-hour standoff, operators have allegedly broken the government seal and resumed business.

The reopening of the liquor shop comes after months of protests by residents of Prithvi Layout, who first organised a 400-person flash protest in January. Despite the official closure, the shop has operated openly for three days, exposing what residents say is a fractured administrative system. "We are not living in 2009. Now we are in 2026," they said. Resident Welfare Association President, Vanisri told *The Beacon* that the licence was issued under outdated 2009 rules, ignoring a 2024 Supreme Court ruling. Suspicions of benami ownership linked to an influential Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) have also surfaced. Residents said the situation feels as if "there is no government at all."

The residents now plan to meet the BECC Commissioner, D. S. Ramesh, to demand action and finalise a formal complaint to the Karnataka Lokayukta against the officials involved.