

# THE BEACON

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

Tuesday, October 15 / St. Joseph's University / Vol: 17 Issue: 47 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

## Yet another extension for PoSH panel

Anoshka Heri

**BENGALURU:** The Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) has requested a 30-day extension to respond to the Karnataka State Commission for Women's demand for the formation of an internal committee within the Kannada film industry, in accordance with the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act. Nagalakshmi Chowdary, the commission chairperson, initially set a 15-day deadline on September 16 for the KFCC to create an action plan for forming a sexual harassment committee. The release of the Hema Committee report prompted the need to form the committee. The commission further addressed a letter to the KFCC, requesting details surrounding women's rights and safety protocols in the Kannada film industry. The letter also advocated for the existence of an internal committee. However, complexities surrounding the structure of the committee and legal aspects resulted in the extension of the deadline, said filmmaker and president of The Film Industry for Rights and Equality (FIRE), Kavitha Lankesh, in conversation with *The Beacon*. A survey that collects details about sexual harassment acts anonymously in the industry is being discussed. An action plan for the execution of the survey is yet to be finalised. "We're pushing for a confidential survey to understand the real extent of the issue. Once people feel safe to come forward anonymously, we'll know the true scale of the problem," Lankesh mentioned.

## J&K awaits stability under new government

Romil TNV

**W**ith 49 of the 90 assembly seats won, the National Conference and Congress are set to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir, securing a majority. Despite growing public dissatisfaction with the political system, this election season saw a notable shift, opined Aditya Bhat, a local voter, with a peaceful and fair election leading to a legitimate government. According to media reports, the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections concluded with a voter turnout of 69.65% in the final phase. Udhampur recorded the highest turnout at 76.09%, surpassing the voter participation in the most recent Lok Sabha elections. However, independent candidates made a significant



Post electoral celebrations in J&K on October 8, 2024

Mint

impact, winning seven seats, reflecting a growing awareness among voters about prioritising individual ability over party affiliation at the ballot box. "If independent candidates can win, it shows that people are hopeful," said Achint Kaul, a local activist affiliated with the All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference.

The abrogation of Article 370 has now led to a shift in the political context of Jammu and Kashmir, transforming it into a Union Territory governed by the central government and a Lieutenant Governor. "We hope that our own representatives will be formed, through whom our development works will be fully carried out," said a resident, em-

phasising the importance of local governance for community development. "People seem hopeful but cautious. They hope that there will be political stability and that issues of employment, development, and security will be addressed, which have been ignored for so long," he added. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Rahul (name changed), a military

officer, discussed the role of security forces in maintaining peace and order during the elections, which is crucial due to the place's history of hostility. "Our mandate has always been to maintain peace in the area. There was heightened security and regular patrolling, but no specific instructions were issued beyond our regular duties," he said. The coordination between the armed forces, paramilitary forces, and local police ensured that voters could cast their ballots without fear. "We increased our efforts two weeks before the elections to prevent any disruptions or even slight chances of hostility. High-intensity patrolling and intelligence-gathering were precautionary measures to safeguard the democratic process," he explained.

## New chatbot to streamline agricultural support

Tejaswini S

**BENGALURU:** Following the successful launch of the Raitha Call Centre, the Karnataka State Department of Agriculture (KSDA) is now developing an AI-based chatbot to enhance support for farmers. The chatbot is being designed to provide timely information on various schemes and address agricultural queries, opined Noor Samad, an agriculture officer at KSDA, in a conversation with *The Beacon*.

The Raitha Call Centre, which has been operational since August last year, consolidates helplines from different divisions into one toll-free number. The helpline currently receives a variety of queries related to schemes



Raitha Call Centre

Prajawani

like PM Kisan Yojana, crop surveys, weather, and crop insurance, handling around 450 calls each day. During peak periods, such as crop insurance payments, the number of calls increases to 600-700 per day, which results

in improper management and inadequacy to respond to queries efficiently. The AI chatbot system, once integrated with the helpline, will streamline the process of responding to farmers' queries by automatically routing

their questions to relevant subject matter experts. "For example, a farmer may have a question on crop harvest. When they ask a question, the call automatically gets connected to the expert of that particular field. The expert analyses the question and answers the farmer. This is done so that there is no loss in time," Samad explained. He further discussed the future of the chatbot, stating, "As the bot receives questions, our officials collect them and bring them to the experts' notice. The experts provide solutions, and we update those solutions on our chatbot. We are still working on making this idea function effectively through technology," he added.

## Jammu faces rising unrest

Kohsheen Raina

**T**he recent shift in terrorist activities from Kashmir to Jammu has brought to light several alarming human rights violations, with villagers caught between militants and security forces, Rajesh Kichloo, a human rights activist working in the All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference in Pulwama and Srinagar, told *The Beacon* on the condition of anonymity. On June 9, 2024, rebels brutally assaulted a pilgrimage bus in Reasi, killing 10 and wounding 33. Twin strikes in Doda and Kathua wounded six soldiers two days later. One army soldier was injured when terrorists attacked a Rajouri checkpoint. On July 8, heavily armed militants killed five soldiers, including a JCO, and injured six in Kathua, as reported by the Observer Research Foundation. In an interview with *The Beacon*, Rajesh expressed, "The aftermath of military attacks often results in villages being swept through in search of accomplices. The situation also highlights the idea of collective punishment, with civilians treated as suspects, further eroding trust between the local population and authorities." Programs like "Operation Sadbhavana" launched in 2023, aim to foster better relations between the military and local populations by promoting sustainable social development in conflict-affected areas.

## Two families, one cultural odyssey

PV Ananth M

**K**ottukkaali is a 2024 Tamil road movie directed by PS Vinohraj. It captivates viewers, making it difficult to take their eyes off the screen to witness the journey of two families through the vivid themes of patriarchy, caste stigma, and feminine-societal dogmas. As the story progresses and the journey shifts, we watch the families' interpersonal relationship dynamics evolve, and their relationship with the culture of Southern Tamil Nadu unfold. The characters played by Soori and Anna Ben have been portrayed with



Kottukkaali movie poster

FilmiGlitz

great accuracy; their on-screen chemistry with other actors, coupled with the captivating dialogues they have with each other, draws one's attention entirely. The tone and intonation further highlight the genius of the screenplay. The movie was overlooked in theatres since it was a competitive feature film. However, it

garnered much attention when released on OTT and was commended for its complex and earthly-raw storytelling. "Kottukkaali" is not just a story of two families but their interaction with the social, cultural, and geographical dimensions intertwined with flawed characters representing the society.

## Navaratri dolls fosters unity

PV Ananth M

**BENGALURU:** As social gatherings become less common, festivals like Navaratri offer a chance to reconnect with communal celebrations and culture, opined Anuradha HR, Artistic Director of the Untitled Arts Foundation, in her conversation with *The Beacon* on Saturday. Reflecting this spirit of community, Anuradha continues her family tradition by organising an annual display of 5,000 dolls at JP Nagar's Untitled Arts Foundation. The dolls, ranging from handmade replicas of the

Ram Mandir to figurines of poets such as Mirabai, draw inspiration from a variety of sources, with her collection expanding each year. Around 50-60 visitors attend the exhibition daily, participating not only in viewing the display but also in community activities such as offering bhajans and prasad. "Festivals like these are not just about celebration; they are about bringing local communities together. Once you start charging for entry, it becomes commercial, and the true value of the tradition is lost," Anuradha added.