

# THE BEACON

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## Sankey flyover stirs debate

**Sreeja Deb**

**Bengaluru:** To alleviate traffic congestion in the vicinity, over 400 saplings and 55 ancient trees will be demolished in order to make room for the construction of a flyover from T Chowdiah Road to 18th Cross, Malleswaram and for the widening of Sankey Tank Bund Road.

The Citizens for Sankey (CfS) group along with BBMP representatives met on January 31 at the Canara Union in Malleswaram, during which this proposal was criticised. The division of the road-widening project between the Chowdiah road to 18th Cross is 1.1 kilometres long. The project is designed to construct a 7.5 metres wide carriageway, built on either side of the median. This four-lane fly-over will connect central and northern Bengaluru.

"The Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA), does the master planning of the city in terms of traffic and transport. It is wrong for the BBMP to build a new project without going through the planning of BMLTA. The real solution lies in public transportation, as each bus has a capacity of 30 to 50 passengers, which reduces the need for private vehicles. And that same amount of money should be invested in increasing the number of buses that will reduce the load on the road. So basically, it is important to look at the intelligence solution, and not just building a flyover," stated Sandeep Anirudhan, Convener-Citizen Agenda for Bengaluru, while speaking to The Beacon.

## 'BMTC for Bengaluru, not for profit'

**Dhamini & Shariq**

**Bengaluru:** With the nearing of the budget allocation for the state on February 17, the BMTC passengers, under the guidance of Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike (BBPV), aimed to seek the prioritisation of this public transportation body.

On Saturday, a human chain campaign at Majestic bus station was held to draw the attention of the authorities to make bus transport affordable, accessible, and efficient.

Speaking to The Beacon, Shaheen Shasa, an activist and the co-founder of BBPV, compared the city's current public transport to states like Tamil Nadu and Punjab. She expressed the benefits of free travel for women in these states and hoped that the same could be implemented in Bengaluru. "This is not just making travel easy for them but also empowering women to not depend on anyone



BBPV Volunteers holding placards

Shariq Ahamed

for travel. Similarly, if there is a free travel scheme for all vulnerable communities in Bangalore, our city can also access all these opportunities," she justified.

Shasa highlighted the issue of 6000 buses being sufficient for a city with a population of roughly 12 million. Expansion of the BMTC fleet is one of the

major demands set along with free bus rides for women, the transgender community, senior citizens, and students. "BMTC should have 3000 more new buses, and that will make it about 9000 buses in the city, which is still not enough, but it will serve more areas with better frequency," she added.

Since 2013, the bus

commuters' rights forum has engaged in campaigns to reduce bus fares as they are uneconomical for most commuters. "Today, the monthly pass is Rs 1000, which the people who work in the city and make the city function, such as the domestic workers, the government workers, and the pourakarmikas; are

these people able to afford the current bus fares? If not for them, for whom are the buses running?" Shasa remarked.

She criticised the government for spending huge amounts of money building flyovers that haven't reduced traffic congestion despite being in place for many years. She also suggests that more money should be allocated to BMTC. "We can't keep building flyovers and expect the congestion to reduce. Investing in buses and reducing private vehicles is the only way it will be reduced," said Shasa.

BBPV made the people aware of the inability of BMTC to operate their current fleet as there is a shortage of staff and a hiring freeze.

She stated that the government should prioritise transportation planning which requires both a budget and a policy.

## Is education becoming a portal for money?

**Angeline Claudia**

**Bengaluru:** The All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) Karnataka state committee urged the government to reject the suggestions made by the Karnataka Reforms Panel, claiming it to be hostile to students and educational institutions. On Saturday, the panel proposed suggestions such as the closure of government schools in the name of 'merger,' increasing the NRI quota in Government Medical Colleges, and reducing the passing marks of SSLC students.



AIDSO logo

Twitter

Apoorva C M, the Bangalore district Vice president of AIDSO, stated that amidst the need for government schools and colleges, they are shutting 3500 schools in the name of mergers. "This is going to have a bad effect on

the students, particularly from the rural areas," she added. Apoorva expressed her concern over the rise in NRI quota in medical colleges and added that medical studies have become expensive. She opined that with the few colleges

available, introducing the NRI quota in them will restrict seat availability. "This would mean stopping the common man's daughter from dreaming of becoming a doctor," she stated. She further went on to say that if the SSLC passing grades are lowered, the learning levels and educational quality will continue to decline. "Our effort is to make them understand the depth of this issue, however, it remains in their hands to decide. But we will be pressurising from our end, this much we can do", concluded Apoorva, while speaking to The Beacon.

## Exhibition of masterpieces

**Bibhash & Jeba**

**Bengaluru:** The festival of arts and crafts mela 2023 was conceived to give weavers, artists, and craftsmen a place to sell their items directly to the public without using intermediaries. The organisers of the exhibition seek to better the financial circumstances of underprivileged weavers and craftspeople around the nation.

A 10-day artisan bazaar features handcrafted sarees, clothes, and ethnic pieces of art and crafts from craftsmen throughout India. The exhibition is on view at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath in Bengaluru from February 3 to 12.

Speaking to The Beacon, Aftab, one of the event's organisers, said he was extremely interested in seeing different events that took place in the city for different social causes, but he had never seen the talent of all the lovely artisans and craftsmen that the nation's many regions had to offer. He claimed that "no proper marketing was done for all the lovely objects that are being manufactured to be displayed to the huge public," on account of, the organisers came up with the idea of organising an art and craft mela exhibition.

## Secrets of intelligence unveiled

**Nikita & Yachi**

**Bengaluru:** At a conference on 'Life in the Shadow,' Amarjeet Dulat, a seasoned veteran in the field of security and intelligence, shed light on the covert world of intelligence operations. Drawing from his extensive experience working in Indian intelligence agencies, Dulat provided a rare glimpse into the complexities and rewards of working in the shadows. Dulat, spoke at the Bangalore International Centre on February 6th,

offering insights and anecdotes about his decades of experience working in the Indian intelligence agencies. The session began by explaining the concept of "plausible deniability", where intelligence operatives must maintain a low profile and avoid leaving a trail of evidence that could incriminate them. He spoke of how this can be a double-edged sword, as it can protect an operative's identity and keep them safe, He went on to describe the challenges of working

in hostile environments, where the threat of violence or capture is always present. He talked about the importance of maintaining a cover identity and avoiding drawing attention to oneself. Dulat emphasised the importance of staying alert and aware of one's surroundings, as even the smallest of mistakes could compromise an operation. He advised those considering a career in intelligence to weigh the pros and cons carefully and seek guidance from experienced professionals.

## Energising India's future

**Kannika S**

Transitioning to a cleaner and more sustainable form of energy is India's ambitious goal, announced PM Modi during his inaugural address at India Energy Week 2023.

India Energy Week 2023 conference was officially inaugurated on Monday, February 6. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas organised the event, which was held at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC).

The theme was "Energising India: Towards a Sustainable Future," and

brought together leading experts and stakeholders from the industry to discuss challenges faced in the country's energy sector.

PM Modi emphasised the importance of a green and self-reliant nation. The country has made significant progress in this direction, with a sharp increase in the share of renewable energy in the country's power mix.

The Prime Minister highlighted the government's efforts to enhance energy efficiency and promote the use of electric vehicles as more as possible.