

# THE BEACON

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## Pinarayi govt takes the flak

Parvathi Nair

The government of Kerala, under LDF leader Pinarayi Vijayan's leadership, faced severe backlash over IAS Officer K Vasuki's alleged appointment as the 'foreign secretary' of the state.

In an order released in the past week, the state government had said that Vasuki, who is currently a secretary in the Labour Commissionerate, "will hold the additional charge of matters connected with external cooperation. The officer will coordinate and supervise all the matters in this regard, in addition to the existing charges".

Many citizens took to social media to express their disapproval of the state's decision while questioning the move's constitutionality. "Kerala State Govt. appoints Vasuki as 'Foreign Secretary' in State! With whom is it going to maintain Foreign Relations? With Bharat? Next? Defence Secretary? With this Unconstitutional Move, I'm wondering if the Communist Government of Kerala is trying to hint that it's a Sovereign Nation?" commented a few users on X.

Dr Venu Vasudevan, Chief Secretary of Kerala, said this results from spreading misinformation and generating anti-government sentiments. In a Facebook statement on Saturday, he explained that many foreign agencies and institutions contact state governments directly, forming new relationships which aid in promoting ties in various sectors.

With the increase in such ties, an external cooperation division was set up, which was previously headed by Suman Billa and will now be taken over by K Vasuki.

## 100% kannadiga quota temporarily on hold

Sinchan Saha

BENGALURU: Despite being proven unconstitutional by courts multiple times, attempts to reinforce reservations for the local population are still being made by states. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, to provide job opportunities for Kannadigas in their state, mooted the Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024. The Cabinet passed the bill on Monday.

CM took to X on Tuesday, 16 July, and said, "The cabinet meeting held yesterday approved a bill to make it mandatory to hire 100 per cent Kannadigas for 'C and D' grade posts in all private industries in the state."

Hours later, he announced, "The bill approved by the cabinet to provide reservations for Kannadigas in private sector organisations,



100% Kannadiga quota gets held up, after being deemed unconstitutional | The Finance Express

industries and enterprises has been temporarily put on hold. This will be revisited and decided in the coming days," following backlash from industry heads, trade bodies and the public.

The Bill envisioned that industries and other private establishments shall appoint local candidates in 50% of management positions and 70 % of non-management

positions, defining criteria for local candidates being "100% Kannadigas".

Tech company Infosys has decided to abide by the bill, stating that they plan to work with all government regulations, as Salil Parekh, MD & CEO, tweeted. Other giants, such as PhonePe, have expressed their discontentment.

"I build companies. Have created 25000+ jobs across

India! My kids don't deserve jobs in their home city? Shame," Sameer Nigam, founder and CEO of PhonePe, tweeted on X.

This is not the first time such a bill has been passed. Similar bills were passed in Andhra Pradesh in 2019, Haryana in 2020, and Jharkhand in 2023.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court disposed of the Haryana Act 2023, stating

that it violated freedom guaranteed under Article 14 and Article 19 of the Constitution.

Previously, the BJP-led government had passed the Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Bill, 2022, within which the government added that it could withdraw benefits from industries which refused to provide reservation in employment for Kannadigas. It also mandated that all communication and correspondence with the public shall use Kannada.

This time, BJP state president of Karnataka, Vijayendra Yediyurappa, condemned the current Congress government, stating that this was a "timid move."

"Why did you bring the bill to give employment to the Kannadigas? Why hold back?" He tweeted.

In addition, the current bill also violates Article 16(3), which allows for reservation based on residence.

## Bahutva Karnataka traces the roots of lynching

Aatrevi Bose

Expressing her views on lynchings in India, Jaya Sharma, a feminist activist and researcher, said that the magical combination that Hindu nationalism now offers is permission and prohibition. So, the attackers are doing what is prohibited according to liberal, progressive, and secular ideology and going against the norms of human rights and law.

Bahutva Karnataka organised a panel discussion titled 'Lynchings in India: A National Shame' on July 20 to deliberate upon the psycho-social factors responsible for the hatred stemming from attackers against



Representational Image

Feminism In India

marginalised communities and an activist's role in preventing hate crime.

Lawyer Manvi Atri moderated this talk among the panellists Sylvia Karpagam, a public health doctor; Nadeem Khan, general secretary of the Association for Protection of Civil Rights (APCR);

and MD Shadeb Ansari, an advocate at Jharkhand High Court and Sharma.

Attackers are permitted to lynch and are garlanded by ministers, which is giving them a psychological thrill, she said. "Filming and sharing (lynching) is not an add-on; it is an intrinsic part of the violence..."

We are in the digital world. Hence, we need to turn our gaze towards the attackers to see these aspects beyond indoctrination, and also urge Meta to remove lynching videos from YouTube and Facebook," she emphasised.

"These are not stand-alone or isolated incidents. These words that we use become a form of sanitising/downplaying the kind of structural problem happening within a culture that rationalises, legitimised, and even valorises these actions." Discrimination, media collusion, social and political impunity become some of the factors enabling mental checklist of "who can be lynched", she added.

## Amul's lack of hygiene

Hemalatha YN

BENGALURU: Expressing dissatisfaction for not receiving a response about unhygienic food being sold from Amul, Sumitra Shekar, the complainant, said that customer's primary concern is to keep themselves healthy by eating hygienic food, especially when it comes to the children's health, but coming across such incidents from trusted brands has created the fear about consuming the packed foods.

The customer, Shekar, discovered four insects in a pack of Amul butter while making breakfast for her children on July 17. The product purchased from Reliance Smart at the Chikalasandra branch was well within its expiry date, January 13, 2025.

She informed, "I have lodged a complaint with Amul customer care, seeking a resolution but it has been four days since the complaint has been raised and I have not received any response. It is very disappointing to know about the brand's ignorance towards resolving their customers' complaints, leaving us with no option but to question their commitment to quality and customer satisfaction," she added.

## Mental health in cinema

Utsav Pradhan

BENGALURU: Films often shape our understanding and views on mental health, thus making accuracy and empathy all the more critical, expressed filmmaker Anmol Tikoo in a panel discussion on mental illness portrayal in movies.

Hosted at the Bangalore International Centre on Saturday, July 20, the panel discussion, "The Good, The Bad & The Ugly: Portrayal of Mental Illness in Movies", invited experts from various fields to discuss the representation of mental illness in cinema.

Panellists featured Suhas Satish, assistant professor at



Panel discussion

Utsav Pradhan

the Department of Psychiatry, NIMHANS, filmmakers Suneel Raghavendra, Vrinda Samartha, Anmol Tikoo, and Basundhara Ghosh, blogger and Founder of Gangs of Cinepur.

"We love stories. And so, through cinema, we look for the characters we relate to. And just temporarily, people

believe that some real change is possible; it is happening... Cinema does speak to people, and it has the power to inspire," said Samartha.

The panel aimed to raise awareness and encourage dialogue about mental health in cinema, fostering a more sensitised narrative among audiences.

## Mango mania hits SJU

Aatrevi Bose

CAMPUS: On the occasion of National Mango Day, St. Joseph's University witnessed its first-ever event dedicated to the king of fruits to celebrate mangoes and raise awareness on healthy snacking.

Mango Mania was organised by the Food Miles Association from the Department of Food Science and Technology on July 20. With game stalls, mango-based tarts, mousse, custard and golgappas were all sold out at the postgraduate block.

Speaking to The Beacon, Dr Anupriya Mazumder, the

Association Coordinator, said, "July 22 is the National Mango Day, and mangoes are still available. The season has not gone yet. This weekend, we tried to popularise it for the first time, and it was a huge success."

Addressing the growing trend of savoury fast foods, she explained, "Besides having a good number of vitamins, mango is a rich source of minerals and keratin. It can be an alternative to make different varieties of nutritious dishes that give you the same taste as junk food."