

# THE BEACON

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## School scams Rs 266 Crore

Rupasree C

Over 10,000 parents in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have alleged that Kesava Reddy Educational Institutions defrauded them of Rs. 266 crores through a refundable deposit scheme, promising free education and other benefits that were never delivered.

The educational group, operating across the two states, reportedly asked parents to pay deposits ranging from Rs. 3-4 lakhs each, assuring that the amount would cover food, transport, and tuition fees while being fully refundable. However, the management has not honoured the contract and has absconded. So far, the CID has recovered only Rs. 9.01 crore. According to the CID, Tirupati, some properties of the accused have been seized, but the case could take over three years in court. Parents who use their life savings are in financial trouble as the legal process moves slowly. Sub Inspector K. Chakrapani mentioned that the legal process is lengthy, but steps have been taken, such as seizing some properties of the accused. He also stated, "Justice in India often faces delays." P. Pranavi, a parent, said that she had trusted the institution with Rs. 3 lakhs for her child's education, but the refund never came. She added that many parents had filed complaints, but progress had been slow.

The scheme has exposed gaps in regulatory oversight. Critics urge stricter government controls on deposit schemes in private schools. Education Department senior official S Ravi Kumar noted, "Parents must be cautious and clear regulations are needed to avoid such issues."

## Hostage to trauma, justice remains elusive

Ourouge R F

Once outgoing and playful, Rohan had become withdrawn and isolated. His professor noticed these changes and referred him to the college counsellor while alerting his parents. The counselling session revealed that a weekend stay at his friend's house had changed the boy's life. The violation committed by the friend's father, whom he respected, scared Rohan. Though his parents filed a case, Rohan's denial and reluctance to cooperate during the trial led to the perpetrator's acquittal.

A report by the Times of India revealed that in Karnataka, for every conviction in sexual assault cases, including POCSO cases, where the survivors are young boys, there have been more than two acquittals over the past four years. The poor conviction rate stems largely from societal stigma and victim's unwillingness to



Representational Image

The Guardian

acknowledge the abuse. Denial, shame and fear make it exceedingly difficult for male victims to seek justice.

The Beacon contacted psychologist Dr Hania from JSS Hospital, Mysore, to gain insights on the psychological impact of such assaults on male victims. "Sexual assault affects male victims as much

as it does the female victims and may even be linked to worse results," she explained. Symptoms include mood disturbances, anxiety, suicidal ideation, behavioural issues, sleep difficulties and sexual dysfunction, amongst others. She also added that they are vulnerable to the potential development of PTSD, or 'rape trauma

syndrome', causing the victim to be triggered by any physical intimacy. Dr Hania opined that patriarchal societal norms contribute to hesitancy in seeking help. She claims that there lies misconception about the concept of masculinity and emotional expression being labelled as 'feminine', which creates barriers to seeking help.

Even with evidence and familial support, the victims hesitate to take legal action. India's judicial system has historically never recognised rape as a gender-neutral crime. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 (BNS) removed Section 377, which addressed non-consensual acts against men and transgender individuals. "India does not see rape as 'gender neutral' compared to the United States and the United Kingdom... section 376 of the IPC only deals with rape against women. Only sections related to physical assault can be invoked in cases of male rape, which has less severe legal consequences than rape-specific charges," said lawyer Sharanya (name changed).

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Delhi High Court challenging the exclusion of provisions to punish acts of non-consensual sodomy under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

## SCMS inks an MoU with Deccan Herald

Krishnapriya M & Anusree B

**CAMPUS:** The School of Communication and Media Studies (SCMS) of St Joseph's University, Bengaluru, inked a Memorandum of Understanding with the leading English daily Deccan Herald on Tuesday, December 10, to aid the students of the MA in Journalism and Mass Communication program to better connect with the news industry. Among other things, the MoU aims to provide industry exposure through workshops by top paper editors and internship opportunities for students.

Present at the signing of the MoU were Dr Richard Rego, Dean of the School of Communication and Media Studies, K. Saravanan, Assistant General Manager of Deccan Herald and Prajavani, K



K Saravanan and Father Rego presenting the MoU Vaishnav

Guruprasad and B L Manohar, both being managers of Deccan Herald and Prajavani. Dr Rego said that the entire purpose of the MoU is for the students to benefit from Deccan Herald's expertise and whatever they can offer to the student's learning.

In discussion with the students, K Saravanan enquired about the content they looked forward to in newspapers and elaborated on their query about the newspaper's role in developing critical thinking, objectivity, and niche reporting. He explained how important it is to have a clear and fearless way of thinking. He added, "We are here to give you soft skill training and internship opportunities and publish your good stories." HoD Dr Maruthu Pandian, Associate Dean Dr Parinitha Shinde, and other program coordinators and faculty were part of the programme. Program coordinator Ravinandan and student coordinator Daiti Baidur are entrusted with liaising with the Deccan Herald regarding the MoU.

## Devanahalli farmers' protest, demand response

Krishnapriya M

**BENGALURU:** As the Devanahalli farmers' protest against the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) 's 1777-acre fertile farmland acquisition drive entered its 981st day, students, farmers, and Dalit organisations across Karnataka protested, demanding an adequate response from the State government.

Speaking to The Beacon on Dec 9, 2024, Ramesh Cheemachanahalli, a member of the core group leading the protest, said that the farmers have opposed the recent negotiation in which dry land is to be acquired instead of irrigated land, as this would affect 600 families.

"Almost 400 families do not have irrigated land. Because of that, we are not agreeing to the negotiation," he said. He opined that since land acquisition in Karnataka does not require consent from farmers following the Amendment of 2019, protest is the only means of saving farmers of around 13 villages from becoming landless.

## KIFF opens doors to local filmmakers

Debarpita M

Although the Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) has acknowledged international directors since its first edition, this time, the festival has provided opportunities to local directors, not only those based in Kolkata but also from other states. Along with this novel feature, a record number of workshops have been organised, according to Atreya, the KIFF public relations manager.

The 30th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) was inaugurated on December 4 and concluded

on December 11. The festival featured over 180 films from 29 countries and was hosted in multiple venues in Kolkata. A special exhibition dedicated to the works of the renowned filmmaker Tapan Sinha was also organised.

"As a film enthusiast, I find such festivals very encouraging, and it also becomes very accessible for us to have direct communication with the industry experts through these workshops," said Aditya Alexander, a film student. "We'll also gain a lot of insights on films and other related topics and explore

various career options," he added.

Atreya emphasised that film enthusiasts and those interested in literature who want to know more about the world of film and cinema can attend the workshops, which will showcase some of the most renowned faces in their panel discussions and masterclasses.

This year's theme celebrates French cinema, and the program features 21 films from France, including iconic classics and works by contemporary female directors.

## SSW observes Human Rights Day

Chukki

**CAMPUS:** Though America is the wealthiest country in the world, it suffers from a poor yet expensive healthcare system that restricts working citizens from using it, stated Dr. Arthur Frankel, a Professor at the School of Social Work (SSW) at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington (UNCW), USA.

December 10 is observed as Human Rights Day, and the School of Social Work at St Joseph's University (SJU), Bengaluru, in collaboration with UNCW, USA, hosted the International Symposium 2024 on Thursday, December 12, with the theme "Human Rights in the Global

World: Trends and Challenges." Dr Frankel inaugurated the Symposium. Dean of the School of Social Work, Father Augustine Lourdu, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the SJU, Dr Regina Mathias, were present at the Symposium along with other dignitaries. This was followed by a panel discussion with experts like the Executive Director of CARE, R Manohar, Deputy Manager of HR & EHS, Geetha Nataraj, Former Professor at SJU, Dr Kiran Jeevan, and others, who addressed human rights issues in different fields. Continued by a Q&A, the students, faculty, and PhD scholars presented their papers and posters.