

# THE BEACON

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## Boycott Maldives trends on X

Sherin Johnson

In a recent turn of events, social media platforms have witnessed a surge in posts featuring the hashtag BoycottMaldives. It gained momentum after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Lakshadweep. The trend was sparked when three Maldivian officials openly mocked the Indian leader on X.

On January 4, Modi posted on X "For those who wish to embrace the adventurer in them, Lakshadweep has to be on your list. He made other posts too that promoted Lakshadweep.

Commenting on PM Modi's post, Maldivian Deputy Minister of Youth Empowerment Mariyam Shiuna, said, "What a clown. The puppet of Israel Mr Narendra diver with a life jacket," which caused an uproar. This comment has now been deleted.

Even as the social media rage continued, EaseMyTrip, the second-largest travel company announced an indefinite suspension of all travel bookings to Maldives. Indian citizens started hashtag Exploreindianislands and grabbed the attention of the travellers to Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

David Raj, a content creator and a travel agent raised concerns regarding the infrastructure to handle large footfalls on those islands. While speaking to The Beacon, he said, "Boom in Indian tourism is also concerning because, in the long run, it's going to impact the diversity. Ministry of Tourism of India should take interest in this and should promote sustainable eco-friendly tourism."

## Blinkit workers allege attack, protest

Amrutha GP & Diva Batavia

The stand-off between Blinkit and its delivery partners has taken a new turn in the national capital as the employees allege being attacked by the hired goons on Saturday, January 13. Blinkit is an app-based delivery agent which has been in service for a couple of years for delivering goods across the country and currently hit the headlines for cutting the pay of delivery partners without any explanation.

The Ekta Union has teamed up with AICTTU (All India Central Council of Trade Unions) to protest against the company. Despite the rise in sales and revenues, the employees are given a pay cut, allege the workers.

Surya Prakash, the secretary



Beaten but not defeated

Twitter/@Dipankar\_cpiml

of AICTTU while talking to The Beacon said, "Previously the employees were getting paid Rs 15 but now they are getting paid Rs 12 per delivery. All the stores, according to rules, need to be open only until midnight but they are extending the timing un-

til 2 am which is forcing the workers to work overtime."

Ekta Union in association with AICTTU carried out a protest in South Delhi wherein, Apoorva Sharma, the Union's convenor, said, "When the workers were protesting a few goons (bouncers)

called by the company management came up and beat them up following which store manager of a partnered store registered a fake complaint."

A delivery partner was beaten up by a few people for about fifteen minutes before being taken to the police sta-

tion. The police were appalled to see his condition said advocate Surya Prakash defending the delivery partners.

A few of the workers were attacked near the police station leading to protests. The convenor informed that due to a lack of resources, the protest will be limited to Delhi.

As per reports in News Click, Sharma, said, "The AEEU (App Employee Ekta Union) submitted a letter to the Delhi Lieutenant governor and the Chief Minister regarding problems faced by the App employees, but the Delhi government is not ready for any kind of talk on their demand."

Despite the strong case and many notices being sent, Blinkit has chosen to remain silent on this issue and has not issued any clarification.

## BBMP eviction sparks street vendors' protest

Sonia Sebi

**BENGALURU:** Distressed street vendors took to the streets on Friday protesting the eviction in Jayanagar. Following the eviction of street vendors by BBMP, a protest broke out in Jayanagar 4 block as the marshalls started clearing the vendors without prior notice. They seized the carts of those who did possess the ID card. The vendors called out the officials for failing to adhere to 30-day advance notice before the eviction as mandated by the Street Vendor Act.

According to the vendors, the situation started to escalate in November



Vendors protesting at Jayanagar 4th Block

Sonia Sebi

2023. Despite possessing the verified documentation and abiding by the rules, the marshalls continued to create problems for the vendors, they allege. Attempts to discuss the matter with BBMP

officials remained unsuccessful. Despite making a promise to hold a meeting with the officials, no actions were taken from their end, they say. "On December 27, we gave them a memorandum de-

tailing the harassment by the marshalls and we gave them a list of vendors with their ID card numbers and then we said that the marshalls are creating trouble and requested to direct them not to trouble us. We said to call for a town vending committee meeting as per the act. They said the next day itself we would call for a meeting, but it didn't happen," said Vinay Sreenivasa of the Federation of Bangalore District Street Vendors Association. The vendors also highlighted their willingness to adhere to spot inspections to address the concerns of arrangements as well.

## BIC hosts Queer performers for classical night

Sneha Thomas

**BENGALURU:** On Friday, the Bangalore International Centre welcomed an evening of Western classical, Hindustani and Carnatic live music and dance performances by the LGBTQIA+ community, organised by Prarthana Prasad, an Instagram content creator and Cosmopolitan's LGBTQIA+ Voice of the Year, along with her partner Maney.

The idea behind hosting a Queer classical night is to create a shared community space that is more accessible and a space that is safe for people part of the queer community, asexual folks and also for people who are introverted, said Maney. The event drew a diverse crowd of queer performers and viewers including some who were closeted. "A lot of our artists have performed before, some even regularly. But I'm not sure how many of the times they've performed they were allowed to truly and openly be themselves, with no worry that someone is going to pass a debilitating comment or say something where they need to hide themselves," Prasad said.

## Rohith Vemula remembered

Neenu M

Labelling the ones who rebel against the caste system as casteist, while shielding the actual practitioners from criticism is an irony, opined Dr Dontha Prasanth, former president of Ambedkar Students Association (ASA) and student union at the University of Hyderabad, who was expelled eight years ago for advocating social justice.

A session organised by the Ambedkar Reading Cycle (ARC) on 13 January 2024, remembering Rohith Vemula, a PhD scholar from the University of Hyderabad who ended his



Rohith Vemula

NewsClick

life unable to withstand caste discrimination, mirrored on the past and ongoing caste struggles within educational institutions.

Dr Prasanth reflected on the obstacles Vemula faced to pursue education. "Rohith was passionate about reading, writing and organising. He wrote competitive exams and got admission through open

general merit, but was accused of receiving admissions because of the support of ASA," he said.

Furthermore, he addressed about how other students and himself from marginalised communities were alienated. He also remarked on the significance of allowing individuals to express themselves and entitling space for all.

## A voice for the Tibetan cause

Parvathi Nair

While speaking about the Indo-Tibetan relationship, Tibetan activist Tenzin Tsundue said that the two nations have always shared a close bond. The award-winning poet pointed out cultural and linguistic similarities between the two nations.

Tsundue, who has been a member of Friends of Tibet, a people's movement for the Tibetan cause, at a discussion organised by the Alternative Law Forum on Friday recalled how he had been arrested almost 16 times over the past few years. "When they arrested me, I told them that they'd arrested the wrong person. They

should be putting him in jail, not me," he said, talking about his arrest before the Chinese President visited India in 2019.

In his presentation, Tsundue described how India borders Tibet, and not China, causing the two nations to have a remarkable shared identity. "Tibetans are somewhat able to understand the edicts of the Buddhist ruler Ashoka."

He also threw light on the Tibetan nomadic culture through his presentation. The culture gives various advantages to Tibetans, forging them as experts on the hilly Himalayan Terrain and making them assets for the Indian Army, he opined.