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Students to get free commute

Sonia Sebi

The Kerala Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) announced free student transportation for economically disadvantaged families. Adarsh, a retired Road Transport Officer (RTO) of the Kochi Metropolitan Transport Authority, speaking to The Beacon, said the aim was to ease the financial burden on students who can now travel free of cost in Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and private buses.

The rise in private vehicles has led to a decline in commuters travelling in public transport. The initiative aims to make public transport more appealing to all income groups by being efficient, affordable and a potential solution to traffic congestion, he said.

While private bus operators expressed concerns about incurring losses, Adarsh suggested a balanced approach. "They shouldn't be ignored completely. Initiatives that support both governments, as well as private sectors, should be undertaken. On the flip side, private bus operators should also recognise that allowing students to become accustomed to public transport usage, they are likely to foster a long-term preference for such transportation methods in the future."

A total of 64,000 financially disadvantaged families' students are expected to benefit from the free transportation scheme.

Shaping tomorrow, the future of South

Prajwal S K

BENGALURU: Dakshin Dialogue serves as a vital forum for fostering discussions on key regional and global issues related to the southern region," said Anusha Ravi Sood, executive editor of news website, South First. On Saturday, the ITC Windsor Bengaluru hosted the esteemed Dakshin Dialogues 2023, South First's annual thought conclave. Prominent figures like DK Shivakumar, Shashi Tharoor, Khushbu Sundar, and others participated in discussions on subjects such as delimitation and the Southern model of governance.

Delivering the keynote address at Dakshin Dialogues 2023, Dr Shashi Tharoor, a parliamentarian and member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), emphasised the importance of not penalising those who have achieved great success in different fields due to the effective



Panel discussion on delimitation

population control measures implemented in the South. The South has prioritised education, healthcare, social infrastructure, providing meals to children in schools, and making medical care accessible in rural areas, he said. The panel discussion on 'Delimitation: Southern Discomfort and Solutions'

with Khushbu Sundar, a BJP national executive member, Prof MV Rajeev Gowda, vice-chairman of the Karnataka Planning Board, retired Supreme Court Justice Jasti Chelameswar and John Brittas, a Rajya Sabha member from the CPI (M) was held.

Khushbu Sundar favoured the current government's

approach to delimitation and its necessity for the southern states. The prime minister is actively working on it, and the focus will not be solely on population aspects, she said. Prof MV Rajeev Gowda voiced concern that the delimitation exercise should not lead to political marginalisation. The southern states are an integral

South first

part of the federal equation, and sharing resources and increasing tax revenue should be done in consultation with other states, he added.

DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister, discussed the brand Bengaluru campaign mentioning the city's unique characteristics. Despite not being a planned city, Bengaluru has attracted people from around the world due to its pleasant weather, rich culture, abundant human resources, and educational opportunities, he said. "Bengaluru, the Pensioners Paradise, attracts tourists, and businesses, and provides a favourable environment for startups," he noted.

He also addressed issues that Bengaluru faces such as migrant housing, encroachment of lakes, congestion pricing, and healthcare. He emphasised that the development of Bengaluru is a collaborative process, and he would bring about significant changes within a year.

Over 3,500 calls received, Tele-MANAS succeeds

Parvathi Nair

On World Mental Health Day and the first anniversary of the Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele-MANAS), the project has received over 3,50,000 calls. It was officially launched on October 10, 2022. According to the official press release from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the initiative was launched on World Mental Health Day, last year to provide accessibility to free mental health services.

A total of 51 Tele-MANAS cells have been set up in the country, exceeding the



Representational image

target of one cell in each state and union territory.

"The Tele-MANAS program is aimed at setting up cells in every state and UT because mental health is not equitably available in all parts of the country," said Dr Pratima Murthy,

Economic Times

Director and senior professor of psychiatry at NIMHANS, while in conversation with Chief Correspondent, Special Projects, Ambika Singh Kahma during a special talk on World Mental Health Day on NDTV. According to Dr Murthy, one

in seven to ten individuals suffer from some kind of a diagnosable mental disorder. The most educated and affluent tend to have a stigma regarding mental health. "Getting professional help is considered as a sign of weakness or as a sign of mental health problem," she added. She also affirmed that Tele-MANAS has given people a platform to speak about their problems.

People have complained about sleep disturbances and substance abuse. "Seeking help to get the right kind of counselling, treatment, and medication can help reduce the time of suffering," she added.

Delayed salaries, induced stress

Sneha

Karnataka government employees are distressed over the delayed payment of their salaries. "The salaries that used to reach us on the first of every month, are now transferred on the seventh or eighth of every month," complained Muni Swamy, a BMTC bus conductor. As a result of the changes made in the administration and government of Karnataka, administrative staff especially teachers and BMTC staff have been receiving their salaries late for the past three months.

The employees believe that the introduction or implementation of new welfare schemes and government-provided benefits like the Shakti scheme in the state is delaying their salaries. "I don't mean to blame the government entirely, but ever since the introduction of the Shakti scheme and other freebies that are given away by the government, our salaries have been delayed. I regret saying that this has never happened before," commented Swamy. Neither the incentives received for four years were sanctioned nor the salaries were hiked, he lamented.

B'luru to witness a looming water crisis

Prajwal S K

BENGALURU:Alleging that the Cauvery Water Management Authority's order to divert water to Tamil Nadu led to a drinking water crisis for more than 1.3 crore residents of Bengaluru city, pro-Kannada organisations, farmer unions and various other associations continued to hold back-to-back 'dhanas'.

The Karnataka Jala Samrakshana Samithi, an umbrella outfit of farmers associations, Karnataka Dalita Sangharsha Saamhiti along with AAP leaders held a silent sit-in protest at Freedom Park

last week. A delegation comprising farmer leader Kuruburu Shanthakumar, Aam Aadmi Party state vice-president Mohan Dasari, pro-Kannada organisation leaders Gurudev Narayanakumar, and Vijay Singh and AAP leaders Jagdish Babu met Union Hydropower Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at his Delhi office on Monday. The delegation requested that permission be given for the Mekedatu project to provide a permanent solution to the drinking water issue in Bengaluru. Tamil Nadu must contribute at least Rs 2000

crore per year for the protection and conservation of forests in Karnataka which demands its share of the Cauvery water," said Shanthakumar.

Speaking to The Beacon, AAP leader Usha Mohan, said, "More than 480 TMC of water is released to Tamil Nadu in normal monsoon years. They do not have adequate mechanisms to manage surplus water, and it ends in the Bay of Bengal. Total of 65 TMC of water can be stored easily when the Mekedatu Dam is constructed. This will help both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to cope with the drought.

'Garden City' to 'Golden City'

Prajwal S K

BENGALURU:Bengaluru, referred to as the Garden City and Healthy City is all set to become the 'Golden City', said Davanam V Ramesh, the Chairman of Bangalore Jewellers Association

The Bangalore Jewellers Association launched the second Bangalore Golden Utsav to encourage gold purchases on Monday. The gold festival will occur in Bengaluru, Tumakuru, Hassan and Shimoga districts from October 15, 2023 to November 30, 2023.

Speaking at the gold festival Ramesh cited the slogan for the gold festival, "Invest your money in gold and it will protect you." "The primary aim of this festival is to attract tourists across the world. It showcases the city's diverse productions and promotes tourism. The festival will serve to introduce the visitors to the cultural and handicraft heritage of Karnataka by showcasing the finesse of local artisans and artists. This festival is likely to generate more tax revenue for the government" said Ramesh.