

# THE BEACON

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## HC upholds media freedom

Sneha Thomas

As the fourth estate, the press is essential to a healthy democracy. Their job is to ensure that this power is not abused and that the citizens are well informed and engaged in the democratic process, said Kerala High Court Justice PV Kunhikrishnan.

On Friday, the High Court quashed the criminal charges against two media professionals concerning a sting operation on Kerala's sensational solar scam case. It was ruled that media persons cannot be prosecuted for sting operations conducted in good faith to uncover the truth and inform citizens.

While journalists need legal protection to hold people accountable for corruption effectively, many media houses now pursue sensational news and misuse their power, which is why the legality of sting operations must be decided based on the case and the circumstances surrounding it, said Joseph Sebastian, a lawyer.

"Defining good faith or public interest will always be problematic, and Rana Ayyub's persecution for the Gujarat sting operation shows that prosecution is never really a journalist's (only) challenge," said Agnidev Bhattacharya, a journalist. In the Haren Pandya murder case, the Supreme Court of India dismissed her book stating that it is based upon conjectures, even though her work has been used as evidence in other related cases, he added.

## Ration shortage impact BPL card holders

Hemalatha Y N

**BENGALURU:** Daily wage workers claim that "Nyaya Bele Angadi" (ration shops) are allegedly selling rationed rice of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) card holders to non-BPL members in the black market. Additionally, the ration is disbursed at staff convenience, and its untimely discontinuation has been noted.

Vanitha K, a BPL card holder and daily wage worker, said ration shops were meant to be a solution for BPL card holders, who are mainly daily wage workers, to access their basic ration needs. Instead, they are struggling as the suppliers have failed to provide the ration for three consecutive months.

"The ration shop staff sells rice in the black market to non-BPL card



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holders. We rely heavily on the government's rice, as it's very difficult for us to buy rice from shops," she expressed. She added that the suppliers distribute for three days, on weekdays, whereas it should be done for at least a week. Speaking to The Beacon,

Bhagya S, in charge of a ration shop in Maruthi Nagar, explained that the BPL card holders are facing these issues due to limited stock. She noted that the area's current population of BPL card holders is 850 people, and the ration shop owners should receive

stocks accordingly. People outside the jurisdiction are trying to access rations from here, thus using up the ration more quickly than estimated, Bhagya claimed.

Vanitha recounted that whenever she came to collect the ration, she had to return without collecting

food staples, and the reasons were plenty; there was no stock, the server was down, or the shop would be closed.

Bhagya mentioned, "There is no scheduled timing given to us, so we don't have a proper idea of when we will get the stock from the society. As soon as we get it, we start distributing it immediately." As we receive instructions from the society that a BPL card holder could collect their ration in any Nyaya Bele Angadi, we request our area (Maruthi Nagar) people to come early and collect it, she explained.

Upon inquiring the measures undertaken to tackle the issues, she replied, "We are requesting the authorities to assign one ration shop to a particular area for the people to ensure equal access to ration for all cardholders."

## Nipah scare puts Kerala under the scanner again

Kessiah Joseph

The Nipah virus outbreak hit Kerala again, with a 14-year-old child from Pandikkad, Malappuram, succumbing to death. Till Sunday, 101 high-risk cases were identified out of 330 individuals on the contact list.

On July 21, the child succumbed to Nipah virus infection at Kozhikode Medical College despite timely medical intervention and anticipation of the monoclonal antibody treatment. The young patient displayed symptoms of fever on July 10. He was initially admitted to various



Representational Image

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hospitals in Malappuram and later transferred to Aster MIMS Hospital, Kozhikode.

Speaking to The Beacon, Dr Shahana S from Kozhikode Medical College said, "A syringe sample taken from the boy confirmed the presence of Nipah virus. The health condition of the child

worsened rapidly. Nipah affects the brain directly. Whoever came across contact with the child is under observation. The area is in lockdown with control regulations, and the health department is following up with preventative measures."

Health Minister Veena

George, in an official meeting on Saturday, stated that the disease's late-stage diagnosis and consequent treatment delay were primary factors contributing to the tragic outcome. "The mortality rate is too high without a proper cure. It is spreading through the animals, especially bats. Fever has every type of phase. We cannot analyse directly. It's done through a step-by-step process," mentioned Dr Shahana.

Authorities have imposed strict restrictions in Pandikkad and Anakayam, including closing educational institutions.

## Kerala districts on red alert

Neenu M

Due to global warming, heavy rainfall with flooding and waterlogging is eventually followed by a drought, said Saneeshkumar Joseph, Member of Legislative Assembly, Chalakudy, Kerala.

The Indian Meteorological Department recently announced red, orange and yellow alerts across certain districts in Kerala till July 24. Sunday onwards, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Kollam, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur had been under yellow alert.

Joseph said to The Beacon, "The dam water levels dropped as the state recorded its hottest summer ever, which avoided the necessity to open them. The unexpected rainfall caused some damage, such as floods and minor landslides. Heavy rains have begun pouring since the end of May, and it's worse than in previous years." But it's not as bad as the ones caused during the 2018 Kerala floods when 35 dams were opened in total, he added.

He said a few relief camps have been set up, and more will be opened based on the weather conditions.

## Knocking it out of the park

Parvathi Nair

The Indian women's cricket team made history as they scored the highest-ever total in the Women's T20, 2024.

In the match on Sunday at Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium in Sri Lanka, India beat the UAE by 78 runs.

With a total score of 201, India became the highest scorer in the Asia Cup, surpassing their record score of 181 in 2022 when they won the Women's T20 Asia Cup against



Indian Women's cricket team

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Sri Lanka. The Indian team scored almost double compared to their last match against Pakistan, indicating a welcome trajectory.

After winning the toss, UAE chose India to bat first. Harmanpreet Singh bagged

the highest score of 66 for the country. Meanwhile, Richa Ghosh was declared 'Player of the Match' for her exceptional performance and single-handedly scoring 64 runs in 29 balls, which sparked India's victory.

## Kanwariya's journey on celluloid

Kiranmai Basavaraj

**BENGALURU:** Kunal Vohra, the director of Longen Folk to Go on Pilgrimage: The Kanwar Yatra film, shed light upon the Kanwar Yatra - an annual tradition and its diverse socio-economic and cultural relevance.

On July 20, the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) organised a discussion on the film following its screening. This year, Kanwar Yatra is expected to occur from July 22 to August 2 on Sawan Shivratni. Saffron-clad Kanwariyas

gather water in Kanwar mud pots from the sacred Ganga at Kumbh Nagari and walk barefoot to their hometown after the ritual.

Speaking to The Beacon, Kunal said, "For 20 years, there's been an explosion of devotees for the Kanwar Yatra. All professions like small and large businesses, those who are poor and even the rich, young adults, and even older adults come here to Kanwar Yatra to fulfil their desires. Some even just come to express gratitude for what they have received".