

## IN BRIEF



### Govt honours entrepreneur Bobby Chemmanur

BENGALURU: Dr Bobby Chemmanur, popularly known as "BoChe", was honoured by the Karnataka government at a special ceremony held in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. The recognition was presented by Speaker of the Assembly U.T. Khader Farid in acknowledgement of Chemmanur's achievements and contributions.

Chemmanur recently completed an 812-kilometre run aimed at spreading the message of world peace, a feat that earned him both a Unique World Record and a Guinness World Record. The initiative attracted wide public attention and further strengthened his popularity among followers.

A fourth-generation leader of a business group with a legacy spanning over 163 years, Chemmanur has established himself as a visionary entrepreneur, philanthropist, sportsperson, motivational speaker and entertainer. He also enjoys a significant presence on social media with over 5.1 million followers and supporters.

Chemmanur had earlier made headlines by bringing legendary footballer Diego Maradona to Kerala for the first time as a brand ambassador and close associate.

In another widely recognised humanitarian initiative, Chemmanur helped mobilise ₹34 crore as "blood money" to secure the release of Abdul Rahim, an Indian facing a death sentence in a Saudi Arabian prison. Chemmanur personally contributed ₹1 crore towards the effort.

### Bengaluru-Kannur train extended to Kozhikode

MANGALURU: The South Western Railway has extended the daily Bengaluru-Kannur Express service up to Kozhikode in Kerala, offering improved connectivity between Karnataka and the northern parts of Kerala.

A notification issued by the railway headquarters in Hubballi stated that Train No. 16511/16512, which earlier operated between KSR Bengaluru City and Kannur, will now run up to Kozhikode with the approval of the Railway Board.

The extended service came into effect from March 15, with Train No. 16511 departing from Bengaluru City continuing its journey up to Kozhikode. The return service, Train No. 16512, will begin operating from Kozhikode to Bengaluru from March 16.

On the extended route, the train will stop at Thalassery, Vadakara and Quilandi stations after leaving Kannur. The train is scheduled to reach Kozhikode at about 12.40 pm and depart at 3.30 pm for the return journey.

Railway officials said the timetable between Bengaluru City and Payyannur remains unchanged and the same rake will continue to be used for the service. In addition, a special train will be operated between Yesvantpur and Hosapete to ease passenger congestion during the Ugadi festival.

The Yesvantpur-Hosapete Special Express will depart at 6.15 pm on March 18 and reach Hosapete at 4 am the next day, while the return train will leave Hosapete at 9 am on March 19 and arrive in Yesvantpur at 7.20 pm. The train will have halts at several stations including Tumakuru, Arasikere, Kadur, Chikkajajur, Chitradurga, Rayadurga, Ballari Cantonment and Toranagallu, officials said.

## Principals from 220 engineering colleges participate in VTU meet

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BENGALURU

"ENGINEERING colleges must prepare students for the job market by providing practical education," said Dr. S. Vidyashankar, Vice-Chancellor of Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU). Speaking after inaugurating the Principals' Meeting organized on Monday at a private hotel by Visvesvaraya

Technological University (VTU) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), he said, "It is not that there are no job opportunities today. However, students suitable for the job market are not readily available. Colleges must provide students with the necessary skills required to secure employment. As much as possible, emphasis should be placed on practical education."

He further said, "The University will implement several schemes keeping the welfare of students in mind. However, the responsibility of implementing them lies with you. Do not forget that you are the leaders of VTU. Colleges must act as friends to students. Laboratories should be opened to support students' learning. Most of the students who enroll with us come from poor

backgrounds. We must stand as guides to help fulfill their dreams."

Dr. Prashanth Mishra, Head of the IEEE Bengaluru Section, said, "IEEE chapters should be opened at the college level because we emphasize practical education for students. We also provide financial assistance for seminars and workshops. Additionally, we organize workshops for professors to help them achieve

progress in their respective departments. Scholarships are also provided to students. Since there are many such benefits, I request institutions to make the best use of them." VTU Registrar Prof. Prasad Rumpure, member of the VTU Academic Council Chengappa, and Director of the VTU Regional Office Dr. H. R. Sudarshan Reddy, among others, were present at the program.



## MLA slams NICE Road management, demands takeover by govt

Somashekhar wants immediate redressal of poor maintenance and safety concerns

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BJP MLA S T Somashekhar strongly criticised the management of the NICE Road during the ongoing budget session of the Karnataka Assembly, alleging that despite collecting nearly ₹10 crore in toll revenue daily, the company has failed to provide proper road maintenance and infrastructure.

Raising the issue in the Assembly, Somashekhar urged the state government to immediately take over the NICE Road stretch from Hosur Road to Magadi Road, citing poor maintenance and safety concerns. The MLA expressed dissatisfaction that even though an inquiry had been ordered earlier when the issue was raised, no concrete action has been taken regarding the deteriorating condition of several bridges along the corridor. He also highlighted that landowners who had given their land nearly 30-35 years ago for the road project are yet to



receive compensation sites. According to him, the conduct and functioning of the NICE company have been unsatisfactory, prompting him to raise the matter again in the Assembly. Somashekhar said that despite the company generating substantial toll revenue, road maintenance has been neglected. He noted that several bridges built 25-30 years ago are now in poor condition and not even safe for two-wheelers. In his constituency alone, eight bridges are reportedly in a dangerous state, he added. The MLA said he had repeatedly submitted representations to the NICE company and officials of the Public

Works Department, but no effective action has been taken. He also recalled that during the tenure of former PWD minister HC Mahadevappa, a House committee was constituted to examine the issue. The committee, which included MLA DK Jayachandra and other members, had conducted inspections and identified several problems. However, Somashekhar alleged that the NICE company has failed to comply with the recommendations of the government and the Assembly. The MLA further pointed out that around 1,700 acres of land along the road were earmarked for layout development,

a matter that is currently pending before the court. Even after 35 years, the landowners have neither received payment nor seen development of the layout, leaving farmers in distress for decades, he said. Somashekhar also expressed disappointment that no decisive action has been taken against the company during either the previous BJP government or the current Congress government. He insisted that cancelling the 30-year concession agreement and bringing the road under government control would help address the maintenance issues and repair unsafe bridges. Responding to the concerns, Karnataka Public Works Department Minister Satish Jarkiholi said that a letter has already been sent to the NICE company, but the government has not received any response so far. He added that the matter has been discussed in a cabinet sub-committee, and a final decision will be taken once the committee submits its report.

## Lack of growth strategy impedes globally popular Mysuru silk industry

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MYSORE Silk Saree is not just a garment but a symbol of pride for Mysuru and the entire state of Karnataka. Known for its elegance, purity and rich heritage, the saree enjoys enormous demand not only within India but also among buyers abroad. Yet, despite its popularity and economic potential, the industry continues to struggle due to traditional administrative approaches and lack of a progressive growth strategy. Industry observers say the demand for authentic Mysore silk sarees is so high that influential people in Mysuru often receive calls from customers in other cities and even overseas requesting help in purchasing the premium saree. However, the inability to scale production and modernise the sector has prevented the industry from tapping its full potential. Ironically, while most businesses are embracing digital platforms, the Mysore silk industry has reportedly withdrawn online sales services due to pressure caused by overwhelming demand. Instead of expanding production capacity and improving supply



chains, the system has reverted to conventional sales methods. Experts believe that shortage of raw materials and limited production capacity are the primary reasons behind the decision. The industry currently produces only about 400 sarees per day — far below the actual demand, which runs into thousands. Around 300 to 350 sarees are produced in Mysuru, while another 100 to 120 are manufactured at the factory in Channarayana. Over the past three years, about 3.10 lakh sarees have been produced, of which more than 3.09 lakh were sold, clearly demonstrating the high market demand. Another challenge is the declining interest among farmers in silk cultivation. Many farmers are moving away from sericulture due to price uncertainty and unstable market conditions. As a result, young people from rural areas are

migrating to cities in search of livelihood, often ending up in low-paying and labour-intensive jobs. Experts argue that the industry requires a fresh approach. Encouraging startups in areas such as cocoon production, silk thread manufacturing, dyeing and marketing could revitalise the sector. By integrating modern technology and entrepreneurial thinking, Mysore silk could reach international markets more effectively. In addition to sarees, there is also growing potential for other silk-based products such as scarves, bags, suits and home décor items that could appeal to younger generations and global buyers. If supported with better policies, stable prices for farmers and modern management systems, the Mysore silk sector could generate thousands of jobs and contribute significantly to the state economy.

## ED conducts raid on Mantri Developers

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OFFICIALS from the Enforcement Directorate conducted raids on the premises of Mantri Developers in Bengaluru on allegations of illegal money laundering. The ED teams carried out searches at the company's office as well as the residence of its founder Sunil Mantri as part of an ongoing investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Founded in 1999, Mantri Developers is a well-known real estate firm headquartered in Bengaluru and operates in cities such as Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune. The

company has undertaken several residential, commercial and retail projects across these cities. According to sources, more than 10 ED officials arrived from the agency's Delhi office in around six vehicles early in the morning and began searching the company's office located on Vittal Mallya Road as well as other related premises. Officials are currently examining financial documents and records linked to the firm's transactions. The agency has registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and is reportedly scrutinising financial dealings connected to the company.

## GOVT FOCUSED ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: CM

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KARNATAKA Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the Congress government has been prioritising women's empowerment through its welfare programmes, adding that the party's guarantee schemes have significantly improved the economic and social status of women in the state. Speaking at the executive meeting and training camp organised by the Karnataka Pradesh Mahila Congress in Bengaluru on Sunday, the Chief Minister said women party workers played a crucial role in the Congress party's victory in the recent by-elections in Bagalkote and Davanagere. Siddaramaiah noted that the



Congress governments during 2013-2018 and again from 2023 onwards have consistently focused on empowering women. Highlighting the impact of the government's key guarantee schemes, he said that under the Shakti Scheme, women in the state have collectively made around 700 crore free bus journeys so far. He also pointed out that the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme is

providing ₹2,000 per month to about 1.26 crore women, which has helped improve their financial independence and social standing. According to him, these initiatives have increased women's purchasing power and boosted their confidence. Quoting B. R. Ambedkar, the Chief Minister said true freedom cannot be realised unless gender discrimination and inequality are eliminated in society. **Call for active participation in campaigns** Emphasising the importance of leadership among women, Siddaramaiah said equal opportunities for all would make achieving equality easier. He noted that the Karnataka Pradesh Mahila

Congress currently has more than one lakh women members and urged the organisation to increase the membership to two lakh in the future. With upcoming by-elections approaching, the Chief Minister called on women members to actively participate in campaign activities and spread awareness about the government's pro-people schemes. He suggested forming two teams of women party workers to take part in campaigning in Bagalkote and Davanagere. Siddaramaiah also recalled that the Congress had won the previous by-elections in Channarayana, Shiggaon and Sandur, expressing confidence that the party would emerge victorious in the upcoming contests as well.

Kauvery Hospitals screened 24,264 people across locations including Electronic City, Marathahalli, Hosur, Chikkaballapur, JP Nagar, and HSR Layout

## Taking kidney health warning to city's busiest junctions

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ON World Kidney Day, teams from Kauvery Hospitals, Bangalore stood at two of the city's busiest traffic junctions, the Electronic City highway on Hosur Road and the Marathahalli Bridge stretch on the Outer Ring Road, holding awareness placards and handing kidney health screening cards to over 2,000 commuters stopped at red lights. The message on those cards was direct: Diabetes, high BP, and frequent supplements can silently damage your kidneys. Get checked before symptoms appear. The activation was backed by findings from a large-scale health screening that Kauvery Hospitals conducted across Bangalore and its surrounding areas. Of those screened, more

than 6,600 participants, over 27 percent of the total, were found to have some form of elevated blood pressure. A significant number among them had no prior diagnosis. In Electronic City alone, 552 of 1,980 participants screened showed elevated blood pressure readings. In Chandapura, Anekal, and Kammasandra, the pattern held. Across the board, the majority of those found to be hypertensive had walked into the camp unaware. India is home to over 77 million people with diabetes, a large proportion of them undiagnosed, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research. The National Family Health Survey found that only 30 percent of hypertensive men and 38 percent of hypertensive women in India are on treatment.



Diabetes and hypertension together account for the majority of end-stage kidney disease cases in the country. The kidney absorbs the consequences of both conditions without

producing a single symptom until the damage is well advanced. Dr. Rammohan Sripath Bhat, Director of the Institute of Nephrology at Kauvery Hospitals Electronic City, and a nephrologist with

over 15 years of experience trained across institutions in India and the United Kingdom, said: "Together, over time, these things accelerate damage that could have been caught with a simple blood and

**The National Family Health Survey found that only 30 per cent of hypertensive men and 38 per cent of hypertensive women in India are on treatment. Diabetes and hypertension together account for the majority of end-stage kidney disease cases in the country**

urine test. By the time kidneys make themselves heard, the window for early action has often already closed." Dr. Krishna Kishore C, Director of the Institute of Nephrology at Kauvery Hospitals, a nephrologist with over 15 years of experience and a specialist in kidney transplantation, glomerular diseases, and community nephrology, said: "Kidney disease is preventable in a large number of cases, but prevention requires people to know their numbers before they feel unwell."

Dr. S. Vijayabaskaran, Executive Director of Kauvery Hospitals, said, "Our screening data puts a number to what our doctors observe every day: the burden of undetected, untreated metabolic disease in this city is large, and the kidney is where it quietly arrives. Our commitment is to make world-class kidney care, including transplantation, accessible and affordable for patients across Bangalore and beyond. Today's awareness drive is the front end of that commitment."