



Anvay Dravid to lead state for Vinoo Mankad trophy

BENGALURU: Promising Anvay Dravid, son of legendary Rahul Dravid, was on Wednesday appointed as captain of the Karnataka team for the Vinoo Mankad Trophy. The one-day format U-19 tournament will be played at Visakhapatnam from October 8-16.

The right-handed wicketkeeper-batter Dravid had recently featured in India U-19's three-match ODI series against Australia in Rajkot, where he played two matches. The 17-year-old was also picked in India U-19's tour of Sri Lanka in July this year. Karnataka are placed in Elite Group E along with Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi.

Nitte climbs into 1001-1200 rankings for 2027

MANGALURU: Nitte (Deemed to be University), Mangaluru, has moved up in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2027, leaving the 1201-1500 band of 2026 for the 1001-1200 band. The rise, the university said, follows steady work on teaching, research, research quality, industry engagement and international outlook, which are the five broad pillars used by THE.

Officials linked the result to a lasting stress on academic excellence, research that has impact, innovation, international contact and social responsibility. The new band, they added, shows the combined labour of the campus community in building a stronger, more globally connected academic and research setting.

University leaders thanked faculty, staff, students, alumni and partners in academia, industry and the community for their continued effort. Nitte said it will keep developing talent, advancing knowledge, supporting innovation and meeting social needs through sound teaching and research that matters. The 2027 improvement is described as a marker on the university's global path and as fresh energy to deepen academic, research, industry and international work and to aim for still higher recognition in coming years.

LPG cylinder explodes on vacant site

BENGALURU: A LPG cylinder exploded inside a makeshift shed at a vacant site here on Wednesday and there were no casualties or injuries, police said. According to police, the cylinder exploded at the site belonging to a person named Murthy, located at 6th Cross, Kaggadasapura, within the limits of Byappanahalli Police Station.

The shed was damaged due to the blast. Upon reaching the spot and inspecting the area, it was found that there were no casualties or injuries, a senior police officer said. Responding to a query whether it was an illegal gas refilling unit, the officer said, "We are verifying the incident." Fire and Emergency Services personnel, along with officers and staff of the Byappanahalli Police Station, reached the spot and conducted an inspection, he added.

New campus at Kings School

Bengaluru: The King's School Canterbury has launched its Bengaluru campus, partnering with Vidyashilp Education Group. Founded in 597 AD, the school will welcome its first pupils in 2027-28, combining its historic educational legacy with Bengaluru's dynamic environment.

Contractors warn of releasing commission documents if dues remain unpaid

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

THE Karnataka State Contractors' Association has warned the state government that it would release documents relating to alleged commission practices if its pending bills are not cleared by November. Association president R. Manjunath said contractors had been waiting for payments for several years and accused the government of failing to honour assurances on clearing their dues.

The association has claimed that nearly Rs 38,000 crore remains pending across various government departments and has sought immediate release of the amount. Reports have put the number of affected contractors at around 1.5 lakh, with dues dating back to 2021-22.

Manjunath alleged that commission demands had increased under the present government and said the association would disclose documents if the pending amount was not released

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within the deadline. These are allegations made by the contractors' association and have not been independently established.

He also alleged that legislators were increasingly intervening in contract works. According to him, contractors who secure tenders are sometimes required to ap-

proach local MLAs before commencing work, which he claimed was discouraging genuine contractors from taking up projects. "Once a tender is awarded, contractors have to first approach the MLA. Only after getting approval can the work begin," Manjunath was quoted as saying.

The association has also alleged that funds meant for clearing contractors' bills were being diverted towards other government commitments, including guarantee schemes.

This allegation has been raised by the contractors' body and was not independently verified in the available reports.

The contractors recalled that Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar had met their representatives on June 30 and, according to the association, assured them that arrangements would be made to clear the dues within two months. The association said that deadline had passed without the promised payments being released.



LoP accuses govt of 'mishandling' drought, farmers' distress

BENGALURU

LEADER of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka on Wednesday accused the Congress government of "failing" to adequately address drought-related distress, the drinking-water situation and the state's finances, and said the BJP would take the issues to the "people's court".

The BJP leader also questioned Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's proposal for an all-party delegation to the Centre, saying the government had not consulted the opposition while preparing its memorandum seeking central assistance.

"The Congress government in Karnataka, this joint government of Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar, has pushed the people of Karnataka into three major crises," Ashoka told reporters here.

According to him, more than 3,000 farmers have died by suicide since the Congress government came to power and the opposition has demanded Rs 25,000 per acre in drought compensation. The government had instead announced Rs 2,500



per farmer.

The state has announced the assistance for around 50 lakh drought-hit farmers at an estimated cost of Rs 1,250 crore.

Ashoka said the government should also prevent distress migration, ensure drinking water and provide adequate power to farmers.

He alleged that more than 200 taluks had crossed the drought threshold and

claimed a 36 per cent rainfall deficit across Karnataka and 46 per cent in south interior Karnataka.

He said the BJP would decide whether to join the proposed delegation after discussions with NDA partners, including Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and H D Kumaraswamy. "If you work for the good of the state, we will stand with you for the good of the state," he said.

Ashoka also charged the government with "mishandling" farmer debt-related distress and demanded directions to banks and microfinance companies to halt loan recovery for two years.

Referring to alleged farmer suicides in Maddur and K M Doddi, he described them as "government-sponsored killings" but provided no independent evidence for the allegation.

On the state's finances, Ashoka alleged that Karnataka had been pushed into a severe debt burden and demanded that the government release detailed financial figures.

He claimed the state's outstanding debt was Rs 8,34,677 crore and alleged that more than half of it had been incurred during Siddaramaiah's tenure.

He also referred to a reported death note by a KRIDL engineer, alleging harassment over delayed payments, and cited the Karnataka Contractors' Association's demand for release of Rs 38,000 crore in pending bills. These claims were presented by Ashoka as evidence of financial distress.

Cong launches Bharat Jodo 2.0 padayatra from Shikaripura

HANS NEWS SERVICE SHIVAMOGGA

THE Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) on Wednesday launched its 'Bharat Jodo 2.0' padyatra from Shikaripura in Shivamogga district, targeting 84 Assembly constituencies where the Congress was defeated in the 2023 Karnataka elections.

The padyatra is being led by KPCC president B.K. Hariprasad and is planned as an 84-day programme covering 29 districts. Congress leaders said the initiative is aimed at strengthening the party organisation and increasing direct interaction with people in constituencies where the party lost in the previous Assembly election.

The programme was launched from Kittadahalli in Shikaripura taluk. The march proceeded through Mattikote, Hosanagar Cross and Nelavagilu before heading towards Shikaripura town. According to Minister Madhu Bangarappa, around 10 km will be covered during the first day's padyatra.

A public meeting has been planned in Shikaripura after the march. Ministers Madhu



Bangarappa and K.S. Basavanna, along with other Congress leaders, workers and local party functionaries, participated in the programme. The selection of Shikaripura for the launch has drawn attention because the constituency is represented by BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra. It was earlier represented by his father and former chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

The Congress has linked the programme to the completion of four years since Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra entered Karnataka in 2022. The new programme, however, has a different state-level focus, with the party planning activities across constituencies where it faced defeat in the 2023 Assembly polls.

Congress leaders said the padyatra would provide an opportunity to interact with residents, understand local issues and strengthen the party's presence at the grassroots level. The next phase of the programme is expected to begin from October 4 or 5 in other constituencies. The party has planned the campaign across 84 Assembly segments over 84 days.

The launch from Shikaripura has also brought the Congress programme into focus because of the constituency's political association with the BJP's state leadership. The Congress leadership has maintained that the padyatra is part of its organisational programme covering the constituencies identified for the 84-day campaign.



A woman crosses a busy road amidst traffic during rainfall in Bengaluru on Wednesday

MRPL explosion prompts call for scientific damage assessment

HANS NEWS SERVICE MANGALURU

WEDNESDAY'S blast at the MRPL facility near Jokatte has left surrounding residents badly alarmed. People in far-off areas such as Katipalla and Bala also heard the loud noise, and accounts of damage to neighbouring homes and buildings have added to the worry. The Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) has raised concern on the matter. "The occurrence next to a densely lived-in zone



Smoke erupts after a loud explosion-like sound was reported from the MRPL premises near Jokatte in Mangaluru on Wednesday

is a grave issue. District authorities and industrial safety officers should check without delay

whether all norms needed for public safety are being duly followed at MRPL," a statement

from SDPI said.

"A free and high-level investigation should cover the precise reason for the explosion, any fault or carelessness in the safety setup, and the fitness of the emergency-handling system. Findings should be disclosed to citizens," said Jamal Jokatte, the SDPI Dakshina Kannada District General Secretary.

He further said, "A comprehensive survey of damage to houses, buildings and other assets should start at once, followed by a scientific valuation.

Probe ordered into fake GPS photos under Employment Guarantee Scheme

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

RURAL Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Eshwar B Khandre has ordered an inquiry following reports of fraud involving fake GPS photographs being used to record attendance of workers under the rural employment guarantee scheme.

In a written direction to the department's Secretary, Khandre said media reports had alleged that in Koppal district, mates were recording videos at work sites even when workers had not gone to the location and, while the video was being played, taking GPS photographs using another mobile phone to falsely record attendance. He has directed an officer of the rank of Joint Director to conduct an inquiry into the allegations and submit a report within four days.

Media reports had also alleged that fake GPS photographs were being used to fraudulently claim Rs 20,000 to Rs 30,000 every day and that attendance was being

marked for workers who had not actually carried out any work.

Taking the reports seriously, Khandre directed officials to submit a factual report along with recommendations on action to be taken against those responsible if the allegations are found to be true. He also instructed officials to consult experts and take necessary measures to prevent misuse of technology and the fraudulent marking of attendance.

The government has made it mandatory under the rural employment guarantee scheme for workers engaged at work sites to take GPS photographs while carrying out work and upload them on the NMMS app.

The measure was introduced to prevent the use of machinery for works and the illegal marking of attendance of workers who had not actually worked at the site. However, reports that some individuals have found ways to bypass the technology have prompted the government to initiate action.

5 decades on canvas: Ganesha Somayaji brings 'Reflection' to Bengaluru

M RAGHURAM MANGALURU

MORE than five decades of artistic practice, spanning watercolour, oil and acrylic, will come together in veteran artist and art educator Ganesha Somayaji B's solo exhibition Reflection, opening at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat here on October 1.

The week-long exhibition, which will continue until October 7, will present a selection from Somayaji's extensive body of work, including landscapes, portraits and paintings inspired by historical sites, forts, riverbanks, beaches and other natural and cultural settings. His works had been extensive in the realm of folk performing arts, folk traditions. His collections adorn the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi, various art galleries across the country and in some private collections in different countries.

Born in Bantwal in Dakshina Kannada in 1949, Somayaji trained under artist

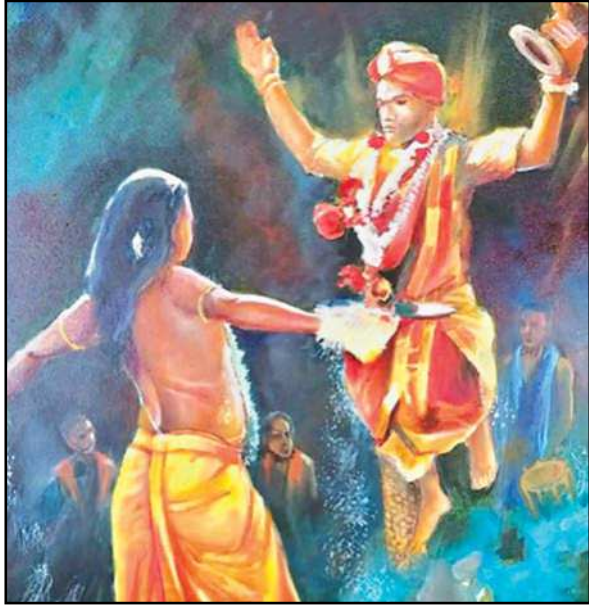


Ganesha Somayaji B

B.G. Mohammed of B.G.M. Fine Arts in Mangaluru. He later secured the first rank and a gold medal in the G.D. Art examination in 1973.

Over a career spanning more than 50 years, Somayaji has produced more than 1,000 works and held 25 solo exhibitions, besides participating in over 120 group exhibitions across India. His practice has included on-the-spot landscape painting, portraiture and documentation of places and heritage through different media.

His works have been ex-



hibited at venues including Mumbai's Jehangir Art Gallery, where he participated in exhibitions in 2019 and 2023. He was also part of the Central Lalit Kala Akademi's national camp, Varanasi Through Creative Eyes in 2016 and has participated in the Appa Art Festival in

Pune and seven editions of the Kudla Kala Mela.

Some of his works are part of collections including that of the President of India and the Karnataka Lalitha Kala Academy.

He has been associated with the Karnataka Lalitha Kala Academy as a member

VETERAN artist Ganesha Somayaji B. will bring more than five decades of painting to Bengaluru with his solo exhibition 'Reflection'. The showcase, opening October 1, will feature landscapes, portraits and works documenting Karnataka's natural, cultural and architectural heritage.

and has coordinated initiatives including Chithra Siri, Varna Jagruthi and Varna Virasat. He is also honorary president of Karavali Chitrakala Chavadi.

The exhibition will be inaugurated on October 1 at 5 pm by veteran artist Krishna Setty, Honorary Member of the Russian Academy of Arts, Moscow. Artist and Karnataka Lalitha Kala Academy president Pa. Sa. Kumar will preside. Reflection will be open to visitors from 11 am to 7 pm daily at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Kumara Kripa Road, Bengaluru.