

IN BRIEF



Prakash Raj breaks silence on Dharmasthala row

BENGALURU: Multi-lingual actor Prakash Raj on Wednesday said C N Chinniah—who had made allegations of “multiple murders, rapes and burials” in the temple town of Dharmasthala—had spoken to him over the phone and sent him information through an audio recording, which he promptly shared with the SIT chief probing the case. Addressing a press conference, Raj said Chinniah had contacted him seeking to share information. The clarification from the actor came in the wake of Chinniah’s recent writ petition to the High Court, which claims a conspiracy involving monetary supplies aimed at defaming Dharmasthala and mentions Raj’s name. Raj said he received a call from activist Girish Mattannavar, stating that Chinniah wanted to speak to him. According to Raj, Chinniah, who spoke in Tamil over the phone, wanted to meet him personally, but he declined, saying he was not a police officer. When Chinniah insisted, he asked him to record whatever information he had and send it across. “As a citizen, what should I do? I got information from a fellow whom everybody is speculating about. Immediately, I contacted SIT chief Pronab Mohanty,” Raj said. The actor said he later met the SIT chief and handed over the recording sent to him by Chinniah. “The SIT chief said, ‘Thank you, Prakash, this is good evidence. If you get any further information, let me know,’” Raj claimed. When the actor followed up with the SIT subsequently, he was informed that certain aspects of Chinniah’s claims did not tally and that Chinniah was changing his version. “After that, I ended the matter,” he said. Referring to reports about Rs 200 crore mentioned in Chinniah’s writ petition, Raj said the public had a right to know whether he had spoken to Chinniah and what information had been shared.

Udupi man loses Rs 2.12 lakh to debit card fraud

UDUPI: A man in Udupi lost Rs 2.12 lakh from his bank account through cyber fraud after using his debit card at a hospital. He had paid his hospital bill using the card on June 3 and made no further transactions. On June 8, he received an SMS alert about money being debited from his account, prompting him to check the details.

Upon verification at the bank, it emerged that between June 5 and June 8, fraudsters had transferred Rs. 2.12 lakh to an unknown account without his knowledge or consent. The victim immediately approached Udupi Town Police Station and lodged a complaint. Police have registered a case under Section 66(D) of the Information Technology Act and initiated an investigation into the matter.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

STRESSING the importance of listening as a key life skill, Karnataka Lokayukta Justice B.S. Patil urged students to become good listeners to achieve success and build a meaningful future. He observed that one of the greatest challenges in modern society is that people have forgotten how to listen attentively.

Justice Patil was speak-

ing after conferring degrees upon graduating students at the 24th Graduation Ceremony of Vemana Institute of Technology, organized by the Karnataka Reddy Jana Sangha in Koramangala, Bengaluru.

Addressing the graduates, he said listening is an art that requires patience and concentration, even when one’s mind is occupied with multiple thoughts. According to him, attentive listening enhances thinking ability,

broadens perspectives, and contributes significantly to intellectual and personal development.

Encouraging students to pursue their careers with enthusiasm and determination, Justice Patil emphasized the importance of creativity, innovation, and continuous learning in today’s competitive world. He advised students to chart their own course in life and work towards clearly defined goals.

“You must design your

own future. Prepare a road-map for your life and move forward with purpose. Every individual should strive for excellence and remain committed to learning throughout life,” he said. Speaking on the occasion, Karnataka Reddy Jana Sangha President D.N. Lakshman Reddy described graduation as a significant milestone and expressed confidence that the degree would serve as a strong foundation for students’ future achievements.



500-yr-old Madhukeshwara temple restoration begins after public outrage

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KARWAR

THE historic Madhukeshwara Temple at Banavasi in Uttara Kannada district, regarded as a symbol of Kannada heritage and cultural identity, has finally begun undergoing restoration works after years of neglect and mounting public pressure. The temple, which boasts a history of nearly 1,500 years and attracts devotees from across Karnataka and neighbouring states, had been facing severe water leakage issues for the past several years.

The deteriorating condition of the ancient structure had sparked widespread anger among devotees and local residents, who accused the Archaeological Department of ignoring repeated appeals for repairs. The issue had gained significant attention after locals threatened to launch a semi-nude protest against



the authorities for their alleged apathy.

For the last two years, temporary arrangements such as tarpaulin sheets had been installed to prevent rainwater from entering the temple premises. However, devotees argued that such makeshift measures not only failed to solve the problem but also diminished the architectural beauty of the centuries-old monument.

Following sustained public pressure, the Archaeological Department has now initiated waterproofing and

protective painting works aimed at preventing further leakage. Residents hope the latest restoration effort will finally provide a permanent solution to the recurring problem.

The Madhukeshwara Temple is considered one of the oldest examples of temple architecture in South India.

Earlier attempts to address the leakage issue included the application of chemical treatments and the installation of metal sheet coverings. However, neither measure proved effective in the long run.

Festival politics heats up as BJP MLA announces schedule

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KOPPAL

A political controversy has erupted in Koppal district after BJP MLA Gali Janardhana Reddy announced that the prestigious Anegondi Utsav would be held in October, even before the district administration officially declared the festival dates.

The announcement has triggered sharp reactions from political circles, with ruling party leaders and officials questioning the propriety of a public representative announcing the schedule of a government-sponsored cultural event ahead of an official notification. The development has intensified discussions over the administration’s role in organizing one of the district’s most significant cultural celebrations.

Anegondi, known for its rich historical and cultural heritage linked to the Vijayanagara Empire, hosts the annual festival to showcase the region’s history, traditions and tourism potential. However, this year’s preparations have become entangled in political



debate. Janardhana Reddy has stated that Rs 3 crore has already been sanctioned for the event and that he has sought an additional Rs 3 crore grant to conduct the festival on a grand scale.

While the district administration is yet to make any formal announcement regarding the dates, Reddy’s declaration has effectively set the political agenda surrounding the event.

The issue has gained further attention because the administration has not yet finalized the festival schedule. Political observers believe the controversy reflects an emerging battle for credit over cultural and development initiatives in the district. Local residents and cul-

tural enthusiasts have urged both political leaders and government officials to keep politics away from heritage events and focus on ensuring the successful conduct of the festival. Many argue that Anegondi Utsav is an important platform for promoting the region’s history, tourism and local economy and should not become a subject of political rivalry.

As the debate continues, all eyes are now on the district administration and the state government for an official announcement regarding the festival schedule. Until then, the controversy surrounding the Anegondi Utsav is expected to remain a major talking point in Koppal’s political landscape.

GREEN CAUSE



A woman worker fills soil into plastic grow bags for raising saplings at a nursery in Chikkamagaluru district on Wednesday

Pompano fish raised in specialised cages in Mangaluru

Premium pricing of fish signals strong future for mariculture

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALURU

A group of fish farmers working under a special development scheme in the Mangaluru region recently completed their first collection of Pompano fish raised in cages. The setup, backed by experts from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, began with the introduction of six thousand young pompano into the enclosures located in suitable coastal waters.

When a portion of the stock reached marketable size, it was harvested and sold, fetching Rs. 400 for every kilogram. This price point has generated considerable enthusiasm among those involved, as it validates the effort invested in adopting modern rearing techniques.

On the day of the harvest, teams sorted through the silvery fish, organising them efficiently near the water’s edge.

The collaborative effort between local families and technical staff ensured the catch was prepared promptly for buyers. Such cage systems provide a controlled environment that supports consistent growth and reduces risks associated with open-water fishing methods.

The initiative forms part of efforts to equip scheduled caste communities with practi-



cal skills in mariculture, opening pathways to diversified earnings. As the remaining fish mature in the cages, expectations rise for subsequent harvests that could further strengthen household finances.

Broader adoption of these methods across similar coastal zones might contribute to increased domestic fish supply while promoting environmentally considerate practices. The positive market response encourages continued investment in training and infrastructure for similar ventures.

Cong MLA terms corruption allegations against him as ‘politically motivated’

BENGALURU: Former Minister and Congress MLA H.C. Mahadevappa, a close associate of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and a prominent Dalit leader, on Wednesday dismissed allegations being made against him amid speculation surrounding a possible Cabinet expansion, describing them as baseless and politically motivated.

It may be noted that a Bengaluru resident has submitted a complaint to Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot seeking an independent probe into alleged corruption and irregularities involving Congress MLA and former Social Welfare Minister HC Mahadevappa.

The complaint alleges misuse of welfare funds, manipulation of tenders issued by the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS), fabrication of records and abuse of official position during Mahadevappa’s tenure as a minister.

BJP opposes 500-acre land acquisition near Bidadi, slams govt

BENGALURU

STRONGLY opposing the final notification to acquire nearly 500 acres for the proposed GBIT near Bidadi, state BJP president B Y Vijayendra on Wednesday accused Chief Minister D K Shivakumar of prioritising real estate over the welfare of farmers and the poor, and demanded that the land acquisition process be halted immediately.

A delegation of BJP leaders, including Vijayendra and Leaders of the opposition in the Assembly and Council, R Ashoka and Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, visited villages around Bidadi to meet farmers protesting against the township project.

“The priority of the CM and the Congress government

is not farmers or building houses for the poor. Within 24 hours of taking charge, the CM has shown that this government’s priority is real estate,” Vijayendra claimed.

Speaking to reporters ahead of the visit, he said the BJP strongly condemned and opposed the government’s move to “forcefully and illegally” acquire farmers’ land under the guise of a township at Bidadi. “The top priority of any government should be to come to the rescue of farmers in distress, but it is unfortunate that Bengaluru’s real estate has become the priority for the CM. On behalf of the BJP, I urge the CM to stop being adamant, listen to the issues faced by farmers and not evict them. I demand that the land acquisition process

be immediately dropped,” he added. The final notification has been issued for the acquisition of 499 acres across three villages in Ramanagara and Harohalli taluks for the Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township, which is among Shivakumar’s ambitious projects—projected as India’s “first AI-powered integrated township”—sources said. The project is expected to cover 7,481 acres across nine villages in the region. The notification issued recently is likely to be the first in a series of land acquisition notifications to be issued in the days ahead, sources added. According to reports, the Greater Bengaluru Development Authority (GBDA) has floated a Rs 26-crore tender to appoint a consultant for preparing the



master plan, detailed project report (DPR) and providing project management services for the proposed GBIT.

Ahead of the BJP leaders’ visit, posters critical of the BJP and JD(S) were reportedly found at various places near Bidadi. Responding to the poster campaign, Vijayendra said BJP leaders were

project and listened to their grievances. Ashoka asserted that a “BJP-JD(S) government will come to power in the future and cancel the project.”

“We will not allow this project to be implemented even now. When I visited the milk producers’ centre, I learned that six lakh litres of milk are produced daily, generating annual business worth Rs 25 crore. Will Shivakumar give farmers Rs 25 crore every year?” he asked.

Noting that silk-related business in the region generates Rs 35 crore in revenue, he said, “The leaves required for silkworms cannot be imported from abroad.

The government must explain what will happen after the silk ecosystem is

destroyed.” “There are lakhs of cows here—should they be sent to slaughterhouses? Where will fodder come from? The government casually says it will give Rs 2 crore. But where should farmers go with that money? They cannot buy equivalent land with that amount,” he further said.

Pointing out that the present generation did not want to give up property passed down through generations, Ashoka said, “Have Bidadi farmers applied asking for residential sites? Who are these sites being created for? They will be allotted to people coming from elsewhere, while local farmers will be left destitute.” Referring to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi’s remarks on environmental destruction during his visit

to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ashoka said his own party’s government in Karnataka was destroying agricultural land in Bidadi.

“Rahul Gandhi should come and see this,” he said.

Alleging that agricultural land was being destroyed for the township project, he said, “There are six lakh coconut and arecanut trees here. Mango, sapota, silk, banana and other crops are grown. Farmers’ livelihoods depend on these.” “In Bengaluru, eight lakh sites developed by government agencies and 10 lakh apartments remain vacant. Including private developments, about 20 lakh flats are vacant. Even in Kempegowda Layout and Shivaram Karanth Layout, many sites remain unsold,” he said.