

Khandre directs CEOs to boost rural jobs under MGNREGS

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BENGALURU

KARNATAKA Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Eshwar B. Khandre has directed all Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to ensure that no rural family is forced to migrate due to drought-like conditions, and to provide employment locally under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

Chairing a review meeting with the Chief Secretary, senior department officials and Zilla Panchayat CEOs at

Vikas Soudha on Friday, the Minister instructed officials to provide employment to five lakh rural workers every month and significantly accelerate implementation of rural infrastructure works from August onwards.

Khandre said the Central Government has allocated Rs5,709 crore for the nine-month period from July 1 to March 31, while the State Government will contribute Rs3,806 crore, taking the total available funds under the scheme to Rs9,515 crore.

“With the available allocation, we have sufficient resources to provide employment to nearly five



lakh people every month. However, the progress during July has not been satisfactory. From August, officials must take up development works on a war footing, create durable com-

munity assets and ensure employment for landless labourers and economically weaker sections so that migration from villages is prevented,” he said. The Minister warned of-

ficials against any irregularities in the implementation of the scheme. He instructed CEOs to ensure that no eligible worker is denied employment and cautioned that strict action would be taken against officials involved in fake billing, financial irregularities or poor-quality works.

Khandre also asked Taluk Executive Officers and Panchayat Development Officers (PDOs) to ensure transparency and accountability in the execution of projects.

He directed officials to utilise MGNREGS funds for the repair of dilapidated government school

buildings, construction of additional classrooms and compound walls, in coordination with the School Education Department.

The Minister further instructed officials to issue job cards to all eligible beneficiaries whose cards had been cancelled and to give priority in employment to women-headed households, persons with disabilities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and economically disadvantaged families.

Expressing concern over districts that have lagged behind in employment generation and asset creation,

Khandre warned the concerned CEOs to immediately convene Gram Sabha meetings, obtain approvals for pending works and improve performance.

He also proposed utilising government-acquired but unused land for cultivating green fodder under community works to help manage drought conditions and provide fodder for livestock. In areas where government land is unavailable, he suggested leasing private land for fodder cultivation. He also emphasised the need to undertake borewell recharge works as part of drought mitigation efforts.

Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, who participated in the meeting, suggested that MGNREGS could also be used for constructing fishery sheds, cattle sheds and sheep shelters in coordination with the Animal Husbandry Department. She further recommended partnering with the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) to expand fodder cultivation in drought-affected regions.

The meeting was attended by Rural Development Department Secretary Sameer Shukla, Commissioner Divya Prabhu, district officials and Chief Executive Officers from across the state.

Decision on Cauvery after all-party meet: CM

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BENGALURU

KARNATAKA Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday said the state government will take its next decision on the Cauvery water dispute only after consulting legal experts and holding discussions with opposition leaders at the scheduled all-party meeting.

Addressing a press conference at Vidhana Soudha, the Chief Minister said the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) has directed Karnataka to release 3,500 cusecs of water daily to Tamil Nadu for 15 days. He noted that similar distress-sharing directions had been issued in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2023, but maintained that every decision must take into account the prevailing situation in Karnataka.

CM Shivakumar said the state had appealed before the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) seeking a reduction in the quantity of water to be released and requesting additional time. Karnataka's legal team, including the Advocate General and senior officials, argued that the state was facing a difficult water situation. However, the Authority held that Karnataka's improving reservoir inflows justified the release of the reduced quantity of 4.5 TMC over 15 days.

The Chief Minister said reservoir inflows had shown encouraging signs in recent days. According to him, Harangi Reservoir is at 95 per cent, Kabini at 83 per cent, Hemavathi at 67 per cent, while Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) stands at 36 per cent capacity. Daily inflows into Karnataka's reservoirs have



increased to around 25,000 cusecs, while the CWRC has directed the release of 3,500 cusecs.

Despite the improved inflows, Shivakumar reiterated that protecting Karnataka's farmers and ensuring drinking water security remain the government's foremost responsibility. He said the government has already taken steps to safeguard drinking water supplies and fill irrigation tanks across the state.

The Chief Minister also acknowledged the support extended by Karnataka's Members of Parliament and Union Ministers, stating that leaders cutting across party lines had collectively represented the state's concerns before the Centre. He said Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi, V Somanna, Shobha Karandlaje, along with other MPs, had made efforts to support Karnataka's appeal.

Highlighting the state's position, Shivakumar said Karnataka had released only

0.6 TMC of water to Tamil Nadu till the end of July, the lowest quantity released during this period in nearly 100 years. He clarified that this was not water released from reservoirs but natural runoff generated by rainfall around Bengaluru.

Appealing against the proposed Karnataka Bandh on August 13, the Chief Minister urged pro-Kannada organisations and farmer groups to reconsider their decision, saying protests and shutdowns would inconvenience the public without offering any practical solution. He assured that the government remained fully committed to protecting Karnataka's interests through legal and constitutional means.

Shivakumar also indicated that the proposed meeting with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay, earlier scheduled for August 3, may be postponed due to the prevailing tensions. He said Karnataka would request a

fresh date once the current situation becomes more conducive for dialogue, stressing that both states should resolve the issue through mutual respect and cooperation.

On the long-pending Mekedatu balancing reservoir project, the Chief Minister reiterated that the project would primarily benefit both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu by ensuring drinking water supply and hydroelectric power generation. He clarified that the proposed 66 TMC storage would not be used for irrigation and would instead help Karnataka comply with distress-sharing obligations during difficult years.

Shivakumar said the government would await the views of legal experts, former Chief Ministers, opposition leaders and stakeholders at Sunday's all-party meeting before deciding on any further legal or administrative action in the Cauvery dispute.

Cop's son among 9 held in hydro ganja racket



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TUMAKURU

IN a startling case, the son of a police officer, whose father had been involved in creating awareness against drug abuse, has been arrested for allegedly running a hydro ganja trafficking network in Tumakuru. The racket was unearthed after police received a confidential tip-off through a QR code-based public information system introduced to combat narcotics.

The breakthrough came after a tip was received on July 10 through the QR code initiative launched by Tumakuru Sub-Division Deputy Superintendent of Police Chandrashekar.

The system allows members of the public to anonymously share information on drug-related activities while ensuring their identity remains confidential.

Acting on the input, Tilak Park police launched an investigation and allegedly found that 21-year-old BCA student Dishanth, son of police constable Raghunath and a resident of the police quarters behind the Tumakuru Superintendent of

Police's office, was leading the drug network.

According to the investigation, Dishanth and his associates were allegedly sourcing both regular cannabis and the more potent hydro ganja from Bengaluru and supplying it to customers in Tumakuru through an organised network.

During the first phase of the operation, police arrested Dishanth along with Manjunath (35) of Bengaluru and Tumakuru residents Satish (37), Pramod (28), Darshan (31) and Amogh (31). A Toyota Fortuner SUV and quantities of ganja were seized during the raids.

Further investigation based on information gathered from the arrested accused led to the arrest of three more persons, taking the total number of arrests in the case to nine.

Police said the investigation is continuing to identify other members of the network and trace the supply chain. Efforts are also underway to determine the source of the narcotics and whether the accused were linked to a larger interstate drug syndicate.

Rat caught 'stealing' gold ornaments from shop



TUMAKURU (KARNATAKA)

AN unusual “thief”, a rat was caught on CCTV carrying away gold rings and chains from a jewellery shop in this district, with the missing ornaments eventually recovered from its “hideout”, the shop owner said on Friday.

The incident that occurred earlier this week came to light after staff at the said shop found that 10 rings and two chains were missing during a routine stock count, they said.

According to the shop owner Vishwas, the staff initially suspected theft and thoroughly examined the CCTV footage but found nothing unusual.

“Everyone started wondering whether a customer had taken them, but there was no

evidence of that either. We couldn't understand how this had happened,” he said.

They later noticed that several price tags, which carry the weight details of the ornaments, were also missing. “We thought that if it was a thief, they wouldn't take the tags; they would only take the jewellery.”

So we decided to search again,” he said.

Upon reviewing the previous night's CCTV footage, the staff spotted a rat carrying away a ring at around 4.30 am. “That's when we realised it was the rat's doing. It had made a hole in one place and created a path from there to another area. Along that route, we found the chains and rings that had fallen. We recovered all the missing jewellery from that area,” he added.

NITK invites alumni to Global Convention 2026

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MANGALURU

THE National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK), working jointly with the NITK Surathkal Alumni Association, has extended a cordial call to every alumnus of Karnataka Regional Engineering College (KREC) and NITK, and to the families of those alumni, to take part in the Global Convention scheduled for 2026.

The two-day programme will be held on the 26th and 27th of December on the Surathkal campus in Mangaluru. The chosen theme, “From Vision to Impact: Rooted in Karavali, Engineering the Future,” signals an intention to connect the personal narratives of graduates with the larger trajectory of both the institute and its surrounding territory.

The coastal territory, known as Karavali, occupies the western coastal strip of India running from Karwar down to Kasaragod. It is framed by the Arabian Sea and the Sahyadri mountains that form part of the Western Ghats, and it occupies a special place among the regions of Karnataka. Residents and visitors also refer to it as Tulunadu, a name that points to a distinctive language, culture, cuisine and customs.

The organisers present Karavali as a landscape still waiting to be fully rediscovered by audiences beyond its borders. The economic and educational character of

TO shape institute and coastal future together



the same stretch has altered markedly. Once recognised for its banking strength and respected educational houses, the region has developed over two decades into a concentrated centre of professional preparation.

During the past five years the arrival of software companies, technology enterprises and global competency centres has accelerated, turning a place long known for supplying talent into a place that itself generates technology. The emerging identity is already being summarised by the label Silicon Beach of India.

NITK Surathkal, the institution that began life as KREC, continues to be recognised for the quality of its professional education. The campus is now preparing to assume a more central part in the sustainable advance of the region that surrounds it.

Attention is directed to forward academic programmes oriented to employment

outcomes, research programmes oriented to industrial requirements, and innovation programmes oriented to measurable impact. These priorities are supported by contemporary laboratory facilities, a faculty of high professional standing and a staff committed to institutional goals.

A newly framed curriculum characterised as bold, balanced and beautiful has been introduced from the present academic year with the explicit purpose of preparing engineers who can respond to the future needs of the country, of industry and of society. Earlier global conventions succeeded in drawing together alumni who represented different academic branches, different places of residence and different periods of graduation. Those occasions allowed participants to re-establish contact with one another, to revisit formative memories and to renew their relationship with the institution that

educated them. The convention planned for December 2026 is designed to move those exchanges forward so that the combined insight of the alumni body can help define the next phase for the institute and for Karavali.

Graduates are invited to return, to experience once more the campus that stands at the centre of the coastal region, and to consider specific forms of contribution.

Possible avenues include participation in the design of learning systems, identification of high-quality talent, engagement with the research and innovation ecosystem, investment in local start-ups, and the establishment of professional offices.

Those who wish to take part are requested to note the December dates in their calendars and to communicate with Professor Prasanna B.D. at the address dean.acr@nitk.edu.in or with Mr Niranjana Mahaballappa at mahaballappa@gmail.com.

APEDA facilitates export of mangoes to Maldives

BENGALURU

THE farm export development body, APEDA, has facilitated the first-ever air shipment of Neelam and Totapuri mangoes from Karnataka to the Maldives, officials said on Friday.

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) operates under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. This shipment marks a significant milestone in promoting Karnataka's late-season mango varieties in international markets and further strengthening India's mango export basket, officials said.

According to an official statement, the consignment was flagged off on July 30 by Chairman, APEDA, Abhishek Dev, who appreciated the collective efforts of the exporter, the Farmer Producer Company (FPC), farmers and all stakeholders involved in making the shipment possible.

He noted that such initiatives enhance market access for Indian mangoes, create new export opportunities for late-season varieties and contribute to sustainable income growth for farmers.

“The export consignment, comprising one metric tonne of Neelam and Totapuri mangoes, was sourced directly from farmers associated with Prakruthimaya Farmers Producer Company Ltd., KGF Taluk, Kolar district of Karnataka,” the statement said.

The shipment was exported by Ashwini A, Director of Ahalya Devi Ventures, a



newly registered woman entrepreneur and exporter, highlighting the growing participation of women entrepreneurs in India's agri-export ecosystem, it added.

Officials noted that Neelam mango is widely appreciated for its sweet, juicy pulp, rich aroma and suitability for desserts, smoothies and beverages. Totapuri mango is known for its distinctive shape, sweet-tangy flavour and versatility for both fresh consumption and processing.

Harvested from late June to the end of July, these late-season varieties offer an opportunity to extend India's mango export season and cater to international demand beyond the peak harvest period, it said.

“The air shipment highlights the growing export potential of Karnataka's horticulture sector and demonstrates how Farmer Producer Companies are playing an important role in connecting farmers with global markets through

organised aggregation, quality produce and export-oriented supply chains,” the statement said.

Farmers associated with the Farmer Producer Company realised over 50 per cent higher returns through this export initiative compared to conventional market channels, officials said.

The achievement underscores the value of direct procurement, export market linkages and organised aggregation in enhancing farmers' incomes while encouraging wider adoption of export-oriented cultivation practices, they said.

The export marks a new chapter in Karnataka's mango export journey and is expected to encourage greater participation of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), exporters and agri-entrepreneurs in tapping international markets for premium horticultural produce, the statement added.