



HDK reiterates NICE toll boycott call

BENGALURU : Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Friday reiterated his appeal to motorists not to pay toll on the NICE Road, intensifying the ongoing dispute between vehicle users and toll plaza operators.

Speaking to mediapersons in Bengaluru, Kumaraswamy alleged that the NICE organisation was collecting toll illegally and accused the state government of allowing arbitrary increases in toll rates. He urged motorists to continue refusing payment despite the possibility of police cases.

“Do not be afraid even if an FIR is registered. I appeal to the people with folded hands — do not pay the toll under any circumstances,” Kumaraswamy said. His remarks come amid growing confusion at NICE toll plazas following his earlier statement asking motorists to stop making payments. Several motorists have reportedly refused to pay after showing videos of Kumaraswamy’s statement circulating on social media.

The refusal has led to heated exchanges between toll staff and motorists, with employees questioning drivers about any court order or government direction exempting them from payment. Toll operators have maintained that there is no such official order and have reportedly put up notices warning motorists of legal action for refusing to pay.

Kumaraswamy, however, stepped up his criticism of the state government and the NICE organisation. He claimed that the company had collected around Rs 2,000 crore through tolls and questioned the government’s decision to continue allowing collections. He also questioned Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar’s role in the matter and demanded to know why the government had not taken steps to stop toll collection if there were violations.

PPFAS Mutual Fund opens new office

BENGALURU : PPFAS Mutual Fund has opened a new office in Hyderabad, replacing its existing branch that served investors for over five years. Located at Dega Towers, Somajiguda, the facility will function as an Investor Service Centre and Official Point of Acceptance from August 21. The new office aims to strengthen engagement with investors and distribution partners across Telangana.

Ai+ smart phones price hiked by Rs 2,000

BENGALURU : Ai+ Smartphone has announced a price revision of around Rs 2,000 across select devices, effective immediately, citing sustained increases in component, manufacturing, logistics and other input costs.

The company said rising memory and other component prices have put pressure on smartphone makers, prompting a reassessment of device pricing. Ai+ said it had absorbed a significant portion of the additional costs but was now implementing a measured increase.

Milann Hospital handles two high-risk pregnancies

BENGALURU : Milann Fertility and Birthing Hospital has successfully managed two exceptionally high-risk pregnancies involving severe fetal abnormalities, recurrent IVF failures, fetal growth restriction and autoimmune complications, resulting in the birth of two healthy babies. Two complex pregnancies were successfully managed: one involved a twin pregnancy with Dandy-Walker malformation, while the other followed eight failed IVF cycles and a previous miscarriage. Despite fetal growth restriction and other complications, timely interventions and emergency Caesarean deliveries resulted in two healthy babies, weighing 1.74 kg and 1.88 kg.

FAKE CANCER DRUG RACKET

Kingpin Prashanth suspected to be hiding in India, not abroad

The gang is suspected to have sold nearly 40,000 bottles of counterfeit cancer medicines by using the names and packaging of medicines manufactured by US-based pharmaceutical companies

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU

THE investigation into the alleged fake medicine racket in Karnataka has revealed that the accused may have been manufacturing and selling counterfeit cancer drugs for nearly 18 months, with investigators now focusing on the alleged kingpin, Prashanth.

According to investigators, Prashanth, along with some of his relatives and associates, allegedly ran the racket and targeted expensive medicines, particularly those used in cancer treatment. The gang is suspected to have sold nearly 40,000 bottles of counterfeit cancer medicines by using the names and packaging of medicines manufactured by US-based



pharmaceutical companies.

Investigators suspect that bottles and labels resembling those of genuine American medicines were used to make the counterfeit products appear authentic. The medicines were allegedly manufactured at a farmhouse in Dodderi near Ramangara before being supplied through the network.

The alleged racket came to light after officials raided the farmhouse on August 19. A case was subsequently registered at Tavarekere police station, leading to the arrest of four people.

Police are now searching for Prashanth, who is suspected to be the key person behind the operation. His wife and other relatives have been questioned as part of the investigation. His wife reportedly told investigators that Prashanth was abroad. However, police are examining the possibility that he may still be in India.

Investigators are also verifying his travel details with

the Foreigners Regional Registration Office. Sources said the information available with the authorities does not establish that Prashanth had travelled abroad. Based on the suspicion that he may be attempting to evade arrest, police have issued a lookout notice against him.

Meanwhile, the state government has ordered a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the racket. Following the government order, the Tavarekere police have handed over the case records to the SIT. The investigation is being led by IPS officer Vamshikrishna. The SIT has formally taken up the case and is expected to question the four accused already arrested by the police.

The investigation will focus on the source of the counterfeit packaging, procurement of pharmaceutical ingredients, manufacturing process, distribution network and financial transactions linked to the alleged racket.

Govt keen to bring foreign university campuses to KWIN City: Patil

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EIGHT leading companies, including Toyota, and research institutions 14 entities in all have entered into agreements for the KWIN City being developed between Doddaballapura and Dabaspet. Some foreign universities have sought buildings tailored to their specific requirements under a ‘build-to-suit’ model. The Government is considering an appropriate model to meet these requirements. Large and Medium Industries Minister MB Patil said on Friday.

The Minister was responding to a starred question raised by nominated member K Shivakumar in the Legislative Council. KWIN City is being developed across 5,000 acres. Development work on the first phase is currently under way, and the tendering process has been completed.

Toyota is establishing a state-of-the-art innovation centre here, which will be of a standard that the company does not even have in its home country, Japan. Global-standard medical institutions, the Indian Institute of Science and a campus of the National Law School of India University will also come up here, he explained.

Imperial College London,



ranked second globally; the University of New South Wales in Australia, ranked 19th; the University of Liverpool, ranked 139th; Lancaster University, ranked 164th; La Trobe University, ranked 241st; and Flinders University, ranked 374th, have already signed agreements with the State Government.

Of these, the University of New South Wales and the University of Liverpool have already established campuses at Manyata Business Park in Bengaluru and the Alembic City complex in Whitefield, respectively. The Government wants these institutions to establish campuses in KWIN City as well. Imperial College London will establish an innovation hub here, he said. Some companies and universities are seeking a ‘build-to-suit’ model. The Government is considering

constructing buildings tailored to the specific requirements of such institutions, enabling them to operate from these premises for the next 30–40 years. Only the eligibility and credentials of the institutions will be considered while allotting such facilities. KWIN City will also have residential facilities and common amenities. The process of allotting space to suitable and reputed institutions will be taken up over the next year, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, K Shivakumar appreciated MB Patil’s efforts to promote industrial growth in the State and attract greater investments to Karnataka. “These efforts are creating employment, promoting regional equity, increasing economic activity and boosting exports in the State. This is commendable,” he said.

Guide government on increasing revenue, plugging leaks: CM to CAs

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BENGALURU

CHIEF Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday urged chartered accountants to advise the state government on increasing revenue, plugging financial leakages and correcting shortcomings in the system.

Addressing a dialogue conference organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru, Shivakumar said the government was open to suggestions and sought the professional community’s guidance on strengthening the state’s finances. “Our government is an open book. We are open to new ideas and solutions. Give us suggestions to correct our mistakes and prevent leakage of resources. You are the custodians of trust, and that trust is in your blood. Protect it,” he said.

The Chief Minister said chartered accountants could



play an important role in protecting people’s assets, improving revenue collection and strengthening the economy. He also criticised what he described as harassment of honest taxpayers by officials. “Honest taxpayers are sometimes subjected to mental harassment by officials, while those who actually evade taxes are not questioned. Karnataka is more disciplined compared to several other states, with a large proportion of transactions taking place through formal channels,” he said.

The Chief Minister urged chartered accountants to suggest ways of increasing government revenue without creating difficulties for businesses and industries. Shivakumar also sought the help of chartered accountants in ensuring better utilisation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds.

He said Karnataka should focus CSR resources on strengthening primary education in rural areas and urged ICAI members to guide companies in directing their CSR in-

vestments towards such priorities. “Give companies guidance on CSR funds. Our government wants greater focus on primary education in rural areas. We are working on an education policy towards this objective,” he said.

Responding to a request from ICAI representatives regarding land for the organisation, Shivakumar assured them that he would look into the matter. “Come and meet me next week after the Assembly session. Your demand is in the interest of the state and the new generation. You should also advise our government on resource mobilisation,” he said.

The Chief Minister concluded by calling for greater cooperation between the government and the professional community, saying the purpose of his participation was not merely to receive applause but to seek a partnership in strengthening Karnataka’s economy and public finances.

ADB to provide Rs 1,750 cr for 500 KPS schools

BENGALURU

THE ADB and the Karnataka government on Friday signed an agreement under which the multilateral agency will provide Rs 1,750 crore assistance for developing 500 government schools across the state as KPS.

The agreement was signed at Vidhana Soudha in the presence of Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa. Under the project, the state government plans to invest Rs 2,500 crore over the next four years, till 2029-30, for developing the 500 Karnataka Public Schools (KPS).

While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide Rs 1,750 crore, the state government will contribute Rs 750 crore. Schools with the potential to attract a larger number of students are being selected for upgradation as KPS institutions, with the objective of enabling each school to cater to at least 1,200 students.

KPS are model government-run schools that provide education from pre-primary to II PU under one roof, with both English and Kannada medium options. Bangarappa said the ADB assistance would help comprehensively develop all 500 schools.

“Over the next four years, that is, by 2029-30, the state government will spend Rs 2,500 crore to develop 500 Karnataka Public Schools. ADB will provide Rs 1,750 crore in assistance, while the remaining Rs 750 crore will be provided by the state government,” he said, according to a release from his office.

The minister said the agreement was finalised following discussions with senior ADB officials and claimed that this was the first time the bank.

MoU inked to establish Dorabji Tata School of Undergraduate Studies

Record 12,000 applications for inaugural UG programmes; first batch of 80 students to commence on August 31

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BENGALURU



THE Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) and Tata Trusts on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the IIM Bangalore–Dorabji Tata School of Undergraduate Studies, as the institute’s new undergraduate programmes received 12,000 applications for the inaugural cohort of 80 students.

The first batch, comprising 40 students each in two four-year, full-time residential programmes, will commence on August 31.

The MoU formalises a philanthropic contribution by the Tata Trusts, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, towards the establishment and initial development of the School of Undergraduate Studies. The support will include the creation of academic infrastructure as well as contributions to the School’s strategic direction, vision-setting, policy formulation and governance oversight.

The MoU was signed by Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata and IIMB Board of Governors Chairperson Dr Devi Shetty in the presence of Tata Trusts CEO Siddharth Sharma and IIMB Director-in-Charge Prof U Dinesh Kumar.

“For over a century, the

Tata Trusts have seeded some of India’s most defining institutions that have influenced generations and continue to serve public good long after the initial investment,” Noel Tata said.

He said India’s next phase of growth would require institutions that could be ranked among the best in the world.

“Our partnership with IIM Bangalore reflects that approach. Through the IIMB-Dorabji Tata School of Undergraduate Studies, we hope to support an institution that can set new benchmarks for undergraduate education and make a lasting contribution to the country,” he said.

Dr Devi Shetty said the partnership would provide the School with a strong foundation to develop an ambitious model of multidisciplinary education.

“IIM Bangalore is a public institution of eminence with a distinguished history of creating transformative educational opportunities. Our partnership with the Tata Trusts, a name synonymous with integrity, nation-building and innovation for the public good, will provide the IIMB-Dorabji Tata School of Un-

dergraduate Studies with a strong foundation,” he said.

The School is part of IIMB’s broader effort to expand its contribution to undergraduate education while maintaining the academic rigour and global orientation associated with its postgraduate programmes.

Located about 23 km from IIMB’s Bannerghatta Road campus in the Jigani-Anekal area, the School is being developed as a dedicated residential academic environment focused on interdisciplinary learning, research and innovation.

It will initially offer a BSc (Hons) in Data Sciences with a minor in Economics and a BSc (Hons) in Economics with a minor in Data Sciences.

The inaugural cohort of 80 students was selected from among 12,000 applicants, making the programmes highly competitive and bringing together students with strong academic and extracurricular profiles.

Tata Trusts CEO Siddharth Sharma said the rapid advances in technology, data and artificial intelligence had underscored the need for multidisciplinary education.

‘Homemaker’ not limited to women, observes HC in compensation case

The principle, the court noted, applies equally to men

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BENGALURU

THE High Court has observed that the term “homemaker” is not restricted to women and can apply to men, women and even working professionals who contribute to the welfare and well-being of their families.

The observation came while hearing a motor accident compensation case involving a woman who suffered permanent disability in a KSRTC bus accident. The High Court enhanced the compensation awarded to her by the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal by an

additional Rs 1,96,800.

The appeal was filed by Pampa Pal, a native of West Bengal, seeking enhancement of the Rs 4.55 lakh compensation awarded by the tribunal. KSRTC had also challenged the tribunal’s order granting compensation to her. KSRTC argued that Pampa Pal was not employed at the time of the accident and, being highly educated, could not be treated as a homemaker. The corporation contended that since she was working as a homemaker on the date of the accident, she could not claim compensation under the head of future loss of income. Justice Dr.

Chilakuri Sumalatha, while rejecting this contention, observed that the concept of a homemaker should not be narrowly understood. Being a homemaker does not mean that a person must be uneducated, remain at home throughout the day or engage exclusively in household work. The court observed that the term “homemaker” is not confined to women and that anyone who sacrifices personal interests and contributes significantly to the comfort, welfare and well-being of the family can be considered a homemaker. The principle, the court noted, applies equally to men

and working professionals. Pampa Pal was travelling from Bengaluru to Madikeri in a KSRTC Rajahamsa bus on October 19, 2013, when the bus collided with a lorry.

She sustained serious injuries and suffered permanent physical disability. She claimed to have spent up to Rs 10 lakh on medical treatment. The tribunal had awarded her Rs 4,55,243, including medical expenses. Challenging the amount, Pampa Pal told the High Court that she held a post-graduate degree in biotechnology and had worked as a guest lecturer before the accident. She had also undertaken private tutoring and



earned around Rs 35,000 per month. She submitted that although she was working as a homemaker at the time of the accident, her educational qualifications,

previous employment and income-earning capacity should also be considered while determining compensation. Taking these factors into account, the High

Court enhanced the compensation by Rs 1,96,800, providing a broader interpretation of the economic value of household and family-related work.