

# THE BEACON

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## Floral tribute to Basavanna on R Day

**Nidhi B**

**BENGALURU**: The Republic Day flower show which is set to be organised by the Horticulture Department will be using about four to five lakh potted plants from places all across the country including, Rajahmundry, Ooty and Pune. The show will be held in Lalbagh Botanical Garden starting from January 18 to 28. The attraction of this year is the floral tribute to Basavanna and Vachana Sahitya.

The legacy of flower shows dates back to the early '1880s and from 1912 Krumbiegel, a German botanist, carried this on, which was then popularised by the visits of Queen Victoria and former prime minister Indira Gandhi, says Kusuma, the Deputy Director of Horticulture Department, Lalbagh.

Speaking to the Beacon, Kusuma stated that this year's flower arrangements will feature a lot of variations, where many special flowers such as impatiens and orchids like cymbidium (boat orchid) are used. The preparations start three months before the show, as special flowering plants take time to grow. After the show, these flowers are distributed back to their respective places with some plants being reused.

"This year's theme is mainly educational based and the main aim is to deliver a strong message every year. Basavanna is a man behind equality, and he focused more on educating people through practical ways," says Kusuma.

## Mixed feedback on MCC's co-education decision

**Shoaib Shakeel**

**BENGALURU**: With a 75-year legacy of providing holistic education, Mount Carmel College (Autonomous) (MCC) announced on January 4 that it is opening doors to both boys and girls for all undergraduate and postgraduate programs starting from the next academic year. Dr George Lekha, the principal, acknowledged the diverse reactions from students, noting that the institution had received mixed feedback.

"The management has been discussing this for quite some time; so several changes are planned and have already been made," stated Dr Lekha, implying that the decision to transition into a co-educational institution was carefully considered and officially announced. The move was not abrupt, she



Gates of Mount Carmel College to open for co-education in 2024

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said, citing the opening of PG courses to boys in 2016, with the current enrollment standing at 13 boys.

While the management is yet to determine a specific percentage for male enrollment, Dr Lekha outlined the intention to implement the changes gradually over the next 4

to 5 years. She explained, "It will start with a small percentage and gradually increase; maybe in 4-5 years, the feel of co-education will come."

Reflecting on the institution's platinum jubilee celebration last year, Dr Lekha recounted the concerns about the

inclusion of male students asserting that embracing gender diversity aligns with the college's mission of moulding compassionate, competent, and confident individuals. She pointed out the success stories of other institutions like St Joseph's and Christ, emphasising that Mount Carmel was

adapting to this transition with a positive outlook. "If we are so worried about boys coming in, where is the confidence? If we are not able to embrace the other gender, where is the compassion and where is the competence" questioned Dr Lekha, underscoring the importance of adapting to a co-educational environment.

Addressing the mixed reactions, Dr Lekha expressed confidence that the initial sentiments would settle over time. "It's a good decision; so we are just giving it time; it will all settle down," she remarked. The administration has also mentioned instances of some boys inquiring about lateral entry, clarifying that the institution was only commencing the co-education initiative in 2024.

## Prioritise critical thinking over skills: Fr Victor Lobo

**Anu Priya**

**BENGALURU**: An overwhelming 94.5 per cent of students and lecturers are opposed to the implementation of a four-year degree found a recent survey done by the All India Save Education Committee (AISEC) Karnataka.

A draft of the "pro-people education policy" and survey report on the problems of NEP 2020 was unveiled by Allama Prabhu Bettadur the state president of AISEC during a convention on Wednesday at the Gandhi Bhavan. Addressing the gathering



Submission of the draft

Vice Chancellor of St Joseph's University Fr Victor Lobo stressed developing critical thinking "Education should not just focus on developing individual skills but also must foster

creative and critical thinking among students. Education should be ensured for all irrespective of caste, religion, or economic background," he added. Tarun Kanti Naskar,

Professor at Jadavpur University criticised the erstwhile NEP as Anti-National Education Policy. "The language policy is a trick to force the Hindi language on the people of the country. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 will lead to the centralisation, privatisation, and communalisation of education and needs to be defeated across the country," he said.

State vice president VN Rajasekhar, state secretary Mahesh SG, scientist RL Mauryan and Professor Somasekharappa were present at the convention.

## BMTC ignores bus connectivity concerns

**Hemalatha Y N**

**BENGALURU**: Commuters have been facing harrowing time traversing from Richmond Circle to Banashankari, because of the lower number of BMTC buses deployed in the area. The wait time for the buses is unreasonably high. Some buses also skip regular stops, making it harder for commuters to reach their destinations.

Nethravathi, a regular commuter, said that the frequency of buses is appalling, especially during evenings. The wait time may exceed an hour.

"It is very difficult and unsafe for women who rely on public transport around this time," she said. Several other passengers echoed her sentiments, suggesting that the frequency of buses be increased.

Instead of addressing the issue, Sunitha, PRO of BMTC entirely dismissed the issue by saying, "Won't you get any other issues except the BMTC ones? ..you don't have to make it an issue..." She declined to comment on the issue faced by the passengers.

## Employers prefer experience over novice

**Dattatraya Dutta**

**BENGALURU**: Companies this season are preferring experienced and skilled over fresh college graduates going by the current trend in the job market, opined Professor Kiran Jeevan, Public Relations Officer and placement officer at St Joseph's University.

Companies are now reluctant to hire freshers as they believe an experienced candidate with skills that suit the job market is a better bet over a college



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graduate, and this trend is scary for colleges, he elaborated. The biggest challenge is to bridge the skillset gap and ensure that students are equipped with

the skills the companies seek during the placement.

Jeevan pointed out that a company like Deloitte which offered a minimum of Rs 6 lakhs CTC last year has now reduced its CTC to a mere Rs 3 lakhs also whilst hiring in lesser numbers this year. Most companies that are hiring extensively on campus are new startups.

"We are hopeful of the situation changing next year as we continue to bridge the gaps that we notice," he added.

## BBMP teachers continue strike

**Sadhika Dasgupta**

**BENGALURU**: BBMP teachers' protest entered the fourth day as they continued to strike at the Freedom Park against the decision of the State government to take over administration from the BBMP. They intend to continue the strike until BBMP agrees to their demands.

The strike commenced on Tuesday after the BBMP decided to hand over its schools to the State Education Department. The protestors demand the BBMP retain control of the schools and colleges to ensure job security and pay parity. Khalil Ullah, a protestor, said,

"The new contract outlined a lower compensation than the current salaries. These issues are to be discussed with the government and they have to provide some clarity."

Karthik, a teacher from BBMP said, "All our teachers are qualified, despite this, the Chief Commissioner is giving wrong information by saying we are not performing well." Shilpa, a guest teacher from BBMP feared losing her job if the schools were taken over by the government. A total of 20 per cent of teachers are in the fear of losing employment.