

# THE BEACON

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## Young Voices Matter: Aravind

Nidhi B and Hemalatha YN

**BENGALURU:** Actor Ramesh Aravind urged the electorate on Monday to come out in large numbers and vote for the country's progress. "To ensure a strong and inclusive democratic system, everyone must participate actively, aiming for 100% voter participation," said Aravind.

Aravind urged the audience to exercise their voting rights responsibly by researching their local candidates on Google. He stressed the importance of understanding their background, achievements, and manifestos before casting their votes.

He cautioned against voting based on hearsay, encouraging the audience to think about what the candidate can do for them and their community.

Chairman Kantaraju of the District SVEEP committee, echoing Aravind's sentiments, reminded the young voters about the upcoming Lok Sabha elections on April 26. He reiterated the voting hours, from 6 am to 6 pm, urging everyone to vote responsibly and make their voices heard.

The district SVEEP nodal officer, Prathiba, the SVEEP nodal officer of Bengaluru Lok Sabha constituency, Ramamani, the principal of BMS College, Dr Vasundara, and more than 1500 students were present.

## Drought declaration done ahead of deadline

Kushal Varma J V

**BENGALURU:** Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda took a potshot at the Central government on Saturday for its lackadaisical approach to the drought situation in Karnataka. He refuted the home minister's claim that the drought relief proposal was delayed.

The state declared 223 out of 236 taluks drought-hit in 2023. As per NDRF guidelines, the Central government was to provide Rs 18,171 crore, which hasn't been provided yet. An open debate was called on Saturday to sort out the issue, inviting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. However, the latter did not attend.

At a rally, Amit Shah had previously stated, "The proposal to the Centre was submitted late by three months. Today, the petition

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 BE	Total
GST Protected Revenue	35,226	53,544	61,044	69,600	79,332	90,444	1,03,106	4,92,296
Actual GST collection	24,182	41,956	42,147	37,711	49,929	61,403	69,436 (estimate)	3,26,764
Shortfall	11,044	11,588	18,897	31,889	29,403	29,041	34,570	
GST compensation received from Gol	6,246	10,754	14,497	26,196	27,085	20,288	1,191	

Revenue minister critiquing the fiscal federal relations through data

Kushal Varma J V

of the Centre to release drought relief is stuck with the Election Commission."

Refuting this claim, Gowda outlined the timeline of events and showed several letters sent to the Centre asking for relief funds.

The drought management manual states, "The declaration of Kharif drought should not be done later than October 31."

Adhering to the

guidelines, he stated, "The drought declaration was made on September 13 2023, which is one and half months earlier than the stipulated deadline in the manual."

The Drought memorandum was submitted on September 22, 2023, following which the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare constituted an Inter-

Ministerial Central Team and submitted a report to the Central government on October 20, 2023.

The manual also states that the Central government must make a final decision on the assistance to the state from the NDRF within a month of receiving the IMCT Report.

He said, "The Central government should have taken a decision latest by

November 20 2023 as per the guidelines, however, till date it hasn't been done. The IMCT report has been gathering dust on the Home Minister's table for over five months now."

Last month, the chief minister raised this issue with the Supreme Court under the Natural Disaster Management Act.

Gowda also highlighted how unfair the tax devolution towards Karnataka has been.

Under the Fourteenth Finance Commission, the state received 4.713 per cent of the taxes; however, this has been reduced to 3.646 per cent under the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

"While it may seem like a difference of merely one per cent, Karnataka is the worst affected as it is the largest reduction compared to any other state in India," he stated.

## Preventive measures urged against non-communicable diseases

Pratham Basu & Shoab Shakeel

**CAMPUS:** In light of the increasing cases of early onset of non-communicable diseases among youngsters, it is essential to prioritise early detection and treatment of heart attacks, strokes, and cancer. This approach can prevent their progression to a more severe stage, said Dinesh Gundu Rao, Minister of Health and Family Welfare of Karnataka, while addressing St Joseph's University students on Monday, World Health Day.

Rao emphasised the state government's citizen-centric healthcare approach. He highlighted the challenges of



Dinesh Gundu Rao addressing SJU students

Pratham Basu

healthcare accessibility due to high costs and limited access, announcing that the "Gruha Arogya Yojna" would be implemented after elections to address these issues effectively. With the Gruha Arogya Scheme, the government aims to bring medication and testing

directly to people's doorsteps. "This early testing will help prevent long-term medical issues like stroke, kidney, and heart failure," he explained.

While acknowledging that the detection of diseases at an early stage has been the biggest challenge for the Health

Department, Rao stressed the provision of free CT and MRI scans, as well as NIMHANS-affiliated therapists at public healthcare centres. With this, the government aims to bridge the healthcare access gap in rural and urban areas. "In our collaboration with IISc, we have implemented predictive analysis to detect early spikes in dengue cases," Rao said.

Quoting the motto of "My health, my right and my responsibility," Rao urged the students to break mental health-related stereotypes and to take responsibility for their physical and psychological well-being.

## Assam society's vibrant fest

Sadhika Dasgupta

**BENGALURU:** The Assamese community in Bengaluru celebrated the vibrant festival of Rongali Bihu. Despite being thousands of kilometres away from home, the community unites together to promote the rich culture of Assam, according to Dhiraj Talukdar, the advisor of the Assam Society of Bangalore.

The Assam Society of Bangalore organised its twenty-third edition of Spring Fest, the Rongali Bihu program, at the Freedom International School Ground in HSR Layout on April 7. Samarjit Ghosh, the president of the Assam Society of Bangalore, explained that the event featured a traditional Bihu Kuwori performance and famous YouTube influencer Dimpu Baruah, who was invited to interact with the crowd.

He said, "We will have a live performance by our special guest, the renowned Assamese artist Neel Akash." Dhiraj Talukdar mentioned that the food festival is one of the unique things they do yearly: "It's not only Assamese cuisine but also includes the flavours of Northeastern cuisine at the food festival," he said.

## Ugadi festive essentials' price surge

Hemalatha YN

**BENGALURU:** The prices of flowers and fruits continue to hit the sky because of the rising demand coupled with a low supply, expressed the vendors at the KR market ahead of the Ugadi festival.

Suresh K, a market flower vendor, said there is a vast difference between the prices before and during the festival week. "The prices of flowers are expected to increase even more on Tuesday and Wednesday," he added.

According to the vendors in the KR market, jasmine flowers

range from Rs 800—Rs 1200 per kg, and roses range from Rs 250—Rs 300 per kg. Along with the flowers, the prices of fruits are also high. Last week, the price of apples was Rs 100—Rs 150; now, it's Rs 350—Rs 400 per kg. The cost of papaya has increased from Rs 80 to Rs 120, while the mangoes are priced at Rs 150—Rs 200 per kg.

Rajanna, a vendor, explained, "The prices of all fruits and flowers have doubled due to the high demand. This is because there are no proper nutrients for the plants to grow

due to the excess heat and insufficient water supply to the yields. Because of the price inflation, customers who used to buy 2-3 kgs of flowers and fruits are now purchasing only half to 1 kg."

Speaking to The Beacon, Veena, a customer, expressed that, "Ugadi is a prominent festival here, and inflating prices cannot reduce the festival spirits because people here collectively feel like spending more on festival necessities or essentials as they are an inherent part of our traditions and culture."

## Congress manifesto goes viral

Anu Priya & Sadhika D

With over 25 crore views across various social media platforms within three days, Rahul Gandhi's video urging citizens to provide feedback on the manifesto has gained traction. It has sparked discussions on social media about the promises made in the manifesto.

On April 5, INC released its manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Inter-alia, the manifesto outlined plans to carry out a nationwide comprehensive socio-economic and caste census, documenting

the various castes and sub-castes and their socio-economic status.

"The Congress manifesto was made by your (citizens) recommendations, and I am thankful for that. I would also like to know your feedback through comments and mails," he said.

The video went viral, with 2.4 crore views on his Instagram post alone. It received over one lakh comments, which provided feedback on the manifesto.

Rahul received more than 3000 email responses from people, said the Congress in the post on X.