

# THE BEACON

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## Assembly drives sectoral growth

Utsav Pradhan

The tenth assembly of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly marked a pivotal moment with the proposal to establish seven new universities in the state. Led by Kunga Nima Lepcha, the Education Department presented bills aimed at enhancing education in Sikkim which was convened on February 12 for its Seventh Session.

Professor Nima Lepcha from Tadong College welcomed the proposal, stating, "Creating seven new universities in Sikkim will significantly improve the forthcoming education." He believes these institutions will offer better opportunities for students and educators, elevating academic standards across the state.

Alongside educational reforms, discussions in the assembly also addressed infrastructure development. The Transport Department introduced a bill focused on this aspect, underscoring the government's commitment to enhancing public infrastructure.

Furthermore, amendments of bills concerning pensions, medical allowances, civil courts, and town planning were deliberated, reflecting the assembly's broader agenda to address various sectors' needs and concerns. Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, who also oversees finance, presented the First Supplementary Demands for grants for the financial year 2023-24, outlining the government's financial priorities and allocations.

The proposal for new universities highlights the government's commitment to expanding educational infrastructure to cater to the growing needs of Sikkim's population.

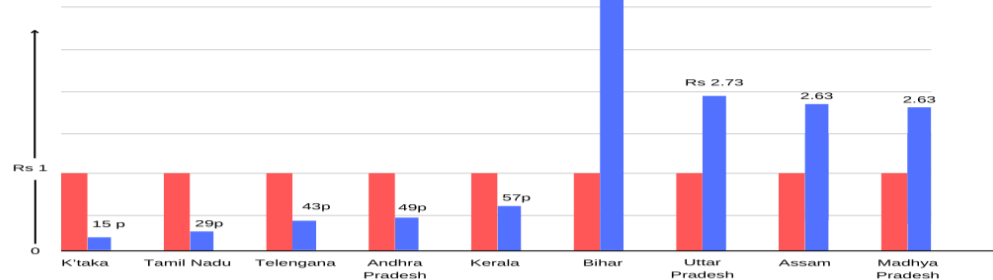
## Tax movement flares up with separatist undertones

Aatreyi Bose

Despite Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu's joint protest underlining the unfair tax devolution that visibly creates a north-south divide, the center remains firm on their budget allocation shares. Karnataka Chief Minister (CM) Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar spearheaded the Southern Tax Movement to the central government's doorstep at Jantar Mantar.

On the basis of Interim Budget 2024, Karnataka Congress leaders marched to Delhi to protest the alleged issue of discrimination against southern states on February 7. Former Members of Legislative Assembly and member of Parliament from Tamil Nadu also took the stage amidst Congress'

Tax return from the centre as per every rupee



Visible disparity in tax devolution

"Bharat Mata ki Jai" and "Delhi Chalo" slogans. Later, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana also raised their voices in unison.

Providing a perspective on the budget, the bar graph shows the state-wise distribution of net proceeds from the center to the states. For every rupee of tax collected from the state government of Karnataka, the Union Gov-

ernment sends back 15 paise. Tamil Nadu gets back 29 paise, Telangana 43 paise, Andhra Pradesh 49 paise and Kerala receives 57 paise. But on the same scale of measure, northern populated states like Bihar receive Rs 7.06, Uttar Pradesh gets Rs 2.73, Assam Rs 2.63 and Madhya Pradesh Rs 2.42.

The Union Government has maintained a firm stance

defending the current budget and reflecting a reluctance to reconsider the use of 2011 census data for funds and tax devolution. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasized that she lacks the discretion to alter the recommendations of the Finance Commission (FC). Along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders

have accused the state governments of harboring a "separatist" mindset and spreading a "false narrative." Meanwhile, the ministers of the state governments countered with their joint concern of the Union government being "step-motherly" towards the south.

The injustice meted out to the southern states is not a new issue and has historical precedence. Unlike the previous nine commissions that used 1971 census data, the 15th FC of 2017 presented its report in 2021, utilizing the 2011 census data for allocating funds to different states. They have perceived it as a penalty and unequal treatment for their accomplishment in population control measures in the delimitation exercise, which the states argued should have been rewarded for.

## Uttarakhand's UCC bill sparks debate

Srishti R Jois

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) bill was introduced by the Uttarakhand administration on Tuesday during a special State Assembly session. A government appointed group led by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai submitted a draft of the UCC bill, and last week the state cabinet approved it.

According to Section 378 of the UCC bill, "It shall be obligatory for partners to have a live-in relationship within the State, whether they are residents of Uttarakhand or not, to submit a state-



Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami

ment of live-in relationship under sub-section (1) of section 381 to the registrar within whose jurisdiction they are so living."

The bill says that the live-in partners in Uttara-

khand must have themselves registered with district officials or will have to face imprisonment of 6 years and will have to pay a fine of up to Rs.25,000, once it advances to a law.

The bill also says that parental consent is required for those whose age is below 21 and should submit a statement to the registrar stating whether they are residents of Uttarakhand or not.

Further, Section 388 of the bill states, "If a woman gets deserted by her live-in partner, she shall be entitled to claim maintenance from her live-in partner for which she may approach the competent court having jurisdiction over the place where they last cohabited, and in such a case the provisions contained in chapter 5, part 1 of this code shall mutatis-mutandis apply."

## Brawl over helmet violation

Afiya Amreen

**BENGALURU:** An incident unfolded on Dr. Marigowda Road in Bengaluru, when the head constable stopped a scooter rider, S Syed Shafi, for not wearing a helmet.

During the encounter, Shafi bit the fingers of a constable after being halted for riding without a helmet. The altercation occurred as the head constable Sidrameshwara Kaujalagi attempted to capture an image of Shafi's vehicle.

Following the confrontation, Shafi was promptly arrested. A video capturing the incident circulated widely on social media, sparking astonishment among viewers.

In the viral footage, Shafi was seen being pulled over by traffic police. As the officers confiscated his vehicle's key, Shafi engaged in a heated argument with them, culminating in him biting one of the constable's fingers.

Speaking to The Beacon, Rajesh, a police officer (Name changed) said, "Shafi abruptly stopped his bike and confronted the constable, insisting that he could photograph his vehicle's number plate. Then, Shafi seized the head constable's mobile phone and attempted to flee, but Kaujalagi caught hold of him. Shafi then assaulted Kaujalagi by biting his fingers. Responding to the incident, a Hovsala vehicle arrived at the scene and detained Shafi."

## A tale of urban resilience

Navya Y

**BENGALURU:** The city is not solely established by the real estate industry, the city corporation at the top, etc. These ladies, who are typically unnoticed, also altered it. Their acts altered the entire city. The city's policies have changed as a result of these", stated Renana Jabhwala, the founder of SEWA Bharat.

On February 13, the Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS) hosted a virtual launch for the book 'The City Makers', written by Renana Jabhwala and Brijal Bhrambhat and titled



Representational Image Amazon.in

How Women Are Building a Sustainable Future for Urban India.

The book mostly focuses on the struggles faced by women living in urban shantytowns and how the Mahila Housing SEWA

Trust (MHT) became a source of inspiration for women's empowerment.

MHT provides women with various positions, including community organisers, by effectively establishing community action organisations for them.

Additionally, they highlighted the leaders of community action groups who focus on energy efficiency and climate change. Both the narratives had real life incidents of women protagonists, Meena Bhen and Krishna Bhen, involved.

## META fest's comedy critique

Kiranmai Basvaraj

**CAMPUS:** A popular comedian, filmmaker, and Instagram influencer, Mr. Anurag Minus Verma, screens his movies at the META fest, organised by the department of English at St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru.

On day three of the META fest, a panel discussion held at De Nobili Hall was attended by Verma, during which he had screened his movies, highlighting multiple issues like casteism, political bias, class and privilege.

Speaking to The Beacon Mr. Verma said, "His films which are a slice of

life and humor call out several social problems existing in the society and have a wider reach because of the humor", while addressing the audience during the discussion, he further added that most of his videos are mostly unplanned and are rather largely candid thoughts of his.

Later he said that the inspiration he had behind his comedies and sketches were drawn out from his earlier days at Jawaharlal Nehru University where he had to come across several people of extreme right wing ideologies.