

Karnataka budget slammed: Joshi, Bommai call it 'anti-people'

Bengaluru, Mar 8: Union minister for Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs, Pralhad Joshi, has sharply criticised the Karnataka state Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, calling it an exercise in minority appeasement and financial mismanagement.



Chief Minister constantly depends on the Centre instead of focusing on the state's progress," he said. Meanwhile, union minister for Heavy Industries and Steel, H D Kumaraswamy, took to social media platform X, alleging, "Favouritism for a few and disregard for the majority! This is the Congress-led Karnataka government's budget - appeasement over development."

climbed to Rs 7.64 lac cr. With the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at 24.91 per cent, he warned that Karnataka may soon breach the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act's 25 per cent threshold.

Joshi further slammed the budget for lacking a vision for economic growth, infrastructure development, and fiscal discipline. "Only 14 per cent has been allocated to agriculture, 10 per cent to education, and a mere 5 per cent to healthcare. The

Mangaluru: MLC Ivan D'Souza hails Wenlock Hospital upgrade, Christian Development Corp approval

Mangaluru, March 8: MLC Ivan D'Souza has welcomed the government's decision to upgrade Wenlock Hospital into a regional facility, alongside the allocation of significant funds for its development. He also expressed his satisfaction over the green signal for the Christian Development Corporation, marking a major step forward in community welfare.



allocation of Rs 250 crore." He emphasised the importance of establishing a separate directorate for the Christian Development Corporation, which would simplify decision-making, facilitate the release of funds, and provide matching grants. On Shaktinagar incident

Jailed actress Ranya Rao admits to smuggling 17 gold bars



Bengaluru, Mar 8: Kannada actress Ranya Rao, also known as Harshvardini Ranya, admitted to smuggling 17 gold bars in her statement to the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) following her arrest at the Kempegowda International Airport on March 4. She claimed to be a freelancer in Dubai's real estate sector and requested DRI officials to maintain the incident's confidentiality.

acknowledged understanding the legal implications of providing false or misleading information under the Customs Act. Describing her background, Ranya stated she was raised in Bengaluru as the daughter of a real estate businessman. She has completed her 12th grade, worked as a film and theatre artiste, and is also a wildlife photographer. She is married to architect Jatin Hukkeri.

Mangaluru: Former deputy mayor Mohammed Kunjathbail passes away

Mangaluru, Mar 8: Former Mangaluru City Corporation (MCC) deputy mayor Mohammed Kunjathbail passed away on Saturday, March 8, following a heart attack. He was 60 years old. A three-time corporator, Kunjathbail had served as the deputy mayor and was an active member of the Congress party, contributing significantly to the welfare of society.



Horata Samiti expressed deep shock over his untimely demise and paid heartfelt tributes. "His sudden passing is a great loss to the committee. He was always thoughtful of the public interest and remained untainted by corruption. The committee offers heartfelt condolences," said Muneer Katipalla, convenor of the Toll Gate Virodhi Horata Samiti.

Building resilient food systems starts with supporting farmers

We have much to thank our farmers for. Their hands cultivate the bountiful horticultural wonders that are ubiquitous in the Middle East. From date palm cultivation across the Arabian Peninsula, the roses of Taif and the colourful fruits and vegetables grown in North Africa to the innovative hydroponic farming methods in the UAE and the seasonal produce of the Levant, the region's botanical beauty is boundless.



It is noteworthy that 13 percent of the total employment in the Middle East and North Africa is within the agricultural sector, making it a vital sector and an important livelihood pathway, in addition to contributing to regional food and water security. In certain countries, this percentage is even higher, with agriculture employing 19 percent of the workforce in Egypt, 14 percent in Tunisia and 31 percent in Morocco. Yet, the region's climate is proving to be perilous to the agricultural industry, making farming a rather difficult feat. Statistics published by the World Bank state that only 4.8 percent of the entire region is arable land.

At the heart of such support, policymakers should create public awareness campaigns revolving around the challenges and rewards of working in the agricultural industry. It is vital to foster a new generation of farmers and agricultural professionals who can take the industry to new heights. This requires integrating agricultural education into school curricula, thereby cultivating an understanding of and appreciation for the natural environments of the MENA region. Classes can introduce students to practical farming programs, include STEM-based agriculture courses, and teach entrepreneurship in agri-business to engage students early on. Public campaigns could showcase stories of local farmers who are contributing to the region's food security, with the aim of repositioning the image of farming as a high-tech, impactful career.

pooling resources, lowering costs and boosting profit margins, improving bargaining powers, sharing equipment and expanding access to markets. As such, legislation, policies and programs should support agricultural cooperatives in the region in utilizing their collective strengths to operate efficiently and effectively. It is imperative that governments offer social safety nets for farmers to ensure they can operate sustainably over the long term. As the industry sometimes faces unpredictable scenarios, it is imperative that governments offer social safety nets for farmers to ensure they can operate sustainably over the long term and build the necessary resilience for such a vital sector.

There are more than 1.2 million agricultural cooperatives worldwide and, collectively, they offer a practical way to empower small-scale farmers by

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