

Menstrual leave: 15 women move HC against policy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

FIFTEEN women working in key posts in various industrial establishments moved the Karnataka High Court (HC), challenging the legality of the State's menstrual leave policy.

Stating that it is likely to hinder their career progression because the impugned notification, dated November 20 2025, mandates industrial establishments to give one day of paid leave per month to all permanent, contract, outsourced women employees aged between 18 and 52 years during their menstrual cycle, restricting it to 12 days per annum, discourages employers from hiring or promoting women employees in leadership positions.

They contended that the notification infringes upon the right to privacy and dignity, which is an integral part of the Right to Life under Article 21. The policy forces women to disclose a deeply private matter about their menstrual cycle to their employer, which can lead to social stigma, disturbing questions and a hostile work environment. It leaves women open to scrutiny, thereby violating their bodily autonomy and dignity, they alleged.

While the intention behind the policy may appear to be benevolent, its effect is counterproductive to the cause of women's empowerment and gender equality. It is a step backward that threatens to undo decades of progress made in integrating women into the workforce as equal participants, the peti-

tioners claimed.

Contending that the action of the state is violative of Article 14, 15, 16 and 21 of the Constitution of India, the petitioners, through their counsel, stated that the classification created between men and women for the purpose of this special leave is not founded with the object of achieving workplace equality. Instead of promoting equality, it reinforces stereotypes about women being physically weaker and less capable, thereby defeating the very purpose of equality legislation, they said.

"The impugned notification, by singling out women for a specific biological function and mandating leave, inadvertently labels them as less productive or more prone to absenteeism, thereby making them less attractive candidates for employers in a highly competitive job market. This directly impacts their right to equal opportunity and to practice any profession freely," the petitioners stated.

They also stated that the policy is an act of "benevolent sexism", which under the guise of protection, perpetuates gender stereotypes and reinforces paternalistic attitudes. It was introduced on the old-fashioned notion that women are incapacitated by menstruation and need special protection, ignoring the reality that millions of women work efficiently even without such provision, they argued.

Two separate petitions filed by the Karnataka Employers' Association and Bengaluru Hotels' Association, challenging the menstrual leave policy, are already pending before the HC.



Tighter child safety policy for tourist spots

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AHEAD of camps and picnics, involving school and college students during summer vacations, the principal secretary of the Tourism department in Karnataka has issued directions to the commissioner of tourism department to frame and implement the Child Protection in Tourism Policy strictly at major tourist destinations

across the state. These directions were issued after the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights wrote to the tourism department seeking the secretary to take necessary measures for the safety of students. The Policy says that a Child Safety Response team should be in place at major tourist centres, trained to respond immediately to major accidents



or when children go missing.

A few of the recommendations said - mandatory displaying of child helpline number and 1098 at tourist spots and accommodations in English and Kannada. In destinations with deep water, danger signs must be displayed at the entrance of the spot, with watch guards in place to inform parents and prevent children from going to

such dangerous areas. A separate swimming spot for kids and life jackets must be available.

To ensure strict enforcement of this policy, the commission recommended an annual audit at major tourist destinations. Also, child safety clauses should be included in all licenses under the department's jurisdiction. They must be reviewed annually and safety certificates should be made mandatory for license renewal.

Government to bolster Kalyan Karnataka as tourist hub

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KARNATAKA Tourism Society (KTS), in association with the Union Ministry of Tourism and the State Department of Tourism, held the "Explore Kalyan Karnataka (North Karnataka)" knowledge sharing workshop and business-to-business meeting, which concluded on Thursday. The initiative was part of a broader effort to promote the state's lesser-known destinations by creating awareness and highlight Kalyan Karnataka region as a tourism hub. KTS said the region offers "a rich blend of heritage, spirituality, crafts, and natural landscapes that remain relatively untapped in mainstream tourism circuits."

Tourist hotspots like Bidar Fort, Bahmani tombs, Kalaburagi Fort, Jama Masjid, and Vijayanagara-era heritage sites, spiritual landmarks like Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib, Narasimha Jhira

Cave Temple, and Sharan Basaveshwara Temple were highlighted during the meet.

The event was inaugurated by Dr Trilok Chandra, Secretary to the Government of Karnataka. He said, "the State has initiated several programs under the Karnataka Tourism Policy 2024-29, focusing on destination development, heritage conservation, and community participation."

Regional director (South) of the Union Ministry of Tourism D Venkatesh added, "The Ministry of Tourism is proud to support initiatives that highlight lesser-known circuits like Kalyan Karnataka, representing the diversity in India's tourism."

State issues new rules for better maternal care

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THE Government of Karnataka has issued strict guidelines to improve maternal and newborn health services in public hospitals, following findings from the State Maternal Death Audit.

The order focuses on fixing key gaps in service delivery and ensuring accountability. Hospitals have been directed to ensure the continuous presence of specialist doctors, with mandatory residence at headquarters to guarantee round-the-clock emergency care. Single-posted gynaecologists cannot be deputed for sterilisation

campus, ensuring uninterrupted antenatal and obstetric services. To address emergencies, hospitals must maintain adequate blood supply and sign prior agreements with multiple blood banks for timely access.

The government has made real-time recording of all obstetric cases on the ARC Partograph system compulsory, warning that delays or non-compliance will be treated as negligence and may affect incentives.

Regular monitoring, including mandatory specialist visits to maternity wards, has also been enforced to strengthen supervision and response during critical cases.



QUIET OBJECTION

Members of various organisations stage a silent protest against Special Intensive Revision (SIR) on Sheshadri Road in Bengaluru on Thursday | VINOD KUMAR T

EXPRESS READ

20 cases solved, 42 arrested in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA: The district police solved 20 theft and extortion cases, arrested 42 accused, and recovered stolen valuables worth about Rs 1.20 crore. Police said on Thursday that the cases registered during 2024, 2025 and 2026, included temple thefts, vehicle thefts, house break-ins, finance fraud, and cattle theft incidents across various police stations. The recovered items include gold and silver ornaments, an earthmover, SUV, tractors, water pump sets and cash. ENS

90-year woman found dead in Chakra river

UDUPI: Nagu Mogaveerthi (90) was found dead in the Chakra river at Noojadi in Kundapur taluk, Udupi district, on Wednesday. On March 24, Nagu went to bed after dinner. By midnight, her daughter Sujatha found that her mother was missing. Nagu's body was later found floating in the river, near her home. Police suspect suicide as the elderly woman was suffering from age-related health issues and was reportedly distressed. ENS

Advertisement for National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID) featuring employment notice and contact details.

Advertisement for Canara Bank Koramangala Layout Branch with contact information.

Advertisement for an auction sale notice for immovable property.

Advertisement for an E-Auction notice for the sale of immovable properties.

Advertisement for an E-Auction notice for the sale of immovable property, including details of the property and terms of sale.

Advertisement for an authorised officer at Canara Bank.

Advertisement for Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) regarding a press advertisement for a crane supply.

Advertisement for Manappuram Finance Ltd. regarding a gold auction notice.

Advertisement for Manappuram Finance Ltd. regarding a gold auction notice, listing various gold ornaments and terms of the auction.

Large advertisement for Shekar Eye Hospital featuring a focus feature on Dr. Rajashekar Y.L., discussing his journey in medicine and the hospital's services.