

City in Numbers

10 MEDICAL COLLEGES IN BENGALURU URBAN DISTRICT

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iTWEET: A faint putrid smell of rotting #garbage, a small cough, a wee bit of throat pain, a leaky nose? Familiar? #Bengaluru #WaitingAtTheClinic



Visit This | Music
City-based band Mother Root will perform rock numbers inspired by The Beatles, The Stones, Deep Purple, The Who, CCR, The Kinks and other bands from the 60s. At The Courtyard. Phoenix Marketcity, Whitefield, today, at 6 pm. Entry free.

SHORT TAKES

Will Remove 'Eunuch' Word: Govt



The state government told the High Court on Tuesday the word 'eunuch' would be removed from Section 36A of the Karnataka Police Act. A division bench headed by acting Chief Justice S K Mukherjee was hearing a petition, which sought quashing of the section that allows the police to maintain a register of eunuchs suspected of kidnapping and emasculating boys.

Students Can Apply for CET from Today



Students aspiring to study medical, engineering and other professional courses in Karnataka can apply for the Common Entrance Test (CET) starting Wednesday. Students can register for CET on the Karnataka Examinations Authority website www.kea.kar.nic.in till February 13. The last date to pay the fees is February 15, and admissions tickets will be issued after April 15.

Chain Snatch: Four Irani Gang Members Held



Four members of the notorious Irani gang, who are believed to have snatched 18 chains in the city, are in custody of the Bengaluru police. Murtaza, Hyder, Shahabad and Gufran -- all from Madhya Pradesh -- were brought to the city from Bhopal and Vishakapatnam where they were arrested. Gold weighing 781 grams worth ₹19.50 lakh has been seized.

Send your feedback to ebengaluru@timesgroup.com

STRAIGHT FROM EXPERTS With well-heeled travellers asking for more, expert-led intimate tours are in vogue now

Tours Move Beyond 'Been There' with Onboard Experts

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Bengaluru: Dr Ranjani Rao, 38, an Electronics City-based dentist, foodie and travel junkie, has been there, seen it. She has done pre-planned travel packages, solo trips, trips with large groups and also travel meet-ups.

She now seeks a travel plan that is experiential, fun, personalised and informative. So, her next trip — to Peru in April and centered around food — will be with a group of 6-10 people. This time, her group is taking

their food guide along. "With an expert, we can dine with local families, have conversations with local chefs and learn how to cook like them," she said. "Homework by the expert ensures that even leisure spent productively as per local culture. This is the kind of travel I want to do henceforth."

Why travel with a guidebook when you can travel with the person who wrote it is the new mantra many Bengalureans are adopting. A whole new segment, the expert-led intimate travel, is born and food, archaeology, wildlife, art, nature trails, adventure, art and photography are among the most sought-after.

Gauri Jayaram's Active Holiday Company organises all these plus



FRIEND & GUIDE
Being with the group throughout, experts develop a bond that is deeper than any local can provide

expert-led marathon and cycling tours. "These trips do not come cheap and travellers who opt for them are connoisseurs. They get into details and technicalities and ask pointed questions. Since they cannot be treated at par with tourists want-

ing to tick destinations off their bucket list, a specialist is a must." Software engineer Sathish Ramakrishnan travelled solo in search of new archaeological discoveries. Then, he came across Carnelian, experts in heritage tours. "We had a conservation architect who told us about monument preservation. We cannot know this on a regular trip." He travelled to Avani, Chitradurga and Lepakshi recently. Meera Iyer of Carnelian leads 12 trips every year. She said that challenges can be logistical — going to lesser-known places in the shortest time with least discomfort. "Also, experts have to be more discerning on where to take people and what would fit into the trip's theme."

Vikram Ahuja, director, Beyond Travel, is launching his first expert-led tour to Brazil and Machu Picchu in April with celebrity actor-writer Rubi Chakravarti leading the group. "Experts allow us to get the finer details right. Being with the group throughout, experts develop a bond that is far deeper than any local expert can provide."

Said Hari Nair, CEO, Holiday IQ: "Right now, it is in a niche stage and a little unorganised. More people opting for it and sharing feedback online will create stronger content for future travellers and lend experts more credibility."

Tech-savvy travellers seeking bragging rights on social media are aiding the momentum, he added.

This Skywalk to Have an Elevator



PROJECT: Skywalk at Jayanagar 3rd block	Agency: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike	Commissioned 2014	Initial Deadline MAY 2015	Present deadline MAR 2016	COST: ₹2 crore	STATUS 70% COMPLETE
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Construction of all skywalks, including this one, was put on hold in the run up to the civic polls. **Benefit:** The skywalk near Syndicate Bank on Elephant Rock Road will provide a safe passage for pedestrians instead of crossing the road. The skywalk will have an elevator too.

AUDACITY OF HOPE

She Drives a Rented Auto for Living When not Preparing for IAS Exam

She got a three-wheeler from a mechanic after auto owners refused to rent one to her

Bengaluru: In the frenzy that is Bengaluru's traffic, the 22-year-old Yellamma drives an autorickshaw while she prepares for the Indian Administrative Service examinations.

Forced to marry a flower decorator when she was 18, Yellamma is now a single mother with a two-year-old boy. The gritty woman rented an autorickshaw and learnt to drive it with her brother-in-law's help. "Autorickshaw owners refused to rent a vehicle because they won't give one to a woman. A mechanic finally agreed to rent me an auto for ₹130 per day," Yellamma says.

She drives from 6 am to 8 pm and wastes no time between two trips, devouring magazines and newspapers in her free time. She is studying for her PUC although her ultimate goal is the IAS. Why? "Because I want to help other women."



Yellamma earns ₹700-800 a day and is left with almost half of that after paying for the auto's rent and fuel

Yellamma says that she encounters a strange hostility from male autorickshaw drivers. "They say I'm

snatching their customers away." Passengers have been good to her. "They are curious and ask me to nar-



IN AUTO-PILOT MODE
She drives from 6 am to 8 pm and devours magazines and newspapers in her free time

rate my story. They encourage me to study on and even pay ₹10-20 over and above the meter." Yellamma earns ₹700-800 a day and is left with almost half of that after paying for the auto's rent and fuel.

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Here's an Electric Alternative to Control Pollution

ET By Invite



BK CHANDRASHEKHARA

Electric buses easily score over diesel ones

Despite access to private vehicles, there is still a large portion of the city that relies on public transport and non-motorised mobility. Public transport will and should continue to be an integral part of movement in Bengaluru. BMTC transports over 52 lakh people daily with a fleet of 6,500 buses — a commendable effort for any transport corporation. The working population in the IT and related sectors expects a higher level of service to enable transition from private vehicles to buses. BMTC has responded to this by introducing charter services and a fleet of Volvo for high comfort travel.

What is now required are high-impact public transit solutions that can sustain the future demand for mobility and leave a green footprint in the process. The increase both in the vehicle population and air pollution justifies the use of electric buses. They offer multiple technical, environmental and socio-economic advantages over diesel and CNG buses; deliver superior torque-to-power output at low speeds that is ideal for city travel; enable regenerative braking and experience lower wear and tear due to the absence of a mechanical drive train. Crucially, from the public health point, electric buses have zero tail-pipe emissions and 30% lower noise levels.

In order to accelerate electric mobility, the Government of India earlier this year

A BETTER OPTION

Electric buses have zero tail-pipe emissions and 30% lower noise pollution levels

launched the FAME scheme (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of hybrid and electric vehicles under the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020. Electric mobility is also identified as a key mitigation strategy in India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) submitted in the run-up to the recently concluded Paris Climate Conference. The Paris agreement visualises such domestic action as well as international climate finance and technology transfer.

Electric buses face two key implantation challenges but both are surmountable: Lack of an ecosystem for electric mobility and high upfront capital cost. Given its decisive advantages, the two issues can be overcome by policy support, especially in the initial stages



of its implementation. This is an appropriate moment for the Karnataka government to demonstrate leadership on electric mobility. It should induct electric vehicles in the fleet of government vehicles to increase awareness, expand product range and demonstrate commitment. Also, with one of the largest intra-city public transport networks, BMTC can emerge as a significant market for original equipment manufacturers in the near future. By replacing around 1,000 old BSI and BS II buses from the fleet, particularly matter emissions from the fleet can be reduced by around 30%. In fact, the corporation piloted an electric bus in 2014 for over three months with positive results.

(The author is President, Bangalore Climate Change Initiative - Karnataka)

Bean Town Toasts Avarekai Mela with Throngs of Foodies

TASTY TREAT

Food Street in VV Puram hosts the fair for 18 days



Our Bureau

Bengaluru: On Sunday evening, Subramanya waded through a sea of people at VV Puram in south Bengaluru, a plate of obbattu and a cup of payasa in hand. Along with his wife Lalitha and two other family members, the Domlur-based entrepreneur dealing in automobile batteries has been visiting Bengaluru's well-known food street this time of the year since 2010. He does not mind the hour-long travel, he said, since the food tastes delicious.

Behind him, there is a serpentine queue of people waiting, coupons in hand. Groups of youngsters take selfies with their plates of steaming dosas and pakodas while other families move purposefully from one stall to another, tasting a little bit of every-

thing. The people manning the stalls seem superhuman, given the swiftness with which they roll dosa batter in the pan, spoon spicy tamarind chutney and spices over the dosas and add chopped onions to the mix.

This is a typical sight at the annual Avarebele (Lablab bean) farm beans Mela along this street. The mela claims to have 70 dishes made from Karnataka's favourite bean. "Due to the growing demand, we have introduced a special section for avarekai-

based desserts this year," they said. There are some residents who are not too happy with a fair such as this happening on footpath for 18 days (till Jan 24 this year), and ministers and lawmakers opening it. Srinivasa, a senior citizen living in the area, was candid in expressing his anger. "I don't know what is happening here. I cannot brave these crowds and walk or stand in line on the road for food."

There are others selling hot food on this street and they say their business has not been affected due to the mela. Preeti Singhal, owner of Chinese Corner, said that although many visit the area for the mela, their business has neither dipped nor increased.

There are takers for everything, ranging from masala vada, idlis and paddu to pakodas, nippat and hollige. This makes it a fare lasting for good two-three hours.

DESSERTS TOO

The organisers have launched a special section for avarekai-based desserts this year



SNACK TIME: Enthusiasts crowd the food street in VV Puram for their favourite dishes