

## School owners surrender before Huliya police

**HULIYAR (TUMAKURU DIST):** The owners of Vidyavaridhi International School KS Kiran Kumar and his wife Kavitha, who went missing after the death of three students in the school on Thursday, surrendered before the police here on Saturday night.

Kiran Kumar, also former MLA of Kallambella Assembly constituency, and his wife Kavitha were said to be staying at his sister's house at HSR Layout in Bengaluru.

A police team led by PSI Praveen, was camping in Bengaluru for the past two days. The police tracked Kiran Kumar's mobile phone to HSR Layout. However, Kiran Kumar and Kavitha left Bengaluru to Huliya before the police could reach the house where they were hiding.

## In brief

### Free eye camp

» Udayabhanu Kalasangha will organise a free eye camp for cataract operation on March 12 between 10 am and 12 noon at Kalasangha premises, Gavipuram, opposite Saalu Chhatra, Ramakrishna Mutt Layout, Kempegowda Nagar. Call 080-26609343.

### Open school exam admission tickets

» The admission tickets for Karnataka Open School (KOS) examination, to be conducted from March 30 to April 10 by Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board, (other exams) have been despatched to all the KOS centres through district DIET principals. Students can collect the admission tickets from the KOS study centre concerned, said the director of Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board in a press release.

### Youth volunteer recruitment

» The Nehru Yuva Kendra, Bengaluru urban, has invited applications from youth in the age group of 18 to 29 years to serve as National Youth Volunteers, for a year. A stipend of Rs 5,000 a month will be paid to the volunteers.

The minimum qualification is SSLC pass. The work area will be limited to their taluk. Those interested in social service will get preference.

Applications should be submitted online at [www.nyks.org](http://www.nyks.org). The registered application and the photocopy of relevant documents should be submitted by March 18 at Nehru Yuva Kendra, Second floor, B-2, GEF Block, West of Chord Road, Industrial Area, Rajajinagar. For details, call 080-23504351.

### Manasarovar Yatra registration

» The Ministry of External Affairs has announced the 2017 Kailas Manasarovar Yatra from June to September through two different routes – Lipulekh Pass, Uttarakhand and Nathu La Pass, Sikkim. Those in the age group of 18-70 years may apply online at the website [kmy.gov.in](http://kmy.gov.in). They can also approach the Karnataka Kailash Manas Sarovar Pilgrims' Association at No. 10, I Giri, 4th Main Road, 2nd Phase, BEML 5th Stage, Rajarajeshwari Nagar.

Call 9448505916, 9341635388, 9483921986 and 9902737931.

### VOSD writing competition

» The Voice of Stray Dogs (VOSD) has announced the annual writing competition for schoolchildren. Schoolchildren of all age groups from all over the country can participate.

All submissions must be made in English and are restricted to 500 words. They should be made online at <https://goo.gl/pHYnRc> or on the VOSD website. The last date for submission is April 10.

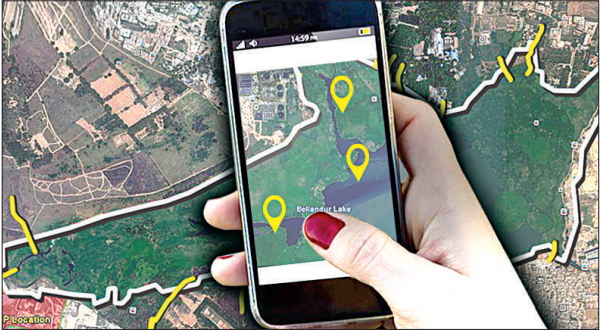
# Crowd-sourcing initiative to map Bellandur lake's black spots

## Fire, trash, polluting industries to be identified, mapped with phone pics

Rasheed Kappan

**BENGALURU:** Fire in the city's Bellandur lake had sparked a frenzied call to save Bengaluru's biggest water body. To keep that attention riveted to the lake's survival, the local community has a plan: Crowd-source the evidence of every fire, locate every garbage dumping and burning site on a GPS-enabled map through smartphone photography.

The project's objective is also to identify the polluting industries around the lake. The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board had blamed inflow of untreated domestic sewage for the froth that erupts periodically in the lake. The attribution to in-



The mapping process is expected to pinpoint the location of lake-polluting industries and identify their role in large-scale pollution of the lake.

dustries was general, limited to numbers without elaboration.

The mapping process is expected to pinpoint the location of these industries and identify their role in large-scale pollution of the lake. As environmentalist

Nagesh Aras informs, the highly toxic effluents from these units are directly let into the drains leading to the lake. Every litre of electrolyte solution with high lead and zinc content can pollute 10 lakh litres of water.

So how does this crowd-sourcing work? Using mobile apps such as Mapillary's OpenStreetmap or Mapunity, photographs are taken from the sites and uploaded to a map, accessible to all. The photos taken with GPS tracking are overlaid onto Mapillary, showing the black spots in the lake as animated pictures. The app's timeline feature allows multiple images of the same site.

But extensive local mapping will be required to get the complete picture. According to Aras, this process begins on Saturday. The data so collated and overlaid on maps will be part of reports to be submitted to the National Green Tribunal. Rationale: Evidence-backed reports have better chance of enforcing remedial action.

To improve the reliability of the maps, data gathering will be on the lines of Mapillary's Humanitarian OpenStreet Map Team (HOT). This is an initiative designed to provide accurate maps for use in humanitarian work. Often when a natural disaster strikes, changes to the human and natural landscape reduce the accuracy of maps. The HOT team then works both physically and remotely to boost reliability.

Mapillary allows people on the ground with a smartphone to capture images in the area which can then be used by people with GIS experience to update the OpenStreetMap. This tool was extensively used for relief measures during the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

**DH News Service**



Citizens' initiative restored Alahalli lake near Anjanapura off Kanakapura Road as a pristine water body. (Right) A purple heron at the lake. The lake has become home to several migratory birds after its revival.



# Dying lake turns into haven for migratory birds

G Manjusainath

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The sight of migratory birds like Marsh Harrier, Garganey, spot-billed ducks and many more at Alahalli lake is a bird watcher's delight.

These winged guests have now made Alahalli lake their home. This, however, was not the scene three months back. Like most water bodies in the city, Alahalli lake was also on death row with sewage and weeds choking it. When public outcry to save this lake fell on

deaf ears and their petitions ignored, residents took up the task on their own.

"I have finally realised that running from pillar to post to revive the lake is a futile exercise. It is apparent that this government is not serious about our lakes. My mantra now is 'Muh Bandh, Kaam Chaalu' (stop talking, start working)," said Anand Yadwad of Alahalli Lake and Neighbourhood Development Trust (ALNDT).

In association with Pavitra Foundation, Promac Industries and ward corporator K So-

mashekhar, ALNDT took up the revival work. Pavitra Foundation offered expertise and brought with it a Swedish "Truxor" machine to weed out water hyacinth. Parvez Vohra of Pavitra Foundation said, "The task assigned to us was Herculean given the rocks and debris found inside the water body. This lake has been abused badly. Many a time, our machine suffered damage. Still, we could weed out only 75% of the lake. Thankfully, there is sufficient water and many birds have started coming here."

The problem of sewage con-

tinues to pose a threat to the lake. Pavitra Foundation and ALNDT are setting up a sewage treatment plant of 5,000 litres to arrest the sludge and release treated water. The capacity is insufficient but it will help revive the lake to a great extent.

"So long as sewage flows into the lake, weeds will grow. The biggest threat from water hyacinth is it absorbs all the oxygen from water, endangering aquatic life," said Vohra, who hails from Mumbai but has camped in the city for the last three months to clean up the lake.

## Birds found in Alahalli Lake

- Indian spotted-billed ducks
- Garganey
- Marsh Harrier
- Purple Heron
- Lesser whistling ducks
- Glossy Ibis
- Little Grebe
- Wood sandpiper
- Red wattled lapwings
- White throated kingfisher
- Cranes

## CM hits out at media

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Chief Minister Siddaramaiah hit out at the media for its coverage on the diary controversy, exchange of tweets between two cine actors and the flyer project.

In his speech read out at the presentation of Karnataka Media Academy awards, Siddaramaiah referred to the diary purportedly having details of payoffs by state Congress members to their national leaders. "It is unfortunate that media was used as a platform to defame people. No effort was made to verify the authenticity of the diary. Does the I-T department work under the person who released the diary?" Siddaramaiah asked.

Siddaramaiah said people with no concern for development used the media to gain

"cheap publicity" by raising controversies over the steel flyover project between Chalukya Circle and Hebbal flyover.

He said the project was mooted in 2010. "There has been cost escalation. Some leader misused the media to gain publicity by making baseless charges," he said.

He said tweets by two actors – Sudeep and Darshan – making comments against each other had become fodder for the electronic media.

Taking a dig at 'plant' of news stories, Siddaramaiah said, "In our country, there are more news plantations, than coffee or tea plantations."

Siddaramaiah, who arrived late, presented the awards to 15 journalists, including Ronald Anil Fernandes of *DH*.

## Message in machine model



Artist Badal Nanjundaswamy painted an open drain in the form of an electronic voting machine on a footpath on KG Road on Saturday. *DH* PHOTO

## New-age learning

# A smartphone can be your music guru

Meghana Choukkar

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** With a smartphone in hand, you can practise swaras and ragas to perfection in the comfort of your home using the mobile app Riyaz.

Developed by Bengaluru-based startup Musicmuni Labs, the app helps you learn Carnatic and Hindustani vocals through step-by-step modules. You can sing along with the instructor or listen and repeat and the app will give you immediate feedback on your performance.

"There are tons of resources to learn Western musical instruments and singing, but hardly any for Indian classical music traditions. We wanted to make learning Indian classical music more accessible using technology,"



Sankalp Gulati, Gopala Krishna Koduri and Swapnil Gupta

said Sankalp Gulati, co-founder of the company.

IIT-Kanpur alumnus Gulati, and co-founder Gopala Krishna Koduri, alumnus of IIIT-Hyderabad, were pursuing their PhD from the Music Technology Group, at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. Their interest in developing technology to facilitate learning of Indian music

tradition began with a project they worked on with their professor Xavier Serra. "The project was to improve domain knowledge of music information processing in five music traditions, including Hindustani and Carnatic. After its completion, we received a grant from the European Union to transfer the technology and develop products for

people to use," said Gulati.

The company was founded in 2016 with the grant while they were still doing their PhD, with professor Serra as a co-founder and several other batchmates as collaborators.

They interacted with senior Carnatic and Hindustani singers, including T M Krishna, to find out what issues they faced when teaching music, especially to children. "Most of them told us that when children practise at home by themselves, they make mistakes which are corrected only when they attend the next class," Gulati explained. To keep young children engaged, the team is also developing a separate child-centred interface within the app with an interactive mascot.

A special feature of the app is that it gives you visual feed-

back with a graph charting the pitch of your voice. This would be useful for learning to sing Harikatas and Gamakas. The app will also be particularly beneficial to beginners, the team believes. "From our experience, we know that learning music is seen as a financial burden by many. The cost of formal training may be an entry-barrier for people who want to explore their interest," Swapnil Gupta, a collaborator, explained.

Soon, they want to introduce lessons on the theory behind the two traditions and include video interactions. At present, the app is available in the Beta version on Google Playstore and it has over 30,000 downloads to its credit. The team will launch the final version within a few months with more lessons.

# 3 'developers' shut shop, leave scores of investors in the lurch

## No trace of promoters who were arrested and released on bail

**BENGALURU:** The fate of thousands of families hangs in balance as real estate firms TGS Constructions, Dreamz Properties and Gruh Kalyan, have shut down all their offices across the city.

The three firms were managed by the same group of people comprising Sachin Naik, Mandeep Kaur, Disha Choudhary, Shataparni Majumdar, Siddharth and others. These companies placed advertisements in prominent dailies and local television channels, offering houses at low prices in prime locations.

The property owners, who have been running from pillar to post to get their money back, were in for a shock when they found that all the offices of the three companies were shut.

Jayanthi Pawar, who had invested in Gruh Kalyan said, "The only office open was at HSR Layout, which too is closed. We do not know where these people have vanished. We have filed many complaints at the HSR Layout police station but to no avail."

Jayanthi had paid Rs 1.5 lakh for the GK Coronation project while another investor from Halasuru M M Seethamma paid Rs 6 lakh for GK Gladiolus project. Like thousands of investors, the fraudsters gave these two women cheques when the project did not take off, which were dishonoured.

Jayanthi said she lodged a complaint with the HSR Layout police but no case of cheque bounce was registered against them.

## Another name surfaces

While Naik and a few others were arrested and released on bail, Majumdar is still at large and is learnt to be hiding in West Bengal. The city police have not been able to trace her.

G Vidya from Fraser Town said Majumdar had signed all the memoranda of understanding for the Gruh Kalyan.

The duped investors said the swindlers are well-connected. Sachin Naik and Siddharth, one of the directors of the firms, are seen in pictures with political bigwigs in the state. These pictures make the investors believe that these political bosses will ensure that no action is taken against them.

Jayanthi said, "When we approached some police officers to get our money back, they said they cannot act against Sachin Naik and others because there is 'tremendous pressure' on them from higher-ups."

When contacted, a police officer in HSR Layout said there is no pressure on them but the role of police is not to retrieve people's money.

"We can arrest the swindlers, which we did. Later, all of them came out on bail. People should have checked the antecedents of the developers and builders before investing their money. It is their fault," said the officer.

The reply irked Seethamma who sought to know what the administration was doing when the fraudsters were flashing advertisements everywhere.

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# Just relax, coconut cafes on highways

Coconut cafes, from Page 1

To mark the inauguration, it has announced Elaneeru Mela, which includes a tender coconut-water drinking competition.

Anekatte Vishwanath, CEO, told *DH* Just Relax sells many varieties of coconut, tender coconut, virgin coconut oil, coconut flakes, and sweets such as burfi and holige made from coconut. The cafe also offers freshly prepared delicacies, like coconut rice and coconut dosa.

Flavoured and chilled tender coconut water is another attraction. Coconut ice cream, coconut water laced with honey, lemon and salt, and ayurvedic products with coconut as an ingredient will also be on the shelves.

"Our aim is to promote not just coconut but all its byproducts to the young. We will introduce millets by and by," he said. Two more cafes are being planned, one on the highway to Chitradurga and another at a farm in Challakere. With seating and folk-style chittara drawings on the walls, they hope to attract people driving on highways to break for coconut refreshments.

If the response is good, more Just Relax outlets could come up on the state's highways.

"The price of tender coconut will be at least Rs 5 lower than

## On the menu

- Chilled tender coconut water
- Coconut water with lime and honey
- Coconut burfi, holige, rice
- Virgin oil from Tiptur
- Coconut flakes, ice cream

elsewhere," Vishwanath said.

Jayaprasad Ballakere of Bhoomi, an NGO supporting the coconut promotion movement, said at least eight to ten varieties of coconut will be sold at the outlets.

The 'Tiptur tall' and 'Tiptur dwarf x tall' varieties of Karnataka will get pride of place. Varieties from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Andamans will also be promoted.

The idea is to encourage products free of chemical preservatives, Ballakere said.

"At the moment, we have no plans of selling coconut milk and packaged tender coconut water as they call for advanced technology. But we will sell them in the days to come," he said.

Various organisations, such as Nabard, Coconut Development Board, and Central Plantation Coconut Research Institute, Kasargod, are supporting the enterprise.

A small cafe calls for an investment of Rs 5 lakh, while a bigger one with parking calls for more, he said.

# College indulging in moral policing: prof

**BENGALURU:** Ashley Tellis, who was fired by St Joseph's College of Arts and Commerce, made a fresh set of allegations against the college on social media late on Friday and early Saturday.

Tellis, a professor, claimed through a Facebook post, that he was fired for being gay and also due to certain differences of opinion with the management.

He spoke about the college's attempt at moral policing of students and not appreciating the various cultures they hail from. From dress codes to not letting students hug each other, he expressed disagreement over what he termed "draconian" principles of the college.

On Friday, he claimed that a priest against whom there were complaints of harassment, was heading the anti-sexual harassment committee of the college.

His post on Saturday read,

"A certain priest was harassing girl students in college, sending them lewd messages at night. It came to the knowledge of a certain lecturer who stood by the students and brought it to the notice of the administration. At the end of that year (last year, actually), that lecturer was fired. That certain priest is now in charge of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee in college. Is no student disturbed by this? Is no parent disturbed by this? Do the students and parents know? Has there been a signature campaign? May we start one now?"

On social media, he also spoke about "an ex-attendant in the college from a small village" who was badly treated by the college. College authorities said that they were aware of the posts and would look into it.

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