

briefcase



TEMPLE TRIP: Governor HR Bhardwaj and his dear ones visited Sri Chennakesava temple at Belur in Hassan district on Sunday

Cricket's loss is wildlife's gain: Kumble

"I am very happy to hear that Lokayukta N Santosh Hegde has taken back his resignation. We will render our support to him," said additional director of forests, ecology and wildlife Meera Saxena. She was speaking on the sidelines of the release of *Vanya-jeevignala Jaadu Hididu*, a book written by Sanjay Gubbi on Sunday. "What is cricket's loss is wildlife's gain," said vice-chairperson of state wildlife board and ace cricketer Anil Kumble at the release of the book. Gubbi had played as a batsman cum wicket-keeper in Tumkur

zone. The 125-page book has 16 chapters detailing topics like elephant behaviour and how highways destroy forests. "I took a year to write the book. I wrote about things that I got to know through my experiences of 20 years. This is my first book. I had earlier co-edited one book," said Sanjay. "There is a similarity between cricket and wildlife: both fields have experts. Wildlife experts should do more to conserve and protect the environment, and not just speak like experts," said Kumble.

Yoga classes from today



Swami Vivekananda Yoga Kendra is organising yoga classes in Yogasana and Pranayama from Monday. The duration of the course is three months. The classes will be conducted from 6 am to 7 am at MLA school, Malleswaram. For more details, you can contact the institute at 23346609 or 9448466037.

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Water adalat in Banagiri today

The Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) of south 1 and 2 sub-division is organising a water adalat for residents of Devagiri, Kathriguppe, Banashankari, Kumaraswamy Layout and Poorna Pragna Layout service station limits. The adalat will be held at the office of assistant executive engineer of south 1 at Banagiri on from 9.30 am to 11 am Monday. It is being held to settle disputes connected to water supply and sanitary connection, delay in conversion from non-domestic to domestic connection and other related problems. Customers can use the IVRS number 155313 for lodging their complaints round-the-clock.

Guest faculty vacancies at BU

Bangalore University has invited applications for the appointment of guest faculty (full or part-time) in the varsity's department of electronic science. The selected candidates have to handle both theory and practical classes and will be paid an honorarium. Aspiring candidates should have secured at least 55 per cent marks in the master's degree level in the relevant subject. Preference will be given to the candidates who have cleared the National Eligibility Test conducted by the UGC and CSIR. Interested candidates may mail their applications along with bio data and the attested copy of the certificates to the department office.

THE COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE THE PLATINUM JUBILEE OF THE MALABAR MUSLIMS ASSOCIATION

You know them by their food

Reshma S Nair and Kiran Kumar
BANGALORE

Malabar Muslims of Bangalore celebrated the platinum jubilee of their association in a glittering function last Friday. At the event, chief minister BS Yeddyurappa announced a Rs5 crore building fund to much applause and gratitude. With the fund, the Bangalore Malabar Muslims Association (BMMA) will construct a school and a Karnataka Malabar Centre. The association of the Malabar Muslims in Karnataka was formed in 1935, even before India became independent. The purpose of forming the association was to aid members of the community to stay in touch, bond and share their concerns and aspirations.

Their presence is everywhere, you just need to look around. The original chain of the friendly MK Ahmed store is owned by this community. In fact, the BMMA was founded by MK Ahmed. They have also started many educational institutions in and around the city to support education for not just youngsters in their community, but for everyone else.

If one had to put a face to this community, the first name that comes to mind is MLA NA Haris. He is the current managing director of BMMA and also MLA of the Shantinagar constituency. "Malabar Muslims are a group of businessmen who have migrated from the coastal areas of Kerala. We are scattered across Karnataka, including Chikmagalur, Hassan, Madikeri, Dharwad and Davangere," he says. "We are different from the local Muslims, because the local Muslims communicate in Urdu, but we speak in Malayalam with a hint of Kannada," claims Haris.

"There are also some differences in the way we pray and in the



FAMILY ALBUM: Shantinagar MLA NA Haris poses with his family. He says that you can tell a Malabar Muslim who has lived in Karnataka long—the Kannada is spiced with Malayalam

rituals we follow. We are *Mapalla* Muslims, who are lovingly called *kaka* (maternal uncle). In Kannada, that translates as *maava*.

"Our commitment is towards humanitarian services, and we will achieve this through education. Our association is actively involved in providing education to the backward classes and to those who cannot afford it," he says.

Most members of the community are into business. They run hotels, super-markets and grocery shops. The grocery shops set up by Malayalees can be seen at every junction in Bangalore and are famous as the neighbourhood Malayalee store. Seventy five is a milestone, but the Malabar Muslims believe there is a long road ahead. "By the time our association turns 100, we expect to set up some engineering and medical colleges. I go by APJ Abdul Kalam's words, 'A dream must be a dream that spoils your sleep, and not what you see while you are asleep.' I'm only trying to convert my dreams into reality," says Haris.

Even 40 years ago, not many in this community were educated. But today, most youngsters of Malabar Muslims are well educated and can fit into the urban context with ease. Kerala Muslims follow their religious practices stringently. Belief in one God, prayers five times a day,

Origin, culture and traditions

Kerala had connections with Arabia from the time of King Solomon. Muslims of Kerala have always believed that their origins in Kerala date back to 7th century AD, when Islam originated in Arabia. There are a multitude of organisations working in the social, educational, cultural and religious spheres. One such organisation is the Malabar Muslims Association, bringing together Mapalla Muslims in Karnataka.

Ramzan fast, Sakkath and Hajj are some of the traditional observances of their culture. Prayers are usually held in mosques. "We also celebrate Onam every year," Haris says.

The women in the community wear *mundu* with a coloured border, blouses with long sleeves and a head gear called *thatam*. In addition to ordinary jewellery, women wear gold or silver waist bands. Men usually wear *mundu* with *jubbahs* and accessorise it with a thick waist belt and a *toppi*. But comfort has over taken tradition today.

FOOD BOND

Traditional food items of the Malabar Muslims consist of delicacies like *Thalasherry biriyani*, *Ghee-rice*, *Puttu*, *Kappa-meen curry*, *Pathiri*, *Appam*, *mutton and chicken curries* of different types and *Pal adda payasam*. But they seem to have gotten used to living in Karnataka. Among their favourites now are *Raagi mudde*, *Soppu saaru* and other Kannadiga dishes.

The Malabar Muslims in Bangalore own several hotels chains and restaurants like Bangalore International, Kadal, Empire, Imperial and Paramount.

These hotels are famous for their Kerala dishes, sea food, biriyani and kebabs. "We go to various restaurants to eat. But most times we cook and call friends over and sometimes they cook and we go there. My personal favourite is *Raagi mudde*, *Soppu saaru* and fish. We have more of the Karnataka culture in the ways we cook, dress and live," says MLA Haris. The BMMA are associated with the KNSS, ECA, Kerala Samajam and various other associations. "It is the Malayalam language that binds us together," he says

Malabar Muslims have five to six mosques in and around Bangalore. On Double Road, there is a mosque that belongs entirely to them. "There is no importance attached to which mosque you go to, as long as you do your namaz on time. There are two types of Malabar Muslims — *Shafi* and the *Anafi*. There is not much of a difference between the two sects. We have a namaz before sunset everyday. For that prayer, we have a difference of about an hour. Otherwise, our customs are similar," he says.

Building Konkani vocabulary, word by word



TO SAVE KONKANI: A team of 60 people have been working on the online dictionary since 2005

Shilpa CB, BANGALORE

Can you take a dying language, revive it and make it mainstream again? The Welsh (native language of Wales) could. So can we, believes, Roshan Ramesh Pai, a Bangalore-based IT consultant, who is on a mission to save his native tongue, Konkani. He and his team of 60 volunteers from all over the world have been working on the Konkani Dictionary Project, *Savemylanguage.org*, which kicked off in Oxford, UK, in 2005.

"It fascinated me that people of Wales could revive their language. They started at the core, beginning with documentation and consoli-

ation. We follow the same process," Pai said.

Five years since the project started, the online dictionary has 6,000 words. The estimate is that there are 10,000 to 12,000 words in Konkani, the tongue spoken by Konkanis in South Canara. The next batch of 200 words will be added in July.

But will populating an online dictionary actually help the cause of reviving a language? "There is no point in having a dictionary that sits in a University library gathering dust. The masses need to have access to it, as much as the academics," says Pai, who is chief editor of the dictionary. Along with words, one can also access proverbs, metaphors,

idioms, euphemisms and even research papers on the language.

"The project has a Facebook application called 'Konkani Word of the Day' which gives users a random Konkani word and its English meaning sourced from this dictionary. The 'Google Word of the Day' application when added to the Google home page gives users a random new Konkani word and its English meaning on the iGoogle home page. Also, the project has its own Facebook page and Orkut group. We tweet on twitter as well," he says. What's more, a Konkani to German dictionary is also available; non-English speaking Europeans too can learn Konkani. b_shilpa@dnaindia.net

How they do it

The team of 60 volunteers of *Savemylanguage.org* works on excel spread sheets, putting in words they come across. "The documentation is taken up in a scientific manner and follows the principles of 'practical lexicography' (the art/science of creating/maintaining a dictionary). Each word is carefully catalogued and if possible, categorised on their semantics, explains Roshan Pai, chief editor, *Savemylanguage.org*

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This operation has won over 26,000 hearts

Anantha Krishnan M. BANGALORE

Twenty-six thousand! That was the last count when Team DNA stepped out of Command Hospital of Indian Air Force (IAF) on Old Airport Road. A silent revolution launched by the hospital along with a handful of volunteers in 2007, has now healed the hearts of about 26,000 patients in three years. Welcome to the aviation capital of India and you are on board "operation e-support". The mission of this initiative is surgery without fears and tears.

"All patients who are undergoing surgery have got hundreds of doubts in their minds. The patients demand too much of time from surgeons. So, we formed an emotional-support group to pluck the fear out of their minds," says Air Vice Marshal AK Behl, commandant, Command Hospital.

The volunteers don't speak about the technical aspects of the surgery, but offer information and mitigate fears, phobias and anxiety. "Patients who got e-support from us went on to become members of our tele-support helpline team and today we have 71 of them. We are now extending the e-support to OPD as well," adds Behl, who is also a plastic surgeon.

The hospital serves as a vital facility for serving and retired armed forces personnel and their dependents. This is the only IAF hospital in India. It was abuzz with activities during the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operations in Sri Lanka, with most casualties being treated here. Even during the Kargil conflict, the hospital played a key role in treating jawans from South India.

The e-support group volunteers comprise of professionals, event managers and home-makers. "They do their work free of cost. We have even started group counselling at the Radio Therapy Centre. Many of our volunteers were once patients at this hospital. When they counsel others, sharing their experience, it has a magical effect," says Vasanta Kishore, the lead counsellor with the e-support group.



The initiative was started to mitigate the fears of patients waiting for surgery