

## Inside



Karnataka State Billiards Association attracts only a few women players.

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Sericulture is causing asthma among farmers.

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Eco friendly Ganeshas not so friendly with the rural people.

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# Salty water for residents on Bangalore's outskirts

By Sagarika Ranjan

Most people in Anchepalya and Kumbalgudu spend half of their income buying mineral water as the bore wells there pump salty water.

Residents are suffering with acute health problems. About 70 percent people survive on mineral water. Fewer than 4000 people purchase around 125,000 litres of mineral water every year in Anchepalya alone, the shopkeeper said.

Monikrishnappa, a shopkeeper in Anchepalya says that there is accumulation of salt in the pipes.

Overtime it leads to choked drains disrupting the drainage of the area.

"There are around 10 bore wells in the area and they all pump salty water," Monikrishnappa said, "The government had promised availability of fresh water four months ago but nothing has been done so far."

The poor cannot afford to buy mineral water and fall ill frequently drinking this salty water, said Shafi Ullah, who has been living in Anchepalya for seven years.

People are suffering from Pharyngitis, kidney problems, enteric fever, jaundice, dental carin and other water borne diseases, said Dr. Bassayya, a doctor for the area.

There are about 90 patients every month who suffer from the above diseases.

Raghu, a shopkeeper in Kumbalgudu uses salty water to make sweets for the shop. "Fetching so much water is impossible", he said.

The panchayat says water sam-



Sagarika Ranjan

### Resident showing water pipes choked with accumulated salt

ples from Kumbalgudu and Anchepalya were sent to the lab of Bangalore University for testing and have been cleared as "drinkable water."

Anchepalya water was found undrinkable but good for washing and cleaning.

Bindu P., the panchayat development officer says there is no problem as the people are drinking

mineral water.

Construction of a water filtration plant has been going on in Anchepalya.

The authorities say that it would start in a month. But according to the residents they have been saying this for more than a year without any progress.

According to M. R. Srinivas, hydraulic professor at R V College,

the cause of this problem is "mixing of sewage water" that leads to the ground water being salty since rains are too frequent for a low water table in Bangalore.

BBMP last month proposed a plan to asses problems related to bore wells and set rules regarding digging of bore wells, which shows that the bore well problems occur all over Bangalore.

# Two sides of the same lake



Rashmi Guha Ray

The pile of garbage beside Madiwala Lake.

By Rashmi Guha Ray

On one side of the Madiwala Lake, a children's park stands among well maintained gardens, while the other side is used by about 50 washermen who work among garbage, deposited in the water used for washing clothes.

The garden and the park are maintained by the Karnataka Forest Department, who is in charge of the whole lake. But forestry officers say that BBMP is responsible for the cleanup of the garbage on the other sides.

On the other hand, the BBMP says that the lake and the garbage are the forest department's responsibility.

"The forest department has been given the charge of the lake for the past twenty years or so. The department is taking steps to clean the weeds and hyacinth since it is a

group D lake suitable for wildlife and fishery," said, Mr. Ganesh, Range Forest Officer, K.R. Puram.

The oldest lake in the city plays an important part in the sewage system. In 2001, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board had termed it as a dead lake along with the Ulsoor Lake. For the past 10 years, residents have been actively protesting against the pollution of the lake.

The condition has improved in the past two years with boating started and the park being opened to the public. The forest department has also planted saplings on the banks.

But garbage is piled up all along the roads by the lake. "Such a huge lake is difficult to maintain. Despite repeated requests to BBMP, they do not always cooperate," says Mr. Ganesh.

More on Pg 2

# Bacteria cause beggars' deaths

By Rubeena Ismail

A report submitted on the deaths at the beggar's colony states that the cause of death of over 50 inmates was due to the food that contained Coliform bacteria.

The report that was submitted on October 2010 by S. Selvakumar was handed over to the Social Welfare Department of Karnataka but was not released completely to the public.

Ravi Kumar, the social welfare officer at Nirashritara Parihara Kendra, the full name of the colony said that no report has been supplied to the colony stating the cause of deaths since last year.

More on Pg 2

# Shops overcharge for soft drinks



A retailer selling a soft drink

Isha Bajpai

**By Isha Bajpai**

Retailers in Karnataka are selling soft drinks at prices higher than the MRP as few government inspectors have been hired to check on them.

The state has less than one-third of the required Legal Metrology inspectors who are responsible for checking illegal trade. The department says it requires 250 inspectors but the state government has recruited 67 inspectors to control 10 lakh traders.

Sixty cases of overcharging on soft drinks were filed in the past one year. "Everybody charges more than the MRP in Bangalore because the company does not give us the cold drink cool and we cool it, so we charge for it" said a shopkeeper

in Rajajinagar.

An observer noticed that shops in the same lane as the Bangalore branch of the Department of Legal Metrology add such "refrigeration charges" for soft drinks. When the deputy controller of Bangalore, P.V. Manoharan, was confronted with this situation he said that due to the lack of staff they are not able to keep a check on such problems.

"In our law there is no provision of refrigeration charges" said C M. Mallikarjuna, deputy controller of legal metrology. "The department has not been strengthened proportionate to the trading and industrial establishment."

Four years back, the Department of Legal Metrology proposed to recruit 40 inspectors who were not hired then. Three months back the government gave clearance to recruit 15 new inspectors.

S. P. Shadakshari Swamy, Controller of Legal Metrology said this problem is prevalent everywhere due to the financial restrictions faced by the government.

The departments are somehow coping up with it.

The government has been cutting down on recruitments and thus allowing illegal practitioners to escape the few inspecting eyes.

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## A year later, some sections of report remain undisclosed

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The water was "not satisfactory for drinking," according to the report. Samples of the bacterium vibrio cholera, which causes cholera, were also found in stool samples of the inmates.

In sections that were not made public before, now, the 134 page report notes that after the deaths occurred no samples of the food and water were tested by the colony medical officer.

Some inmates who did not die were registered as dead, and the names of some inmates who died were missing from the list of fatalities.

The deaths were reported as "natural" without proper investigation. The report said no trained doctors were attending to the inmates who needed special care.

"My job was to prepare the report and submit it. The recommendations I gave is up to them to implement, it goes out of

my jurisdiction," said Selva Kumar, IAS, Project Administrator, Karnataka Health Systems Development; "The Social Welfare Department of the state takes it from there".

One year after the incident, according to The Hindu, CID has now taken over the investigation.

Santosh P. Nargund, a civil activist who followed the investigation closely said that the government is trying to delay the report from being made public.

In his opinion, people will delay it until everyone forgets about it.

Bringing in the CID to investigate the deaths at the colony is just another delaying tactic, according to Nargund.

The investigating officer at the CID was unavailable for a comment.

A year after the deaths, an official report has been written, but families of the dead have yet to read it.



Rishabh Chakravorty

Women inmates doing their daily chores

## NGO Report: Senior citizen abuse rate rises in Bangalore

By Nitindra Bandyopadhyay

Bangalore which was once considered to be pensioner's paradise now ranks second to Bhopal as a hub where senior citizens are abused, according to HelpAge India, an NGO.

Vanalaxmi, 75, who suffers from Alzheimer's was abandoned by her family after she lost her eye sight.

Her son brought her to the city on the pretext of treatment but left her to survive on her own. She was rescued by passersby near Lalbagh and admitted in NIMHANS.

A survey conducted by HelpAge India shows that 74 percent of senior citizens in Bangalore feel that there has been an increase in incidents of elder abuse in the past three years.

"It is shocking that most of these cases are not reported and still the number of cases we get to handle is too high," said M.Prakashan, HelpAge India.

The survey further states most common abuse is verbal abuse from lower socio economic strata

while it was neglect in the higher socio economic strata.

"Elder abuse in Bangalore is increasing exponentially," said Shiv Kumar, convener, Nightingale Elder Enrichment Centre an NGO. "One main reason is the booming real estate market in Bangalore due to which children torture their parents to sell property for profit. Earlier state government used to give four lakh rupees annually to maintain our 24/7 helpline for receiving complaints from suffering elders. From Jan 2011 the state government has stopped this fund without citing any proper reason."

The Government of India approved the National Policy for Older Persons on Jan. 13, 1999 in order to accelerate welfare measures and empowering the elderly in ways beneficial for them.

"We are building parks and other recreation centres for the elderly people. Issue of elder abuse comes under the control of state police and public welfare

department. BBMP has nothing to do with it," said S.S.Khandre, Public Relations Officer, BBMP.

"Still no action has been taken by the Karnataka Government to implement it in an effective manner," said Raja, Nightingale Elder Enrichment Centre. "The problem is worse among the below poverty line people of Bangalore".

The rehabilitation centre receives such inmates all round the year. The intake of people older than 62 years has increased by more than eight percent as compared to 2009 according to the log book maintained by this shelter.

"My daughter-in-law refuses to feed me and every month takes away my pension despite my protests," said P.S.Murthy, a retired official of KSRTC.

"I can't leave the house because I have nowhere to go and if I complain to my son he just overlooks it. I don't want to complain to the police because then my son will face harassment."

## Forestry and BBMP at odds over lake

Continued from Page 1

The BBMP officials refuse to comment as the lake officially falls under KFD, while Mr. Ganesh says that the BBMP can take away this right any moment. But no one seems to be cleaning the piled up garbage.

"The forest department cleans up the place at times, but the BBMP does nothing for us. The government does not even provide us with basic amenities like a proper place to dry our clothes," said Sreenivas V, a washer man.

"We suffer from dengue and malaria because of the unhealthy water, but what can we do?"

This is our sole source of income," said V.G. Raju, another washer man who has been using

this lake for over 30 years.

Though Rajesh, the environment officer, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board said that the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Plant has installed a five million litre water treatment plant in Madivala about five years ago.

The BBMP has also constructed fences "to stop garbage from flowing into the water", the residents complain of unhealthy conditions.

Santoshi Pagabalu, a resident of the area, said that the garbage deposits result in mosquito borne diseases.

Unless the KFD and BBMP sort out their differences, the grass will continue to be green only on one side of the Madivala Lake.

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# Eco-friendly Ganesha idols less popular in rural areas



Eco friendly Ganeshas on sale in the city

Rishabh Chakravorty

By Ancy K Sunny

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board's awareness campaign failed to convince villagers to use eco-friendly idols instead of submersion of lead painted Ganesha idols in natural water bodies.

The KSPCB and environmentalists hold meetings and awareness programs for the public. They encourage them to use eco-friendly Ganesha idols and lead free paints.

But these meetings are mostly attended by the urban public and the message fails to reach the rural community.

"The villagers do not know about the new type of lead-free Ganeshas. They feel that Ganeshas made of mud or without paint are boring. They do not know about the dangers of lead painted Ganeshas," said Deepak.G.K, resident of the Golahalli village. According to him the advertisements are restricted to cities.

Ratna and Lakshmi Narasamma from Devegere village and Lekshamma from Golahalli say that they buy the colourful Ganeshas because they are beautiful. According to them there has never been any awareness programme regarding the harmful effects.

The idols are immersed in the water bodies in these villages, which is a source of water for cattle and other domestic purposes. Submersion of these idols pollutes the water that is used by the cattle and for other domestic purposes.

These idols are often made of Plaster of Paris which takes a long time to dissolve. The paints used contain heavy metals like lead and mercury which enter the food chain and in the long run, cause health hazards.

The KSPCB spreads this message through newspaper and pamphlets. Talk shows are held on local

radio stations like, All India Radio and Doordarshan during the festive season, but this do not reach villagers who are illiterate.

"The Board has tied up with various NGOs from all parts of Karnataka to give wide publicity on this issue and to bring the message to the rural areas also," said Lokesh H.K, Deputy Environmental Officer at the KSPCB.

"More and more programmes will be brought in the coming years to address this issue."

According to Sumangala. S. Mummigatti, producer of science programme with All India Radio, Bangalore, the rural areas are still in danger.

"To some extent, the awareness made by NGOs and various groups have reached the urban areas," she said. "But unless it reaches the grass root levels, we cannot expect any drastic change."

# Whitener addiction can be curbed using less toxic elements

By Chitra Lakshman

The popular street drugs like heroin, opium and cocaine are unavailable to certain sections of the society. As a result, children and young adults are resorting to easily available drugs like the whitener, which pose a lot of health problems.

Dr. Vivek Benegal, drug specialist at NIMHANS says "It delays the development in the brain, affects the behavioral pattern, and causes psychosis, paralysis and weakening of the nervous system which results in heart attacks".

According to Dr. Benegal, young adults are addicted of the correction fluid as it is easily available at any stationary store for Rs.25 either they buy the diluter or take drops of it on their handkerchief to sniff.

Benegal also says that the addiction can be controlled by using less percentage of trichloroethyne and toluene or replace them by less toxic

elements.

An alternative method is to reduce the supply of correction fluid or more use of pen whitener which doesn't produce any kind of smell.

The combination of medication and alternative methods like counseling are adopted to reduce the addiction. Narcotics Anonyms is a nonprofit organization in Bangalore which works extensively with drug addicts. "We have 100 young adults coming to our society every year and we provide an environment in which addicts can help one another stop using drugs and find a new way to live", says Mr. Lakshman, a recovering addict at NA.

"As it is increasing day by day, we can control the addiction by spreading awareness among children and also by bringing the addicted people to our centers or to the rehabilitation centers that can cure them" he concluded.

## Photo corner



Rishabh Chakravorty

Yours Truly Theater @ campus performing playback theater on personal pitch of an IJNM student.

# No takers for information science course

By Nandita Raman

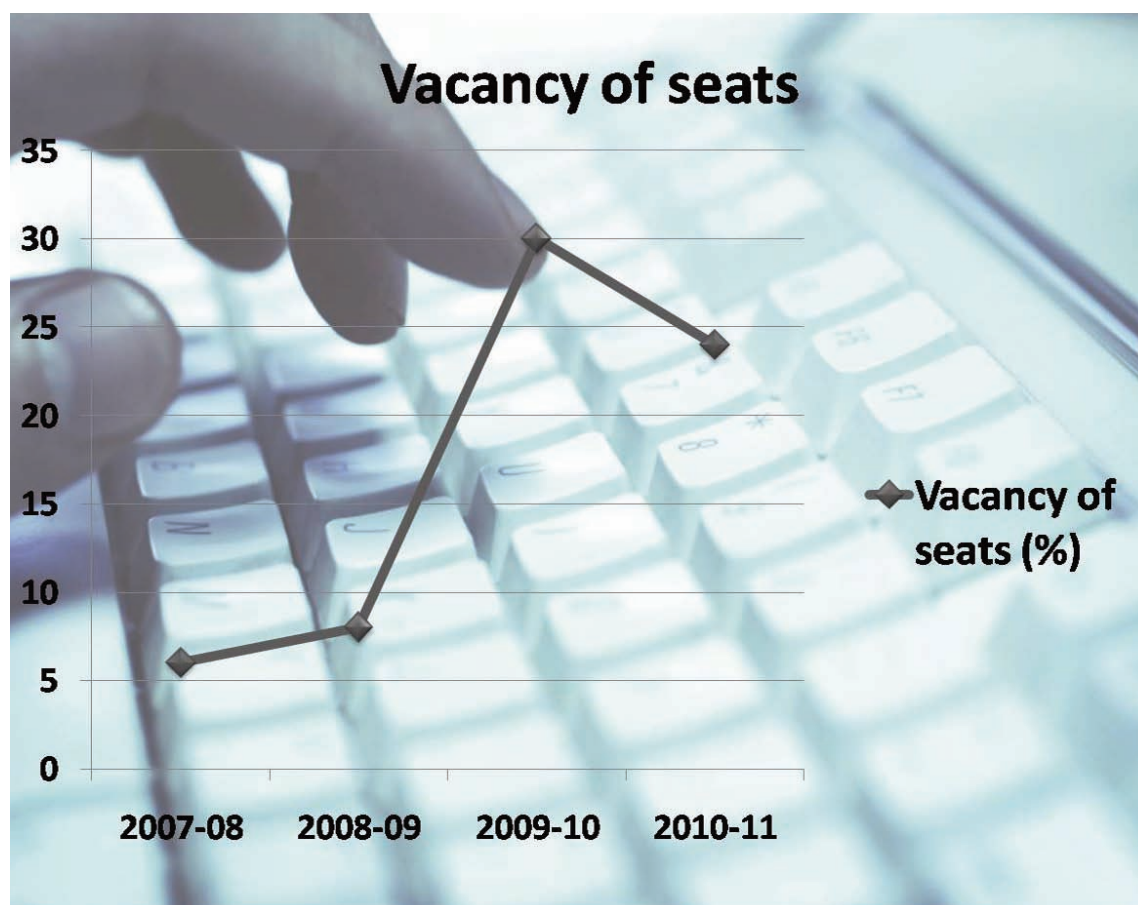
Information science engineering has more and more vacant seats while electrical engineering and mechanical engineering is seeing a steady rise.

"There are no takers for information science and computer science engineering" said S. P Kulkarni, Administrative Officer, Karnataka Examinations Authority. The courses in demand this year are electrical, mechanical, and civil engineering, he said.

According to Kulkarni, the software industry will die in the next five years in India as China and Korea have cheaper labor. The call centers these days hire Pre University College (PUC) graduates because they are aware of the basic software and are equipped with skills that the job requires. Kulkarni said seeking work at call centers don't need to specialization in students IT or computer science.

He also said 8,000 jobs in electrical engineering job in Bangalore are vacant, so demand for the course is growing every day.

The placement record of M. S.



Increase in vacancy of seats in information science engineering.

Nandita Raman

Ramaiah Institute of Technology also suggests that mechanical engineering is very popular among students. Last year, 157 students were placed in information science course as against 219 students in the mechanical branch.

"The salary level for a mechanical engineering graduate is higher" said M. Vijayadev, Professor and Head, Placement and Training Department. "Their starting salary is around Rs 400,000."

He also said reputed companies like Mahindra and Mahindra, Toyota Kirloskar, Blue Star, etc come in for recruitment for mechanical engineering stream making it attractive for the students. On the other hand, only certain companies like Oracle, Mphasis, etc specifically hire IT students.

Students echo the same view as the placement officer.

"IT jobs are very stereotyped," said Anirudh Deshpande, a second year mechanical engineering student of MSRT. "I wanted something challenging so I chose mechanical engineering."

# Silk farmers prone to asthma



Priyanka Maheshwari

Sanama, a worker at sericulture unit suffers asthma

By Priyanka Maheshwari

Workers in the silk industry contract asthma as they reel out silk filament with their bare hands from cocoons placed in boiling hot water. Almost four out of every 10 workers suffer from asthma.

"I have nearly 300 asthmatic patients every month from the sericulture industry.

This industry has a large number of asthmatic patients in comparison to any other industry", said Dr. S.A. Qhuddus, a local doctor, who has been treating such patients for the past 35 years.

The workers at the Ramanagara unit operate under hazardous conditions.

Silk filament is drawn out by loosening the cocoons in hot water. Later, silk is reeled out from these hot water basins without any protective gloves.

"Ramanagaram, Kanakpura and Sidlaghatta have cases of asthma more than any other Taluk in Kar-

nataka. For every 10 workers in sericulture 4 suffer from asthma or wheezing. Aged people are more susceptible to it," said Dr. Qhuddus.

Reeling units use biomass for heating water. The fumes produced from burning biomass and the smell of dead pupa in hot water causes asthma.

People with low immunity levels and allergy to pupa are more prone to the disease.

"A Medical insurance cover of Rs.15000 is provided to the workers by the government through ICICI Lombard, they pay Rs.55.06 as premium and the rest is paid by the government," said sericulture inspector, H.C. Suresh.

Sanama, a worker said that she did not receive any insurance from the government.

Though she suffers from asthma, she has to do the job as she has no other alternative. Almost every visit to the doctor costs Rs.150-200.

The silkworm seed production

center (grainage) at Ramanagara has workers collecting the new born moths without gloves.

Workers tie a handkerchief around their noses to avoid inhaling powdery scales (dust) that scatter when the moths flutter out of the cocoon.

"These scales cause wheezing when inhaled," said Dr. Muniraju, a mulberry sericulture expert.

Use of hot water in the process usually burns the workers' hands. Regular use of ointment provides only short term relief.

Workers do not use gloves in the process of reeling because they feel the amount of heat increases because of the the rubber gloves.

This makes them feel uncomfortable and therefore they don't use gloves.

Most of the workers and authorities have taken asthma, wheezing and respiratory diseases as a part of their work at the industry, with no hopes of the situation getting better.

## Wine stores in the city flout rules



Mowna Ravikumar

A student of Bishop Cotton Girls' School ends her study day by walking past The Noon Wines.

By Mowna Ravikumar

A pair of wine stores located in the Central Business District bothers St. Joseph's Boys' High School and Bishop Cotton Girls' School.

A central law has directed all state governments to ensure that no liquor shop is allowed within a radius of 100 meters from any educational institutions, hospitals and religious places.

However, Sam's Wine Store and The Noon Wines also known as Scottish Pub are within 100 meters from St. Joseph's Pre-University College and Bishop Cotton Girls'

School.

"There should be no pubs around schools as it would affect the students," said Charles Noronha, Vice Principal of St. Joseph's Boys' High School.

Noronha said it is a fair rule that has not been enforced correctly. "The pubs mostly tempt the students to experiment with alcohol," he said. "It is the government's responsibility to take measures."

The principal of Bishop Cotton Girls' School refused to comment on this issue.

The Noon Wines on St. Mark's Road has been in business for the last 26 years without any interference from the schools or the government said K. Kamal, senior manager of the Noon Wines

Lakshminarasimhaih, Deputy Commissioner of State Excise Department said that wine stores that breach the law are given a notice and are expected to explain within a week. They are given a time period of three months to relocate. Failing to do so, their license will be withdrawn.

The pub does not admit customers without an identity proof and serves only people above the age of 21, said Kamal

Chandru Kumar, 26, a patron, said that the pub does not check for identity proofs and serve everyone inside.

"Pubs in the city are supposed to check for identity proof and allow only people above 21 years to consume alcohol," said Roopa Prasad, a lawyer. "Breaching the rule could result in confiscation of license or payment of a hefty fine."

## Lack of women players at the KSBA

By Shikha Kumar

Three women members of the Karnataka State Billiards Association have won state, national and international championships in billiards. Despite these successes, only one in 100 members at the KSBA is a woman.

Fourteen-year-old Varsha Sanjeev, KSBA member and winner of the Sub-junior Girls Billiards National Championship, finds the lack of women players disheartening.

She feels male players get more recognition internationally than women.

"Everyone knows that Pankaj Advani is a world champion. How many have heard of Chitra Magimairaj?" says Varsha. Magimairaj had won the World Ladies Billiards championship in 2007.

Varsha believes that billiards is not taken seriously enough in India.

She feels that women perceive the game as boring and prefer other sports like badminton or tennis.

The KSBA has hardly 20 women players out of a total of nearly 1,900 members.

To encourage more women to play, the academy has installed a snooker table in Mount Carmel Girls College in Bangalore and also provides a coach.

K Ranjan, vice-president of the Billiards and Snooker Federation of India appreciates this move and hopes that all affiliated associations in other states provide tables in schools and colleges to increase the reach of the game.

Winston Corneille, the administrator at the KSBA, feels that doing away with certain notions that people have about the sport will help in increasing the reach.

"It is not an elitist game. In fact, I would say it is as cheap as running a marathon. Apart from cue sticks, there is zero investment," says Corneille.

Ranjan adds that not many are aware that most clubs have subsi-



Shikha Kumar

Varsha Sanjeev, National Billiards Champion at the KSBA

dized membership fees for women players. The memberships are a few lakhs but for women players it's around Rs 5,000.

Ranjan hopes that the World Snooker Ranking event, scheduled to be held in February in next year, will change the way women look at the game.

This is the first time that the World Snooker Ranking event will be held in India.

"The budget for that tournament is 4 crore rupees. Prize money alone is 2, 50,000 pounds."

Varsha, too, is optimistic about the future of women in the sport. She feels proud of the fact that her success is gradually inspiring other young girls to follow suit.

She says more youngsters should take up the sport as there is lesser competition at the sub-junior and junior level.

"Start out young and win more," is her advice to the aspirers. "I hope to see more women in the sport as I grow up," she continues. "When women are doing so well in other fields, why not in billiards too?"

### Weather Report

Max temp - 29°C  
Min temp - 21°C  
Humidity - 56%

Source: HTC SENSE

### Market watch

Infosys rose 2.05%  
BHEL dropped 0.88 %  
RIL rose 0.59 %

Source: Google Finance