

# THE BEACON

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## Govt introduces 'Vidyagama' education program

Sudarshini

**BIDAR:** Parents and students of Karnataka state government and aided schools were contented with the state's out-of-school education plan 'Vidyagama', while teachers expressed safety concerns as they had to travel amidst the pandemic to conduct classes in the localities of the students.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, Karnataka's education department in the month of August had devised 'Vidyagama', an education plan for government and aided school students who do not have access to online education.

The teachers of R. H. Ballur High School, Bidar,



Vidyagama class in the residential area of Bidar

travelled to the residential areas of the students to conduct classes as schools are shut down. They expressed concerns over their health and safety as well as over

students who were located in remote areas where the teachers cannot travel to.

"Parents are extremely happy with the state's out-of-school education plan as this

allows our students to continue studying, but it is us teachers who face issues as we have to travel every day to different locations and come in contact with various

people which puts our health at risk," said Assistant teacher Shantamma Samson. "Even with Vidyagama, some of our students are still not able to receive education since some of them reside in containment zones," said assistant teacher Sunanda Ballur. The Headmistress Kavya Nandini said, "Vidyagama initially was challenge for us, but we now consider it to a unique opportunity to keep our students in touch with the learning by conducting classes out in the nature."

Along with conducting classes, Vidyagama also helped families with food supply as they distributed raw food materials which were originally midday meals in schools.

## Salons take a hit as grooming poses fear

Priyansha

**PANIPAT:** The beauty salons in Panipat are struggling to entice customers as the grooming services pose fear of coronavirus spread.

Dr. Jeewan Lata, owner of 'Classic Lady salon', a chain of salons, had to shut down one of three branches because of the pandemic. "The salon industry has been badly hit due to the virus. These days we only get customers who turn up just to fulfill their urgent needs," she said.

The inability to pay rent and maintain staff are the main reasons for shutting down. "We are unable to carry out our daily routine services because of the virus. Presently, we are left with only five staff members," she added.

Harjinder Arora, owner of 'Mabel Studio', said, "The best way to attract customers is to provide safer service rather than just providing offers, because people don't want to avail offers at the cost of their safety."

Poonam Aghi, 46, a resident of Panipat said, "I think it's unsafe to visit salons, due to the pandemic. We are all aware of its communicable nature and salon services require physical touch" she concludes.

## A safe haven for rare birds

Akshara D M

**GORAI:** As the inclement weather and global warming threatens to disrupt Mumbai, the EsselWorld Bird Park in Gorai remains largely unaffected due to the creation of a microhabitat for its exotic and indigenous species, says Rajesh, an assistant bird trainer at the park.

Spread over two acres and surrounded by a fifty feet tall mesh, EsselWorld bird park is home to nearly 400 exotic birds. Rajesh unfolds the collective efforts put up to create the natural microhabitat which is a result of thorough research conducted by the team of naturalists, biologists and horticulturists across India. Two hundred and thirty species of hand-picked

plants, herbs, shrubs, fruits and berry trees are planted in the park, with special care taken to make sure the plants and flowers are bird-safe.

The foggers, misters, small ponds, waterfalls and the rocky decks replicate the natural ecological conditions for the bird species. The exotic birds obtained from the raids by the forest officials at Airports also find a home in this habitat.

Thorough research of journals and advice from Ornithologists are followed to feed the birds, including food imported from abroad along with naturally available food as well. Some of the notable exotic bird species are Vulturine guineafowl, Galah Cockatoos, Blue and Gold Macaws, Mandarin Duck and the African Grey Parrot.



EsselWorld Bird Park, Gorai

## Connectivity based teaching by NGOs

Pavithra Prabhu

**BANGALORE:** Covid-19 has forced Bengaluru-based NGOs that educate underprivileged children to embrace teaching strategies based on internet connectivity and brand partnerships to keep the show going since May 2020.

"Like every other educational NGO, we were clueless as to how we would keep working when the pandemic hit. Our major aim is one-to-one tutoring, which revolves around physical

classes" said an employee of U&I Trust.

Various centres (partners) were classified based on the level of internet connectivity. Based on this, four teaching modules were formulated. The first module uses virtual classes for students with high internet connectivity. The second module is Live streaming on YouTube for high and medium level of connectivity. The third module is a worksheet module that delivers worksheets to students who have poor connectivity. The

final module is the Learning Centre Partner (LCP) Kits. "A learning centre partner is the person that we sign the memorandum of understanding (MoU) with, to partner with their centre" noted a volunteer of the U&I Trust. This module is used for students who live in orphanages and residential care homes.

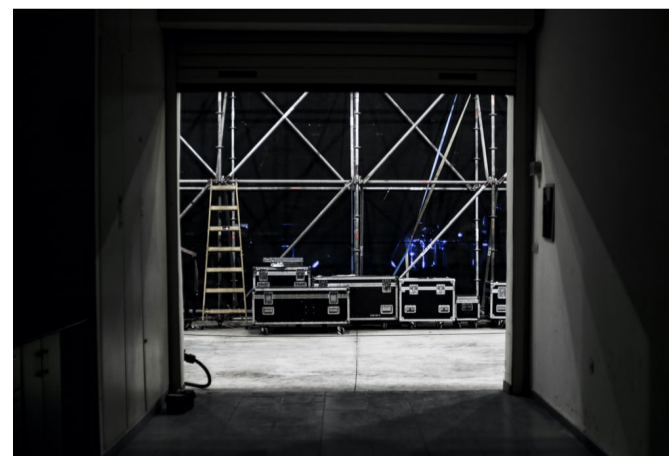
Volunteers have been collectively working to provide unrestrained education for underprivileged children even during a global pandemic.

## Backstage workers suffer great economic crisis

Athul Krishna

**THRISSUR:** KD Sanesh, a Thrissur native and owner of a stage lighting company, is struggling to make ends meet. The pandemic and the resulting lockdown has impacted not just performance artistes, but backstage and technical crew as well.

For Sanesh, August is his sixth consecutive month without work, as all stage shows have been stalled since March. As the months of March, April and May are usually the busiest time for stage events, most stage technicians purchased their



Representational Image

equipments earlier this year through bank loans. "I bought light and sound equipment for Rs 3 lakhs for the events and am now left

with the equipments, with no use for it" says Sanesh.

Light and sound companies are not the only ones facing this problem. A large number

of people who work under them for daily wages have also lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

"I don't know when this plight will end, so I've had to take up other jobs like auto driving and farming", says Dhanesh Kumar, another light technician from Thrissur. With measures such as social distancing, it is unlikely that the events industry will return to its former glory.

Like Dhanesh, many other back stage crew members have resorted to various other jobs like farming for survival.