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Snapping moments of history: A lens into Bengaluru's past

Saishyam Srikanth

BENGALURU: "Earlier, we were treated like heroes. People would roll the red carpet out for us photographers. Now, our fellows are not following ethics and things have changed," Gopinathan Kumar, former Chief Photographer of The Hindu notes.

A city needs storytellers to tell its story and photojournalists are those creative geniuses that narrate these tales. They document moments that carry us to a time in history, a sad one sometimes, a happy one some other times and on many occasions, a surprising one. For Gopinathan one such moment of history came with the arrival of the IT Park, a moment that he documented through his lens.

The veteran photographer remembers how the road leading from KR Puram to ITPL (International Tech Park Limited) was once a kaccha road filled with potholes. Before the IT park came into being, Gopinathan remembers a time when that street witnessed the first instances of dacoity in the city. Bangaloreans on two-wheelers would be hit in the face and then, they would be robbed. "Many people lost their eyesight. We went and took photos of these victims in Minto Hospital." The retired photojournalist also had the chance to click the photo of the inauguration of the IT Park, a moment that firmly marked the transition of the city into the Indian Silicon Valley.

harassed during the celebrations. "I broke the news of that incident. (The) police and the government said nothing happened." He remembers how he had taken several photographs, some that could not even be published on public platforms which he submitted to the police as proof.

Photography has changed over the years along with the profession of photojournalism. Chetan Shivakumar of The Times of India says, "When we would hear about a crime that took place, we would run to the spot. If you went to the spot and clicked, only then would you get photos." Now, many have a mobile phone in their hands. The police or witnesses send pictures to the news organisations. Many journalists don't even go to the spot where the crimes took place, he says.

The technology change has also impacted those who are still in the profession. But many remember fondly the time when they worked with analogue cameras. Gopinathan remembers how there was a slow news day in the late 1980s and these 'lean days' saw the most pressure on photojournalists since they had to provide enough photographs to fill space.

He recollected his experience in the late '80s. As he was drinking tea with his colleague outside his office, he saw a horse pulling a tonga, which was loaded with an auto-rickshaw and heavy engineering equipment. He realised that

my hand there was a camera and nothing else came to my mind. I didn't know if I had successfully clicked it and I ran to the office to develop the photographs." Gopina-

All India Press Photography Award in the Human Interest Category in 1988. Thus, we see how even in this small moment the photojournalist was documenting the history

urbanised.

As a photojournalist, these are the moments that give us a chance to chronicle history and tell stories to future generations. Years ago, a former Bangalore Mirror photographer risked his own life to ensure that the public saw pictures of an event that brought the entire city of Bangalore to a standstill.

It was July 15th 2000, a typical monsoon day but a day that many will remember for years to come. Kannada cinema's greatest actor Dr Rajkumar was kidnapped by Veerappan, a notorious bandit. Subramanyam had been on the trail of the bandit for a long time, deep inside the Sathyamangalam forest, and was there on the day Nagappa was killed and Dr Rajkumar abducted. With his manual SLR camera, he managed to capture photos of Veerappan and Dr Rajkumar. Photos of an incredible moment of Indian history were beamed across the globe; frames from a moment that caused severe strain of ties between two neighbouring states.

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File Photo

A slice of history : The national award winning click

K Gopinathan

"Now the city has grown 200 or maybe 300 times. I can probably only see the opposite road from the place where I clicked those photos"

"(Earlier), When we would hear about a crime that took place, we would run to the spot and clicked, only then would you get photographs. Today, all Indians are photographers"



File Photo

A shameful night for the city: December 31st, 2016

Anantha K Subramanyam

Another veteran photojournalist, Anantha Subramanyam remembers a sad moment in the history of the city which he documented. He was at MG Road on New Year's Eve 2017, a day that is celebrated with much cheer in the city. Yet this cheer soon turned into shock & horror for many women who were sexually

the horse looked tired and told his colleague to walk out of the shop and click pictures of the horse. Then all of a sudden, the auto-rickshaw hit a tree branch and the tonga got stuck. The horse was literally in mid-air and choking. "By an entirely subconscious process, I clicked the photographs. I could see that in

than had succeeded by the sheer rhythm that was acquired through practice; he had managed to correctly expose, focus and shoot the pictures. All of these required manual precision in those days. Each shot required one to wind the camera and then shoot.

The resulting photograph won the

and giving us a glimpse into how animals were treated, how Bangalore's roads were and just how much things have changed.

For Anantha Subramanyam, his moment of glory came when he got a chance to click a picture of a leopard which had strayed into a school in the east of the city in 2017. Yet, again, this small moment tells us plenty about our time. How we have destroyed the environment and taken up space that once belonged to all creatures around us, and how Bengaluru has rapidly



File Photo

Attempting to capture: Officials try to trap the leopard which caused a scare

Anantha K Subramanyam

Documenting art in Bengaluru's history

Gautam Nagar

Bengaluru has made giant strides in information technology and biotechnology in the last two decades, nevertheless, it has not lost its essential character as a city that once nurtured and patronised fine arts.

The city has much to offer to art lovers and connoisseurs - be it in various forms of expression through drawings, sketches, paintings, sculptures and handicrafts, facilitating expression, weaving a rich cultural tapestry adding charm to Bengaluru.

The early 20th century saw the emergence of artists K. Venkatappa and K. K. Hebbar who gained prominence and recognition just on the verge of independence at the national level. K. Venkatappa, through his works, was particularly known for his realism in watercolour paintings. The Venkatappa Art Gallery still has a collection of his artworks.

Speaking of the contributions of the two artists, H. A. Anil Kumar, a celebrated art critic, historian and artist himself said, "In certain ways, the works of K. Venkatappa and K. K. Hebbar ushered in an era of modernity on the Karnataka art scene."

K. K. Hebbar, who additionally served as the Chairman of the Lalit Kala Academy in Bengaluru, also provided scholarships to students to study in established art schools such as Kala Bhavan in Shantiniketan, West Bengal.

According to H. A. Anil Kumar, the 1960s saw an explosion in the art scene in Bengaluru with the establishment of the Chitrakala Parishath, the Lalit Kala Academy, and an evolving art movement in the city. Furthermore, drawing inspiration from the Bombay art movement, the formation of an art group known as 'We Four' inched the art movement in Bengaluru towards a more progressive plane. The art group also saw the involve-

ment of renowned artist Peter A. Lewis.

notifying dates for art reveals and dialogues." The artistic expansion in Bengaluru in the 1960s was crucial for enthusiasts to "expose" and "disassociate" themselves from the



A myriad of creative expression

ment of renowned artist Peter A. Lewis. traditional art forms and styles that were rampant in Mysore, paving the way for modernity as an urban contribution to art.

Naturally, this would also result in progress in styles seen in the art of Bengaluru. The initial styles saw semi-classic, realistic works influenced by Raja Ravi Varma. Bengaluru had the pride of being home to famed Chandamama artist MTV Acharya and other renowned names RM Hadpad, G S Shenoy, SG Vasudev, Chi Su KrishnaShetty and illustrative artist Chandranath Acharya, even graffiti art popularised by Gujjarappa, John Devraj and others.

"Though not accepted as a serious art form, landscapes used to be the dominant genre of painting, inspired by the impressionist works in Bombay. Nonetheless, the works of artists such as Babu Ishwar Prasad are still considered modern-

from India and Switzerland. The most notable of these residencies, Bengaluru Artist Residency One (BAR1) was established in 2001.

The decade of the 90s also saw a progressive shift in the art scene in

folk, traditional and contemporary art. One of the most notable among them is the Roerich Gallery with art collections of Nikolai Roerich the famed Russian artist and his son Svetoslav Roerich. The art



Gautam Nagar

complex consisting of numerous galleries and stalls spread over a three-acre land treats patrons to a plethora of handicrafts, sculpture, ceramics, jewellery, among many other offerings from independent local artists and sellers drawing art lovers to its galleries and art fests popularised by Chitra Santhe an annual event.

Bengaluru, geared more towards the abstract and the experimental. These works came about as a result of artists like Sheila Gowda, Pushpamala and other students who had returned to Bengaluru as alumni of Shantiniketan. These styles and art forms initiated an era of contemporary art, the ripples of which are still being experienced today.

The National Gallery of Modern Art, Bengaluru, located in Vasanth Nagar was established in 2009 and has curated art from the pre-Independence period of the 1800s to those up till the 1980s and 1990s. Operating under the Ministry of Culture, the government-run gallery boasts of an extensive in-house curation of the works of renowned artists such as Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy, Rabindranath Tagore and Raja Ravi Varma, as part of a "comprehensive, retrospective information", according to Mr Darshan Kumar, Deputy Curator of the gallery.

Moreover, in an effort to develop an eye for art, the National Gallery of Modern Art organises free museum visits for school children to provide an experience and imbue an interest in art.

Three years ago, the gallery also hosted an elaborate curation pertaining to the history of the art movement in Karnataka, as well as the contemporary direction it is shaping towards. The curation exhibited the works of over 450 local artists, including those of S.G. Vasudev.

Situated on Seshadri Road, the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, founded by its President Arya Murthy and Founder Secretary Prof M.S.Nanjundarao is yet another exciting destination for art lovers to visit in the city. It has produced several generations of artists since its inception in the 1960s. Moreover, the Chitrakala Parishath also houses galleries and museums that exhibit a range of

for exhibiting the work.

Believing in the motto of "Art for All", Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath continues to possess an exuberant spirit and energy devoted to spreading and making the art culture of Bengaluru accessible to all.

As with all things, art too is making a transition to the digital realm. A paradigm shift has been witnessed in the creation and distribution of art, with the popularity of software such as Photoshop and Canva, and the reach that is possible for budding artists to achieve through social media platforms such as Instagram. Moreover, the recent traction gained by non-fungible tokens or NFTs has granted artists the opportunity to sell their work online along with a certified seal of authenticity.

Alvin Jaison, an undergraduate student of Digital Media and Animation at St. Joseph's College states that he was drawn to digital art due to its convenience. "The current world is evolving into a digital state, and digital art is starting to be valuable day by day," he said.

The factor of convenience as an appeal was echoed by Deepika Mondal, a fellow student. Deepika, who works in both traditional and digital spaces of art stated that she has grown to become more attuned and comfortable with digital art platforms, providing a "different kind of perspective".

Conversely, Professor KS

"As Bengaluru became the capital, it became a centre for an art school movement, and saw artists from other districts such as Dharwad and Gulbarga visiting the city. Bengaluru quickly became a hub for galleries, with the press notifying dates for art reveals and dialogues."

ment of renowned artist Peter A. Lewis.

"As Bengaluru became the capital, it became a centre for an art school movement, and saw artists from other districts such as Dharwad and Gulbarga visiting the city", said H. A. Anil Kumar, who went on to say, "Bengaluru quickly became a hub for galleries, with the press

ist and progressive", said Mr Anil Kumar, stating how it was critically acclaimed in the 1980s.

Beginning in the 1990s, several art movements and artist initiatives coalesced into art residencies in Bengaluru. Functioning essentially as an exchange program, these art residencies saw interactions and exchanges between artists



Sea of ceramics

Gautam Nagar

Professor K. S. Appajaiah, General Secretary of the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath believes that Bengaluru possesses a rich culture and history of art, following the cities of Bombay and Delhi. "Many eminent artists have settled down in Mysore and Bengaluru." Professor Appajaiah mentioned that the Chitrakala Parishath regularly conducts workshops, and camps and their galleries are open to all

Appajaiah cited digital art as "a medium for commercial profit", with its distinct factor of quality resulting in its popularity.

Monica S, another student of St. Joseph's College believes that traditional art will continue to enjoy a state of relevance. "Not everyone is satisfied with digital forms of artworks, and many people do not consider digital art as a legitimate art form," she added.

Iconic establishments then, commercial hubs now

Afreen Hussain

BENGALURU: The expression “Namma Ooru Bengaluru” describes the sense of belonging that this city has provided to Bengalureans who have lived here for generations.

The city grew as a cultural hub as people poured in from across India. It was the pensioners’ paradise to some and the Garden City to others. It was a city that offered opportunities to eke out a living for millions.

As decades rolled by, an emotion got intertwined with the city amongst its habitants, partly represented by the places that gradually turned into iconic landmarks. These brought in nostalgic memories and represented the heritage of the city.

However, for many Bengalureans, these have now sadly, become walk-through memory lanes as few of them have been relegated to history owing to demolitions, ill-maintenance, and sheer neglect.

The question, therefore, is what will happen to the heritage of the city, given that one of its cultural artefacts is being lost. Anirudh Kanisetti, historian, author, and editor at the Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), Bengaluru, has an interesting take on the matter. “I suspect that Bengaluru will go a similar way as many other rapidly urbanising cities and that these landmarks will be forgotten. And they will be replaced with buildings that are more commercially viable but less closely tied,” he said. The heritage is being lost, inch by inch, he opines.

Several iconic landmarks in and around the adjoining streets of MG Road, Brigade Road, and Church Street have ceased to exist over the recent years. One such memorable landmark, the 57-year-old Kohinoor Hotel was relegated to history in the last decade. In 2012, after the owner



File Photo: The Hindu

The past and the present in one frame

of the hotel, Mohiuddin Kutti lost a legal battle over a hike in rent to the landlord Maqsood Fakir M, the hotel which was situated at the junction where Brigade Road meets MG Road was shut down. A OnePlus Store, a Chinese smartphone brand has taken its place. Sheik Waseem, who has been selling eyewear accessories for the past 16 years, standing on the footpath right opposite the place where the historic hotel was once situated said, “I would walk into the hotel several times a day to savour their famous ‘Sulaimani Chai’. I have not tasted any tea that is as flavourful as the sulaimani at Kohinoor. The other specialities of the hotel were bheja fry, Kerala chicken curry with parathas, and biryani, which were their bestsellers.”

“I dearly miss the existence of

Kohinoor and the people who worked there. I can say for sure that there cannot be another Kohinoor Hotel again,” Waseem added while reminiscing the good old days he spent at the hotel.

Another classic landmark not quite far away from the Kohinoor Hotel was the popular Rex Theatre. An 80-year-old single-screen theatre that pulled the curtains down for the last time on 31 December 2018, is fondly remembered by Bengalureans. Mahesh, a cab driver, who mostly ferries passengers around the area cannot reconcile with the fact that the theatre is shut forever. “Whenever I pick up passengers from around here (Brigade Road), they usually provide me with navigations such as, ‘Anna (brother in Kannada), can you pick me up from Rex

Theatre?’ or ‘I’m standing opposite Rex Theatre’. Though the building does not physically exist anymore, Rex Theatre sure remains in the hearts of Bengalureans.” “Can one of Bengaluru’s oldest theatres be forgotten by the masses so easily?” he wonders.

Dr S.K. Aruni, Deputy Director of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) describing the concept of culture said, “Every generation is bound to carry a varying set of memories of the place they belong to or reside in. And the current generation residing in the city, I feel, has lost most of the original culture of Bengaluru; the street culture has vanished, and hangout places like Majestic have been altered and modified. This has resulted in the loss of several iconic landmarks.”

“The loss of the city’s culture can be compared to a process, where the good old Bengaluru has lost its charm with the changes brought about by globalisation and the burgeoning IT sector. It is as if the original Bengaluru has been buried under the present face of the city. It seems areas like Electronic City, Hebbal, and the localities around the metro are what is considered as real Bengaluru,” he further added.

He emphasised that a few organisations are trying to preserve the bits of the original culture of Bengaluru, however, he adds, he is unsure whether they will succeed. He complains how everyone these days seeks a comfortable life, with the clamour for widened roads, posh infrastructure and flyovers. This need for a comfortable life has destroyed most of the iconic landmarks of the city, he says.

Loss of such symbols of culture is not only limited to Bengaluru, but even the villages surrounding the city have also lost their identity, he opines. For instance, Begur, a town located near the Bengaluru-Hosur highway is not the same as it previously was. Similarly, 300 villages were merged with the city, and all these villages have lost their identity in some way or the other, he adds.

“If you ask me, most of the iconic landmarks have been erased, but one landmark that I get reminded of is the Avenue Road, and precisely a piece of history from there, the Ranganathaswamy Temple, which has been ruined due to the beautification and modification.”

He concluded with an insightful thought, “The erasing of the culture of a place is a systemic process that occurs periodically. This must be prevented because the loss of culture is the most irreparable loss to humankind.”



File Photo: Swarajya

Curtains down on Rex Theatre



Then and now

Gautam Nagar

Sports culture adapts to urbanised milieu

A few oblivate, a few more emerge

Joel P Anto

Over the years, the city of Bengaluru has produced legendary players who have represented the country in various sports. Cricket and football are two of the most popular games, either watched or played in Bengaluru. Let's pause for a minute and take a look at the city's sports culture that has disappeared over time.

"There is unquestionably a significant contrast between the past and the present sports culture of Bengaluru. The current generation is unaware of classic games like lagori and goti etc. One reason for this could be attributed to the fact that they are glued to smart devices, and the other is that the people around them are no longer interested in traditional games, instead, they prefer watching football and cricket because these games create more icons and star players, whom they want their children to idolize," says SR Haridas, an All India Football Federation (AIFF) licensed coach.

Traditional street games like Lagori, Goti, and Gilli Danda, which were popular among children, are off the streets now. The lack of open spaces available in many localities is also contributing to the decline of these traditional unconventional games; shrinking spaces is the collateral damage of rapid urbanization. However, the obsession with academic goals has resulted in the kids becoming couch potatoes and



When past meets the present: An evening scene from a local ground.

Joel P. Anto

thereby has led to the gradual decline in the sports culture of the city.

The lung spaces, parks, and playgrounds are an essential part of an urban community and help shape the health consciousness of the city. An urge to be fit and healthy would usher in practices and habits that over a while get

integrated as a part of the culture. But the support that the sporting culture long received has been on the decline for a while now, opine the city-dwellers recounting the decreasing number of playgrounds. Playgrounds are one of the important things that influence a child from a young age. In this modern era, where children are immersed in their smartphones, the reduction in playgrounds has exacerbated this behaviour in children.

According to data from the BBMP Horticulture Department, there were 938 parks in 2014, but that number has since risen to 1146, indicating that 208 more parks have been established since then. More parks may increase biodiversity, reduce pollution, and improve air quality, which is a positive thing, but the concern is a few of these parks were earlier playgrounds. Parks inside the playgrounds will reduce the

space for sports. In Bangalore, there are just 256 playgrounds which are meagre compared to the total inhabitants. Many of these are not maintained and hence are locked. According to a survey by Janaagraha, an NGO dedicated to improving the quality of urban life, less than 40% of parks and playgrounds have sporting equipment, and only 56% have proper lighting. While many children depend on playgrounds at school, just a few of the best schools provide this facility.

RX Murali, BCCI level 3 cricket coach in Bengaluru who has closely worked with popular cricketers like Mayank Agarwal and Australian player Michael Bevan in the past said, "Previously, only a few games like cricket and football were considered mainstream but now there are a lot of other games which are in the limelight like badminton, tennis and even

basketball, this has brought about vast changes in the sports culture of Bengaluru."

"In the past, the infrastructure was very limited but now it is better but the quality of coaching must be improved. Parents want their children to play games just for the sake of it because they are not sure if the children can have a sustainable future in this industry," he said.

"Now, the sports culture is moving towards digital gaming from physical game playing. This is natural as there is an evolution in every culture, even in sports. Changes take place in accordance with the time and trend, which is why traditional games like lagori and goti have been lost now. I personally believe that moving forward, it will be the age of professional sports only and the existence of sports in any other form like recreational or others will be completely out of the picture," he added.



A game of football at twilight

Joel P. Anto

Advertisement



With intellectual resistance fading, street plays lose their lustre

Sharon Anna James

BENGALURU: Karnataka has enriched the nation with a variety of art forms and traditions. Street play as a form of expression in the early 1980s aimed to raise political consciousness and combat social injustice. However, in recent years in the city, a decline in street plays has been witnessed.

Malathesh Hulagathuru, a theatre activist, stage play artist, and director who has been in this field for around 16 years, concurs that there is a decline in people joining street play and theatre.

“The present generation is not bothered with political concerns. Street play is all about a response to political and social issues,” he says, adding that the present generation is more focused on cinemas and series that fetches them popularity which is an important reason they choose other forms of art over street plays.

The expectation from street play performers is that they become activists and not just artists. It is a medium of expression that voices the plight of the commoners.

Malathesh further explains how the culture of protest against injustice fuelled an interest in such forms of expression in the city. “People would raise their voice against any injustice in the past; even if there was a hike in the price of petrol or lack of jobs. Today’s street plays have become a product of political

sion but an artist by passion, has been in this field for over three decades. He wears many hats, including that of a sculptor, theatre artist, painter, stage director, actor,

has also contributed to this decline. With snarled traffic, it has become difficult to perform on the streets.

In the 1970s, street plays were a powerful tool for shaping the

when this art form became a commercial activity aided by the government-funded advertisement. Although the government pumped in money to bring out content based

He sees a problem in the education system that binds the teachers and students by a tight schedule of assignments, work, and exams, which doesn’t allow them to be



File Photo

From the play “Mannada Mannina Makkalu”—a play on farmers’ suicide staged in a village in Yadgir district

File Photo: Aavishkara Street Play Troupe

musician, and the founder of the World Peace Museum in Bangalore. Devraj opines that theatre is a weapon of liberation as it allows one to imagine and create. “Art and theatre stand as a beacon of a new light to bring about peace in today’s world of violence,” he says.

political consciousness of an entire generation of youth. Many sensitive and controversial topics were taken up and brought to the attention of the public. Through street plays themes such as communal violence, Feminism, infanticide, dowry, wage disparity, and untouchability were

on societal issues such as alcohol addiction, this commercialisation, unfortunately, resulted in the loss of street play’s essence.

Today, street play is more of a form of advertisement used by NGOs and the government than being a serious educational tool for the democratisation of society, opines Dr BR Manjunath, a veteran playwright and intellectual.

“I feel sad about this situation. In my experience, if you can make simple plays involving students who can reach out to the public, you will have a big impact. It is also necessary, especially in certain areas of Bangalore, to make use of a mix of languages. Otherwise, for people who are not exposed to Kannada and English, how will they be able to reciprocate the message?” he wonders.

He opines that students can uphold the theatre culture. Unfortunately, the education system does not recognise the importance of art and theatre in education, he says.

culturally responsible individuals.

“The only way we can make people think and question the authorities is through street plays. It gives people the ability to debate and ponder the complexities of the issues. The format of street theatre is democratic and interactive, which makes it effective because the actors go to the people, not the other way around. They see that the audience and the actors are on the same level,” he asserts.

Vijayamma, an octogenarian who was previously a journalist, a playwright, and an activist, explains that street play is a form of art that must reach everyone, and she hopes it lasts forever.

With grief, she says, “Street plays were once used to convey progressive thoughts, but nowadays, things have changed. Today, the art form has unfortunately intermingled with the ideologies of those in power, and the original essence of street play has been lost.”



File Photo

From the play “Olithu Madu Manusa” directed by Malathesh Hulagathuru

File Photo: Samudaya Street Play Troupe

ideologies, which have affected the value or worth of the art form,” he says.

Modernisation, industrialisation, and the influence of new media have affected street theatre. People have smart gadgets that allow them to enter into a realm that offers everything in one go. The audience is unaware of the authenticity of the message. “New media stops you from thinking, turning individuals into puppets in the hands of the rich, and the mobile phones have made us immobile,” says Malathesh. John Devraj, an engineer by profes-

“I’m afraid we have lost the strong culture that Bangalore once prospered in. The first is that youth are silenced and distracted. Second, before the advent of mobile phones, the only mode of communication was through street theatre. Movements like peasant movements and student movements occurred earlier, but today the students are silenced. The young generation that had to lead the path towards political consciousness has stopped fighting,” laments Devraj. Street play as art still exists but has lost the glory it enjoyed earlier. The limited space that the city offers

enacted. College students used this art form to express themselves and highlight social realities. It became the voice of the voiceless speaking for the oppressed section of society.

Street plays had their heyday during the 70s when they were used as a tool of protest. “Street play and struggle were inextricably linked, but as the protest culture declined, particularly after globalisation, so did street plays. This prompted talented actors to shift to the small screen. Despite being paid very little, hoping on earning fame, they continued,” opines Devraj.

But there was a twist in the 1990s



File Photo

A still from “Mannada Mannina Makkalu”

File Photo: Aavishkara Street Play Troupe

Under the banyan tree with a one by two coffee

Pavana J

BENGALURU: For most Bangaloreans like me, while growing up in the early 2000s, Sundays meant morning drives with the family to Cubbon Park, a small stroll along with the luscious greenery the park has to offer, watching the people play with their little puppies running around with energy, followed by a quiet breakfast at Airlines Hotel, one of the drive-thru restaurants that existed at the time.

Airlines Hotel was established in 1968 right in the middle of the bustling city of Bangalore. To write about the place, I decided to take a walk down memory lane, reminiscing all the wonderful times I've spent here almost every Sunday as a kid. So I grabbed my notebook and a pen and sat down to write the rest of this story under the famous Banyan trees in the restaurant's parking lot, whilst I waited for my double sugar coffee to arrive. Just as I completed the first few lines, I decided to venture into a small part of the hotel I had never been to before- the administration area. I walked up to the cashier's counter and asked the man sitting behind the counter, fully engrossed in watching the highlights from the previous night's IPL game on his phone, "Sir, is there anyone I can speak to about the history of the hotel? It's for a story" and before I could complete, he pointed to his left and said, "Go there and ask for Mr Natraj. He's the best person to talk to you about this place." I swiftly set out to look for Mr Natraj. After asking 2-3 waiters, holding a big tray full of food to deliver to the customers, I finally found Mr Natraj, very seriously looking down at a big book, which I assumed was a register or an accounts book of some sort.

With a smile so bright and welcoming, Mr Natraj asked me to pull a chair and sit down. "My name is Natraj," he said, "I've been working here as a supervisor for over 20 years now." Very gracefully moving his glance from his book towards me, he quickly corrected himself, "26 years, to be precise." "You know, many things have changed here since I started working. The premise used to be much bigger, and we had more trees inside than one could imagine. But they gradually started renovating, and buildings were constructed one after the other. The road opposite the hotel was much wider and a two-way before, but now they've made it a one-way. As they started making developments one after the other, we started to think that our business would go down, but thankfully it has all remained the same even after all these years," he said.

"Last few years, as people from all over the country have started moving to Bangalore, we've had to change our menu. What initially started as a South Indian breakfast joint now serves delicacies from the north as well. Even Bangaloreans have started adapting to their new taste buds. In a day, we see about 1500 customers. While most still come to relish our famous south breakfast like the rava idly, masal



Beneath the roots from heaven

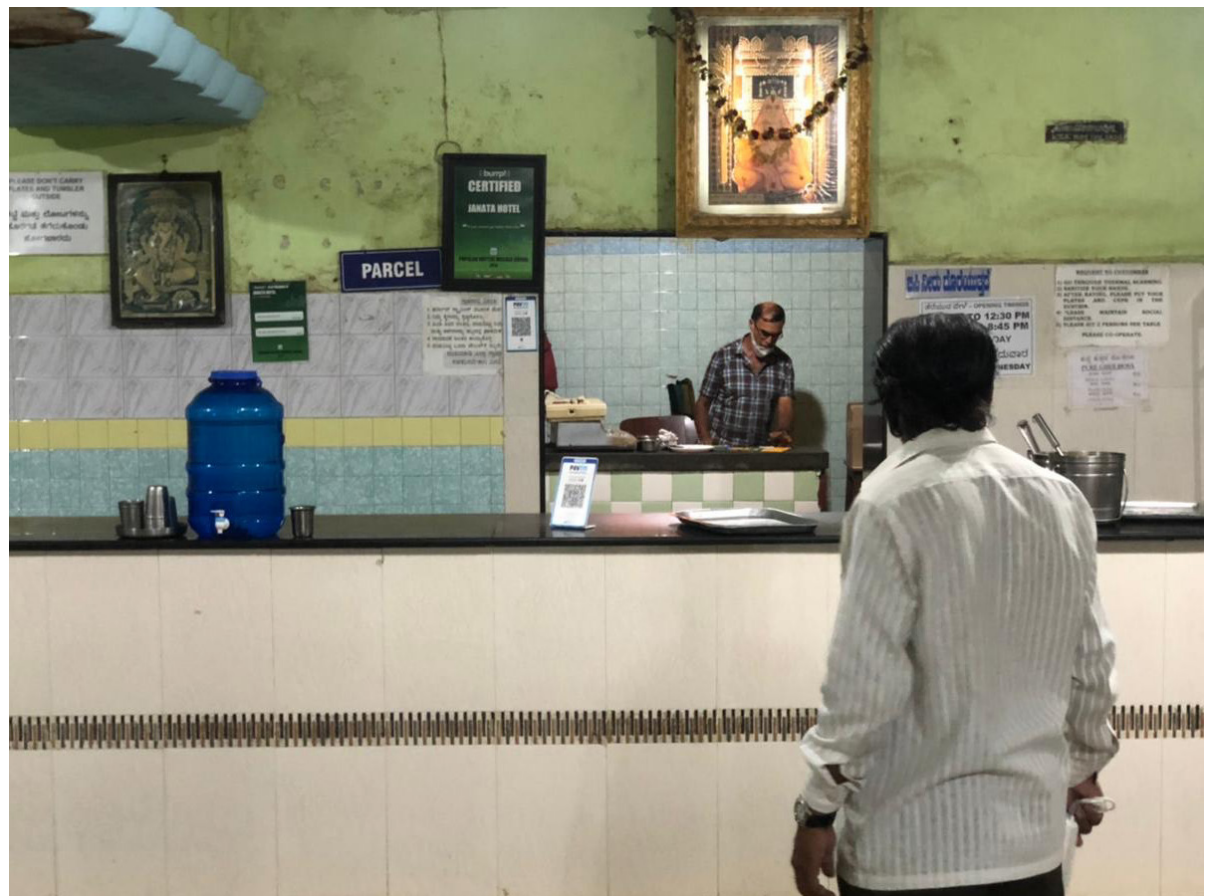
Pavana J

dose, and Mangalore buns, many come here for the chole bhature and the variety of sweets and snacks we offer," said Natraj. However, my personal favourite remains the double sugar coffee in a cup bigger than the palms can hold. "I still see the same people visit us, the same people who used to visit us all those years ago. The best part about our hotel is our loyal customer base." I could see the pride in his eyes as he continued, "We even have conversations amongst ourselves, all of us who have been here for many years, the people we saw as college students now come with their kids. It's almost like we have seen some of them grow right in front of our eyes," he said before being interrupted by a call.

As he said this, I wondered to myself, I'm one of those generational customers too. My parents and sister had often narrated stories about how they would bunk college to come here, and now I was doing the same.

Natraj resumed saying that the most difficult time was when the hotel was shut down for a year in 2014. "We thought this was it! But to our surprise, the day the hotel reopened, we had so many people come in, and that was when we realised we have together built a legacy," he said with his eyes filled with joy.

For over 55 years, Airlines Hotel has been a hub where families, business people and students come to get away from their daily stress. And as Mr Natraj narrated, even if the city is constantly changing, the people who come here make sure that the place feels just like it was when it first began.



A window into the past

Pavana J

Hailing from the old towns of North Bangalore, it's almost impossible for me to not talk about Janata Hotel while deliberating about the historic eateries in Bangalore. A small breakfast joint right in the middle of the noisy streets of Malleswaram brings back memories from evenings after school when my friends and I would rush after sports practice for a quick cup of coffee, usually accompanied by a vada or Kesari Bath. A hotel that opened in the 1970s continues to be a mass favourite. Situated amidst the busy Malleswaram market, one is sure to get a surprise

the minute they step in; the most iconic part of the old restaurant is the ambience which makes you feel like you're stuck in a 70s movie.

Mr Kishore Iyengar is a resident of the area and a regular customer of the Janata Hotel for decades. When asked about his relationship and affection for the restaurant, he said, "This place has been a family favourite for longer than I can remember. During festival times and after a full day of shopping, my grandma and I would stop by for a snack or quick lunch. Some of my best memories are here."

However, with concern, Mr

Kishore said that the taste of the food has drastically changed. He said most dishes have lost their authenticity adapting to the new people, culture, and tastes of the city. "Although they don't make the taste buds reminisce about childhood, they still bring joy and a familiar sense of happiness," opined Mr Kishore.

Like Mr Kishore, Janata Hotel remains a local favourite for many others. Although the place is modifying its menu in tune with the likes of the new customers they have acquired, the place still holds a sense of nostalgia like no other.

Iconic bakeries that shaped the taste of the city

Pushparaj C

BENGALURU: Bangalore is home to many iconic bakeries. The city houses the more than 100-year-old Albert Bakery in Frazer Town and the 60-year-old Thom's Bakery in Cleveland Town. Locals flock to these establishments to try out the various specialities.

Tradition runs deep in the modest Thom's bakery founded by PM Thomas. It began in 1970, as a restaurant called 'Thom's Café and Restaurant.' Later, a small grocery store was opened, right next to the restaurant. The location has always been the same since then. After Mr PM Thomas passed away his sons, Binu Thomas and Biju Thomas took over the business.

Moving into the late 80s, Thom's was a bakery and grocery store. Mr Binu Thomas and Mr Biju Thomas made sure there was daily supervision to maintain the quality of products. Now, the third generation from the Thomas family has taken over the business.

Athul Thomas, grandson of PM Thomas mentioned, "Our plum cake is an iconic product. There are so many items like fresh bread, samosas, sweet treats which attract the customers and they keep coming back for more". This connection with the customers has remained constant through the years. As you enter the bakery, a mouth-watering aroma of freshly baked bread greets you and lures you in. The bakery is stacked with goodies, rows of rich plum cakes, crispy samosas and also freshly baked milk bread. Keeping in mind all the fancy bread that we see in the market today, the bakery's products are reasonably priced. Then you can turn your



A view of the century-old Albert Bakery

attention to the supermarket. Chocolates and candies, salad dressings, pasta sauces, pasta, locally produced cheese and veggies line the supermarket shelves. "For the future, the plan is to make the bakery much bigger and to expand the business by opening up new outlets. It is up to us, the third generation, to continue with the legacy," Athul Thomas said.

Shiva Prasad, a regular at Thom's bakery said, "My father used to take me to the bakery when I was a kid, I still remember the delicious taste of the cakes and other items." Has the taste of the bakery products changed over time? "I would say it has not changed much. The food culture has been maintained from the first day I visited the bakery and until now it is the same. "Another name in the list of famous heritage bakeries is located on Mosque Road.

Known for their 'Khova naan', the Albert Bakery is so iconic that it has come to be identified by the food that it serves. This legendary bakery was established in the year 1902, near Kamaraj Road, as a godown which initially stocked a few items such as bread, rusk and biscuits. Albert Bakery was started by the great-great-grandfather of Mr Mohammed Faizan, Mr Mohammad Yacoob. Faizan is currently the owner of the business. Their regular specialities include mouth-watering items that we have come to associate with various festivals. Hot cross buns made for Good Friday, Marzipan eggs made for Easter, non-alcoholic plum cakes for Christmas and Mutton Samosas & Bheja Puffs for Ramzan are just a few examples of these.

The shop opens to customers at 3 pm and runs till 9 PM and all

products are freshly prepared. The bakery has a strict policy which prohibits the usage of preservatives and taste enhancers. Before they open for customers, the best quality ingredients are mixed together to prepare the freshest delights.

Mr Mohammed Faizan while speaking about the bakery said, "The plan is to keep things simple, original and economical so that many will be able to afford our products."

"Many old family businesses set

up branches and various outlets and this leads to the loss of the originality of the product. I don't want that to happen. I like to keep it simple and like to attract the people who enjoy the taste (of our products). Today, one of the main items which bakeries with multiple outlets make is the lemon tart. They use artificial additives, crushes and probably other items instead of the natural lemon. I don't like to do this. I like to keep it original and stick to the traditional method of preparation," he added.

Chandra Shekar, a loyal customer said, "I am 56-years old and I have been going to Albert bakery since my childhood and it's the only bakery I like to visit. They have maintained the taste over a long period of time. My favourite item which I buy during every visit is the mutton puff".

The crowd that frequently goes to Albert bakery are a testament to its quality and the owner's commitment to ensuring the highest quality and taste.

Thom's and Albert have stood the test of time and together show us the wonderful legacy that the bakeries in the city have built. While the city has changed a lot, the continued presence of these businesses has ensured that the traditional food-related flavour of the city has not gone missing.

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Colours that grab the eyeballs.

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"I would say it has not changed much. The food culture has been maintained from the first day I visited the bakery and until now it is the same"



Thom's Bakery: A culinary icon

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The soul of the Garden City withers away

Subadra Sarath

BENGALURU: In India's rapidly growing cities, change appears to be the only constant. Historic buildings are bulldozed, roads are widened, lakes and marshes are drained, and parks are converted for commercial use or to make way for urban expansion. Nature is the first casualty in the never-ending quest for advancement.

The trees of Bangalore that earned us the tag of Garden City and shaped a unique identity, are slowly dying now. Trees still line up the streets albeit assaulted by gasoline fumes and construction activities. They play a vital role in the daily lives of Indian city dwellers, one that is frequently overlooked. However, the spectacle of a dystopian future that urban expansion presents is a matter of concern.

To begin with, the planners had prioritised the green component along the main streets of the city with even spacing between trees, and the choice of varieties was in a manner which made sure that every part of the colonial city was certain to have some flowers in season at all times of the year. This colonial legacy may still be observed today in gentrified suburbs along Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore's major business and shopping district, with spacious, traffic-free walkways. Malleswaram's Sampige Road, earned the name as it accommodated magnificent Sampige trees (Champak trees) that once lined the path.

Sampige Road has a metro station close by, named Mantri Square, after one of Bangalore's major malls. Despite the area's urbanisation, Sampige Road has its old-world attractions, with gorgeous temples, marketplaces, and year-round cafes. Due to the urbanisation and modernisation, the trees were chopped down, robbing the area of its majestic appearance. The Kadu Malleswara Temple inspired the name of the locality, Malleswaram—the temple's first name is Kadu (forest) and was built by the Marathas in the 17th century as a place where the rich and nobility might dwell.

Even Margosa road which is also named after a tree has been dug up for the diversion of traffic. These trees, which are largely exotic imports, were planted in an orderly, disciplined manner, and they appear to have a finely tuned sense of decorum. They fulfil a vital civic function.

Despite the unabashed spree of uprooting the sturdy and old trees, inhabitants and office-goers value these trees. The old Banyan trees stand as a remnant of the feudal era and the practices attached to it; the designated head of a village used to be seated under a banyan tree while the disputes were settled. The Maha Muniswara temple at Malleswaram is surrounded by a large Ficus tree.

The urban landscape is nurtured by the greenery and not the other way around. Even when trees provide comfort and are deeply rooted in our cultural ethos, the residents still



The last leaves in the midst of the concrete jungle

Subadra Sarath

have complaints. Protruding wires from the electricity transformers are found to be crisscrossing the canopy formed of thick branches. To create room for a new transformer, trees or thick branches are sometimes destroyed. Trees grow despite these alien intruders. At other times these trees dump branches on these transformers during storms and causing protracted power outages.

Inhabitants who have grown accustomed to living with trees may gripe about these minor annoyances, but they are tolerant of them, choosing to live with the occasional problems than with not having trees. Even service staff become accustomed to the presence of trees on the road. Telephone wires are commonly coiled around trees, kept in hollows, or hung from branches while employees and street vendors frequently hang their possessions or lunch bags from a conveniently shaded limb or tuck them into nooks between branches to be collected at leisure.

"Just five years ago when I came here to visit Bangalore for the first time in summer. The city had the best climate even in such a hot season, as the roads were filled with

trees. But, now the summertime feels like its burning due to the hot air that just blows on to our face all because of the constructions and the development the city is having," says Ex Assistant Station Master, Gopi S.

He opines, "I used to work in railways as the station assistant and I used to get posted in many differ-

ent states but Bangalore was one place which I will never forget and will cherish. I remember Bangalore for its greenery and climate and of course the people. Bangalore made my work more soothing with its pleasant climate. I have taken my family around a few times. we would always prefer Bangalore as the place to visit."



Heaven's blanket

Subadra Sarath

Continued from Page 1

A moment that sent shockwaves through the city and its people.

Today, many years after this incident, the pandemic has had its effect on the profession. Anantha himself doesn't work in the journalism industry anymore. Many photojournalists have lost their jobs because companies have had to undertake cost-cutting exercises to deal with falling revenue and the general economic stress that grips our times. These moments that our photojournalists clicked may soon go undocumented. The storytellers will lose their power to weave tales with their lenses.

Similar stress has enveloped the city that these journalists have covered too. Many years ago, Gopinathan was asked by his editor to click a photo showing the growth and development of Bangalore. For this assignment, Gopinathan travelled to Indiranagar and from there, clicked a photo which showed the then massive Public Utility Building. "Now the city has grown 200 or maybe 300 times. I can probably only see the opposite road from the place where I clicked those photos," he quips.

The future may be uncertain, but Bengaluru owes a great deal to the many photojournalists who have helped and continue to help the city tell her stories and unwrap all the secrets that she hides.

"I used to get posted in many different states but Bangalore was one place which I will never forget and will cherish. I remember Bangalore for its greenery and climate and of course the people."

There's a history in every name and here's how it came: *From Benda-kaal-uru to Bengaluru*

Sanjana Anand

BENGALURU: The city of Bengaluru has earned quite a few names, such as the Garden city, the city of lakes, Silicon Valley of India, the IT hub, and even the pub capital of the country. But what is fascinating is, 'how did Bengaluru acquire its name?' This is something that many people, even many of the residents of Bengaluru are unaware of.

Bengaluru and its several areas and localities have their own piece of history and stories to look back upon concerning the names. The city was founded by Kempe Gowda I in 1537 when he constructed a mud palace or a fort here. A view of the pages of Bengaluru's history reveals the process of evolution of its name. From 'Benda-kaal-uru' to the anglicised version of Bangalore to the present official name of Bengaluru, the city, its people, and the culture of this land have evolved over time.

A popular anecdote recounts that the 11th century Hoysala king Veera Ballala II, while on a

hunting expedition near Yelahanka, lost his way in the forest. Tired and hungry, he came across a poor old woman who served him boiled beans. The grateful king named the place 'Benda-kaal-uru' (literally, the town of boiled beans), which was eventually simplified to Bengaluru. The British colonials found it difficult to pronounce the name 'Bengaluru' and thus it was anglicised to 'Bangalore'.

Located in the northwest of Bengaluru, Malleshwaram is a locality in the city that is well known for its vintage architecture, temples, markets, historical landmarks, old houses, and authentic South Indian street bites. The charm of the area draws many to it. One of Bengaluru's oldest layouts, Malleshwaram was established by the Wadiyars of the Mysore kingdom. This area was named after the famous Kadu Malleshwara Temple, situated in the area. Inspired by the Dravidian style, this temple was set up by Venkoji, a stepbrother of Shivaji in the 17th century on a hillock. An 1878 Survey of India map indicates that



Eidgah Mosque, Chamarajpet

Sanjana Anand

the area originally came under the village of Ranganatha Palya. The word 'Kadu' in Kannada means 'jungle'. As the surroundings are full of wild trees and shrubs, hence the name, 'Kadu Malleshwara.'

Srikanth H, a resident of Malleshwaram said, "I have lived all 56 years of my life in this area. I've heard a lot of stories from my father and grandfather on how Malleshwaram got its name, some say that it is named after the temple, Kadu Malleshwara, and some others say the place where Malleshwaram is located today was once a village called Mallapura or Mallapuram."

In the late 1890s, Bengaluru was hit by a plague that cost the city 3000 lives. This led to the emergence of two new hygienic extensions of the city which were known as the 'modern suburbs.' These two newly formed localities were Malleshwaram and Basavanagudi, both the areas were built at the foothills of elevated hillocks. Malleshwaram was built at the

foothills of Kempe Gowda's tower and the small hillock of palace Guttahalli, whereas Basavanagudi was constructed at the foothills of Bugle Rock and Lalbagh.

Another area named after a temple is 'Basavanagudi.' The word 'Basava' in Kannada means bull and 'gudi' means temple, hence the amalgamation of these two terms gave rise to this locality's name. Nanjundiah B, a resident of Basavanagudi said, "Initially it was a village called Sukenhalli and mainly this land was for utilized for agricultural purposes, it had a lot of groundnut fields."

Chamarajpet is possibly one of Bengaluru's oldest localities. A host to many Kannada literary luminaries, with a temple on each road, along with mosques and the presence of Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace; this area is the symbol of not only communal harmony but also a sign of the royalty which once existed here. The name, 'Chamarajpet', is

derived from Chamarajendra Wodeyar. It was first named Chamarajendra Pete, which was later shortened to Chamarajpete.

Sadashivnagar, formerly called Palace Orchards, is a locality in Bengaluru which is known for its lavishness, its expensive and high-class lifestyle, and its eliteness. This area was named after Karnad Sadashiva Rao, a freedom fighter and philanthropist.

Few streets and areas in Bengaluru were named after British officers; Eagle Street was named after Henry Eagles, and Clarke and Davis roads were named after town planners and administrative officers. Lavelle road gets its name from Michael Lavelle, an Irish soldier. Cunningham Road derived its name from military nomenclature and was named after Francis Cunningham, who was an officer in the Madras Army. A famous church lent its name to St. Mark's road.



Kadu Malleshwara temple

Sanjana Anand

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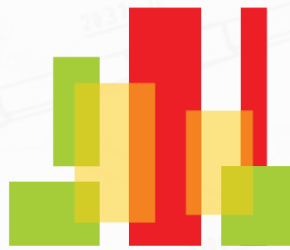
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