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Glitches grab headlines, but city's metro runs equally on humour, hustle & human stories.

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STILL TURNING PAGES

For more than a century, one MG Road landmark has quietly outlived empires, wars and the digital revolution.

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HILL YEAH!

The city's party circuit found a dazzling new address as ZERO DEGREE On The Hill made a glittering debut in Rajarajeshwari Nagar.

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CRUSHED ALIVE



Eight migrant workers died after a massive boulder crashed onto a city quarry, triggering safety and accountability questions

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PICK YOUR BRAIN!

A fan of puzzles and crosswords? Hop on the train and treat yourself to some brainstorming.

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Alone together

Why success, loneliness & burnout are colliding in the lives of Bangalore's young professionals

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IMAGE COURTESY: AI IMAGE

ALONE TOGETHER

THE CITY BUILT ON HUSTLE IS LEARNING THAT MINDS NEED MAINTENANCE TOO

Bindu Gopal Rao

He had it all. The high-paying tech job. The house. The car. The life everyone back home envied. Then it all came crashing down.

"I started feeling a certain emptiness that bordered on a lack of motivation and a sense of achievement," says Sanil Kumar, a young IT professional in the city. "I shrugged it off initially, but it soon became more pervasive; to a point I did not even feel like getting off the bed to go to work," he adds.

A few professional setbacks tipped him over the edge. The diagnosis, clinical depression. "I had suicidal thoughts, and if I had not sought professional help, I am sure I would have been dead long ago," he admits. Kumar isn't an outlier. He's one of thousands.

Lonely in a crowd

Bangalore's IT corridors run on ambition, deadlines and caffeine, and increasingly, on burnout. Long hours and relentless pressure are quietly wrecking the city's most productive minds, leaving behind a generation that's young, talented and silently struggling.

"This environment kind of creates a shocking situation, where three out of four young professionals end up dealing with mental health issues, and roughly 32% of them move on from their jobs, mostly because the work pressure is very high, they can't find a decent work and personal life balance, and because there isn't enough backing from other people," says Sakishore, clinical psychologist at Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bangalore.

Bangalore runs on outsiders. The city's workforce is built on migrants who left family, friends and familiar comfort behind, only to land in a fast, expensive, unforgiving metropolis with

Here's the good news. If you're going to fight a mental health battle anywhere in India, Bangalore isn't a bad place to do it. The city has quietly built one of the country's most developed mental healthcare ecosystems, and that's no accident.

none of the old support systems intact. Add a punishing cost of living and the constant pressure to earn, and loneliness steps being a feeling and starts becoming a weight. India's hierarchical workplace culture doesn't help either.

"There is a lot of stress, and people also become less willing to ask for help when mental health concerns show up. The stigma around getting mental health support makes things even worse, because people are less inclined to seek the care they truly need," Sakishore explains.

The national numbers back him up: roughly 10.5% of Indians experience mental health issues, yet a staggering 84.5% never get professional treatment.

Here's the twist, though. In India, mental healthcare is rarely a solo battle. Families step in, whether they signed up for it or not, and in many ways, that's one of the country's greatest strengths.

"Families provide practical support, financial support, continuity of care, and emotional investment in a way that few formal systems can replicate. Many people recover because someone in their family stayed engaged even during the most difficult periods," says Dr Amit Malik, Founder and CEO of Amaha.

It's not always smooth, though. "One of the biggest challenges is uncertainty. Most carers are not trained to understand what they are seeing. They may struggle to distinguish between a symptom and a personality trait, between a temporary setback and a warning sign, or between being supportive and becoming overprotective. This uncertainty can create anxiety, frustration, and conflict within the family," Malik adds.

Minds on the brink

Depression isn't just sadness, it's numbness, worthlessness and, in the worst cases, self-harm. Bipolar disorder swings between reckless highs and crushing lows, capable of wrecking relationships, finances and careers in a single episode.

Schizophrenia fractures reality itself, hallucinations, paranoia and disorganised thinking

that make independent living near impossible without support. OCD hijacks time with intrusive thoughts and compulsive rituals, breeding shame and isolation. And a suicidal crisis? That's when the pain feels so unbearable, death starts to look like the only exit.

It doesn't stop at stress, either. "Individuals will have lack of interest in their lives and lack energy, and they will lose their momen-



turn to achieve their goals in life," says Dr Sugamini Ramesh, senior clinical psychologist at Apollo Hospital, Bannerghatta Road. For the severe cases, the treatment has to go beyond a weekly chat.

"Individuals who are suffering with severe depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, addiction, OCD, suicidal crisis, or other conditions require more than occasional therapy sessions. They must be actively occupied physically and mentally continuously. Their dietary and sleeping habits should be monitored on a regular basis," Ramesh adds. It's not just the patient who pays a price. Families caring for the mentally ill often get drained themselves, their health, routines and lifestyles unravelling right along with the person they're trying to hold together.

The comeback city

Here's the good news. If you're going to fight a mental health battle anywhere in India, Bangalore isn't a bad place to do it.

The city has quietly built one of the country's most developed mental healthcare ecosystems, and that's no accident. It's powered by a young, mobile population, solid healthcare infrastructure, a booming corporate sector, and the presence of NIMHANS, an institution that has played a foundational role in advancing mental healthcare, research, training and public awareness across the country.

"What we're seeing today is a meaningful shift in how people engage with mental health services. The city's demographic profile has a lot to



do with this. Bangalore attracts people from across the country who are navigating high-pressure careers, major life transitions, and life away from traditional support systems. Another notable trend is the role employers are playing. Many organisations are investing in mental health benefits, creating more opportunities for people to access support early," says Dr Malik.

Getting the diagnosis right matters more than people realise; too many serious conditions get misread, dismissed, or missed entirely for years. Psychiatrists are trained to tell the difference between conditions like bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder, as well as between psychosis and problems caused by substance use, which makes a big difference in how they plan treatment. Managing medications properly is very important for conditions such as major depressive disorder and severe obsessive-compulsive disorder, as exact psychiatric drugs are needed for treatment," says Sakishore.

"Therapy isn't one-size-fits-all either. Group therapy is institution-alised therapy where non-judgemental conditions will help the individual to cope. Of course, it differs from individuals to individuals. Acceptance and awareness about the disease will help the individuals to cope with the situation very well. Family support plays a very important role in the therapy sessions," says Ramesh. Specialised care changes the game entirely too. Instead of patients bouncing between disconnected doctors, Bangalore's better facilities now run on coordinated, multidisciplinary teams.

"Psychiatrists, therapists, nurses, and allied specialists work from a shared clinical formulation, review together daily, and adjust in real time to what is unfolding. For complex presentations, that coordination has a clinical impact that is difficult to replicate in any other setting. Medication adjustments that might take weeks in outpatient care can happen in days under close observation," says Malik.

Even the smaller details matter. Therapies are sequenced to reinforce each other rather than working at cross purposes, and dignity in the treatment environment but it's all thought, it's baked into the clinical thinking from the start.

Bangalore built India's tech dream on hustle. Now, slowly, expensively, and not a moment too soon, it's learning that minds need maintenance too.

THE NUMBER STORY

- **Around 10.5%** of Indian adults are living with a mental disorder at any given time, according to NIMHANS's National Mental Health Survey
- **Of those affected**, 84.5% get no treatment at all, the same survey found, one of the widest mental health treatment gaps in the world.
- **NIMHANS traces** its roots to 1847, when the Bangalore Lunatic Asylum was founded, making it one of India's oldest mental health institutions.
- **The institute** took its current form in 1974, when the Mysore Government Mental Hospital and the All India Institute of Mental Health were merged.
- **NIMHANS** is the designated nodal centre for Tele-MANAS, India's national tele-mental health helpline.
- **Tele-MANAS** has logged close to 30 lakh calls since launching in October 2022; the government told the Rajya Sabha in December 2025, nearly two calls every minute, round the clock, in 20 languages.

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