



# **BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE, BANGALORE**

**ENGLISH NEWS PAPER CLIPPINGS**  
**11-12-2020**



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# BBMP to get its own law for better governance

Bill empowers the civic body to levy fee on ads, impose entertainment tax

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

Both Houses of the Karnataka legislature on Thursday passed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Bill, 2020, to give a separate law for the city corporation that ensures a new municipal governance, increases the number of wards from 198 to 243 and empowers it to levy a fee on advertisement and impose entertainment tax.

The Bill was passed amidst

boycott of the session by the principal Opposition Congress and the absence of JD (S) members. Opposition members argued that it was passed without due consultation.

The Bill, that runs into 109 pages, was drafted based on a report of the Legislature's Joint Select Committee headed by BJP MLA S. Raghu. The Bill, among other things, increases the term of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor from one year to 30

months. With this Bill, the BBMP comes out of the governance structure under the Karnataka Corporation Act (KCA), 1976.

The KCA "is inadequate in administrative and structural matters to govern Bengaluru," said the bill, adding that there is "an urgent need to formulate an independent legislation for the working of the BBMP for the purposes of improving, decentralization, integration of public

participation at various levels of the BBMP."

The Bill allows the government to nominate residents of the city, such as experts in the fields of health, town planning, education, but the number of such members should not exceed 10% of the councillors. The nominated members won't have the right to vote in the meetings of the corporation.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2**

# Third phase of vaccine trials begins in Belagavi

RISHIKESH BAHADUR DESAI  
BELAGAVI

The third phase of COVID-19 vaccine trials began in Belagavi on Thursday.

City-based Jeevan Rekha Hospital has made preparations to organise the trials on a large scale and has issued a public appeal asking volunteers to take part.

“We have begun administering the test dose of Covaxin to volunteers,” said Paritosh Desai, in charge of the trial process.

As many as 40 volunteers were given the vaccine on Thursday. “We hope to give the vaccine to at least 1,000 volunteers,” Dr. Desai said.

He says increased awareness about the vaccine has made their job easier. “Now people know about the vaccine and they are coming forward for the trials,” Dr. Desai said. He said the third phase is different from the second in multiple ways. “The test

dose used is almost the same as the final product and the number of volunteers is bigger. Only healthy individuals in a specific age range were selected for the second phase. But in the third phase, any one above the age of 18 will be administered the vaccine. Those with health problems and comorbidities are not rejected,” he said.

The vital part is that the third phase involves a placebo-based double blind and randomised testing. “The process involves the patient receiving two shots of the vaccine or of the placebo two times. After that the volunteers are monitored by the hospital for a year. There is a provision for SOS visits to the hospital if the patients suffer from symptoms or any other problem,” he said.

Volunteers of the first and second phase had to make multiple visits to the hospital for monitoring.

Jeevan Rekha has been conducting two separate sets of trials. It conducted the first and the second phase of trials for Covaxin, while it organised only the second phase of trials for ZyCoV-D developed by Zydus Cadilla. As many as 50 healthy young people volunteered for Covaxin and 275 were given the ZyCoV-D doses.

The Belagavi hospital is yet to get the go ahead for the third phase of ZyCoV-D. Reports from the first and second phase trials have proved the safety and efficacy of Covaxin.

“Covaxin, the made-in-India vaccine has been proven to be safe. It has been given to over 25,800 people in 250 centres across the country till now,” says Amit Bhate, director of the hospital.

Those wanting to participate can call the hospital helpline at 9743433294, 9019601976, or 9113222185.



# BBMP Bill: More brickbats than bouquets

One of the major drawbacks is the lack of public consultations, say urban planners

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

The speed with which the State Legislative Assembly passed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Bill, 2020, on Thursday has caused a stir among civil organisations and activists. The Bill received more brickbats than bouquets, with many viewing it as another opportunity lost for the much-needed administrative and governance reforms for the city.

The lack of public consultations, apart from no solution to the lack of coordination between different civic agencies and parastatals in the city is one of the major drawbacks in the Bill, said urban planners.

Former Opposition leader in BBMP Council M. Shivaraju, who filed a PIL petition questioning the delay in holding polls to the civic body, termed the Bill as “unconstitutional”, going to the extent of calling it a “Black Day” for the city.

In a statement, the non-profit organisation, Janaagraha, said that the Bill should have been far more ambitious and comprehensive, and based on a far more systematic, consultative and well-informed process.



View of the head office of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

## HITS and MISSES

	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decentralised structure with zonal and ward committees, and area sabhas</li> <li>■ Mandate of zonal committee to be headed by the councillor instead of a zonal commissioner</li> <li>■ Increase in term of Mayor to 30 months</li> <li>■ Constitution of grievance redressal authority for municipal service-related issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No provision for a robust and coherent metropolitan governance mechanism</li> <li>■ Complete side-step on spatial planning and natural environment</li> <li>■ No provisions on predictable finances to BBMP</li> <li>■ Absence of technology backbone for Bengaluru's governance</li> </ul>

Source: Janaagraha

did not address the problems of the city, especially administrative gaps. The State's exchequer gets nearly 60% revenue from the city and yet, the “myopic Bill” has no vision for Bengaluru's future development, he maintained.

Stating that the BBMP Bill was better than the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976, in some ways, urban expert V. Ravichandrar, who was also part of the government-constituted BBMP Restructuring Committee, said the hits were the recognition of municipal authorities, such as Mayor, zonal committees, ward committees and area sabhas, and emphasis on heritage and solid waste management.

But he questioned why the MLAs were made central to the BBMP Bill, when the executive is actually the elected councillor. “There are a few city corporations in the country where the MLAs don't belong to them. The Bill should have ideally taken this path,” he said and also pointed out that the drawing of the ward should be citizen centric and not whether it cuts across two or three Assembly constituencies.

Srikanth Viswanathan, CEO, Janaagraha, said: “The silver lining to the cloud is decentralisation of powers and functions to the zones and wards and citizen participation through ward committees and area sabhas. We need to, however, emphasise to the State government that major missing pieces such as metropolitan governance, spatial planning, and financial and human resource capacities, besides digitalisation need to be addressed.”

Jagadish Reddy from Varthur Rising maintained that the Bill

# State sees 1,238 new cases, 5,076 recoveries

Twelve more succumb to the virus



Samples being collected for testing during at the city railway station in Bengaluru on Thursday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BENGALURU

As many as 1,238 new COVID-19 positive cases were reported in the State on Thursday. The total number of people who contracted the virus in the State since the start of the pandemic now stands at 8.97 lakh.

In total, 5,076 persons were discharged on Thursday, taking the total number to 8.66 lakh. Twelve people were reported to have succumbed to the virus on

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**COVID-19**

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Thursday, taking the total number of deaths to 11,912.

Of the 19,206 active cases, as many as 258 patients are in intensive care units across different designated hospitals.

The number of COVID-19 tests conducted on Wednesday stood at 84,270. However, the positivity rate for the day stood at 1.46% and case fatality rate stood at 0.96%.



# Health Dept.'s COVID-19 expenses touch ₹205 cr.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**BENGALURU**

The State Health and Family Welfare Department has so far incurred expenses of ₹205 crore towards handling the COVID-19 pandemic, Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai informed the Karnataka Legislative Council on Thursday.

Apart from this, ₹108.75 crore has been spent on salaries, incentives, and risk allowances paid to employees. During the lockdown period, the State had distributed ad-

ditional 5 kg of rice to eligible families under PDS and had spent ₹711.62 crore towards this, the Minister said.

Replying to members during a discussion on supplementary estimates aggregating to ₹3,320.4 crore, the Minister said the Health Department had spent ₹205 crore on procuring equipment, testing kits, and other required infrastructure.

After a nearly three-hour discussion, the estimates were approved by the Council.

# BBMP to get its own law

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J.C. Madhuswamy, who tabled the Bill, said only MLAs whose constituencies are within the BBMP limits and MLCs who are registered voters in the corporation would become members of the corporation. The Bill also tweaks functions of standing committees, he said.

The Bill empowers the BBMP to levy a fee on advertisement and entertainment tax. It said no hoardings would be allowed to be displayed in the city without the written permis-

sion of the commissioner. The fee to be collected is not for more than one year period. "After introduction of GST, we could not levy tax on advertisements. Instead of a tax, there will be a fee," he said.

Entertainment tax should be levied and collected by the BBMP over any ticket-based, non-ticket-based, and televised entertainment, in accordance with the Act.

Rainwater harvesting has been made mandatory for houses built on 60 x 40 sq.ft. and more area.

THE  HINDU

## Government wants to put off BBMP polls: Oppn.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

Councillors and leaders in the Congress are up in arms over the State Assembly passing the BBMP Bill, 2020, a day after the Joint Legislature Committee constituted to review it submitted its report.

Abdul Wajid, former Opposition leader in BBMP Council, who had also filed a PIL petition in the High Court of Karnataka, questioning the delay in holding polls to the civic body along

with M. Shivaraju, also former Opposition leader, said the main agenda of the government seemed to be to put off polls to the BBMP for a couple of years.

"They want to achieve this by hook or crook. The government is likely to appeal against the High Court order in the Supreme Court by presenting this as a ruse," he said.

### HC direction

The High Court had recently directed the State government

and the State Election Commission to hold polls for the 198 wards in BBMP.

The court held that allowing application of amendment to the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976, which increased the number of wards to the BBMP, would be contrary to the constitutional mandate of timely holding of elections.

Concurring with Mr. Wajid, Mr. Shivaraju said the court had noted that the process of delimitation, reservation and amend-

ment with regard to number of wards should have happened at least six months before the end of the term of council. The term of the council ended on September 10, 2020.

### Role of Assembly

Urban experts Ashwin Mahesh said the Assembly clearing the Bill appeared to be a legislative response to the court's ruling to the SEC to declare the elections to the BBMP within six weeks from the date of publication of

final reservation notification by the government.

### 'Local governments'

"There needs to be a mechanism to ensure that the government doesn't decide when to hold polls to the local bodies by setting up a delimitation commission that is separate from the SEC.

"It is only when local bodies are considered to be local governments that there will be unbroken elections," he said.



# New BBMP Act gets mixed response from citizen groups, policymakers

**Dub it 'missed opportunity' to transform city**

**HITA PRAKASH**  
BENGALURU, DHNS

The new Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Act 2020 has evoked a mixed response among citizens, policymakers, civic activists and residents' welfare associations.

Contrary to the government's view that the act is an independent legislation that would decentralise and bring in public participation at various levels of the municipal governance, citizen groups dubbed it a "missed opportunity" to transform the city, barring a few good aspects.

To get the measure of the public opinion about the newly promulgated legislation, *DH* spoke to a cross section of the society, including former members of the BBMP restructuring committee, activists, retired bureaucrats, RWAs and political parties.

While people have welcomed the decentralisation measures that would give more powers to zones and wards, many termed it negative

without bringing in parastatal agencies like BMTC, Bescom, BWSSB and BDA, among others.

V Ravichandar, part of the three-member expert committee on BBMP restructuring, said the bill is different from their recommendations for the city administration.

"Our committee had worked on a bill that included all parastatal agencies. The one that is passed is purely a BBMP Act. The difference, effectively, is day and night," he said.

He added that the zonal provisions and articulation of the municipal authorities are better than the existing ones despite grey areas on the roles of the mayor and commissioner. He said the city needs an overall Bengaluru-specific bill catering to the 21st century problems. But the bill now focuses on the BBMP, which is like solving the 20th century problems that are now passe.

Tara Krishnaswamy, co-founder, Citizens for Bengaluru, said if other agencies had been brought into the act and allowed to function under

## 'Bill a ploy by the ruling BJP to defer civic polls'

Parties eyeing to get into the city administration view the bill as a 'ploy' by the ruling BJP to defer the civic polls without reason.

Shantala Damle, co-convenor, Aam Aadmi Party, Karnataka, said: "If the government really wanted to do good to the citizens of Bengaluru, in terms of providing better civic amenities, they should have done it long ago rather than

mindlessly passing the bill in a hush-hush manner. The MLAs want to control the works ordered by the BBMP ranging from garbage to civil contracts. The BJP's shoddy handling of the pandemic in Bengaluru, poor roads and



**Srikanth Narasimhan**



**Shantala Damle**

floods have upset citizens. The government is clearly afraid to face an election and proposed the new act just to postpone the polls."

Terming the act a regressive step, Srikanth Narasimhan of the newly

founded Bengaluru Nava Nirmana Party said: "We needed a civic body free from the interference of MLAs. But the very first line of the bill contradicts its own intentions. Progress can only be achieved when the city is unshackled from the clutches of the MLAs and state government, besides making BBMP a fully empowered autonomous organisation."

## EXPERTS SPEAK



**V RAVICHANDAR**

Our committee had worked on a bill that included all parastatal agencies. The one that is passed is purely a BBMP Act. The difference, effectively, is day and night



**TARA KRISHNASWAMY**

It is surprising that no public consultation was made pertaining to the act of this magnitude, if at all the government's intention was to truly govern the city in a progressive manner

the elected council, it would have allowed people to have control over the administration.

"It is surprising that no public consultation was made per-

taining to the act of this magnitude, if at all the government's intention was to truly govern the city in a progressive manner," she said.

"If the civic body is unable to

maintain the existing limits by providing better civic amenities, then what is the use of expanding it even further? Except the real estate and vested interest linked with the politics over these areas, the approach is senseless and illogical as all the evidence suggest the failure of the corporation at every ward," Tara added.

Citizens group Whitefield Rising called the bill unscientific and lacked the foresight to make Bengaluru the Silicon Valley it deserves to be for the kind of tax citizens pay.

Anjali Saini of Whitefield Rising said: "The villages in the periphery that are proposed to be included into the BBMP limits are better off with the gram panchayats.

They are governed better

than the way BBMP is governing the existing wards.

The land value increases by urbanising the peripheral areas where people with vested interests probably own land. The bill has nothing to do with civic services and governance."

Srikanth Vishwanathan, CEO, Janaagraha said: "The silver lining could be the decentralisation of powers and functions to the zones and wards and citizen participation through ward committees. We need to, however, emphasise to the state government that major missing pieces such as metropolitan governance, spatial planning and financial, human resource capacities, besides digitalisation need to be addressed soon for meaningful change on the ground."



# House okays new BBMP Bill

**City will have 2 mayors; separate law for B'loru replaces KMC Act**

BENGALURU, DHNS

**T**he Legislative Assembly on Thursday passed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Bill, which promises a new governance structure for the city besides increasing its municipal area.

At present, Bengaluru is governed under the Karna-

## Rainwater harvesting must

The BBMP Bill proposes to make rainwater harvesting mandatory for properties located on sites measuring 60x40 and above, Law Minister J C Madhuswamy said. "Such properties will be required to store rainwater and help solve the city's water problems. Earlier, the proposal was to make it mandatory for everybody. But, we have confined this to 60x40 sites and above," he said.

taka Municipal Corporations Act. That the city should get a separate law was a long-pending demand.

The Bill, drafted by a joint select committee, was passed with the Opposition benches empty as the Congress had decided to boycott the proceedings whereas the JD(S) did not

show up.

The Bill proposes "constituency consultative committees", which are expected to give MLAs more say in the way the city is run.

Piloting the Bill, Law Minister J C Madhuswamy said Bengaluru needed a separate law as the city had become un-

wieldy.

"Much has changed since the last delimitation was done. We are not able to define what is BBMP and what is a gram panchayat or a town panchayat," he said.

"On par with the rising population and area, we want to provide good administration for the city," he added.

Once the Bill becomes a law, Bengaluru will have two mayors in five years -- each one getting a 30-month tenure. At present, a mayor has a one-year term.

The Bill proposes to divide the city into zones -- up to 15 -- and each one will have a committee.

► **BBMP, Page 2**

**malls, three-star and above**

**stores will be fined Rs 5,000.**



# House okays BBMP Bill to give...

## BBMP, from Page 1

“Earlier, there were zonal commissioners. Now, each zone will have a committee that will be responsible for execution of works. They will be empowered to solve problems under their jurisdiction,” Madhuswamy said, adding that the existing standing committees will continue.

“The Constituency Consultative Committee will be headed by the local MLA and have members including those from residents’ welfare associations.

“This committee will aid the zonal committees, review their functioning, monitor implementation of works and look at how wards that are backward can be developed,”

Madhuswamy explained.

The bill will result in delimitation and the number of wards in the city will go up from 198 to 243. The city’s municipal area will also expand to cover a 1-km radius of the existing boundary, which is expected to consume outlying villages and suburbs.

“There was some confusion on this. What if there are villages just 100-400 metres away from the 1-km radius? Such places can be brought under the municipal limits by way of a separate notification,” Madhuswamy said.

The bill has received flak for lack of public consultation during its drafting. Also, it is largely seen as the BJP government’s ploy to delay elections to the BBMP.

## What does the bill say?

- 30-month tenure for mayor, deputy mayor
- 225-250 wards, but the government has finalised on 243
- Increase BBMP area to cover 1-km radius from existing boundary
- Divide city into zones, up to 15 of them
- Zonal committee headed by a councillor for decentralised decision-making
- Constituency Consultative Committee headed by local MLA
- Councillors elected as MLA, MLC or MP should retain either one of the posts
- Power to collect fee on advertisements
- Power to levy entertainment tax
- Power to stop dangerous quarrying in BBMP limits
- Creation of Urban Transport Fund
- Grievance Redressal Authority to handle complaints
- BBMP to anchor disaster management efforts

## 1,238 fresh Covid cases, 12 deaths in state

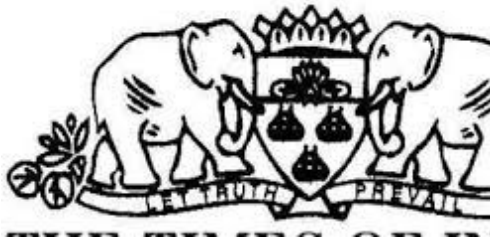
**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Karnataka reported 1,238 new Covid-19 infections and 12 related fatalities on Thursday as the case tally swelled to 8,97,801 and the toll to 11,912.

The day also saw 5,076 patients getting discharged after recovery. As on December 10, the number of recoveries went up to 8,66,664. Out of 19,206 active cases, 258 are in ICUs.

Bengaluru Urban accounted for 701 new cases and eight deaths. Among the districts, Mysuru recorded 53 fresh infections, Mandya 46, Hassan 42 and Tumakuru 36.

A total of 1,20,63,741 samples have been tested for Covid-19 in the state of which 84,270 tests were carried out on Thursday.





# Of 230m syringes' order, firms have already produced 90m

Chethan.Kumar@timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** Hindustan Syringes & Medical Devices (HMD) and Iscon Surgicals, the two firms that bagged orders for more than 230 million syringes to aid the country's Covid-19 vaccination drive, have already manufactured 90 million pieces. The entire order was to be fulfilled by March 2021.

Iscon from Jhodaipur and HMD based in Faridabad, are the only firms contracted by the govern-

## PREPARING FOR THE VACCINE

ment to supply syringes. The Union ministry of health and family welfare (MoH&FW) on Thursday issued dispatch instructions for 70 million syringes which will soon reach various government warehouses.

"Of the 177.6 million syringes we had to deliver by March, we have already manufactured 70 million," said Rajiv Nath, managing director, HMD. "Today, we got the nod to ship these out. It amounts to 115 truckloads of devices. We've also been told to prepare for additional orders, which will be issued soon."



### DELIVERY NOTES

- 230m: Orders placed so far
- 90m: Already manufactured
- 140m: Need to be produced

### Companywise breakup

- 177.6m: Orders with HMD
- 70mn: Already manufactured
- 52.2mn: Orders with Iscon
- 20mn: Already manufactured
- 100mn: Additional orders expected by Iscon

Sandeep Bhandari, vice-president, Iscon, which has already manufactured 20 million of the 52.2 million syringes it was contracted to produce, said the firm is yet to get dispatch orders. "Until the government lifts stock, we won't be able to make more devices given storage constraints," he said, adding that the firm is expecting an additional order for about 100 million syringes.

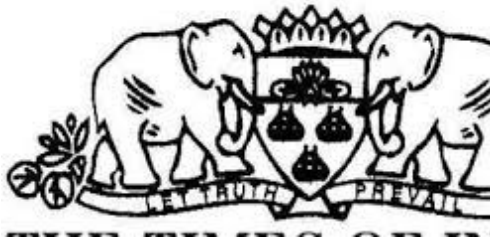
Pointing out that raw material cost has gone up by around 40% in the past four months, Bhandari urged the government to dispose invoices early. "We understand the unprecedented times Covid has created, but we want to contribute to the country," he said.

Both Nath and Bhandari said they were supplying devices at less than Rs 2 per piece. "It's around Re 1.6," Bhandari said, which puts the total cost of 233 million syringes at roughly Rs 37.2 crore.

Besides the order with the government of India, HMD, one of the world's largest syringe suppliers, has orders for 140 million pieces from the Covax facility working for global equitable access. The firm has already shipped more than 100 million pieces of 0.5 ml auto disable (AD) syringes for intramuscular injections to Covax facility, a WHO-led initiative to ensure poor countries have access to the vaccine.

"We are planning to expand capacity to 800 million per annum by the first quarter of 2021 and touch 1,000 million by end of the second quarter," Nath said, while Bhandari said Iscon is looking to expand its capacity from 240 million per annum to about 450 million.





## BBMP bill gets nod, city may expand by 1km

**Bengaluru:** Greater Bengaluru's geographical area is set to expand by 1km radius with the Karnataka legislature clearing the BBMP restructuring bill on Thursday, reports Anil Gejjl.

If the move passes the government legal test, then the BBMP area will expand from 816sqkm to nearly 900sqkm after adding new local bodies on the fringes.

The proposed expansion is likely to cover gram panchayats, town panchayats, town municipal councils, city municipal councils which house some major IT companies. This is expected to increase the property prices in the new zones. This would, in turn, bring in more revenue to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

Inclusion of new areas will increase the number of wards from 198 to 243.

► **Mayoral term, P 2**

## BILL SEEKS SEPARATE LAW TO GOVERN BENGALURU WITH 30-MONTH MAYORAL TERM, ZONAL PANELS

► Continued from page 1

**T**he BBMP bill seeks a separate law to govern the city with a 30-month mayoral term, a chief commissioner, zonal committees. At present, BBMP is governed under the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act, 1968.

After tabling the bill in the assembly in March, the government referred it to a joint panel following objections raised by several members, including a

few from the BJP.

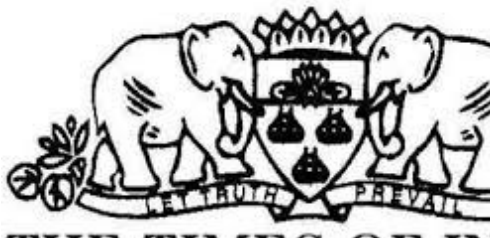
The government was planning to implement the bill's provisions after the BBMP council's term ended on September 10 and hold polls in the middle of 2021. However, the Karnataka high court recently ordered the State Election Commission to hold polls to the existing 198 wards and notify it in six weeks. The government is now planning to move the Supreme Court, armed with the bill and seeking more time to implement it.

### WARDS TO GO UP FROM 198 TO 243

- Terms of mayor and deputy will go up from 1 year to 2.5 years; wards to increase from 198 to 243

- Constituency-level consultative committees, headed by MLA, to be set up

- Increase number of zones from eight to a maximum of 15; each to have zonal committee with zonal commissioner



# ‘Why expand BBMP which has failed 110 villages added to it 13 years ago?’

It Must Ensure Amenities First: Activists

Nithya.Mandayam  
@timesgroup.com

**Bengaluru:** The decision to expand BBMP's jurisdiction has not gone down well with citizen activists. They pointed out that the civic agency is still struggling to manage the 110 villages that came under it 13 years ago.

Tara Krishnaswamy, co-founder of Citizens for Bengaluru (CfB), said the move reeks of reality motives. "The limits of Bengaluru city have been expanded prior to this as well, and it is proven that the BBMP cannot handle it. Where is the need for another expansion? If you move six kilometres away from the city centre, you can see that the roads and infrastructure are in a bad shape. Has BBMP ever thought of fixing this problem?" she asked.

According to her, it is good that the number of wards is increasing from 198 to 243, but BBMP's size does not need to grow. "The Palike has proved it is incapable of managing 198 wards. Its size actually needs to shrink," she added.

Srinivas Alavilli from Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy said the more you centralise, the less will urban services be available for citizenry. "About 13 years ago when Bengaluru

## TRY ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF GOVERNANCE

On the city's periphery, there are villages that have urban characteristics and a case could be made for their inclusion," V Ravichandrar, civic expert, said. "However, our past record in improving the 110 villages added to BBMP does not inspire confidence," he added.

Bengaluru needs to address the growth issue through alternative models of governance instead of opting for a gigantic single corporation. "For instance, Mumbai absorbed more areas through a multi-corporation setup like Brihanmumbai Corporation, Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation and Thane Municipal Corporation, among others, instead of having one mega corporation," he said.



Mahanagara Palike (BMP) became Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), 110 villages were adopted, but there has been no development in these added areas," Alavilli said.

Vishnu Prasad, member of Save Bellandur Forum, also felt there's no need for expansion and pointed out the

civic body is still developing outlying areas and localities. "They are unable to provide basic facilities to the wards and keep complaining of lack of funds. How will they work now? The objective of the expansion appears to be revenue mobilisation, but how will people survive when there are no basic facilities?" he asked. In-

stead of expanding the city limits, they need to work towards improving roads and provide streetlights, he added. "Many areas in Bellandur do not have basic UGD lines, water lines and roads. Even major road works are pending. BBMP must first provide facilities and then talk of expansion," he added.



# Get ready for Palike's new shape and form

BBMP's boundary to be expanded; number of wards increased from 198 to 243

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**O**n Thursday, the Legislative Assembly approved the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) Bill 2020, promising sweeping administrative and structural changes. Now, gram panchayats and town municipalities within one square km radius of BBMP will be added to the civic body. With that, the number of wards will increase from 198 to 243.

Prior to tabling this Bill, the BBMP was governed by the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act 1976. The Bill was tabled by the Law Minister JC Madhuswamy on behalf of Chief Minister, in the absence of the Congress. On Wednesday, a Joint House Committee of the legislature tabled a report on the BBMP's Bill.

## Longer Mayoral tenure

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and members of various Standing Committees will get 30 months tenure instead of just a year. A similar system exists in Zilla Panchayats, where the president and vice president are given a 30-month tenure.

Besides this, the number of divisions in the BBMP will be increased from eight to 15. Each of these zones will act as an independent civic body with one of the corporators named as president, besides a committee of legislators to guide in each of the Assembly segments. Zonal joint commissioners are allowed to function independently and take decisions.

The number of standing committees will also be reduced, while

## The Bill was tabled by the Law Minister JC Madhuswamy on behalf of Chief Minister, in the absence of the Congress

adding more members to each of such committees, to provide representation to all corporators.

## Guidance Value Linked Property Tax

Instead of collecting the property tax on net asset value (NAV), the BBMP Bill proposes a more dynamic tax formula linked to the guidance value of the property fixed by the Stamps and Registration department.

With the revision of guidance

value every year, the property taxes are likely to go up or come down due to the revision. Similarly, the Bill proposes Solid Waste Management Corporation that will be given complete responsibility for collection, segregation, transportation and conversion of waste into energy. The corporation is also given powers to collect entertainment and advertisement taxes. After shifting to GST, the BBMP was not allowed to collect these taxes.

## No Dual Membership

Unlike under the Karnataka Municipal Corporation (KMC) Act that allowed corporators to continue even after getting elected to legislature or parliament, the new Bill makes it clear that a member who is elected to the legislature

or parliament must quit one of the seats within six months after being elected.

## Delay Tactic

With neither the government nor Opposition city lawmakers keen to hold BBMP polls, the tabling and approval of the Bill in a hurry is seen as an effort to scuttle an early election. Recently, the High Court directed the State Election Commission to conduct the election to 198 wards as per the existing law. The government is likely to approach the court to hold elections as per the new law which would mean that the elections will be deferred indefinitely as a reorganisation of wards, revision of voter list and reservation of wards will take at least a year to complete.



### Rain Water Harvesting

**Rain Water Harvesting**  
The proposed Bill makes it mandatory for everyone with a building on 60X40 plot to have Rainwater harvesting (RWH).

The Bill proposes Solid Waste Management Corporation will be given complete responsibility of conversion of waste into energy



**A BBMP report says up to 39% segregation is being achieved in the 38 wards where the new trash collection system is in place since July. Bengaluru seems to be getting better at...**

# OPERATION SEPARATION

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**C**ity appears to be taking baby steps with regard to segregating waste at source. In 38 wards where two vehicles are being sent to collect wet and dry waste separately, as part of the new system, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is seeing anywhere between 1 per cent and 39 per cent segregation in 27 wards. The remaining nine wards still collect mixed waste from both bulk generators and the houses.

These figures are part of the performance report prepared by the BBMP over a period of four months since July. The top five wards – which are showing improvements with regard to wet and dry waste segregation are: Singasandra, Rayapuram, Nayandahalli, Mangana Palya and Uttarahalli. The ones in the bottom are: Siddapura, Nagarabhavi, Mudalapalya, Vasanthpura, Chowdeswari Ward, Bommanahalli.

With zero segregation, some of the wards have shown no improvement at all. They are Bharathi Nagar, Shivajinagar and KR Puram.

In all these 38 wards, the BBMP had deployed a separate service

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 >>**



KAUSHIK JN



Garbage auto-tippers are crucial in providing last-mile clean-up and ensuring that Bengalureans separate their waste to keep the city clean; (inset) a Bangalore Mirror report of November 3 gloating about the milestone achieved by the city

**“If we see the overall performance, be it tracking of vehicles, attendance and segregation, more than 70 per cent of the wards are performing well**

— Randeep D, Special Commissioner (SWM) BBMP

# Light after dark ordeal

**After woman is eve-teased outside Hulimavu police stn, BBMP gets into action and fixes defunct street lights**

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**A** woman had to go through a nightmarish ordeal for the BBMP to fix the streetlights outside the Hulimavu police station. The woman, who was eve-teased by a bikeborne man right outside the police station on Wednesday took to the social media about her experience and also went to the cops. Sagarika Ganguly, a tattoo artist, said she had to go through this only because it was pitch dark in that stretch at the time. Ganguly, who hails from Kolkata, has been staying in the city for three years now.

She told Bangalore Mirror that she was walking back home from work around 9:45 pm. "I closed the studio which is in the same lane as the Hulimavu police station and was walking back home which is only 500 metres from there. A bikeborne man came from the opposite side and passed some comment. I was texting



The area near Hulimavu Police station

**“The biker was able to do this only because there were no street lights on the stretch”** –Sagarika Ganguly

and did not hear it. The man took a U-turn and passed another lewd comment, which I heard,” she said.

The man commented on her body and stopped his vehicle in front of a building. He was wearing a mask and a helmet so she couldn't see

his face. “There were so many poles but none of the lights were on and the place was deserted. He was standing there and staring at me. The biker was only able to do this as there were no street lights and I was the only woman walking at that time,” she said.

Hulimavu police said that they have taken the complaint. “She asked us to get the street lights fixed first so that women feel safe. We have informed BBMP to fix the lights. She is yet to file a written complaint,” said the officer. BBMP workers later fixed the streetlights.

KAUSHIK JN



**Meet South Bengaluru's tree guardians who call themselves Hasiru Ratha. Every morning they set out to remove metal guards around trees, plant saplings and even design guards to be placed around young plants**

## THE VOLUNTREERS

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**B**engaluru's title of being the garden city may be fading, but these citizens are ensuring that our future is in safe hands. Soon after we discovered a group of volunteers removing nails driven into the barks of trees, here's another group removing the iron guards around trees.

A group of volunteers in South Bengaluru, some of them retired citizens, have become tree guardians of their neighbourhood. From planting saplings that will add to the greenery in the area to removing and relocating tree guards from over grown trees, these citizens are protecting trees by removing and relocating the tree guards which are constricting the trees. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike which puts up iron guards around saplings, often forgets to remove them once the tree has grown large. Volunteers identify such trees and set them free from the tree guards.

Naganj Manyu, 64, a resident of Yediyur and a retired bank employee started the initiative called Hasiru Ratha on Environment day in 2017. Since then he has been planting and maintaining the trees. Now that he is retired, he says he works to save the trees all 365 days. The group has 15 active members, from students to



**The BBMP uses thick metal guards which they weld and leave around trees, even when they have outgrown them. A lot of people start throwing garbage and other things inside these tree guards and make it difficult for the tree to grow**

— Shiva, a volunteer at Hasiru Ratha

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

senior citizens. They step out of their house at 6 am and start taking care of the plants and trees in the area.

After retirement, Manyu bought a car and removed the work. He now uses the car to keep all his equipment required to take care of the plants. He said, "I drive the vehicle myself. I have hired an assistant who helps me with taking care of the plants. A few volunteers join me in the morning and based on the requests from residents and vol-

unteers, we plant the saplings in the requested spot and prop them up with bamboo poles for support. I have designed my own metal tree guards which I install and remove once the plants are grown."

He added that he was inspired by Subramanya Thimmappa and a desire to give back to society. He has designed and installed over 250 tree guards.

Shiva, a software professional and a volunteer said "The BBMP uses thick metal guards which they weld and leave around trees, even when they have outgrown them. A lot of people start

throwing garbage and other things inside these tree guards and make it difficult for the tree to grow. We identify such trees and set them free from these guards and ensure them for small plants which are in need of these guards. On a weekly basis we set at least seven such trees free and plant seven new ones."

Manyu said that they have planted over 1,000 plants in Bengaluru south. He said, "I have appealed to the authorities to make a policy wherein while playing roads, flyovers/roads, etc., they must add the estimated

cost of planting saplings at a distance of 20 or 25 feet."

Shantibagh, 70, another volunteer and a retired bank employee from Bengaluru South said that he accompanies Naganj every morning and coordinates with the other volunteers. He said, "A lot of people plant the saplings but they forget to take care of it. We regularly look after these plants and take care of them. During the rainy season, we plant and take good care of it and during the summer, we water the plants so that they don't die."



## Covid hotspots are out of the red

But, city's tech corridor is turning out to be the new hotspot

By Srikanth Vignani  
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Once the mega covid hotspots of Bengaluru are now reporting negligible to nil covid cases. As per the latest data from the BBMP covid war room, the least number of cases (0-2) has been reported from Lakshmi Devi Nagar, Devarajeevanahalli, Muneshwara Nagar, SK Garden, Padarayanapura, Chalavadi palya and Azad Nagar. On the contrary, the tech corridors in the city are turning out to be the new hotspots. The highest number of cases are in Hoodi, Doddanekundi, Varthur, Bellandur and Koramangala.

Among the other hotspots are Horamavu, RR Nagar, HSR Layout, Uttarahalli and Hemmigeppura.

Sources said that this was pointer to the fact as to how the covid cases were shifting in the city. "If you remember, Padarayanapura had hit the headlines repeatedly for the surge in cases and when the cases



A covid testing camp at Mysore Road on Thursday

were under control across the city, DJ halli was seeing a huge spike in cases. Even the BBMP was forced to set up a containment zone by blocking many roads to prevent people from coming to the road. Similarly, there were multiple hotspots in DJ Halli and SK Garden. Consistently, for weeks, there were the hotspots with many of the primary and secondary contacts too testing positive. However, things are so different now that these areas have nil to two cases

**“It looks like the city's social life is back with people going out and not following rules. Or they are not getting tested”**

—A city-based doctor in the last 10 days.

Another official said this is similar to Mumbai's experience where

Dharavi had become the hotspot with maximum number of cases in the initial months but later it became a model of how to manage a containment zone or a Covid hotspot. "It looks like we are getting our own models," the official said.

However, a city-based doctor wondered why the tech corridors were witnessing a spike when most of the techies are working from home. "It looks like either the city's social life is back with people going out and not

### 701 cases reported in Bengaluru

In the last 24 hours, Bengaluru reported 701 cases out of which 440 were males. The city also reported eight deaths with five of them being males. The city also reported 4,549 discharges, which is the highest in the last few weeks. The officials said the number of discharges was not reflected in the daily bulletin due to a technical error and so Thursday's bulletin saw a huge spike in the discharges due to accumulated numbers. As a result, the active cases plunged to 13,821 cases. So far, 49 lakh tests have been conducted in Bengaluru and the total positivity rate is 7.68 per cent, while the recovery rate has now jumped to 96.2 per cent. The active rate now stands at 5.67 per cent with death rate being 1.12 per cent.

following rules. Or, it could also be that in these areas many people are going for testing and not from the former hotspots not many are going. It was only when the BBMP forcefully asking the people to get tested from door-to-door, that they were getting tested. Now, as no one is pushing for the mandatory testing, many people in the areas where fewer cases are being reported, are probably skipping the tests."



# Annaswamy Mudaliar Road still awaits concrete plans

Slush-filled road has become a nightmare for motorists and residents

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**T**he inordinate delay in restoration of Annaswamy Mudaliar Road has been making the lives of around 100 families miserable. Motorists proceeding towards Cox Town and other areas through this stretch too are facing a tough time.

As the road becomes slushy whenever it rains thus, they have to navigate deep puddles of accumulated water on this road. There have been instances of vehicles getting stuck in the slush on this road. Residents have said that though complaints have been lodged with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) authorities, including Palike administrator Gaurav Gupta, nothing has been done till date.

They said that though Gupta presided over the ward committee meetings and directed BBMP engineers to complete work but it is either stopped or progressing at a snail's pace.

**Despite repeated complaints to BBMP, including Palike administrator Gaurav Gupta, no action has been taken**

"We are fed up of complaining to the authorities concerned about the condition of this road. There is no coordination among the different departments of the BBMP and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). They are busy shifting the blame on others," said V Purushotham of Ulsoor Rising.

Shanmugam P, a resident of Sivanchetty Garden, emphasised on the need to expedite the completion of the work to avoid slush and dust on this road.



PICS: KAUSHIK JN



"It is quite shocking to see work progressing at a snail's pace on this small stretch. The work began five months ago and is still incomplete," said Shanmugam.

Meanwhile, a resident on the

condition of anonymity, blamed the traffic police and the contractor for the delay in completion of the work. "The contractor claims that that traffic police are not co-operating with him due to reasons

best known to the latter. I want the traffic police to enable the contractor to work day and night and complete the work as early as possible," said the resident.

BBMP Assistant Executive Engineer (Major Roads) Srinivasa H said the restoration of the road will be complete in a few days.

"The contractor has delayed the work. I have already advised him to expedite the work. I expect the restoration of the road to be completed in one or two weeks. After the restoration of the road, the concretisation of the road will begin," said Srinivasa.

## Winter session adjourned sine die on Thursday

**T**he session that was scheduled to be held up to December 15 was cut short as legislators were not too keen to attend due to ensuing gram panchayat elections. The State Election Commission is set to notify the first phase of the gram panchayat polls on Friday. During the four-day session, the government introduced and passed the controversial Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill 2000 amid vocal protests by the Opposition parties. The Bill, however, was not tabled in the Legislative Council. Protesting against the government, Opposition Congress members boycotted the Assembly on the last day during which BBMP Bill 2020 was approved. In the Council, the government managed to get the passage of two key farm bills.

## Baiyappanahalli transit hub upgrade work on track

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**T**he Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is in the process of acquiring about 40 properties to build a four-lane access road to the under-construction third coaching terminal in Baiyappanahalli, expected to be ready by February next year. Officials plan to widen the 1-km stretch from Maruthi Seva Nagar so that two-way traffic can be allowed.

Lack of accessibility and connectivity to the swanky train terminal — being built to decongest Majestic (KSR) and Yeshwanthpur railway stations — was one of the main concerns raised by mobility experts and commuters. The South Western Railway (SWR) is spending about Rs 260 crore to build the terminal, 2 km away from the Baiyappanahalli Metro and railway stations.

Officials said they will convert the stretch between Mukunda theatre (near flyover) and terminal into a bidirectional road by removing encroaching shops.

"The one-way road is wide enough to allow



A swanky train terminal is being built at Baiyappanahalli

two-way traffic. We will vacate encroachers who have occupied a part of the road and footpath space," a BBMP official said.

The civic body is also planning to widen the road. "We have completed the assessment of properties needed for acquisition. A first notification has also been issued. We need about 8

properties on one side and another 36 properties on the other side," another BBMP official said. While the BBMP is tasked with acquiring properties, the SWR is expected to meet the cost required for the construction of road.

The SWR officials also said that the under-construction railway over bridge will be ready

by May next year.

"Once these two projects are ready, the access to the terminal from Old Madras road and Banaswadi will get better," he said. On Saturday, Ashok Kumar Verma, divisional railway manager of SWR (Bengaluru City) announced that the terminal will be ready by February.

### Airport halt station

The halt station near Kempegowda International Airport will be operational by next week, the SWR officials said.

While the infrastructure was in place by October this year, the officials will start running services in a week's time. This is expected to provide a huge benefit to commuters heading to the airport. Currently, the cabs to the airport are costly while BMTC has very minimal services. Currently, the SWR is operating three pairs of trains on the airport line.

The halt station is being built by the Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) at a cost of Rs 3 crore. They also plan to run shuttle bus services to the airport.





## BBMP BILL PASSED IN ASSEMBLY



Even as the leaders from both the Congress and JDS boycotted Assembly proceedings opposing the passage of the cow slaughter bill, the state government got the BBMP bill passed without any Opposition. The bill proposed a 2.5-year term for both Mayor and Deputy Mayor, while the existing eight zones will be increased to 15. Each zone will act like a mini municipal corporation with the zonal commissioners getting more power. **P2**



## With no oppn, Palike Bill has easy passage

Proposes 15 zones, ad fee, entertainment tax

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@Bengaluru

THE Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Bill, which proposes expansion of the city's municipal limits, increasing the number of wards and a new governance structure with a 2.5-year term for the mayor and deputy mayor, was passed in the Assembly on Thursday with absolutely no opposition. Congress and JDS members had boycotted the Assembly proceedings opposing the government's move to pass the cow slaughter Bill.

The Bill also proposes increasing the number of zones from 8 to 15. Each zone will be like a mini municipal corporation in itself, with Zonal Commissioners getting more power.

The Bill, tabled in the Assembly in March, was referred to a joint committee after several city MLAs, including those from the BJP, opposed it. The government constituted a 16-member joint select committee in August, headed by BJP

MLA S.Raghu, to look into it.

The committee, which tabled its recommendations in the Assembly on Wednesday, has recommended increasing the number of wards to 140 and increasing the Palike's jurisdiction by an km radius. Law minister J Madhureddy told the House that though they have recommended 1 km increase in radius, it could be more in some places where part of a panchayat or village is involved.

Further, the minister pointed out that the committee has recommended having an almost equal number of wards in every Assembly constituency. The Bill also specifies that elected representatives stick to one post at a time. The Palike commissioner will be an IAS officer of additional chief secretary rank while zonal commissioners will IAS officers of secretary-level rank.

The Bill also proposes advertisement fee and entertainment tax. Palike officials will be given power to take action against illegal and dangerous squatters.



## BBMP treatment of our ward worrying: Bellandur residents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@Bengaluru

WHILE the state government is working on improving infrastructure across the city residents of Bellandur point out that they are worried about the way the ward is being dealt with.

In an online portal set up by the newly launched Bengaluru Nava Nirman Party citizens have posted that Ward number 16, Bellandur, home to one of the oldest and largest lakes in the city is a Category II ward, with a population of over 80,000. They point out that the road conditions are miserable and many other facilities are far from what is expected.

Rupel Halph, BNP leader said: "We downloaded information from the BBMP Citizen Portal and noticed that 260 projects with a total value of Rs 111 crore were approved for Bellandur ward in the last five years but only 120 have been executed. It is ridiculous that a ward that is the sixth largest in the city, the budget allocation for roads is a meagre Rs 1.2 crore."

Residents also said the allocated Rs 1.2 crore has been used for maintenance of facilities such as parks and street lights in Bellandur. There are many dark spots in the ward making it dangerous for pedestrians and drivers.



We notice that 260 projects with a total value of Rs 111 crore were approved for Bellandur ward in the last five years but only 120 have been executed.

Rupel Halph, BNP leader

Property tax collection from Bellandur is the highest in the city they said, adding that it is time that citizens are consulted and allowed to participate in the process of ward-level project approval and execution, which is the only way to remove corruption, inefficiency and poor work quality in these projects. Residents of Bellandur have protested several times on this matter and need to be heard, residents said.

Adding to Bellandur's bundle of woes is the pigmenace *Pseudorabies* aptible to a virus which can infect humans as well. Early in February this year, the IT giant SAP India had shut its offices following two cases of H1N1 influenza, a strain of swine flu. Residents say pigs are attracted to the garbage which is dumped on roads due to irregular waste collection. Civic activists from the Kava Mukta Bellanduru forum have filed a petition online demanding that the waste collection contractor for the ward be changed.



## Assembly Clears BBMP Bill Proposing Changes in City Administration

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**Bengaluru:** Karnataka's legislative assembly on Thursday passed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Bill, proposing to bring some changes to the city's governance, though most sections have been taken from the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act, 1976, that currently governs Bengaluru.

The BJP government ensured the passage of the Bill even as the opposition Congress boycotted the session protesting the passage of the anti-cow slaughter law, while JD(S) members did not turn up.

The Bill, which runs for about 110 pages, seeks to increase the number of BBMP wards from the existing 198 to minimum 225 and maximum 250. Unlike now, where several wards are split between different assembly segments, the BBMP bill has mandated that wards are divided within the assembly segments and no ward should spread over two constituencies and that they should have equal distribution of population.

A joint select committee headed by BJP MLA from CV Raman Nagar S Raghu proposed changes to the BBMP's structure and that has been incorporated in the Bill.

The separate law for the BBMP has also introduced a 30-month term for the mayor and the deputy mayor, while the term of standing committees continues to be one year. The change will cut the number of mayors to two over a period of five years. The existing provisions in the KMC Act permit the election of a mayor and deputy mayor every 12 months.

The Bill has paved way for increasing the number of zones from eight to 15. Each zone will be headed by zonal commissioners who will re-

port to the BBMP's chief commissioner.

A new feature requires formation of constituency consultative committees and zonal committees, similar to ward committees, but at the assembly and zonal level. The constituency committee headed by the local MLA, consisting of councillors and resident association members, gives more power to legislators in matters related to the ward.

The Bill has identified responsibilities of the committees that will include aid

### IN THE PIPELINE

**A new feature requires formation of constituency consultative committees & zonal committees, similar to ward committees**

and advice to zonal committees, monitor the project implementation and respond to public grievances.

The zonal committees chaired by one of the ward councillors will also look at project implementation and coordination between wards. Another change the bill has proposed is to increase the property tax every year on the basis of the guidance value, which is revised by the stamps and registration department.

PRS Legislative Research, an independent research institute that has analysed the BBMP Bill, has highlighted several shortcomings that may prevent Bengaluru's governance from undergoing structural changes. The institute has pointed out that the state government continues to hold power over the city administration, which will be a major obstacle in achieving decentralisation of power.

## As Recoveries Rise, City Sees Steep Fall in Active Cases

Our Bureau

**Bengaluru:** Bengaluru's active Covid cases dropped to 13,820 on Thursday from over 19,000 cases two days ago.

While the number of new cases reported daily has remained below 1,000, the city saw a sudden surge in recoveries as over 7,000 Covid positive persons were recorded as discharged in the last two days. As many as 4,549 people recovered on Thursday



**Over 7,000 Covid positive persons were discharged in the last two days. 4,549 people recovered on Thursday**

while 701 new cases were reported.

The state health bulletin showed an improvement in recoveries following news reports about a gradual uptick in Bengaluru's active cases in the first week of December.

As on November 1, the active cases in Bengaluru was 30,508. It dropped to 17,769 by mid-November. But with the number of new cases and recoveries reported on a daily basis remaining almost equal, the city's active cases continued to be close to 17,000 by the end of November. The last eight days saw a slight increase in active cases as the recoveries fell. Active cases stood at 19,468 on December 8, raising caution.

Health and medical education minister K Sudhakar had told ET on Wednesday that the rise in active cases in the first week of December was because of delay in updating discharges in the online portal. "I have asked officials to fix the gaps," he said.

A BBMP official said while discharges in hospitals were recorded and updated on a daily basis, the same was not happening in home isolation cases. "We need to track Covid positive persons in home isolation and consider it as recovery on the 10th day," he said.

### STATE LOGS 1,238 CASES

Karnataka reported 1,238 Covid cases on Thursday even as the recoveries rose to 5,076. The state's total cases has reached 697,801 of which 376,582 are from Bengaluru. The state also recorded 12 deaths including eight in the capital.



12/10/2020

## Govt Revises Covid Test Cost

**Bengaluru:** The Karnataka government decreased the price of Covid-19 testing on Wednesday, capping the RT-PCR test in private hospitals and laboratories at ₹800 per test, inclusive of the cost of PPE kit. It was costing ₹1,200 till now.

The additional charge for collecting samples from home should not exceed ₹400, the government said.

**Govt has capped RT-PCR test in pvt hospitals & labs at ₹800 per test**

Subsequently, the rate of testing of samples sent by the government to private laboratories has been reduced to ₹500 from ₹800 per test. "As the rates of chemicals and equipment used to test Covid-19 has come down, the technical advisory committee has recommended to revise the cost of testing," the health department said. The state has fixed ₹1,250 for Truenat test and ₹2,400 for CB Nat test. The cost of testing Rapid Antigen in private labs is capped at ₹400.

### 1,279 NEW CASES IN STATE

Karnataka reported 1,279 new cases of Covid, of which 728 were from Bengaluru, taking the case tally to 896,563. Nineteen Covid deaths were recorded including, 13 in Bengaluru.