



**Bruhat Bengaluru
Mahanagara Palike**

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE,
BANGALORE**

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Centenarians survive COVID-19 better, shows data

Of the 60 infected so far, only three have succumbed to the infection; according to COVID war room data, case fatality rate among them is 5%

AFSHAN YASMEEN
BENGALURU

The State has seen as many as 26,006 children aged below nine and 60 centenarians being infected with COVID-19. Of these, 26 children and only three centenarians have died.

All the three centenarians who died are male patients (one aged 102 and two aged 100) from Bengaluru. None of them had any co-morbidities. Among the 60 who tested positive, only one centenarian, a 105-year-old female from Chamarajanagar, had hypertension and diabetes. Of the total centenarians, 53% are female patients, according to the State COVID war room data.

Of the total 8,81,086 cases



A health worker collecting a sample for the COVID-19 test in Bengaluru. •FILE PHOTO

reported till November 27, the highest number has been reported in the age group of 30 to 39 (1,92,539) followed by

the 20 to 29 age group (1,80,078).

However, of the total 11,738 COVID-19 fatalities in the State

(till November 27), the deaths have been the highest in the 60 to 69 age group, with 3,540 people dying. But, in terms of Case Fatality Rate (CFR), the 90 to 99 age group tops with 11.4% and zero to nine age group is at the bottom with 0.1%. As many as 148 of the 1,300 patients in this 90 to 99 age group have succumbed to the infection.

Significantly, the CFR among the centenarian group is 5%. Except for the 100+ age group, the mortality rate has increased gradually with seniority across age groups.

Doctors, who have been saying that those aged above 60 are more vulnerable to COVID-19, are surprised over the low mortality rate of the

senior-most age group.

Less exposure

Anoop Amarnath, member of Karnataka's COVID-19 Critical Care Support Unit (CCSU), who heads the department of Geriatric Medicine at Manipal Hospitals, said one of the potential reasons for the low mortality among the centenarians could be their less exposure to the virus, as they are usually house-bound.

"Also, immunosenescence — gradual deterioration of the immune system owing to age — could be another reason. If the immune system is very strong, cytokine storms are likely to be high. Most develop severe COVID-19 because of an over-reaction of their

immune system, which triggers a syndrome called a cytokine storm. But, if the immune system weakens (immunosenescence), the cytokine storm is not severe. May be this has played a role," he said.

Pointing out that centenarians usually are healthy, the doctor said, "Most centenarians do not have many co-morbidities and that is probably why they are able to reach that age."

"The Baltimore Longitudinal Study on Ageing — started in 1958 and is the longest ongoing research on ageing — looks into why some people are resistant to disease and stay healthy till extremes of age," he said.

V. Ravi, member of the State's COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), said the low mortality among the centenarians could be because they presented early to hospitals. "Usually, families take utmost care of their elderly and may be they were given medical attention at the earliest," he added.

Terming this as an old-age paradox, C.N. Manjunath, nodal officer for labs and testing in the State's COVID-19 task force, said most centenarians would have lived a healthy and disciplined life. "They would lead a contented and stress-free life because of which they would not have had co-morbidities," the doctor added.

P2

1,291 new cases, 15 deaths in State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The State on Sunday reported 1,291 new cases of COVID-19, taking the total number of positive cases since the start of the pandemic to 8.83 lakh. Fifteen people succumbed to the infection and the death toll in the State now stands at 11,765. The case fatality rate for the day stood at 1.16%.

As many as 19 patients have died owing to non-COVID-19 reasons. According to the health bulletin issued by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, the positivity rate for the day is 1.22%.

The total number of active cases in the State currently stands at 24,503; around 374 patients are being treated in intensive care units. The bulletin also stated that 1,530 patients were discharged, taking the total number of recoveries to 8.47 lakh.

Bengaluru Urban reported 686 new cases, the maximum among all the districts in the State. With 10 deaths, the toll in this district rose to 4,131. As many as 13,223 rapid antigen detection tests and 92,205 RT-PCR tests were conducted over the past 24 hours, taking the total number of tests to 1,05,428.

COVID-19 update

Number of positive cases reported in Bengaluru Urban on November 30

686

Total cases 3,69,290

Active cases 18,319

Discharged 3,46,839

Deaths 4,131+1*

* One person died of other causes

Source: Department of Health and Family Welfare

P2

2 more quarries to be used to dump waste

Activists unhappy as the city administration has adopted a no-landfill policy

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is set to convert two new quarry pits at Mittaganahalli and Bagalur into landfills to dump waste generated by citizens. The quarry landfill at Mittaganahalli, where over 2,000 tonnes of mixed waste is currently being dumped every day from the past year and a half, is almost full.

“We have issued a tender to develop the Bagalur quarry, less than a kilometre away from Mittaganahalli into a scientific landfill, which the government is yet to approve. This will take nearly three months to be developed and made ready. In the interim, we have prepared a small quarry pit at Mittaganahalli itself to dump the waste and it can sustain us for six months,” said Sarfaraz Khan, Joint Commissioner, Solid Waste Management, BBMP.

Solid waste management activists are unhappy with the development as the city administration has adopted a no-landfill policy, committed to segregation at source, and



The quarry landfill at Mittaganahalli, where over 2,000 tonnes of mixed waste is currently being dumped every day, is almost full. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

er the past four years only indicates the complete failure to implement the policy the city has adopted,” said an SWM activist.

Not functioning

Of the six compost-based waste processing plants, three are not functioning. While Lingadheeranahalli plant has been stuck in litigation at the National Green Tri-

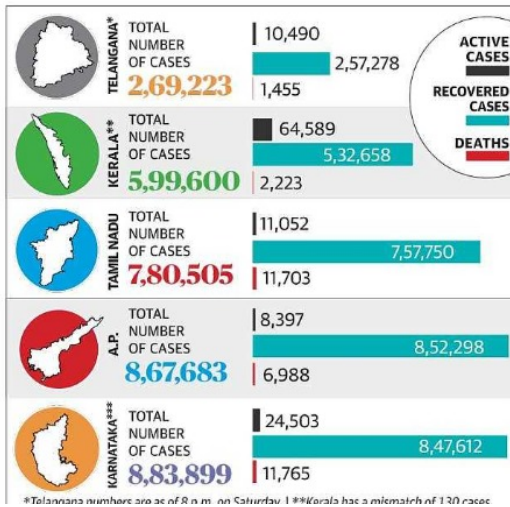
shut down owing to protests by local residents. “Segregation levels in the city have stagnated at around 40% and we are sending nearly 1,200 tonnes of segregated wet waste to the processing plants daily,” Mr. Khan said, adding efforts were on to reopen the three other plants as well.

However, Sandhya Narayan, member of the Technical Advisory Committee, SWM, BBMP, said

added any waste processing capacity in the city since 2015, neither the large plants nor the decentralised plants. None of the waste-to-energy plants that have been in the pipeline for nearly a decade now, materialised. Many proposals for the biomethanation plants at the ward level have not been accorded approval,” she said, adding there was no serious push to increase the

Andhra Pradesh claims 1.13% positivity rate

At 11.34%, Kerala's is much higher than other southern States; Tamil Nadu sees 10 deaths



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala was on the threshold of six lakh COVID-19 cases on Sunday, with the State reporting 5,643 new cases from 49,775 samples.

The test positivity rate continued in the 9-11% range, rising to 11.34% on Sunday.

The COVID-19 toll rose to 2,223 with another 27 deaths added to the list. Thrissur accounted for six deaths, Kottayam five, Alappuzha and Ernakulam, four each, Malappuram three, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram two each and Wayanad, one.

The number of healthcare workers who contracted the

infection were on a decline, official data said. Four more COVID-19 patients died.

Cases and tests dropped from November 20. On Saturday, 46,280 samples were tested and 805 cases detected.

COVID-19

ed. Campaigning for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections could raise coronavirus spread, it was feared.

The new cases included 131 from Greater Hyderabad, 82 from Medchal-Malkajgiri and 58 from Rangareddy.

Andhra Pradesh reported 690 new infections and so

The positivity rate of 54,710 samples tested in 24 hours was 1.13%, the lowest in six months.

Krishna and Visakhapatnam districts reported two new deaths each, while Guntur, Chittoor and West Godavari reported one each.

On a day when another 1,459 persons tested positive for COVID-19, Tamil Nadu recorded fewer than 10 fatalities, taking its COVID-19 toll to 11,703. Nine persons, including four in Chennai, died in the State. Of the fresh cases, Chennai accounted for 398, followed by Coimbatore with 148 cases.

(With inputs from Hyderabad, Vijayawada

India records 41,810 fresh COVID-19 cases, 496 fatalities

Eight States contributed more than 70% of new cases: govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India reported 41,810 COVID-19 cases, 496 fatalities and 42,298 discharges in the past 24 hours. The number of active cases stood at 4,53,956, as per the Health Ministry data on Sunday.

The Ministry said 70.97% of the fatalities reported in the past 24 hours came from eight States/UTs – Delhi, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Delhi reported 89 fatalities, followed by Maharashtra (88) and West Bengal (52).

Twenty two States/UTs have recorded case fatality rates less than the national average of 1.46 %, the Ministry said.

“Maharashtra recorded the maximum positive change with addition of 1,940 cases whereas Delhi recorded the maximum negative change with a decrease of 1,603 active cases,”



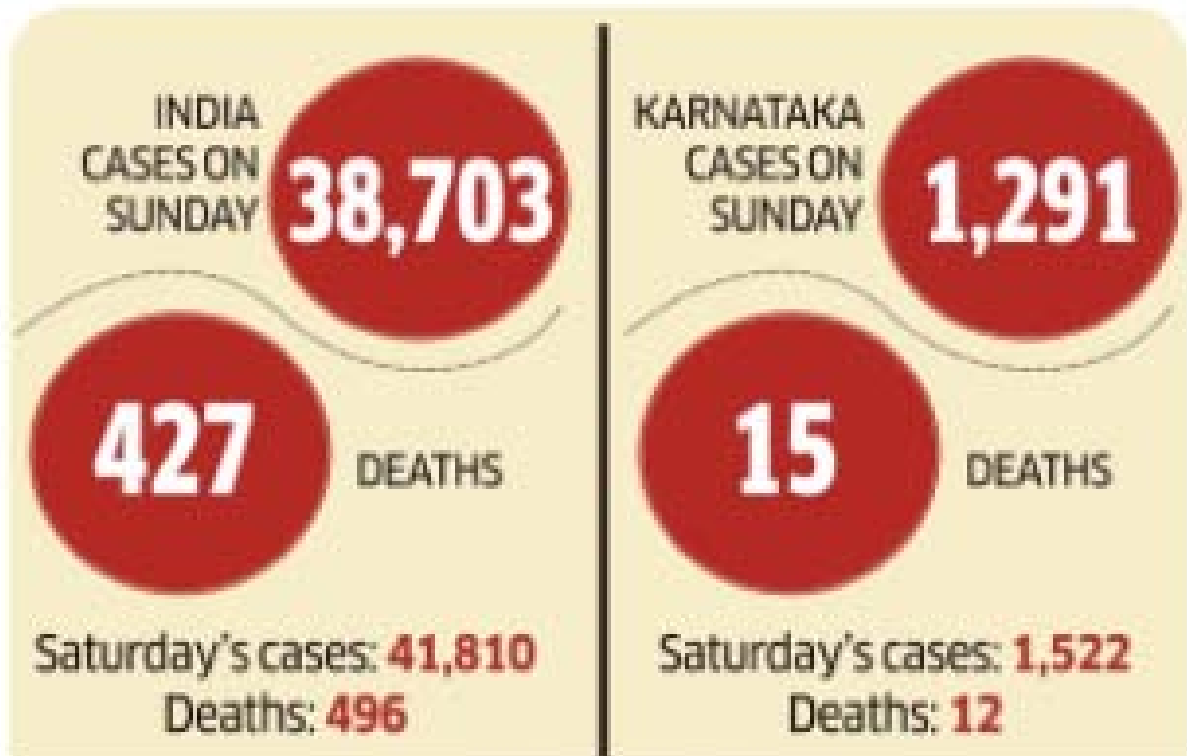
Fight continues: A health worker taking the nasal swab of a passenger at a railway station in Mumbai •AP

The Ministry said 70.43% of the daily new cases were contributed by eight States/UT – Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Chhattisgarh. Kerala leads the tally with 6,250

Maharashtra (5,965) and Delhi (4,998).

Delhi also reported the highest number of single-day recoveries, with 6,512 newly discharged cases, while 5,275 people recovered in Kerala followed by

DECCAN HERALD



TILL 9.45 PM, SOURCE: DHNS/PTI

Singapore newborn has Covid antibodies

A Singaporean woman, who was infected with the novel coronavirus in March when she was pregnant, has given birth to a baby with antibodies against the virus, offering a new clue as to whether the infection can be transferred from mother to child. The baby was born this month without Covid-19 but with the virus antibodies.

Details on Page 9

Ailments worsen as patients keep away from hospitals

AKHIL KADIDAL
BENGALURU, DHNS

The months-long assault by the pandemic kept many patients with non-Covid ailments away from hospitals out of fear of contracting the virus. The cost of that move is now becoming apparent as the virus retreats and a few patients make their way to the deserted corridors of hospitals in the city.

Take the case of 60-year-old Rajesh (name changed), a resident of Hebbal, who had stage I prostate cancer at the start of the outbreak in March.

Rajesh shunned hospitals due to the raging pandemic. It didn't help that there was a general unavailability of non-Covid services. Now, months later, his cancer has reached an advanced stage.

Senior doctors at many hospitals said arrivals have thinned, but those turning up are people with serious health problems, long-neglected or suppressed due to the



Doctors in the city said there is still a widespread fear among people about going to hospitals due to Covid.

pandemic.

Dr Prasanna H M of Pristine Hospital, who took over as the president of the Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association (PHANA) on November 22, said most private hospitals have either restarted non-Covid services or are moving to restart regular services but the demand has been abysmal.

"Private hospitals are reporting only 30% demand for healthcare related ailments as compared to pre-pandemic

figures," he said, adding this did not mean people have suddenly become healthy.

Prasanna said there is "still widespread fear of Covid-19 among people to the point that they are avoiding hospitals".

"They choose to turn up if there is an emergency," he said.

A significant chunk of the emergency cases comprises people whose pre-existing medical conditions have turned serious due to postponed health check-ups.

► **Covid fear, Page 4**

Four stations in Anjanapura metro line won't have parking

BMRCL to give priority to public transport users

BENGALURU, DHNS

Passengers excited about riding the metro on the Yelachenahalli-Anjanapura line must leave their vehicles at home since four of the five stations on the line have limited parking facilities.

The 6.29-km stretch of the line, the first of the Phase 2 stretches to be inaugurated in December, will have stations at Konanakunte Cross, Doddakallasandra, Vajarahalli, Talaghattapura and Anjanapura.

A senior Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) official said except for the terminal station at Anjanapura,

there would be no parking facility in the four stations.

Land acquisition

"Land acquisition has been a major challenge for Namma Metro. Considering the availability of several first- and last-mile connectivity options, priority was given to provide accessibility to public transport users. Providing parking space, especially for cars, is a costly idea," he said.

To a question, B L Yashwanth Chavan, Chief Public Relations Officer, BMRCL, noted that for the first time, dedicated infrastructure has been provided to ensure safe



Lack of parking at stations like the one at Doddakallasandra (in pic) will inconvenience commuters. DH PHOTO/S K DINESH

access to a metro station.

"The service roads around the metro stations will be dedicated for public transport vehicles and people to pick up and drop off passengers. Within this space, there may be very limited parking facility for two-wheelers. The option of shared mobility will be provided for first- and last-mile

connectivity," he said.

The BMRCL has spent Rs 1538.76 crore for the acquisition of land for the 42-km Phase 1 project. However, the Phase 2 line, measuring over 72 km, has already cost about Rs 5,000 crore for land acquisition.

Discussions on transferring the responsibility of the park-

ing facility were held in 2018, when it was decided that BMRCL should focus on running the metro and improving accessibility.

It was also suggested that the BBMP should build a multi-storey parking facility at various places, especially to help metro commuters.

Pavan KP, a commuter from Narayanagara, situated about 1 km away from the new Doddakallasandra metro station, said that lack of parking facility will inconvenience many commuters.

"Konanakunte Cross is an interconnecting point for the nearby areas. The parking space at Yelachenahalli is already saturated. One or other agencies should take up the responsibility of providing parking near metro stations. It is difficult to rely on shared mobility or public transport for last-mile connectivity," he said.

FREE OF VEHICLE EXHAUST



Since the launch of the Clean Air Street initiative on November 7, Church Street has become every pedestrian's paradise during the weekends, with all the freedom and space to stroll around. The no-vehicle initiative by the Department of Urban Land Transport (DULT) will be on till February 21, 2021. DH PHOTOS/RANJU P

Food delivery workers tire for 12 hours, but denied wages during pandemic

BENGALURU, DHNS

Companies have manipulated their algorithms to deny food delivery workers minimum wages during the pandemic though they spend nearly 12 hours on the road, a study has found.

Five researchers from the National Law School of India, University of Sussex and International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIITB) studied the earnings and work intensity of food delivery workers in the city belonging to various companies.

The study found that companies hired the workers promising more income than their previous jobs and kept their word for the first three years, until 2017.

Good remuneration was ensured as workers were given easily attainable targets and generous incentives, which helped them develop a network.

'Partner' just a label

Soon though, the algorithm became smarter and tightened the noose on the workers.

Despite the feeling that they had a control on their incomes, they had to work for about 12 hours to earn Rs 500 to Rs 600, with Rs 200 usually going towards filling their bike's fuel tanks.



Long exposure to pollution and fatigue also pose a threat to the workers' life. DH PHOTO/ B H SHIVAKUMAR

Companies label them as 'partners', thereby refusing to take any responsibilities obligated to employees. This denied the workers the usual social security net such as care and compensation during an accident, the study noted.

The opaque payment system that dangles large incentives, an illusion that only ends up tiring eager workers who keep chasing it, fails to offer the more basic support such as a grievance redressal system.

"When a worker gets closer to achieving the incentive, the app tends to slow down in routing the next delivery task to the worker close to fulfilling the target required to get the incentive," the study said.

Long exposure to pollution

and fatigue is a threat to the workers' life and also a danger to fellow motorists on the road, the study noted.

Gig employees

It suggested regulating the wages on the online platforms by fixing a base wage on each trip and a 'fallback wage' equal to minimum wages in Karnataka.

"The situation of the gig workers during the pandemic (exposes) the myth perpetuated by the industry that these workers are independent contractors. India needs to follow other countries in recognising gig employees as workers and therefore, bring the sector within the ambit of labour regulation," it said.

Ailments worsen as Covid fear keeps patients away from hospitals

Covid fear, from Page 1

The example of the prostate cancer patient Rajesh is a case in point.

Diagnosed with stage 1 prostate cancer in February, Rajesh's medical treatments were cut short by the nationwide lockdown at the end of March.

"In the months that passed, some non-Covid services resumed, but the patient did not return for treatment for nearly 6 months because of fear of Covid-19," said his physician Dr Suri Raju V, Chief Urologist of Regal Hospital in Chokkanahalli.

"When he finally turned up this week, we found his illness had advanced to stage 3," Dr Raju said, clarifying that Rajesh's case is not isolated. "This is just one case in many," he added.

Low demand

For some hospital administrators, the low demand for services has come as a surprise.

Dr Yateesh Govindaiah, Assistant Head of Medical Services for Apollo Hospitals in Karnataka, confirmed that the public was equating hospitals to infection by Covid-19.

"We need to restore the public's confidence that hospital visits are safe. It is challenging. The entire medical ecosystem has been disturbed," he said.

Not surprisingly, many smaller private hospitals are in financial distress.

Dr Prasanna said PHANA is considering urgent financial help for smaller hospitals.

"We are trying to tap into the MSME stimulus package," he said.

State adds 1,291 new Covid cases, 15 fatalities

Bengaluru Urban accounts for 53% of the patients

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state's low-lying plateau of Covid-19 cases continued into Sunday, with the addition of only 1,291 new cases to the total.

This brings Karnataka's Covid-19 total to 8,83,899. The state's low daily numbers are virtually half of what was being reported at the start of November. Yet, data suggests that the Covid-19 curve, which effectively plateaued two weeks ago, will not see a further dramatic dip in the days to come.

The state recorded 10,494 cases over seven days from November 23 to 29. In the previous seven-day period, from November 16 to 22, the state recorded a marginally higher 11,399 cases.

In Bengaluru Urban, which on average constitutes 54% of all daily cases, the seven-day total of cases has shown a 700-case reduction per week since November 16, which is smaller than the 1,567 decline in cases which was seen from November 9 to 16.

On Sunday, authorities said, Bengaluru Urban registered 686 cases on Saturday, which constitutes 53% of the state total. The next highest numbers were in Mandya district and Dakshina Kannada with 48 each, Mysuru with 37, Hassan district with 41, Tumakuru with 39 and Udupi with 38.

Some 1,530 Covid-19 sufferers were also officially discharged in the state, out of which 723 were in Bengaluru Urban. The government also announced 15 new deaths, 10 of which are from Bengaluru Urban and two from Mysuru.

All the victims had comorbidities. The youngest was a 50-year-old from Mysuru who died on Saturday, eight days after being diagnosed with the disease.

The oldest new fatality is a 92-year-old from Bengaluru Urban who died on November 26, on the same day that he was diagnosed with the disease. He also had hypertension.

BBMP said it carried out 46,004 tests on Saturday. The Palike said that the city's cumulative test positivity rate is 8.31% so far.

Seventeen percent of the 8,704 cases registered in the city over the last 10 days have been in Mahadevapura, followed by South and East Zones with 16% each.

After many complaints from motorists; expert team from Nagpur fixes issue in 6 days



(Top) The road underbridge near the second entry to KSR Railway Station. (R) Work in progress at the underbridge

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

AFTER repeated complaints from commuters about water leaking from two road underbridges (RUBs) near the KSR Bengaluru City railway station, the problem has finally been redressed. After six days of work, a team from Nagpur plugged all the leaks in the underbridges near the second entry on Saturday using special material.

People who commute between Majestic and Rajaji Nagar use these RUBs which are part of the much delayed eight-lane Rs 103-crore signal-free Okkalipuram corridor project jointly taken up by BBMP and the Railways.

Senior Divisional Engineer (East), Co-ordination, Bengaluru Railway Division, H Satya-jeet told TNIE, "We brought a team of four experts from Nagpur to plug the leaks. A concrete canvas was laid on the entire portion which will ensure nothing can seep through any more. The team used geo-synthetic material to carry out the job."

Asked why it took so long, despite numerous complaints, the official said, "We had to set up road blocks and this is a very busy section. It



took us three days to rectify issues in one underbridge and another three days for the second one."

Divisional Railway Manager A K Verma said, "We are trying to ensure that any inconvenience caused to the public is taken care of."

The foundation stone for the 660-metre corridor connecting Rajajinagar-Old Mysore Road junction with Fountain Circle (Khoday Circle) was laid in December 2012 with a March 2014 deadline. Numerous problems have been encountered over the years and even the March 2020 deadline was missed.

Work on two more RUBs are yet to start as mammoth power cables have come in the way and need to be shifted, said a senior official. "We have submitted letters to the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. It will take us anywhere between 9 and 12 months after the cables are removed to put the other two RUBs in place."



IN THEIR SUNDAY BEST

People take a stroll on Sunday on Church Street, which has been made a pedestrian-only stretch on weekends | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

P2

KSPCB starts real-time tracking of effluent flow

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

THE Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) has set up a real-time monitoring system to ensure proper discharge of effluents from small industries to Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) in the city. There are seven CETPs in the city which cater to small industries that do not have the space to house their own plants, or can't afford the technology.

Vijayakumar Gogi, chairman, KSPCB, told *The New*



Real-time monitoring will aid in ensuring effluents are sent to the treatment plants on time | EXPRESS

Indian Express, "This has been done to ensure pollutants are discharged effectively. We started it last month and officials are keeping track of it online."

Doddababallapura, KG Halli, Kengeri, Kumbalgod and Tumukuru Road are some areas where CETPs are set up. "Since all data is available online now, we can track whether firms are sending across discharged effluents or not," Gogi said.

A senior official said, "The quantity of effluents from

each factory and timings are sent to us. The quality of the untreated water and the output post treatment can also be tracked."

He added, "GPS trackers have been fixed on to tankers bringing effluents from factories for better tracking."

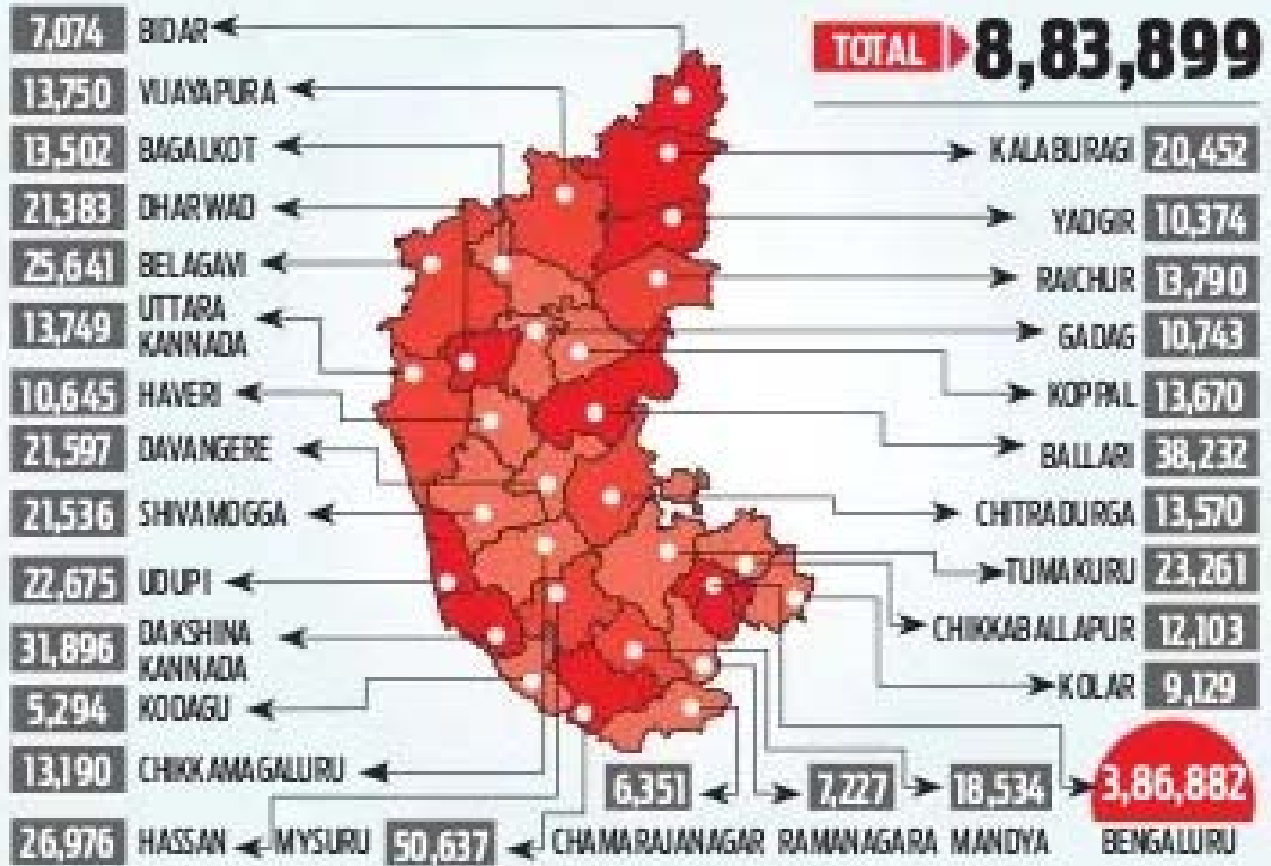
KSPCB is also in the process of developing an app to put all relevant information out in the public domain. It will be available on Google Play Store, the official said. "This will allow the public and staffers to interact with us," he added.

P2

State's positivity rate stands at 8.02 per cent

Bengaluru: At the beginning of November, the state's positivity rate was at 10.32 per cent and a day away from December, the positivity rate stands at 8.02 per cent. With 1,291 cases reported on Sunday, the total cases now stand at 8,83,899. Of these, Bengaluru reported 686 cases and 18,319 active cases. Back on October 11, there were 66,854 active cases in the city. The city's recovery rate stands at 93.92 per cent and the state's recovery rate stands at 95.89 per cent. 15 deaths have been reported on Sunday, taking the death toll in the state to 11,765 cases. There were 1,530 discharges on Sunday. **ENS**

CONFIRMED CASES



TALLY ON SUNDAY

NEW CASES 1,291	NEW DEATHS 15	TOTAL DEATHS 11,765	1,05,428 Samples tested
NEW RECOVERIES 1,530			24,503 Total active cases
			8,47,612 Total recoveries

An illegal '16% extra' payment being made to auto tippers since June 2018 has been stopped, thanks to a lady IAS officer. So the contractors are threatening to stop collecting waste from homes

CON WITH THE WIND

KAUSHIK JN

I Naveen.Menezes
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TWEETS @Naveen_MIRROR

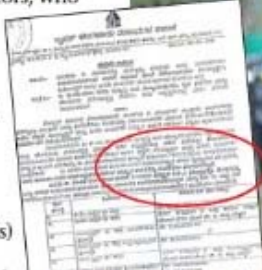
There's a reason why the words contractor and connivance start with 'con'. Garbage contractors, who had been making an additional — and illegal — Rs 8,960 per month per auto-tipper, have been found out and are now threatening to stop collecting trash in Bengaluru to force the Bruhat Bengaluru Managara Palike's (BBMP's) hand.

The scam — which had been going on since June 2018 — was traced by Thulasi Maddineni, Special Commissioner (Finance) in the BBMP, and an IAS officer of the 2005 batch.

Auto tippers had been contracted by the BBMP in June 2018 for the daily collection of waste from houses and commercial establishments across the city. The civic body offered to pay Rs 56,000 per auto tipper a month. The responsibility of providing a driver and helper for every vehicle was on the contractor. Officials say there are about 4,000 auto tippers.

Other than Rs 56,000 per vehicle, the zonal officials used to pay an additional 16 per cent of the Rs 56,000 on the grounds that the contractor has to hire extra staff on four

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >>



IN BLACK AND WHITE: The contract between BBMP and the service providers clearly states that the 16 per cent is part of the Rs 56,000 to be paid per auto-tipper per month



EXTRA CHARGE KICKS IN FROM JAN As reported by Bangalore Mirror on June 10, Palike will start charging you ₹200 extra per month; commercial units will pay ₹500

PAGE 2

Pay more for your trash from January

I Y Maheswara Reddy
c-maheswara.reddy@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is gearing up to collect a user fee for the collection of garbage from residents. If all goes well, the BBMP will commence collecting the user fees of Rs 200 from property owners and tenants, and Rs 500 from commercial establishments.

"We are supposed to collect the user fee from the residents in July. We are in talks with Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) in this regard. The property owners will have to pay the user fee along with the monthly electricity bill," said BBMP Special Commissioner (Solid Waste Management) D Randeep.

According to the BBMP sources, all the property owners, including tenants have to pay the user fee for handing over garbage to the pourakarmikas. "The user fee will not be collected from those houses that are vacant or not handing over garbage to the pourakarmikas. If they are asked to pay the user fee, they can approach the BBMP health officers who inspect the buildings,"



BBMP will collect user fees of Rs 200 from property owners, tenants and Rs 500 from commercial establishments

said Randeep.

The BBMP sources said Bescom is upgrading its software to make a provision for, including a separate column, for the user fee in the monthly electricity bill. It is said that Bescom will prepare the list of property owners and tenants who fail to pay the user fee and send it to BBMP health officers.

"The health officers and marshals will meet such property owners and tenants who fail to pay the user fee," said the Special Commissioner.

It is estimated that Bescom has around 46 lakh residential consumers and 6.5 lakh commercial consumers in the city. Bescom is expected to receive five per cent of the user fee collected from residential and com-

mercial consumers. It is said that the supply of electricity will not be disconnected if the property owners fail to pay the user fee.

Demanding that the BBMP authorities withdraw the user fee, the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry president Perikal M Sundar said that he would oppose the collection of user fee.

"We have been demanding that Bescom waive off collecting minimum charges from the industries that are shut down. We will approach higher authorities against collection of the user fee," said Sundar. Meanwhile, Sandhya Narayan of the Solid Waste Management Round Table has welcomed the BBMP's decision.

Contractors threaten strike

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

days a month since each employee should mandatorily be given one weekly off. Extra staff, contractors say, was also required during the national holidays. Now here's the rub. The BBMP's contract – and the monthly payment of Rs 56,000 – includes the 16 per cent surcharge for additional staff for weekly offs and holidays. Yet, contractors managed to extract the additional amount from the BBMP at its zonal offices (no prizes for guessing how). This resulted in BBMP paying its contractors an extra Rs 3.58 crore per month.

"The contractors won the project for Rs 56,000 per auto tipper. It is the contractor's responsibility to pay for the driver and the helper. No way did the contract letter mention about the 16% additional payment," says Maddineni.

With the contractors standing firm on the addi-



tional 16 per cent on every vehicle, the monthly release of payment has been put on hold since June this year (Palike was forced to release payments for April and May after contractors threatened to go on strike).

Last week, the Bangalore Mahanagara Swachathe Matthu Lorry Malikara Hagoo Guthigedarara Sangh

threatened to stop collection and transportation of waste, starting from Monday, November 30. However, officials said a meeting has been scheduled between the BBMP, labour department and the garbage contractors' association on Monday to sort out the issue. The BBMP would also look at ways of recovering the additional amount it paid all these years. But don't get your hopes up just yet, since the contractor mafia carries some serious heft.

The BBMP has been spending roughly about Rs 22 crore a month on waste collection from houses and commercial establishments. Of late, the civic body has been coming up with several measures to improve transparency in the functioning of solid waste management – for instance, each vehicle is required to have radio-frequency identification card (RFID) and GPS in order to get payments for their work.

KRDCL gets upper hand

Palike's second attempt to retain the 191-km, high-density corridors under its custody unsuccessful, with State government sticking to its previous decision

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

A total of 12 major roads – which see the maximum volume of traffic as compared to other roads in the City – will be developed and maintained by the Karnataka Road Development Corporation Ltd (KRDCL) for the next five years. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMPs) second attempt to retain about 191-km of high-density corridors under its custody has been unsuccessful with the state government sticking to its previous decision.

Last week, the Urban Development department (UDD) issued an order stating that the initial improvement and annual maintenance of 12 corridors, including the outer ring road will be the responsibility of KRDCL.

Although these roads were handed over to the KRDCL earlier this year, the BBMP had made a fresh request to the government to reconsider its decision on many grounds, including that the civic body is better positioned to maintain the road as it already has a separate road infrastructure division and does not require additional administrative expenses.

Sources said that the state cabinet, which met on last October, decided to stick to its stand, following pressure from the newly-appointed chairman of KRDCL K Shivanagowda Nayaka, who is also an MLA from Devagurga in Raichur district.

As per the government order, the KRDCL will spend Rs 477.29 crore towards taking up initial improvement works that include developing the footpaths, providing cycle and bus lanes wherever possible and making all the 12 roads



Although these roads, including the Mysuru Road (above), were handed over to the KRDCL earlier, the BBMP had made a fresh request stating that Palike was better positioned to maintain the roads



Attempts on to put 12 high-density roads back in BBMP's court
There are efforts to persuade state govt to go back on its decision to hand over maintenance of corridors to KRDCL
BM report on October 10

pothole-free. The government has capped annual maintenance expenditure at Rs 100 crore a year. The KRDCL has also been directed to consult the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) while finalizing the design.

A large part of the design is focused on improving visual appeal of the corridors like reflective paint, signage, bus bays, landscaping along the median

A large part of the design is focused on improving the visual appeal of the corridors such as reflective paint, signage, bus bays, landscaping along the median etc. On-street parking on these roads will be prohibited. In October, BBMP Commissioner N Manjunath Prasad had cited two examples where agencies such as Public Works Department and Bangalore Development Authority did not maintain about 474-km roads after the defect liability period of the contract was over. "If the road is in bad shape, people point out

at BBMP. They do not know under whose custody the major roads fall," he had said in the letter to the UDD.

"A large part of the ORR is in good shape. Some of the major roads including Bannerghatta road, Kanakapura road and Mysuru need immediate attention. The BBMP was given a chance to maintain these roads well but they were not upto the mark. There is nothing wrong in giving a chance to KRDCL," Shankar MS, a resident of Banaswadi and a marketing executive said.

ANANTHA SUBRAMANYAM K

Fence will hence keep debris out at this lake

After years of neglect, Palike is fencing Gangashetty Lake



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Gangashetty Lake in KR Puram was in a state of neglect for many years. It had turned into a dumping ground for all types of debris and garbage by lazy residents and unscrupulous building contractors. The lake was on the verge of dying since the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Lakes Department did not take up any developmental work here.

However, the lake will be getting a new lease of life as BBMP authorities have started fencing the lake land. Residents, lake activists and environmentalists are happy about the development. It is believed that a land dispute between the BBMP Lakes Department and private property owners prevented the civic body from fencing the lake all these years.

"I came to know that the dispute was settled in a court. Now, the lake has some identity with fixed boundaries on its four sides. The fence will prevent dumping of debris in the lake," said Balaji Raghothaman, a lake activist.



The lake was being used as a dumping ground for garbage and debris

ing machines. Residents were up in arms against this. Later, the contractor of mechanical sweeping machines removed the dust from the lake bund.

"I am very happy with the BBMP Lakes Department for taking measures to fence the lake land. I want the authorities to rejuvenate the lake as early as possible," said Vishwa Reddy, a lake activist.

Expressing disappointment over BBMP authorities' failure to fence the entire lake, R Devaraj, a resident said the authorities have to protect the lake from the encroachers. "I expected the BBMP authorities to fence the entire lake," he said.

Meanwhile, BBMP Lakes Department Executive Engineer Ravi said that fencing is being carried out on one side of the lake. "There are some encroachments on the lake land. The tahsildar has to take measures to clear them. We will fence the remaining portion of the lake after all the encroachments are cleared," said Ravi. Apart from debris and heaps of dust, the lake, situated opposite to the Tahsildar office at KR Puram, is full of hyacinth.

“ There are some encroachments on the lake land. We will fence the remaining portion of the lake after all the encroachments are cleared

—Ravi, BBMP Executive Engineer

He said that fencing of the lake land would facilitate the BBMP Lakes Department to take up other developmental projects at the lake.

It may be recalled a portion of the lake land was being used to dump dust collected by mechanical sweep-

City Records 686 New Cases of Covid

Bengaluru: Bengaluru accounted for 53% (686) of the new Covid cases reported in Karnataka on Sunday as the tally in the city rose to 369,290. With 1,291 fresh cases the state's case count reached 883,899. As many as 1,530 people in the state recovered and were discharged in the past 24 hours. Of them, 723 were from Bengaluru. Meanwhile, 15 people died of Covid, with many districts not recording any new fatalities. Ten of them were from Bengaluru. The state conducted 105,428 tests in a single day, taking the total tests to more than 10 million.

Andhra crossed a major milestone on Sun-

day as it completed one crore sample tests. The state saw an addition of 620 fresh cases, taking the gross positives to 8,67,683, a health bulletin

1,291

FRESH CASES REPORTED IN THE STATE

said. Kerala registered 5,643 fresh cases, taking the total caseload to almost six lakh, while the toll mounted to 2,223 with 27 related deaths, health minister KK Shailaja said. TN state media bulletin said that nine people succumbed to the infection taking the death toll to 11,703; 1,459 people tested positive. — Our Bureau & Agencies

P3

BACK IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS



ALL FUN & GAMES

With the decline of daily Covid cases reported in Bengaluru, people have started resuming outdoor physical activities. Youngsters, including the differently abled, played cricket and other sports at Chandragupta Maurya ground in Jayanagar on Sunday.

N NARASIMHA MURTHY

P3

Among seniors, those in 60s have lowest CFR in Karnataka

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Bengaluru: While Covid-19 gaining a fatal edge in senior citizens was anticipated, those in the youngest (60-69) and the oldest (centenarians) age brackets among the infected elders have reported the lowest case fatality rates (CFR) in Karnataka.

Multiple doctors TOI spoke with said most of the deaths have involved patients with comorbidities. They said access to healthcare and early detection may have helped those in their 60s, while centenarians have good genes and mild infection, among other things, to thank for.

Among the 8.8 lakh Covid-19 cases reported in Karnataka till November 28, at least 16% — or 1.4 lakh — were senior citizens aged above 60

100+ DO WELL

Here's how those in 60-69 and centenarians beat Covid

- ▶ Seniors in 60s: Access to good healthcare, early Covid detection
- ▶ 100+: Good genes, mild cases

1.4L Seniors infected in K'taka	11k+ Total deaths in state
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Most of them (100+) were healthy with no other health conditions and have responded well to treatment

CN Manjunath | EXPERT PANEL CHIEF

years. But the seniors accounted for 61% of the nearly 11,800 Covid-19 deaths in the state, reiterating the high vulnerability of people in this category.

According to government data, patients in the 60-69 age group account for 63% of the cases among senior citizens but only 49% deaths, while centenarians account for 0.04% in both cases and de-

Medical colleges reopen tomorrow

Medical and dental colleges will reopen on Tuesday, and students and faculty members must undergo RT-PCR Covid-19 tests and produce the report before re-entering campus. Any student who develops symptoms after joining classes must take the RT-PCR test afresh. **Page 2**

aths. Dr CN Manjunath, chairperson, Covid expert panel, said: "Given that people in this age group are among the most vulnerable, numbers reiterate how efficiently the system — access to healthcare and strong treatment protocols — has worked."

▶ 'Those in their 90s', P 4


Ahead of elections, 33 gram panchayats in state get urban tag

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Bengaluru: With the panchayat election bugle set to be sounded soon, 33 gram panchayats across the state have been upgraded into or made part of an urban local body (ULB) in the past two months, and 100 more will get the tag in the next two years.

Though the urban agglomeration is the official reason behind the panchayat-upgrade decision, sources said a village in an urban local body will enjoy more electoral significance and get more attention than under a gram panchayat. Elections to gram panchayats were to be held this year, but had to be postponed due to the outbreak of pandemic. ULB polls are likely to be held next year.

Law minister JC Madhuswamy said population in these villages had crossed 15,000 threshold, prompting upgrade of panchayats. "Everyone has to grow. Should these panchayats not urbanise? When

 If a habitation has achieved an urban character and its zonal gram panchayat and deputy commissioner send in a recommendation to us, then we support its upgrade

LK Atheeq | PRINCIPAL
SECRETARY, RURAL DEVELOPMENT
& PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT

we speak of panchayats which are attached to cities like Bengaluru, it is a much-needed process," he had said after the cabinet approved the proposal on Friday.

Six gram panchayats will be added to Bengaluru, five to Belagavi and three each to Shivamogga and Mysuru. Rest of the panchayats are spread across seven districts.

In 2018, Karnataka had 6,021 gram panchayats. With this upgrade, the number of panchayats will come down to 5,976.

► To help ruling party, P 6

P1

B'LURU WATCH			
Covid figures as on Nov 29			
Cases	Active	Cured	Deaths
3,69,290	18,319	3,46,839	4,132

P1

KARNATAKA COVID TRACKER CASES IN 24 HRS: 1,291 DEATHS IN 24 HRS: 15 TOTAL: 8,83,899 TOTAL DEATHS: 11,765		CASE BREAK-UP ON SUNDAY Bengaluru Urban: 686 Dakshina Kannada: 48 Mandya: 48 Hassan: 41 Tumakuru: 39 Udupi: 38 Bengaluru Rural: 38 Mysuru: 37 Belagavi: 25 Koppal (57) had the least number of active cases, followed by Bidar (64), Ramanagara (72) and Gadag (76). Seven districts reported less than 10 fresh cases.	PATIENT STATUS ON SUNDAY: 686 TOTAL DISCHARGED: 8,47,611 ACTIVE CASES: 24,503 The state conducted 1,05,428 tests on Sunday. Of these, 13,223 were rapid antigen detection tests, while RT-PCR and others made the rest. Positivity rate for the day stood at 1.2%.	FATALITIES ON SUNDAY Bengaluru Urban: 10 Mysuru: 2 Dakshina Kannada: 1 Uttara Kannada: 1 Tumakuru: 1 Of the fatalities, 13 were men and two died at their residences. The women – both in Bengaluru – were aged 71 and 67 years.	ACTIVE CASES Bengaluru Urban: 18,319 Dakshina Kannada: 498 Tumakuru: 459 Mysuru: 424 Bengaluru Rural: 379 Hassan: 374 Mandya: 318 Chitradurga: 314 Belagavi: 274
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P2

25 in Karnataka lived through 2 pandemics

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Bengaluru: More than a century before Covid-19 crippled the world, the Spanish Flu of 1918 was described as the “pandemic of a lifetime”. While it was precisely an experience of a lifetime for most people, some who survived that scourge have been witness to the current pandemic that is sweeping across the globe.

Data accessed from the government of Karnataka shows that the state has at least 25 such patients — 12 women and 13 men — who witnessed the first pandemic and defied an infection from the second. Remarkably, on both occasions, they were in the most vulnerable age groups.

Dr Anoop Amarnath, geriatrician and member of the state’s Covid-19 critical care support group which oversees treatment for such patients, said: “We treated one woman from Chitradurga, who was more than 110-years-old. I think one factor that has worked with people in this group is the absence of comorbidities. This indicates that they are better at recovering from both communicable and non-communicable infections.”

Of the 60 centenarians infected by Covid-19 in Karnataka, 22 are aged exactly 100 years, while 13 are aged between 101 and 102. The remaining 25, including some as old



PTI

SPANNING A CENTURY

60 Number of patients aged 100 years or more	3 Deaths
5 Patients still under treatment	52 Discharged
25 Were alive during Spanish Flu	12 female 13 male
24 recovered	11 are in Bengaluru

as 116 and 119, have witnessed both the pandemics.

Of this latter group, 24 have already been discharged, and a 105-year-old patient, who tested positive on November 5, is still re-

covering from the disease. While it could not be immediately ascertained if any of these patients had also contracted the Spanish Flu, the fact that most of them were under 10 years means they were vulnerable to infection.

Amarnath added: “We also noticed that the infection in almost all of these people was mild. Another thing that could have helped them is what we call immunosenescence [gradual deterioration of immune system] which prevents excess response from the body’s immune system that could trigger other complications.”

Bengaluru, with 11 such patients, has the highest share followed by Tumakuru (3), while Belagavi and Koppal have two each. The others are spread across Hassan, Uttara Kannada, Chamaraajanagar, Chitradurga, Chikkaballapura, Koppal, Davanagere and Kodagu.

Dr CN Manjunath, chairperson, Covid expert committee, said: “I think just like we have the obesity paradox [people are obese but without any other ailment that obesity usually causes], we can call this the 100-year paradox: There have been many cases where centenarians do not have any ailment associated with age. Even among Covid patients, you can see that most of them did not have comorbidities which helped their cause tremendously.”

P2

WARDING OFF THE VIRUS

- Only colleges that are outside containment zones to function.
- Students and staff living in containment zones barred from attending classes on campus.
- All institutions with healthcare facilities (hospitals) must continue patient-centric care and academic activities cautiously.
- Only one student per seat is allowed on college buses. Each bus should carry only 1/3rd its capacity to maintain physical distance.

PRECAUTIONS FOR HOSTELS

- Hostel students travelling from international destinations need to enrol on <http://sevasindhu.karantaka.gov.in/Sevasindhu/English>.
- All hostel establishments must have adequate light and a good ventilation system.
- Fumigation/disinfection/sanitisation must be carried out in the hostel regularly. These activities need to be documented on a housekeeping checklist.
- A separate restroom should be provided exclusively for students to freshen up as soon as they return from hospital, with facilities to dip clothes in disinfection solutions.

As MBBS colleges prepare to reopen, RT-PCR test must for students, staff

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Just as with arts and engineering colleges which reopened a fortnight ago, students and faculty of MBBS colleges, which are slated to reopen on Tuesday, will have to compulsorily undergo RT-PCR tests and produce the report to be allowed back on campuses.

The government has allowed all medical, dental, Ayush, paramedical, nursing and pharmacy colleges affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) to reopen from December 1. K Sudhakar, health minister, has requested colleges to adhere to safety guidelines prescribed by the government.

As per standard operating procedure issued by RGUHS, staff and students must undergo the test in ICMR-approved state government laboratories. They must obtain reports no later than three days before rejoining college (between November 28 and 30 for classes from December 1). Any student who develops symptoms must take an RT-PCR test afresh. Students must also produce consent letters from parents.

In its SOP document, RGUHS has asked institutions to evaluate "local situations" and implement the advisory accordingly. "Institutions may plan to reopen their campuses in a phased manner, ensuring safety, health and wellbeing of all students and staff. They should be flexible in their plan and should be ready to handle any eventuality arising due to Covid-19," RGUHS states.



BACK TO THE FUTURE: With Covid-19 cases declining across the state, playgrounds in Bengaluru were filled with youngsters on Sunday

Every institution has also been asked to constitute disaster and medical emergency (preparedness and management) teams (DMET). Each team must have a public health specialist, microbiologist, psychologist, medical social worker and counsellor. The team should be updated periodically on medical emergencies and/or disasters.

A nodal officer must be appointed in other health sciences institutions who can take up DMET activities. MoU should be made with the nearest medical college/hospital/appropriate bodies for DMET training and execution of activities.

Social distancing

The varsity has directed classes to be divided into different batches if class strength is more than expected. It has said in-person classes should be conducted for only 1/3rd of capacity in different batches. It

has suggested avoiding many assignments which may demand frequent travel outside the campus.

Protocol for exams

College authorities must prepare a micro-plan on the number of students, classrooms, teachers, staff, seating arrangements for students, vehicles and movement plan, marking of boxes on the floor outside the examination hall, etc. Colleges have been asked to train invigilators and staff prior to examinations. Students must report at least one hour prior to the scheduled time.

Infected students must take exams in a separate centre/room. They must inform the college beforehand and produce a medical certificate from their treating physician certifying that they are fit to sit for the examination. The candidate must also submit "risk consent" to take the exam.

P2

Lake activists want trees saved

Bengaluru: Conservation activists on Sunday morning gathered on the banks of Benniganahalli Lake next to Old Madras Road in Pail Layout, near KR Puram, to assess the impact infrastructure projects will have on it.

The Benniganahalli Lake Trust had commissioned the exercise in the backdrop of imminent threat to trees in the lake's vicinity due to the Metro project. While 119 trees are likely to be affected, 91 are facing the axe.

The volunteers took a walk around the lake to identify areas of encroachment, pollution and spots infested with water hyacinth.

The activists decided to get people to the lake every alternate Sunday to spread awareness about the issues pertaining to it. They will be conducting activities like yoga and cycling, display posters and use social media to spread awareness.

Spread over 15 acres, Benniganahalli Lake was revived last year.

Trust secretary NH Subramanian said: "We are not against development. We would be more than happy if the Metro station here is named after the lake. But there is a need to sit and discuss if we can bring down the numbers trees that will have to be cut." **TNN**

P2

13 years on, 110 villages under BBMP lack infra

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Bengaluru: Thirteen years and two civic elections after they were merged into Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike to become Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, 110 villages on the outskirts continue to wallow in administrative apathy. That some of these villages are part of high revenue-yielding areas like Mahadevapura, Whitefield and Sarjapur has not helped them get proper roads and basic amenities like bus stands.

"We do not have a single footpath; we are forced to stand on the main roads for buses or cabs," said Suhas Gupta, a software employee of a private company located on Sarjapur Road.

Three years after these villages joined the city civic body, the first civic polls were held in 2010 and five years later, BBMP got its second elected body. Elections are due now and the government is coming up with various excuses to de-

6 The areas are under development. There are many localities in Bengaluru which are older than these and yet lack facilities. How can these areas be developed overnight? In a few more months, this place will have all the public facilities promised

— **BBMP official**

lay them. Among the reasons cited is the need to increase the number of wards to ensure better administration.

But there seems little hope of things changing on the ground. Debanjani Mukherji, a resident of Thubarahalli, says that for four years now she has only seen the road condition deteriorate. "They only do some bit of pothole filling, but not a single stretch in neatly asphalted. BBMP only keeps giving false hopes," she added.

Not just Thubarahalli, all 110 villages hardly have footpaths, and if they do, they are filled with hawkers and parked bikes, said Mukherji,

adding: "It's a total failure of the system."

With the lockdown lifted and things getting back to normal, many software companies located in Whitefield and Mahadevapura have resumed operations.

Techies are getting back to their workplace and are relying on public transport for the same, but poor infrastructure is a big obstacle.

Recently, Whitfield Rising posted a picture of people standing on the footpath and waiting for a bus, prompting Twitter user Chethan Kumar to comment, "...We are not a smart city for 10 years [sic]."

Prajwal Acharya, a software employee working near ITPL, said people don't even know that a bus stop actually exists at the spot.

"They stand at a common place and the bus actually stops there. We don't have a proper bus stand. We just stand near a local shop and the buses make a halt. This in turn hinders traffic movement. Nobody monitors things," said the BTM Layout resident.

Covid-19: Those in 90s have highest CFR

► Continued from page 1

Dr CN Manjunath said: "Most of these deaths would be from the early stages of the pandemic. With more awareness and early admission, we've managed to save more."

Those in the 70-99 years group account for 38% of cases among seniors and 51% deaths. A break-up of the age groups shows that those in their 90s have the highest CFR. Patients in the 70s account for 28% of cases and 35% deaths. At least six of every 100 patients in this age group have died compared to just four among those in their 60s and five among patients aged 100 years or more.

Comparatively, those in their 80s have a CFR of 9% (9 out of 100 die) and patients aged between 90 and 99 years have a CFR of 11.4%. Together, patients in these two age categories account for 9% of the cases and 16% of the deaths among seniors.

100+ category survivors

So far as centenarians go, of the 60 infected, 52 have been discharged and five are under treatment. Only three (5%) have succumbed to Covid-19.

Manjunath said: "Most of them were healthy with no other medical conditions and have responded very well to treatment. We think that most, if not all five still under treatment, will also recover."

PANDEMIC TREND

Age group	Cases	Deaths	CFR
60-69 yrs	88,353	3,535	4%
70-79 yrs	39,935	2,484	6.2%
80-89 yrs	11,048	1,005	9%
90-99 yrs	1,296	148	11.4%
100 + yrs	60	3	5%
Total	1,40,692	7,175	5%



Source: Karnataka Covid-19 War Room | Data up to Nov 28

Data shows only two of 60 patients had comorbidities — a 103-year-old Tumakuru woman had hypertension and a 105-year-old Chamarajanager woman had hypertension and diabetes. Both have recovered. Dr Anoop Amarnath, geriatrician and member of the Covid-19 critical care sup-

port group, said: "Among other things that may have helped them, including a generally healthy body, is the fact that infection in most of these cases was mild. That they may have been insulated from the public even before the lockdown and other restrictions may have aided them."

Asymptomatic patients 4 times less likely to spread virus: Study

Coughing, Sneezing Play A Key Role In Discharging Infection

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New Delhi: Symptomatic people with Covid-19 infection tend to spread the virus far more than those who are asymptomatic as coughing and sneezing play a key role in discharging the infection to a large distance and for a longer period of time, public health experts said while underscoring the importance of early isolation, testing and contact tracing to ensure the chain of transmission is broken. Findings of a study conducted by researchers at the Imperial College London showed asymptomatic Covid-19 patients were four times less likely to spread the infection than symptomatic ones.

"If one is asymptomatic, he or she is not coughing and sneezing etc. So, the chance of spreading infection to a large distance becomes less. Also, the duration of the viral load is shorter in such people as compared to those who have symptoms," All India Institute of Medical Sciences director Dr Randeep Guleria said.

According to Dr K Srinath Reddy, president, Public Health Foundation of India, symptomatic people infected with Covid-19 also posed more danger because the proportion of such people in



Duration of the viral load is shorter in asymptomatic people as compared to those who have symptoms, a study conducted by researchers at the Imperial College London showed

the population was much higher than those who were asymptomatic. Initially, it was felt that the pandemic was being driven more by asymptomatic people because it is difficult to identify, test and isolate them.

However, the study provides new evidence to what epidemiologists, many health experts and even the World Health Organisation was highlighting that pre-symp-

tomatic and symptomatic cases are the ones causing more infection.

The study — a statistical analysis of dozens of contact-tracing reports — also showed that the highest risk of infection came from sharing a home with an infected individual. "Those with symptoms must get themselves tested and isolate themselves as early as possible because chances of spreading

the virus is maximum during the first one or two days," Dr Guleria said.

"The study actually further reinforces that you must test all those who are symptomatic early and within the first 48 to 72 hours do detail contact tracing and quarantine all the contacts to help break the chain of transmission," he added.

However, experts also warned that less likelihood of spreading did not mean that asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic people should not be managed or isolated.

"The chances of spread from asymptomatic persons are less is logical and possibly true but to infer from that asymptomatic person does not pose threat may be incorrect," Dr Reddy said, underlining the need to adopt Covid-appropriate behaviour like wearing masks, maintaining physical distance and hand hygiene in daily life and even within a household, particularly if one has come in contact with any positive case.

"The real challenge is with isolating a mildly symptomatic person at home as you have to make sure that at home, all the precautions are taken like all family members wearing masks and trying to keep the house as ventilated as possible," he added.

Post-Covid lung fibrosis could be tsunami after quake: Paper

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: As Covid-19 is a respiratory ailment, it is not surprising that lungs are the most commonly affected organ. But city doctors are worried about the extent of damage the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes Covid-19, can cause in the lungs.

A review paper published in the November issue of Lung India, the peer-reviewed and indexed medical journal of the Indian Chest Society, said, "Post-Covid lung fibrosis" could be the tsunami that will follow the earthquake (caused by Covid)."

The article's lead author, Dr Zarir Udwadia, said the review was prompted by the "dreadful fibrosis we are routinely seeing." In the initial days of the pandemic, while doctors were still not clear about the virus's ability to cause pneumonia as well as blood clots in the lungs, many patients sought treatment late that resulted in heavy scarring of lung tissues due to advanced infection.

"Physicians are likely to encounter potentially hundreds of thousands with post-Covid in-



Pic used for representation only

A doc said patients with lung scarring were showing signs of healing

terstitial lung disease (PCILD)," said Dr Udwadia.

As experts have only 11 to 12 months of knowledge about Covid-19, there is no clarity over whether patients with severely affected lungs will get normal or worsen over the years to lung failure. "When many seriously ill patients were discharged in the initial Covid peak in Mumbai in May, they still had scarring in their lungs," said Dr Rahul Laud, intensivist and a member

of the state task force. "In non-Covid pneumonia, a young patient's lungs would be good within four weeks and a senior citizen's lungs could take 12 weeks," said a doctor from KEM Hospital. But such swift healing is not a part of post-Covid recovery.

Like with other scars, those on the lungs too disappear over time. Dr Laud said some patients in his post-Covid clinic had shown good recovery. "The scar tissues on the lung had disappe-

ared," he said. A doctor from a civic hospital said some of the earliest patients with severe lung scarring or fibrosis were showing signs of healing now.

Dr Udwadia's article said while the majority of those infected will not have long-term pulmonary disease, 5%-10% will develop severe Covid-19 pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. The problem with Covid is that 5% to 10% is a huge number, considering that 61 million have been infected across the world so far.

Fibrosis was rare in SARS and MERS. They infected only tens of thousands, and long-term follow-up showed progress even in the worst-hit patients in 6-odd months. "The natural history of these severely affected patients is unclear at present, but using our knowledge of... SARS & MERS, we would hypothesize that the majority will stabilize or improve over time, although some will progress to advanced lung fibrosis or post-Covid interstitial lung disease," read the article. But it listed a number of new medications that could help.