



BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE, BANGALORE

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INDEX

1. THE HINDU
2. DECCAN HERALD
3. TIMES OF INDIA
4. BANGALORE MIRROR
5. THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
6. THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Ban on year-end public events

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The State government has banned holding of public events such as parties and dance programmes from December 20, 2020 to January 2, 2021, in view of the pandemic.

The guidelines issued on Thursday also ban handshakes and hugs, and stress on the need for social distancing. Clubs, pubs, and restaurants, however, can function as usual.

DETAILS ► PAGE 3

THE HINDU

Put Xmas, New Year party plans on hold

Clubs, pubs and restaurants can function as usual, but big gatherings have been banned

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the State government has banned special parties, dance programmes, and gatherings among other public events from December 20, 2020, till January 2, 2021.

This puts to rest speculations over whether or not parties organised around Christmas and New Year in Bengaluru city and elsewhere in the State will be held this year. Big gatherings to celebrate New Year in public places and roads, where maintaining social distance is difficult, has also been banned.

The prohibition on hosting parties in clubs, pubs, restaurants, and open places, where a large number of people are likely to gather, came through an order of Chief Secretary T.M. Vijaybhaskar on Thursday that sets the guidelines for Christmas and New Year celebrations. The order, however, said clubs, pubs and restaurants can open and function as



A file photo of revellers at Brigade Road on the eve of a new year.

usual.

The Chief Secretary's order is in tune with the Ministry of Home Affairs order of November 25, which was followed by the State government order of November 27, both of which pointed out that there is a need to keep the celebration simple. The two orders had banned par-

ties in public places, housing complexes and places where big gatherings were likely.

No handshakes, hugs

While asking churches where big crowds are likely during Christmas to maintain social distance, the order has also banned handshakes and hugs during the

festival. The order equips Police Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to increase curbs on identified public places and roads.

Asking those above 65 years and children below 10 years to remain at home, the order said that as per the November 21 order, maintaining social distance, wearing

Christmas, New Year curbs

- Restrictions applicable between December 20, 2020, and January 2, 2021
- Special parties, dance programmes and D.J. parties banned in clubs, pubs, restaurants, and open spaces
- Gatherings in public places and roads banned
- Handshakes and hugs banned
- Restrictions on children below 10 years and senior citizens above 65 years continue. They have to stay home
- Restaurants, pubs, bars and clubs can be opened

face masks, and use of thermal scanning and sanitisers at hotels, malls, pubs, restaurants, and similar places remain compulsory.

The order has asked owners of hotels, pubs, restaurants, and malls to have an online pre-booking facility to prevent crowding.

Yediyurappa launches Bengaluru Mission 2022

'Progress of projects will be reviewed every six months'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The projects taken up under Bengaluru Mission 2022 for upgrading the city's infrastructure to address the growing population and number of vehicles will receive budgetary allocation and will be reviewed every six months for progress, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said here on Thursday. A task force will be set up to supervise the projects.

"There will be no shortage of funds and adequate provision will be made in the ensuing Budget," Mr. Yediyurappa told presspersons here after launching Bengaluru Mission 2022.

Projects have been identified in four key areas – mobility, clean Bengaluru, green Bengaluru, and digital services – to improve infrastructure, environment, and government services over the next two years.

According to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) administrator Gaurav Gupta, the four key areas for development were taken up after identifying eight pressing issues in the city. "All the projects are achievable, discussions with change leaders have been held, and partners have been identified. Some projects that have long gestation may take a little longer. A task force will be set up to monitor the work," he said. Simultaneously, there will be other projects taken up by the BBMP and other civic agencies, he added.

To a question on accountability in progress of work, Mr. Yediyurappa said, "I assure you that the project's progress will be reviewed once every six months. I will inspect the projects every six months."

Explaining the mission, Mr. Gupta said, "Over the past 30 years, the number of vehicles has increased four-fold while open space in the city is 78% lower than the prescribed standard. Nearly 65% of the city's population is under the age of 35 and is tech-savvy. For them, public services need to be digitalised."

Lacking in specifics

While Mr. Yediyurappa promised adequate funding through budgetary provisions, when asked about the



Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and Revenue Minister R. Ashok during the launch of Bengaluru Mission 2022 at the Vidhana Soudha on Thursday. • SUDHAKARA JAIN

Key projects

- Development of 190-km stretch on 12 high-density corridors
- Bringing 400-km stretch of arterial roads under annual maintenance contract
- Restoration of 25 lakes and monitoring water quality in 20 lakes
- Setting up learning centres on composting and zero-waste homes
- Two mega tree parks in city suburbs on an area of over 400 acres
- Waterway beautification of raja kaluves
- Redesign of Sahaya portal, a one-stop platform for grievance redressal
- Online access to citizen services
- Online access to road history

Over the past 30 years, the number of vehicles has increased four-fold while open space in the city is 78% lower than the prescribed standard. Nearly 65% of the city's population is under the age of 35 and is tech-savvy. For them, public services need to be digitalised

GAURAV GUPTA, BBMP administrator

quantum of funds required, the officials did not provide any specifics. Additional Chief Secretary Rakesh Singh said, "Finances are connected for all the projects. The State and Union governments will fund the projects."

Many of the projects that were announced as part of the mission also lacked specifics, and some of them were old projects brought into the mission now. Projects will also be taken up under the public-private partnership model.

Asked if the government had all the details on *raja*

kaluve encroachments, Chief Secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar said that on the 800-km stretch of *raja kaluves*, about 2,500 encroachments have been identified and about 1,500 encroachments removed. "Removal of the rest of the encroachments was stopped because of a court order and COVID-19. The High Court has now permitted their removal," he said.

On the status of whitetopping of roads, Mr. Gupta clarified that what has been started will be completed, while new whitetopping projects would be reviewed.

Service charge for collection of garbage rolled back

There was opposition from several quarters to the proposal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

On Thursday, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) administrator Gau-rav Gupta, while speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the launch of Bengaluru Mission 2022, said, "There is no proposal to collect additional money from citizens for solid waste management."

However, senior officials in the BBMP, who spoke to *The Hindu* on condition of anonymity, said that no decision had been taken on either levying a service charge or not collecting it.

BBMP had even written to Bescom seeking help in collection of the service charge. Senior officials said that Bescom was yet to respond to the proposal.

An official said the Solid Waste Management (SWM) bylaws, approved by the government earlier this year, allow the BBMP to levy and collect service charge for door-to-door collection of waste. This service charge, which is separate from SWM Cess that is collected along with property tax, ranges



The proposed fee is for door-to-door collection of different streams of waste. ■ BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

from ₹200 to ₹14,000 a month.

The cess, mandated by the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act, 1976, is for the general upkeep of the city, clearing black spots and street cleaning. Service charge, on the other hand, is for the delivery of a specific

service. In this case, door-to-door collection of different streams of waste.

There has been lot of opposition from several quarters to the proposal to levy a service charge. On Wednesday, Congress workers had staged a protest against the proposal.

HC orders inspection of roads

Court asks for report to be submitted by February 5

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Thursday directed the secretaries of Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA) and Bengaluru Urban District Legal Services Authority to set up teams to inspect the condition of roads in the city and submit a report by February 5.

The court directed them to identify roads for inspection and depute paralegal volunteers and advocates on the legal aid panel of KSLSA to conduct the inspection and take photographs. Paralegal volunteers are volunteers chosen from different walks of life and imparted with legal training by the legal services authorities.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay



FROM THE COURT

Shreeniwas Oka and Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty issued the directions while hearing some PIL petitions filed in the court since 2015 complaining of the poor state of roads and the failure of civic authorities to maintain them properly.

‘Hold meeting’

Both the secretaries have

been directed to also hold a meeting with the petitioners and their advocates to identify roads for inspection.

The order was issued after it was pointed out by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) counsel that the civic body did not appoint Indian Institute of Science (IISc) to conduct an audit on repair works on the city’s streets as the IISc had submitted a proposal stating that the audit would cost ₹5.4 crore.

The court had, on February 6 this year, directed the BBMP to entrust the task of auditing road repair work to the IISc to ascertain whether the work on repairing/refilling potholes was being done scientifically and whether the streets were in reasonably good condition.

Deadline for roadworks

Urban Development Minister B.A. Basavaraj on Thursday said all major roadworks under the Smart City project would be completed by March-April 2021. Acknowledging the delay in completion of works because of rains and COVID-19, he said he has been regularly reviewing their progress. "All major roadworks will be completed in March-April 2021," he said.

THE HINDU

Classes for X, XII students may resume on Jan. 1

Advisory committee has recommended that Vidyagama not be conducted for lower primary students at the start of the year

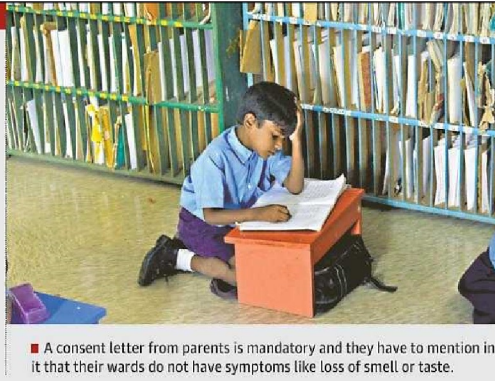
STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Schools in Karnataka are likely to resume classes on January 1 for X and XII students who are preparing for their board examinations. This was the recommendation of the COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), whose members met with officials from the Department of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Primary and Secondary Education on Thursday to discuss the reopening of schools.

In what appears to be a staggered approach to the reopening of schools, the committee said that after observing how these classes are conducted for two weeks, regular classes for students of IX and XI can be held from January 15 onwards.

SAFEGUARDS

- Children with cold, cough, fever, and other COVID-19 symptoms are not allowed to attend classes
- Parents should not send their children to schools if they have a sore throat, breathing problems, or experience a loss of smell or taste.
- After they recover, they have to bring medical reports before attending school.



■ A consent letter from parents is mandatory and they have to mention in it that their wards do not have symptoms like loss of smell or taste.

The committee has also recommended that the Vidyagama programme, which the government is set to relaunch on January 1, not be conducted for lower primary students (classes I to V). Un-

der the new format, applicable to government, private and aided schools, students can come to campus in small batches and attend classes. The committee has however said that Vidyagama can be

conducted for students of VI to IX from January 1 onwards.

The government will, in all likelihood, follow these recommendations. "In our submission to the High

Court, we have said that Vidyagama will be started from January 1 for students of I to X. But, we will in all probability follow the TAC's recommendation," a senior official of the Department of Primary and Secondary Education said.

On Wednesday, the department issued an order for Vidyagama to be relaunched from January 1. The programme which began on August 8 was put on hold on October 10 after a few students and teachers who attended them allegedly contracted COVID-19.

Primary and Secondary Education Minister S. Suresh Kumar in a press release stated that a decision will be taken after consulting Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa. The Department of Primary and Secondary Education has

said that students who have symptoms such as cough, cold, and fever should not attend classes.

Those children who have COVID-19-like symptoms cannot attend classes. The press release issued by the department states that once these students recover they have to bring medical reports before attending school.

However, despite this, many private schools affiliated with the central board that *The Hindu* spoke to said that they will not conduct Vidyagama and will continue with online classes.

"Once the State government issues an official order regarding this, we will consider conducting practical classes for X and XII students," said the principal of a CBSE school in Bengaluru.

A successful union of public and private sectors is need of the hour

COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of universal healthcare

DR. H. SUDARSHAN BALLAL

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that a country is only as strong as its healthcare infrastructure. In India, it exposed and further widened the existing fault lines in our delivery systems. Most importantly, in a country like ours, where about 70% or more of healthcare is in the private sector, we have learnt that public-private partnerships are the need of the hour in a crisis like this.

We need to strengthen our primary and public healthcare infrastructure significantly and increase both - spending as well as manpower in these areas - so that we can effectively combat the second and third wave of COVID-19, and future pandemics.

One more aspect which is absolutely important and needs to be implemented is universal healthcare for citizens. Even though the government has already taken steps to implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme and its extended programs, we need to further extend it to cover the missing middle, i.e., the middle class, especially in the self-employed and informal sectors.

That said, our experience over this year has improved our ability to deal with such similar situations should they arise in the future. We learned that the success in dealing with the pandemic was very much dependent on how well the public-private partnership between the



government and the private sector was managed. The private and public health sectors have learned to work well together during this pandemic, though there were some initial hiccups. The government taking a tough stand on hospitals failing to make beds available in accordance with the rules, through consensus and dialogue rather than coercion helped the situation.

What we got right

Ever since the first few cases of COVID-19 were diagnosed in the State in March, the government took some early steps with an effective lockdown. It set up multiple committees and a task force, and held fruitful meetings with the private sector to increase our diagnostic capacity, which is the foundation for the effective management of any pandemic. Very early in the course of the pandemic, dialogues were held with the private sector to take care of the expected rise in cases when the lockdown was phased out.

One of the very novel ideas implemented by the government was setting up of EICU and virtual consults with specialists in the private sector from Bengaluru with

hospitals in all the district headquarters. We are proud that by using tele-medicine technology, there was a significant improvement in the care of these patients and an almost 50% decrease in the fatality rates in these areas.

Demand for beds

Initially, government hospital capacity and beds were upgraded and earmarked for COVID-19 cases. But when the numbers started increasing, it was found that the beds were filling up rapidly. Following this, about 50% of beds in the private sector were dedicated to COVID-19 care. For patients whose symptoms were not severe, COVID-19 Care Centres were set up by the public and private sectors. We developed a system of home care for asymptomatic patients, which started to free up beds. Though there were some hiccups in the beginning, which was to be expected in tackling a pandemic of this scale, they were streamlined rapidly. By and large, most patients got the appropriate care, though intensive care is still a challenge. Bengaluru has around 400 high-end ICU beds and an equal number of high dependency beds, and Karnataka probably over 900.

Fortunately, there has been a significant decrease in the number of new cases by almost 70% and a significant decrease in the case fatality in Karnataka. I would imagine this is because of

the right efforts and a working public-private partnership model.

Citizen participation

Effective management of COVID-19 needs citizen participation. The decline in numbers that we are seeing would not have been possible without compliance from citizens and massive awareness campaigns. Such campaigns, along with punitive action, helped in slowing down the spread of the disease.

The hurdles that we faced were not limited to hospitals and beds, but to adjunct sectors also. One lesson learned was the need for a high concentration and flow of oxygen in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. The demand resulted in problems of oxygen supply to many of the hospitals, both in the private and government sectors. But with the efforts of all concerned, it was soon sorted out. As of now, there is no real shortage of oxygen though at times, its supply and cost have been issues that need to be resolved.

All in all, Karnataka has done well and certainly better than many other cities and States. It could be considered as a model State in the management of COVID-19. However, we have to ensure that we do not let our guard down.

Dr. H Sudarshan Ballal, Chairman, Manipal Hospitals and member of State's COVID-19 Expert Committee

India's recovery rate high: govt.

The country has registered 33,291 recoveries in the last 24 hours, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's COVID-19 recovery rate is among the highest in the world, the Health Ministry said on Thursday. While the global figure is 70.27%, India's is 95.31%, it said. The U.S., Brazil, Russia, and Italy are reporting lower rates.

"India has registered 33,291 recoveries in the last 24 hours. About 75.63% of these new recovered cases are contributed by 10 States/ Union Territories. With 5,728 persons recovering from COVID-19, Kerala has recorded maximum number of recoveries, Maharashtra registered 3,887 recoveries, while West Bengal registered 2,767 recoveries," noted the data released by the Ministry.

24,010 new cases

India has registered 24,010 new cases in the 24 hours with 10 States and Union Territories contributing 78.27% of them.

Kerala reported 6,185 cases in the 24 hours, West Ben-

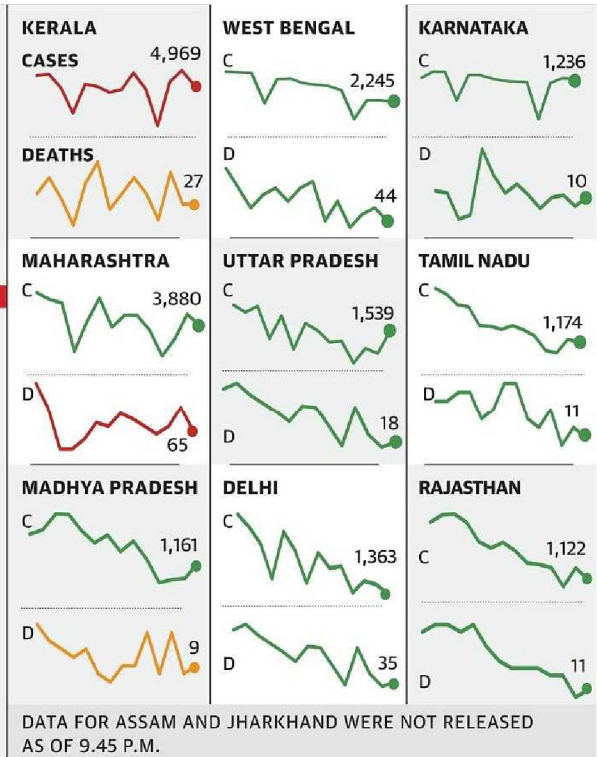
Viral tracker

With 26,974 new COVID-19 cases recorded on Thursday, India's tally inched towards the 1 crore mark with 99,77,372 cases. As many as 281 deaths were added. A total of 15.78 crore samples were tested as of December 16, according to the ICMR

NEW CASES AND DEATHS



The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases and deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases and deaths are rising (red line); if they are lower, then dropping (green line); if they are similar, then cases and deaths are flatlining (orange line) in that State



gal recorded 2,293, while Chhattisgarh registered 1,661. Also 79.15% of the 355 case fatalities reported in the past 24 hours are from 10 States and Union Territories. Of the new fatalities, 95

(26.76%) were reported from Maharashtra. West Bengal recorded a fatality count of 46, while Delhi reported 32 deaths.

"India has registered a steady decline in the number

of daily deaths. The case fatality rate is sustained at 1.45% and is consistently decreasing. India's fatality rate is one of the lowest in the world," the Health Ministry added.

DH



DECCAN HERALD

DH

DECCAN HERALD

BBMP bins 'user fee' move on waste disposal

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on Thursday withdrew the proposal to charge Rs 200 as 'user fee' for waste disposal following backlash from citizens and civic groups.

The civic body also clarified that there is no such proposal before it, even though it had recently proposed to collect user fees along with monthly electricity bills.

BBMP Commissioner N Manjunatha Prasad had recently written to Additional Chief Secretary, Urban Development Department, and Managing Director, Bescom,

in this regard.

Criticising the BBMP's move, several political parties had staged protests in the city.

On Thursday, BBMP Administrator Gaurav Gupta told reporters that there was "no new proposal" before him when asked about levying 'user fee' for garbage management.

Clarifying on the issue, BBMP Commissioner said the idea of collecting 'user fee' "had remained at the proposal level and no decision was taken till date". For now, Prasad said, the civic body had decided "not to proceed with the idea".

SC to consider plea on BBMP, Page 2

Set up panel to inspect roads in B'luru: HC to legal services authority

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday directed the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA) to form teams to inspect the condition of the roads in Bengaluru. The KSLSA has been directed to submit a report by February 5.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka was hearing a PIL filed in 2015 on bad roads in the city.

A report by the teams would help in deciding the correctness of the compliance report

filed by the BBMP, it said.

The bench directed the secretary of KSLSA to set up a team of paralegal volunteers and advocates in coordination with the secretary of the Bengaluru Urban District Legal Services Authority. The teams will identify public roads in different parts of the city under the BBMP's jurisdiction.

Members who are willing to do pro bono work shall be requested by the secretaries of the legal services authority to visit the designated public streets with a view to ascertain its present condition, the

court said. "It will be appropriate if the secretary of the legal services authority invites the petitioners and the counsel for a meeting and decide which public street should be inspected. The volunteers or advocates nominated by the secretaries shall act as commissioners of this court."

The petitioners have sought a direction to the BBMP to submit an action-taken report on killer potholes and provide a mechanism to enable citizens to file complaints about the poor condition of the roads.

State bans DJ events, parties for New Year

BENGALURU, DHNS: The state government has banned special DJ events, dance parties and other celebrations between December 30 and January 2.

In a series of guidelines issued ahead of Christmas and New Year, it also banned handshakes and hugs to minimise the spread of Covid-19.

Church congregations must adhere to social distancing.

The government stipulated rigorous social distancing at clubs, pubs, restaurants and similar places of recreation. They must adopt online bookings to ensure limited attendance.

Details on Page 2

No DJ events, parties this NYE

Rigorous social-distancing at pubs, restaurants: Govt

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government has banned special DJ events, dance parties and other celebrations between December 30 and January 2.

In a series of detailed guidelines issued ahead of Christmas and New Year, the government also banned handshakes and hugs to minimise the spread of Covid-19.

Church congregations must strictly adhere to social-distancing and enforce the use of sanitisers and masks.

In a two-page order signed by Chief Secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar, the government stipulated rigorous social-distancing at clubs, pubs, restaurants and similar places of recreation. Police have been asked to deploy additional forces to ensure social-distancing.

Large crowds of people are

CHRISTMAS AND NYE GUIDELINES

Dos

- Social-distancing and sanitisers for church-goers.
- Social-distancing at clubs, pubs, restaurants and similar places of recreation between Dec 30 and Jan 2.
- Masks, social-distancing and thermal screening at all public spaces.
- Hotels, malls, pubs and restaurants should take online bookings to limit crowds.
- Only green fireworks are permitted.

Don'ts

- No large gatherings at clubs, pubs, restaurants and similar places of recreation between Dec 30 and Jan 2.
- No special DJ dance parties.
- People aged over 65 and children under 10 should stay home

not permitted to congregate in public spaces. Thermal screening facilities are to be deployed in primary places. "While people can continue

their daily activities, the assemblies of crowds or congregation of too many people is prohibited," the government added.

Hotels, malls, pubs and restaurants are required to adopt online bookings to ensure attendance by a limited number of people.

"Senior citizens over 65 and children under the age of 10 are not to visit public places," the government said.

All officials, including police, BBMP and health officials, must ensure that central and state government notifications regarding social-distancing are followed.

"Individuals acting in contravention of directions will be prosecuted under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, plus legal action under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code," the government order said.

B'luru to be revamped

CM launches Mission 2022 to make tech hub 'one of world's best cities'



B S Yediyurappa

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Thursday unveiled 'Bengaluru Mission 2022', an ambitious programme to revamp the state capital that is currently grappling with myriad problems ranging from garbage to

traffic to loss of greenery.

The new plan, Yediyurappa said, will make the tech hub "one of the best cities in the world" over the next two years.

Launching the programme, Yediyurappa said the government was looking at overhauling the state capital under four themes: faster commute,

cleaner city, greener city and citizen connect. "Bengaluru should once again reclaim the glory of being the Garden City," he said.

The Chief Minister assured there would be no dearth of funds, even as the state's finances are under severe stress due to the pandemic. "Budget has been allocated for all planned works. We will conduct inspections once in six months and ensure all works are completed in time," he said. PM Narendra Modi is said to be the trigger for the initiative, as Modi wanted Bengaluru to be ahead of the curve on development every time he met Yediyurappa.

► **Revamped, Page 8**

HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 high-density corridors totalling 190 km
- Annual maintenance contract for 400 km arterial roads
- Refurbishing existing waste processing plants and zero waste homes
- Launching 2 mega tree parks on PSU lands
- Popularising existing mini forests
- Setting up museum at NGEF
- Innovation centre at Mysuru Lamp Factory



B'luru to be revamped

REVAMPED, FROM PAGE 1

Highlighting traffic woes, Yediyurappa said Bengaluru's traffic had increased four times over the last three decades.

"There are about 84.5 lakh vehicles causing air pollution and adding to traffic density," he said.

Talking about the garbage problem, which has eluded a solution till now, Yediyurappa said every day about 5,800 MT of garbage is generated in the city. The government would address the problem by putting in place scientific measures for garbage management, he said.

"By 2022, all the waste water generated in the city will be recycled," the CM said.

Elaborating on the plans, BBMP administrator Gaurav Gupta said the government would take up development of 12 high-density corridors adding up to 190 km.

Annual maintenance contract would be given for 400 km of arterial roads. In addition, the government will promote shared electric vehicles and ensure operation of

suburban rail within the next two years.

To ensure efficient waste management, the government will refurbish the existing waste processing plants, implement GPS-based monitoring of waste collection and rehabilitate legacy dump sites.

Citizens will be encouraged to process wet waste at home, he said.

To expand the city's lung space, the government will repurpose the lands of PSUs such as Mysore Lamps and NGEF to develop new urban lung spaces apart from launching two mega tree parks spread over 400 acres. Existing mini forests in JP Nagar, Turahalli, Kadugodi and Mathikere will also be developed into popular destinations, Gupta added.

In an effort to make citizen services easily accessible, the Sahaya portal will be redesigned as a one-stop platform for grievance redressal.

The government will also establish a Bengaluru Culture, Heritage and Crafts Museum at NGEF to acquaint the huge migrant population in the city with the state's culture.

DH



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GESTURE OF GRATITUDE



Artist Paramesh, in the costume of a doctor, civic worker and policeman, is collecting 500 postcards from people to send them to the prime minister to express gratitude to corona warriors, in Bengaluru on Thursday. DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGH T

Lacking in vision

Why should MLAs, MPs sit in the city council and influence decision making at the local level?

A RAVINDRA

Patrick Geddes, noted Scottish geographer and town planner of the early 20th century, conceived of the city as an inclusive and integrated whole with its ecological city-region. He came to India and prepared town planning reports for about 18 cities. His holistic approach to city planning is very relevant today when towns are growing into cities and cities into metro and megacities. This has what has happened to Bengaluru which has evolved from a town with less than a million people in the 1950s to a vast urban agglomeration of 13 million.

As a new law for the IT capital of India was in the offing for quite some time, people expected that it would provide a vision that would create conditions for the development of Karnataka's capital as an economically progressive, socially inclusive, environment-friendly and well-governed city.

Unfortunately, what has been handed out to the highly civic-conscious citizens of the city is a piece of legislation that has just tinkered with the existing state municipal corporation law affecting a few changes relating to the governance of BBMP. Vital matters relating to urban planning, coordination, infrastructure development, and the role of parastatal organisations like BDA, BWSSB, BMTC and BESCOM have been ignored. Thus, the BBMP Act, 2020 is limited to the municipal area and does not include the metropolitan city as a whole.

It is surprising that the legislature committee which deliberated on the draft bill never considered the earlier reports that went into the reforms required to transform Bengaluru. The Kasturirangan Committee on the governance of the Bengaluru metropolitan region and BBMP, ABIDE's draft on Bengaluru Metropolitan Region Governance Act and the Bengaluru Governance Restructuring report submitted to the previous Congress government were the outcome of deep study and deliberations by experts that contain well-considered recommendations. It is unfortunate that political leaders have chosen to ignore the readily available expert views and based their decisions more on political considerations.

Let us consider the major features of the Act. First, the positives. Increasing the tenure of the mayor from 12 to 30 months will provide some stability to political leadership at the top. Division of the city into 15 wards and creation of zonal committees headed by a councillor can help in decentralised decision making provided necessary powers are delegated along with functions and adequate funds.

The constituency consultative committee headed by the MLA will bestow a sense of importance to the legislator in the civic management of his or her constituency but this arrangement could also create some conflicts between the legislator and the municipal authorities



as its recommendations will be purely advisory. A grievance redressal authority is a welcome feature but its success depends on its composition as well as the speed with which it can provide relief to the complainant.

Now, the provisions that are a matter of concern. In the first place, the proposal to expand the existing municipal area by a radius of one kilometre is flawed. No lesson seems to have been learnt from the previous experience of extending the city limits from 250 to 740 sq km in 2007. Even after 13 years, the newly added 110 villages lack the required civic amenities. The BBMP has been struggling to manage such a vast area administratively and in terms of resources. While it is prudent to include areas which are already urbanised and have the potential to yield resources, any physical expansion by an arbitrary standard of one kilometre radius will only create more problems.

The provision giving the choice to councillors elected as MLA, MLC or MP to retain either one of the posts is self-defeating because anyone becoming a state legislator or MP becomes an

ex-officio member of the corporation council. In fact, this privilege bestowed on them cuts at the roots of local democracy and should have been deleted.

Their numbers can tilt the voting in favour or against a particular proposal of the civic body. Why should those whose legitimate role is in the state legislature or the parliament sit in the city council and influence decision making at the local level? This goes against the very spirit of democratic decentralisation.

Fee on ads

The provisions relating to collecting fee on advertisements and levy of entertainment tax are not well thought out. Local bodies already have the power to levy advertisement tax, so it will not be an additional source of revenue unless the fee is something over and above the tax, in which case, it is likely to pose legal problems.

In the case of entertainment tax, it is already subsumed under GST and levy of an additional local tax on the same item would result in a steep rise in the tax on the entertainment industry which has already suffered because of Covid-19.

The question needs to be asked if a separate Act was called for to make such marginal changes which could have well been accomplished by making suitable amendments to the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act. An exclusive law for a rapidly growing city like Bengaluru should have covered what is now termed by urban planners as the 'city-region' that includes the urban core linked to semi-urban and rural hinterland with multiple administrative units and sharing resources, enabling it to function as an integrated entity.

Such an area would provide the scale for regional planning and policymaking for economic and social development and ecological security. It would also facilitate developing a regional transportation network and other infrastructure to create the necessary ecosystem for the location of new industries and decongesting the city core.

The existing Bengaluru metropolitan region (with some modifications) could have served as the jurisdiction for the new legislation. It is an opportunity missed but an opportune time must be found at the earliest to amend or replace the BBMP Act of 2020 by more robust legislation to serve the local and global needs of a cosmopolitan city.

(The writer is former Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka)

SC to consider plea on BBMP elections

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Friday is scheduled to take up a batch of petitions, including one by the state government challenging the High Court order pertaining to the BBMP polls to 198 wards, as per the delimitation notification of September 23, 2020.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian would consider the three separate petitions filed by the state government and Baskar and Dr B R Ambedkar Dalita Sangharsha Samiti against the High Court judgement of December 4.

The High Court had also directed for holding the BBMP polls as expeditiously as possible by publishing the election programme within a maximum period of six weeks.

The petitioners, for their part, questioned the validity of the High Court's directions, saying that the state legislature has already passed the Karnataka Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2020 to increase the seats for councillors from

198 to 243 by a notification on January 14, 2020.

This was done to give due representation to Scheduled Castes and other marginalised communities in the municipal council of a large and growing city like Bengaluru, they said.

The petitioners also contended that the High Court had passed an "erroneous" judgement on a writ petition filed by the State Election Commission (SEC) and others.

The SEC neither had any locus standi nor authority to file a writ petition against a validly enacted legislation. It had rather no choice but to give effect to the amendment, they said.

The SEC, for its part, claimed that the Delimitation Commission had not yet submitted its recommendation for dividing the corporation into 243 wards and the exercise would take considerable time to be completed.

The term of the BBMP corporation expired on September 10, 2020, not due to inactivity of the state government, but in view of the prevalent pandemic, the petitioners claimed.

For every 1 case detected, state missed 90

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

For every Covid-19 positive case it detected, Karnataka missed 90 cases while more than 80 crore Indians may have been exposed to the virus by now even though most of them don't have any symptoms.

These are the new findings of an Indian Covid-19 super-model, which in its latest run with data till December 13, has found that nearly 60% of the Indian population may have been exposed to the Covid-19 virus, making it harder for the virus to find susceptible individuals.

Also, there was an uptick in the numbers in November, but the rise was not as much as feared, according to the model created by a group of scientists put together by the Department of Science and Technology.

"This may be an explanation why India never saw a second surge in the epidemic as apprehended. This, however, is only a finding of our model and there is no independent validation," mathematician Manindra Agrawal, dean at Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and one of the members of the DST team told *DH*.

Going by the supermodel's



A BBMP medical staffer collects Covid test samples in Bengaluru on Thursday.

DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

prediction in UP and Bihar, for every detected Covid positive case, there have been around 300 who escaped the surveillance net. For Kerala and Delhi with better testing coverage, there were 20 undetected cases for every detected case. The national average is 1:90, which is the same as Karnataka's.

This, however, didn't mean a flaw in the existing surveillance system, Agrawal explained. These individuals may not be having any symptoms and were unaware of their Covid status.

They also predicted that the epidemic in India would taper off by February 2021. The model, however, attracted criticism from several scientists for the methods adopted.

INDIA COVID CASES ON THURSDAY **26,435** **320** DEATHS

Wednesday's cases: **24,010**, Deaths: **355**

KARNATAKA CASES ON THURSDAY **1,236** **10** DEATHS

Wednesday's cases: **1,240**, Deaths: **6**

TILL
9.45 PM,
SOURCE:
DHNS/
PTI



Sri Narendra Modi
Honourable Prime Minister of India



BENGALURU MISSION 2022

Revitalizing Bengaluru...



Sri B.S. Yediyurappa
Honourable Chief Minister of Karnataka

Bengaluru is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. It has many feathers to its cap apart from being the haven of technology and knowledge driven industries. Providing world class amenities and facilities to this globally renowned city is the priority of our Government.


Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and programmes for Urban Development has accelerated systematic growth of cities including Bengaluru. Under his able leadership, there has been a paradigm shift in the Indian Urban Landscapes with more cleaner and greener cities.

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa led Government has envisaged systematic growth of Bengaluru city, which is globally renowned and witnessing rapid growth.

Government has identified the problems and challenges citizens face in everyday life and has resolved to provide all necessary infrastructure and other basic amenities to the citizens to make it the best place to live. Government has chalked out a blue print for the development of the city in next two years and has launched **Bengaluru Mission 2022**.

Under Bengaluru Mission 2022, 4 major challenge areas and proposed new age solutions have been identified:

1. ENABLING FASTER COMMUTE




EFFICIENT CITY HIGHWAYS

- 12 high-density corridors, totaling 190 kms, to be taken up in mission-mode by KRDCL
- Accelerated completion of **Smart-city roads**
- Annual maintenance contract for arterial roads which total 400 kms in length
- Enhanced road appearance ensured by undertaking kerb stone-painting and lane markings
- Installation of **synchronous signal lights**

SMART MOBILITY

- Promotion of Shared Electric Vehicle mobility across the city
- Faster metro completion
- Expanding Bus priority lanes
- Operationalisation of suburban rail to ease traffic and reduce pollution

2. SWACHHA BENGALURU (CLEANER BENGALURU)



INTEGRATED CITY WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Specialized entity for waste management for end-to-end professional management of municipal solid waste
- Rehabilitate and refurbish existing processing plants to operate at optimum capacity
- Guide and monitor solid waste collection and transportation by leveraging technology
- Remediate and rehabilitate legacy dump sites
- Plan, design and implement model **Material Recover Facility**

NAMMA KASA NAMMA JAVABDARI

- Citizen participation programmes through training of SWM trainers and Shuchi Mitra for effective micro/macro SWM planning and implementation
- Setting up of Kalika Kendras (Learning centres) in each zone for information, education and communication to the community on composting and zero waste homes
- Encourage in-house processing of wet waste through local buy-back centres for compost




3. HASIRU BENGALURU (GREENER BENGALURU)



GREENER NEIGHBOURHOODS

- Launch of 2 new urban lung spaces by repurposing state PSU lands (NGEF, Mysore Lamps)
- Launch of 2 mega-tree parks in city suburbs each measuring 400+ acres
- Popularising existing Mini-forests among citizens (Turahalli, JP Nagar, Kadugodi, Mathikere)
- Intensified monitoring of ambient air quality by increasing Air quality testing meters to 500

WATERWAYS & CLEAN LAKES

- Waterway beautification K-100 Raja Kaluve project
- Restoration of 25 lakes in Bengaluru Real-time monitoring of water quality in 20 lakes
- Enhancing water quality and improving biodiversity around lakes
- Stakeholder mobilization and volunteer participation




4. CITIZEN CONNECT



UNIFIED CITIZENS CONNECT PORTAL

- Online access to citizen services like Khata, Property Tax, Birth & Death Certificate, Trade Licenses
- Online access to road-history information for citizens
- Location-aware information to citizens on civic services, programmes and officers
- Redesign of 'Sahaya' portal, a one-stop platform for grievance redressal, to ensure better user experience for Bengaluru citizens

EXPERIENCE BENGALURU 360°

Bengaluru Culture, Heritage and Crafts Museum at NGEF

- Contemporary public recreational spaces and cultural events hub at NGEF, creating opportunities for artists, artisans and other creative professionals
- Set up of "Hihaasa" Bengaluru's technology history museum at Mysuru Lamp Factory, an interactive digital showcase of the city's journey into one of the world's premier innovation hubs
- Set-up of Bengaluru Innovation Centre at Mysuru Lamp Factory dedicated to advancing the future of entrepreneurship, Innovation and the bio-technology industry




B'luru infra to get big upgrade in 2 yrs: CM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The BS Yeddyurappa government on Thursday rolled out Bengaluru Mission 2022 that aims to revamp city infrastructure over the next two years. "It's the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to see Bengaluru as one of the best cities in the world. We'll work to fulfil his wish," he said after launching the blueprint.

The roadmap will focus on five broad areas: easing traffic bottlenecks, making public transport more accessible and affordable, impro-

Legal volunteers to check roads: Court

After BBMP said experts' consultation charge was high, the Karnataka HC on Thursday said paralegal volunteers and advocates will check pro bono the quality of certain city roads where potholes have been filled. P 3

ving lung spaces, connecting people with the city's art and culture, and providing digitally enabled services.

► Tree parks planned, P 4

Two mega tree parks planned

► Continued from page 1

The government plans to create two new lung spaces on the lines of Cubbon Park by repurposing lands of public sector undertakings NGEF and Mysuru Lamps. The government will establish a culture, heritage and crafts museum at NGEF to showcase the state's culture. An interactive digital show of the city's journey into a premier innovation hubs — Ithihaas-Bengaluru's technology history — will be set up at Mysore Lamps Factory.

Two mega tree parks, each of 400 acres, will be developed on the outskirts of the city and turn existing mini-parks at JP Nagar, Turahalli, Kadugodi and Mattikere into popular destinations. The government plans to set up a unified citizens' connect portal to make services easily accessible. The BBMP's Sahaya portal will be redesigned as a



BENGALURU MISSION 2022

- 12 high-density corridors of 190km by KRDCL
- Expansion of bus priority lanes
- Operationalisation of suburban rail
- Specialised entity for waste management

one-stop platform for grievance redressal.

To reduce traffic bottlenecks, the government plans to develop 12 high-density corridors, stretching up to 190 km, in coordination with the Karnataka Road Development Corporation. An annual maintenance contract would be given for 400km of arterial roads and it will promote shared electric vehicles and ensure operations of suburban rail within the next two years.

The government will refurbish existing waste-processing plants and implement GPS-based monitoring of waste collection and reha-

bitlate legacy dump sites to ensure efficient waste management. Yeddyurappa said funds have been set aside for all the works and they will be completed in a time-bound manner. He asserted that financial distress due to Covid-19 would not get in the way of development.

However, the opposition dubbed it as "old wine in an old bottle". "The roadmap seems to be a compilation of ongoing works and those in the pipeline. It clearly suggests the government is making attempts to lure urban voters ahead of the BBMP elections," said a Congress functionary.

BBMP chief tweets about beautified median; citizens say fix roads first

Mrinalini.Bhat@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's attempt to ride high on the success of its beautification initiative at the median on Ballari Road (near Cauvery Junction) has evoked snarky reactions on social media. "First build roads, beautification can come later," said many Bengalureans, who are tired of enduring backbreaking rides across the city.

BBMP commissioner N Manjunatha Prasad's tweet, which contained two photographs of the aesthetically landscaped median and a traffic island near Cauvery Theatre, is what triggered the discussion. While a few netizens appreciated BBMP's work, many slammed the agency for turning a blind eye to the condition of roads in their localities. "Come to Thanisandra and you can drive my car, I will sit next to you as navigator and if you dont get frustrated I will owe you a dinner at my home!!" a citizen posted.

Roads have become pain points in Bengaluru as citizens, especially those living in the outlying areas, attempt to return to normalcy. While some are dug up, many are not asphalted. Many netizens accused BBMP bigwigs of selectively beau-

SOME LAUD INITIATIVE, OTHERS ASK AGENCY TO PRIORITISE

Mahantesh G

"Beautification comes after safety, please drive your vehicle by yourself, whole Bangalore and then realise how good roads are given with tax being collected from us (sic) #safetyroadsfirst"

Anand Goddale

"Good one sir and thank you. Many such junctions need beautification. Namma Bengaluru needs better infrastructure"

Abhishek Singh

"Can't believe you're talking about beautification of roads when the entire city is not even having motorable roads. Hope you take a ride on city roads soon before hallucinating in your beauty palace (sic)."



POINT OF DEBATE: The BBMP commissioner's tweet contained two pictures — of the landscaped median and a traffic island near Cauvery Theatre

Arpan Srivastava

"Wonder how people in Bellandur and Mahadevapura feel when they see these updates from the commissioner"

Ram Mohan P

"Please plant saplings in the innumerable potholes and craters dotting the roads in Bangalore"

Vinoth Singh

"Thanisandra road stretch has been dug out in the last 18 months and the road condition is pathetic. It's not even walkable. Causing a greater inconvenience to the public and residents near by. Please do prioritise and level the roads at the earliest (sic)"

tifying streets that lead to the offices and residences of the chief minister and his cabinet colleagues. "You are only digging roads and not rebuilding them," Tweeples said, suggesting the Palike get its priorities right as broken or bad infrastructure could be life-threatening.

Work being expedited: Officials
Senior BBMP officials maintained

they are working towards making Bengaluru a better city. "The pandemic has been a hurdle; road work is being expedited," an official said.

Civic activist and Janaagraha head (civic participation) Srinivas Alavilli said: "The reaction is understandable but somewhat misplaced. BBMP is a huge organisation with many moving parts. The beautification project is likely to have be-

en executed by a team other than road maintenance. If a ward panel takes decisions about public work within the ward instead of the headquarters, locals would point to the incongruity in taking up beautification when the road is in terrible shape and prioritised their budget better. Lack of citizen participation in ward-level governance, especially in outer areas, is a problem."



SPIRITS UP: Bengalureans buy Christmas decorations on Thursday

New Year restrictions till Jan 2, says government

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The government on Thursday issued a circular urging the Christian community to keep Christmas celebrations simple and listed restrictions for New Year revelry, which will be applicable from December 30 to January 2.

The order issued by the chief secretary's office bans physical contact at churches and urges church authorities to ensure there is no overcrowding or violation of social distancing norms. "People above the age of 65 and below 10 years must celebrate at home," the circular reads.

The government reiterated Covid-19 safety norms from compulsory wearing of

masks to all other rules, citing the Centre's order from the last week of November.

Besides having to follow other Covid-19 precautions, clubs, pubs, restaurants, and other similar establishments have been ordered: "...not to allow special parties or hire DJs." They will, however, be allowed to function.

Public gathering and celebrations on roads — like the annual revelry on MG-Brigade roads — are banned but roads will remain open for regular daily activity, the order adds.

"Hotels, malls, pubs, restaurants and similar establishments must, if needed, use a token system for entry into their premises so as to prevent crowding," the order reads.

Expand trial, ICMR tells hospital

Shreyas.HS@timesgroup.com

Belagavi: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has directed Jeevan Rekha, a hospital in Belagavi conducting clinical trials of Covaxin, the indigenously developed Covid-19 vaccine candidate, to expand the scope to 1,500 people in the third phase.

The target earlier stipulated by ICMR in conjunction with vaccine developer Bharat Biotech was 1,000, but so far, the hospital has administered booster shots to only 600 volunteers.

COVAXIN TESTS

Although the hospital has struggled to convince individuals to enrol for the third phase, as a centre, it has been doing better compared to others in the country. The hospital did enrol 1,000 volunteers for the third phase of trials, but some of them appear to have developed cold feet or are delaying the process of getting the jab due to safety concerns.

The hospital has put out advertisements on various conventional media and social media platforms to pick up the pace. The reason for a higher target is the relatively successful performance by



Syed Asif

NO LET-UP: A BBMP health worker collects swab samples from a youth for Covid-19 tests in Bengaluru

Council chairman can take action: Min

Cooperation minister ST Somashekhar on Thursday said the chairman of the legislative council is empowered to take action against MLCs who did not observe Covid-appropriate behavior during the special one-day session on Tuesday. When it was pointed out that

several MLCs did not maintain social distancing or wear masks, Somashekhar said, "All are equal under the law. Everyone without exception must obey Covid-19 guidelines. The council chairman is empowered to initiate action against MLCs violating rules."

the hospital. Paritosh Desai, co-investigator of the trial process, said Jeevan Rekha, is in a better position in terms of the number of volunteers it has vaccinated so far.

Asked just where the hospital stands in terms of

other trial centres.

Desai said the hospital received communication from ICMR to increase the numbers by 500 people on Tuesday. "This is a huge pat on the back for the centre as it indicates ICMR's trust in this hospital," he said. It must be noted that the hospital successfully completed the first and second phase of trials.

A source in the hospital told ToI that after reports of adverse impacts of certain vaccine candidates which are in the process of being tested on humans around the world, volunteers across the country have become apprehensive about participating. This is keeping many away from centres, including Jeevan Rekha.

"But our hospital was quick to respond and find ways to convince volunteers or find new volunteers," the source said. "This helped us do better than some centres. ICMR acknowledged this and gave us additional responsibility."

On the other hand, Jeevan Rekha has also conducted second phase trials of ZyCoV-D, a vaccine candidate developed by Zydus Cadilla. A total of 275 people received shots.

numbers, Desai said, "I am bound by rules governing the trials and cannot divulge the exact position at which the hospital stands. All I can say is that we are well placed." He also refused to comment on the numbers at



HC asks volunteers, advocates to inspect potholed stretches

Vasanth.Kumar@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The high court on Thursday said paralegal volunteers and advocates will check the quality of certain city roads where pothole-filling work has been taken up.

The court passed the order after BBMP said IISc's civil engineering department had sought more than Rs 5 crore in consultation charges whereas the cost of pothole-filling work on 74 identified roads from July 2019 and January 2020 was Rs 44 lakh.

A division bench headed by chief justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka asked the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority secretary in coordination with that of Bengaluru Urban District Legal Services Authority to create a panel of paralegal volunteers and panel advocates who are willing to do pro bono service. The inspection report should be submitted by February 5. The court will hear the case on February 9.

The volunteers or advocates nominated will act as commissioners of the court, the bench said. The court, which took up the 2015 PIL relating to Bengaluru city's potholes, said inspection reports will help in deciding BBMP's stand taken in its compliance reports.

The court had appointed Dinesh Agrawal, superintending engineer, CWE (Army), Military Engineer Services, Bengaluru, as court commissioner in October 2018 to verify pothole-filling work in north and west Bengaluru.

UNDER CONTROL Deaths In November Lowest Since July | Soliga Kids Neither Attend Online Classes Nor Follow Lessons On TV

Fatality rates in Nov, Dec are lowest since Covid hit state

Chethan.Kumar@timesgroup.com

K Suril Prasad

Bengaluru: As with fresh cases, there has been a steep decrease in the number of Covid-19 fatalities in the state in November and December, resulting in the case fatality rate (CFR) — deaths per 100 cases — plunging to its lowest in the two months since the pandemic hit in March. At 0.97%, the CFR in December so far is even better than 0.99% in November.

The state reported 610 deaths in November: 340 in the first two weeks and 260 in the second half of the month. The first 16 days of December have so far seen only 193 fatalities, making the continuing decline more pronounced. While November saw 61,485 cases, the corresponding figure for the first 16 days in December stands at 19,768.

The total number of people who succumbed to the virus in November is the lowest since July (2,068), from where the number increased in August before marginally dipping in September. The decline has been significant from October (2,304). As of December, Karnataka reported a total 11,971 deaths at a CFR of 1.32%, and only 803 of these were in the



LAUDABLE GESTURE: Paramesh Jolad, a performance artist, is on a drive to collect 500 'Thank You' postcards, meant for Covid-19 warriors, from people in Bengaluru

past two months.

Experts attribute the decline in deaths to multiple factors: From improved awareness that has led to early admission in hospitals, to a dipping positivity rate that has increased the availability of beds among other things.

Other than these factors, they said the state now has a better treatment protocol compared to June or July. Having learnt lessons early on, the strategy is now streamlined even in semi-urban and rural hospitals.

Analysis of weekly death numbers shows that the second

week of November had already seen the lowest fatalities (139) since the last eight days of June, when 109 deaths were reported. Weekly deaths have further reduced from there to 109 between November 15 and 21, and 157 in the nine days between November 21 and 30.

There were only 89 deaths between December 1 and 7, and another 104 up to December 16. These two weeks, in fact, saw fewer deaths than the whole of June, which had 197 fatalities.

At 1.3%, Karnataka's overall CFR is better than India's (1.45%), and the government

ON THE WANE

Month	Cases	Deaths	CFR
Dec*	19,768	193	0.97%
Nov	61,485	610	0.99%
Oct	2,21,645	2,304	1.03%
Sept	2,59,344	3,162	1.21%
Aug	2,18,308	3,388	1.55%
July	1,08,873	2,068	1.89%
June	12,021	197	1.63%
May	2,656	27	1.01%
April	464	19	4.09%
March	101	3	2.97%
Total	9,04,665	11,971	1.32%

Source: Govt of Karnataka & Covid19India.org
*Up to Dec 16 (Not the Sum of All Months)

has been trying to bring it down to below 1%.

The CFR in November and December is better than even March. This is because March and April, which had 3% and 4% CFR, respectively, had very few cases — 101 and 464 — compared to any other month.

Also, the number of cases has been dipping consistently from October, which experts say is also indicative of the virus spread being brought under control, but add that people must still continue to take precautions given expectations of a second wave.

Karnataka needs a miracle to store, deliver and administer covid-19 vaccine as and when it arrives

ABRACA JABRA

59 mobile walk-in freezers, 930 ice-lined refrigerators, 423 deep freezers... list of cold chain infra state is awaiting is long, scary

Rajashankara.S
@TimesofBangalore
TWITTER: @RJMIRROR

The covid vaccines are coming. But we're already getting the chills because the State has a long list of things that it needs before the vials can be received, stored and distributed.

Firstly, with just three mobile walk-in freezers, the State is facing a Herculean task of transportation and distribution of vaccines to the districts, leave alone taluk and booth vaccination centres, the final destination. As per estimates, every district needs at least two mobile walk-in freezers to transport vaccines within a district. The first phase of vaccination drive will cover 4.7 lakh health workers in the government and private hospitals and Karnataka is expecting to get 4.7 lakh vials of vaccine and as many injections.

Still Require

The State is yet to receive 866 small ILRs, 64 large ILRs and 28 large DFs as per communication sent by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The State health department requires an additional 395 Deep Freezers (DFs) as only 28 DFs are coming from the Centre. In all the districts, nearly 464 DFs are out of



BENGALURU'S VAC-SCENE



use of which 255 are beyond repair and 209 condemned.

Accordingly, the State government is bracing up to ensure safe transportation and distribution of the vaccine from two State

Vaccination Stores (SVS) in Bengaluru and Kalaburagi to five Regional Vaccination Stores (RVS), work on which has just begun.

Sources in the health department said that they are preparing infrastructure for storing facilities

of 9.4 lakh vials and injections keeping in mind the booster dose to be administered after two or three weeks. "As of now we are not sure whether it would be a single

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >

State yet to freeze on vaccine storage equipment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

dose of vaccination or double dose with a gap of two or three weeks. We are preparing for both," a source said.

Available Infrastructure

Karnataka has 2,855 cold chain points for storage and distribution of vaccines to 29,451 session sites (vaccination centres) and 10,008 vaccinators as per Universal Immunisation Programme. The State has 10 Walk-in Coolers (WIC) and 4 Walk-in Freezers (WIF). In addition to this, the Centre has said it will supply three WICs and two WIFs for which necessary civil works are going on.

With existing WIC and Ice-Lined Refrigerators (ILRs) available in the state where 2 degree Celsius to 8 degree Celsius temperature is maintained, the state can store 19,98,41,280 doses of vaccine.

Similarly, the State can store 17,69,66,400 doses of vaccine with existing WIF and Deep Freezers (DFs) where minus 15 to minus 25 degree Celsius temperature can be maintained.

The government is also considering using WIC and WIF available with the Animal Husbandry department at their veterinary vaccination stores. But experts are divided on the use of these facilities for storing Covid 19 vaccine.

No Clarity

The government is yet to get a clarity on storage protocol as different vaccines will require different temperature levels. "Once we get a clarity on who the vaccine supplier is and the

temperature at which they need to be stored, we will make arrangements accordingly," a source said.

Meanwhile it is said that each of the States will get only one company vaccine and not a mixed bag of vaccines developed by different companies to maintain uniformity.

What is Planned

The government has already done rational allocation to districts and region-wise consignee details with a number of equipment to be shipped to the identified regional vaccine



stores and state vaccine stores has been communicated to MOHFW from state.

Two SVS's are being shifted to new locations. In Bengaluru, the SVS at Anand Rao Circle is being moved to Magadi Road while in Kalaburagi it will be shifted to a new building there.

To ensure a better supply chain network and distribution of vaccines, the government is in process of setting up three RVS's in Bengaluru urban, Shivamogga and Ballari. These regional centres will strengthen the existing supply chain network and help effective transport of vaccines to districts to reach their final destination centres. These newly proposed RVS's will require additional WIC and WIF.

Three WIC are planned at Bengaluru SVS, Bengaluru Urban District Vaccine Store (DVS) and Kalaburagi SVS respectively. Two WIFs are being planned at Bengaluru Urban DVS and at Kalaburagi SVS respectively.

Most Wanted

Here's what we'd like for Christmas.

- 2 mobile walk-in freezers per district
- Additional 395 Deep Freezers (DFs)
- 15 Vaccine Vans and two Refrigerated Vaccine Vans for B'uru and Kalaburagi
- Vaccine Carriers (18,944 numbers),
- Small Cold boxes (1,147),
- Large Cold Boxes (893),
- Ice packs (1,00,323),
- Stem thermometer (3,665),
- Low voltage stabilizer (684)
- High voltage stabilizer (1,132)



Manipal startup has a portable fridge ready for vaccines

The battery-powered device can be used for transportation of vials

| Hemanth CS
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TWEETS @hemanthMirror

With the covid-19 vaccination drive expected to start soon, the cold chain logistics is expected to play a crucial role in the storage and distribution of vaccines.

Storage equipment of different types is essential in ensuring the last mile delivery of the vaccines.

A Manipal-based startup, BlackFrog Technologies Pvt. Ltd, which had during the initial days of the pandemic outbreak readied and deployed Emvólio, a portable battery-operated, medical-grade refrigerator to transport viral swab samples, is now ready to deploy the same for transportation of vaccines. "Emvólio is designed as per WHO-PQS draft specifications for a portable fridge for the transport of vaccines. The device is meant for day-long immunization visits.

Further, it helps optimize human resources in vaccine delivery by removing the need for repeated immunization visits to account for the administration of unviable

vaccines. Most importantly, our battery-powered device stands apart from the competition with its unmatched portability and ease of charging," BlackFrog Technologies Pvt. Ltd, CEO and Product Architect, Mayur U Shetty told Bangalore Mirror.

He further added that Emvólio offers uniform cooling (no hot spots/cold spots within the cold chamber) and minimal freeze-thaw cycles which means that every time a user opens the lid to retrieve a vial and subjects the cold-chamber to ambient air, the rapid-cooling system in Emvólio brings the cold-chamber back to safe limits (i.e. 2-8 degrees Celsius) over 96 per cent faster than an ice-based product.

Shetty said that Emvólio is compatible to handle the various vaccines that are in trials or being distributed like Oxford/AZ Serum Institute, BBIL Covaxin, Pfizer and Moderna (see box below).

Emvólio can carry about 30 to 40 vials of 10 ml each implying that 300 to 400 people can be vaccinated each day by one user and some modifica-

Portable fridge makers for vaccine in talks with govt

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



tions have been made from the previous variant which was used for transporting viral swab samples.

"The vaccine storage capacity has

been increased to two litres (from the previous variant of 1.5 litres) to accommodate the requirements for covid-19 vaccine delivery.

Further, we've integrated advanced freeze-thaw cycles detection algorithms to determine the efficacy and any potential degradation of the vaccines. We now provide an ergonomic wearable backpack for carrying the system to remote and inaccessible areas," he added.

BlackFrog Technologies Pvt. Ltd at present has a capacity of manufacturing 300 units every month and are now scaling up their production unit to 1500 units every month by February given the demands from South Asia and Africa.

"After we have a clearer direction from MoHFW on the volume requirements India might have, we will increase our production to about 100,000 units annually with support from other ISO 13485 certified large manufacturers. We are discussing the cost with government bodies based on the volume requirements. We are also considering leasing our equipment to the ministry for express immunization," he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

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Much ado about nothing? No garbage cess proposal

Palike chief says there was never a plan to take a Rs 200-user fee for door-to-door garbage collection

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

In November D Randeep, BBMP Special Commissioner, SWM, made a startling declaration. He said, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is all set to collect Rs 200 as user fee from households for door-to-door collection of garbage in the city. Now, coming at a time when people were facing financial crises and were in trouble due to the pandemic and its aftermath, this was received with a huge furore.

Residents' welfare associations, who were shocked by this, were doing all they can to prevent this proposal. Most had written to the civic body to postpone this plan. Now, comes the great U-Turn.

The BBMP administrator Gaurav Gupta on Thursday said that there was no proposal with the BBMP to collect the user fee for collecting garbage from door to door.

He was answering a query from media persons at Bangalore Mission 2022. "There was no proposal with the BBMP to collect the user fee from the households in the city," he told media persons. Bangalore Mirror contacted BBMP Commissioner N Manjunath Prasad to know the truth of the matter. He too dismissed that the BBMP had sent a proposal to the state government. "We have no such proposal," he said.

This assurance has come at the right time for harried resident welfare associations.



Political parties had jumped on to the protest bandwagon too

There was no proposal with the BBMP to collect a user fee from households in the city

—Gaurav Gupta, BBMP administrator

Citizens' pleas heard?

"We had submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa requesting him to cancel the proposal of collecting the user fee as the BBMP has already been collecting garbage cess from property owners along with the property tax every year," said Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry president Perikal M Sundar.

Recently, PC Rao, president of Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels' Association, had also said that the decision to collect user fee for collecting garbage from door to door would be a burden on the citizens. "We oppose the decision of imposing a user fee on households and business establishments," he said.

Keshav Kumar N, president, Confederation of All Residents Welfare Association, said the association too had submitted a letter to the Chief Minister to cancel the decision. "The BBMP did not invite stakeholders to discuss the decision. It should have consulted the residents' welfare associations before taking such a decision," said Kumar.

Kasturinagar Residents' Welfare Association Joint Secretary Murugan Munirathnam said, no one was even aware so far as to how the user

fee will be collected. "We called the BBMP Commissioner's Office but an official told us to talk to Special Commissioner Ravi. When we called them up they directed us to talk to Solid Waste Management Special Commissioner. We are not against the user fee but the amount and how it will be implemented is our worry," said Munirathnam.



BM has been reporting about this plan whenever the BBMP hinted about it

Palike's plan for Mallathahalli Lake raises wall of contention

Many say proposal to build retaining wall for Rs 19 cr is violation of HC, NGT orders

ANANTHA SUBRAMANYAM K

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) plans to construct a 358-metre-long concrete retaining wall around Mallathahalli Lake in RR Nagar at a cost of Rs 19.07 crore. The project, many say, is a violation of the High Court and National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders. Lake warriors want the civic body to stop wasting public money on "unnecessary" projects when there are several inexpensive ways to fence the lake boundary.

On Thursday, the BBMP floated a short-term tender for the construction of retaining wall for Mallathahalli lake. "The action plan was prepared long back. It was first cleared by the state government. We have also got the approval for the detailed project report (DPR) by the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority (KTCDA)," a senior BBMP official said.

The KTCDA officials said that the retaining wall is being built to protect the lake from encroachments. "The wall is not being built very close to the lake," he said and added that the wall will be built on a BDA land, which was recovered from encroachers. "The recovered land, which is next to the lake, will be converted into a park. It will have a musical fountain, lawn and benches etc," a KTDCA official said. "The BBMP has a plan to restrict



The retaining wall, he said, will be 3 to 4 metres in height and about 358 metres long

the entry only to those who buy the tickets," he added.

The retaining wall, he said, will be 3 to 4 metres in height and about 358 metres long. "It will both protect the lake from encroachment and restrict the entry to the park and the lake only from one or two points," the official said. However, the BBMP's plan has shocked lake warriors. "Why is the BBMP spending Rs 19 crore for one lake when there are many lakes

in the City, which are not fenced due to lack of grants? Any sort of construction activity, excluding roads and bridges, is a violation of court orders. Citizens will be forced to go to court if the lakes are not protected for future generations," V Ramaprasad, co-founder of Friends of Lake, a network of volunteers, said.

Environmentalist Leo Saldanha termed the project a money-making racket. "The people who are behind

the project may come and go but the lake will be destroyed if such constructions take place. Justice NK Patil report -- which is part of the final order of the Karnataka High Court based on our public interest litigation -- has clearly stated that the legal limits of the lake must be defined by planting trees and hedges, so that the biodiversity enhances. A retaining wall is a waste of public money," he said.

Half-finished underpass a pain in Jakkur's neck

Crucial underpass at Dr Shivaram Karanth Layout incomplete for eight months

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

A railway underpass that was supposed to be finished six months ago is still in a semi-constructed state, courtesy the negligence of the authorities. The underpass – in Dr Shivaram Karanth Layout, in Jakkur – was supposed to save the time and fuel of the many citizens who cross the busy railway level cross to go towards RK Hegde Nagar or Jakkur and other areas.

Around 20 trains pass through this busy route every day and citizens have to spend extra minutes in waiting for the trains to pass or spend more mileage in taking an alternative but longer route. To mitigate this problem, the railways and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) had proposed constructing a railway underpass in February 2020 and expected to finish the work within three months. However, the construction of the underpass is still incomplete even after eight months.

Sanjeev Dyamannavar, a resident of Telecom Layout, said that it was important to complete the underpass which connects a busy road between Jakkur and RK Hegde Nagar.

"Traffic is expected to increase due to doubling and intermediate block signalling at Thanisandra. South Western Railways should immediately finish constructing this underpass and close the level cross



ANANTHA SUBRAMANYAM K



The work on the underpass began in February 2020 and was expected to be completed in three months

“ It has become difficult for us to commute here. The incomplete underpass shows the inefficiency of the BBMP authorities

—Prashant Rao

difficult for us to commute on this road. It takes around 30 minutes to reach Jakkur from Bhartiya City. The incomplete underpass shows the inefficiency of the BBMP authorities,” said Prashant Rao.

Sudharshana M, a resident of Dr Shivaram Karanth Layout, also criticized the authorities. He said that it had become a habit for elected representatives to give assurances on

infrastructure projects during the elections and forget about them as soon as the elections were over.

“I came to know that the proposal for the construction of the underpass was made four years ago. I was very happy when the construction began in February but now, I am disappointed with the delay in opening the underpass for the public,” said Sudharshana.

to reduce traffic problems,” said Dyamannavar.

Prashant Rao, a resident of Bharatiya City, blamed the railways and the BBMP authorities for the lack of coordination. “It has become

Richmond Town to be free of waterlogging woes

Stormwater drain, starting from Baldwin's Girl School, will be cleared

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Residents and commercial establishment owners in and around Rhenius Street in Richmond Town and O'Shaugnessy Road in Langford Town are a happy lot as the civic authorities are underway with the Bengaluru Smart City project which will solve the waterlogging problem in these areas.

Residents who have been living in and around the area for over two



ANANTHA SUBRAMANYAM K

three decades said they are happy with the decision of the civic authorities to clear and open up a 'raja kaluve' - a major storm water drain which starts from the back gate of

the Baldwin's Girls High School and runs all the way to the Hockey Stadium, through the side of the road which is less than a kilometre.

"It's nice to know that the gov-

ernment is working towards restoring the old Bengaluru by opening up original storm water drains which were there probably only in maps when the layouts were formed originally. The issue of waterlogging in the area is a cause of grave concern," Marianne de Nazareth, a resident of Richmond Town.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials and engineers supervising the Smart City Project told BM that the water logging problem in Richmond Town will have a permanent solution.

"There is no shoulder drain concept. We are laying underground - already constructed - 900 mm diameter concrete stormwater drain pipes in and around Rhenius Street, O'Shaugnessy Road, all the way until the Hockey Stadium on one side of the road. These storm water drains

will have a chamber and a grating every 20 metres that is connected to the surface of the road which will take in all rain water from the road surfaces. This water will flow into the major stormwater drain which will go towards the Hockey Stadium side from which the water will escape through several other drains which will be in a downward gradient towards other places," a BBMP engineers said.

As of now, one side of the road is blocked for the Smart City Project work.

Watch this story come alive by pointing your phone camera at the QR code



ANANTHA SUBRAMANYAM K

With Christmas around the corner, St James Church in Mariyannapalya is all decked up to usher in the devotees

No hugs, no shaking hands on Xmas, NYE

In light of the pandemic, the State government on Thursday issued guidelines for Christmas and the New Year's Eve celebrations. Although pubs and restaurants will be allowed to function, strict protocols to ensure physical distancing and sanitisation is maintained at all times.

According to the guidelines issued by Chief Secretary TM Vijay Bhaskar, local deputy commissioners and the police commissioner can clamp more restrictions

on roads or specific areas on New Year celebrations. Clubs, pubs and restaurants are allowed to function as per the Covid-19 guidelines by allowing people only after a thermal screening, ensuring that everyone wears masks, no overcrowding and proper physical distance is maintained. Additionally, commercial venues will have to provide hand sanitisation facilities on their premises. However, they will not be allowed to organise special parties or

DJ-Dance parties. Crowding at clubs, pubs and restaurants between December 30 and January 2 is restricted.

Christmas Mass

Churches have been directed to ensure proper physical distance is maintained and allow only those wearing masks and only after thermal screening and hand sanitisation. Shaking hands and hugging is prohibited while wishing each other.

Mission possible: CM gears up to revamp city

Bengaluru Mission 2022 will address challenges faced by citizens, assures BSY

Aimed at providing world-class amenities and infrastructure and making it the best place to live, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Thursday unveiled Bengaluru Mission 2022 to revamp the city in the next two years.

After studying the problems and challenges faced in everyday life in the city, the mission has been formulated identifying four core areas for development - enabling faster commute, Swachcha (clean), Hasiru (green) Bengaluru and connecting with citizens, he said. "A blueprint has been prepared keeping in mind how Bengaluru should be in the 22nd year of the 21st century- which means 2022 that also marks the 75 years of India's independence," he said, speaking at the mission launch event.

The intention was to reach the goal in the next two years, the chief minister said. "This has been done aimed at addressing the challenges and problems faced by the city, after a thorough study and to give a clear vision for development. It has been done with an ambition to make Bengaluru as a world class city in all aspects," he added.

The objectives of this mission included enabling faster commute by easing out traffic congestion, re-establishing the reputation of the Garden City under Green Bengaluru, ensuring efficient and scientific waste management and connecting with the people with unified digital platform and also by creating spaces to showcase culture, heritage and other spe-



The city is riddled with a number of civic issues such as broken footpaths, poor garbage disposal and dangling wires

“We will conduct inspections once in six months and make sure that all the works planned are completed within the given time-frame

—BS Yediyurappa, K'taka CM

cialties of the state capital. "We will conduct inspections once in six months and make sure that all the works planned are completed within the given time-frame. Budget will be allocated for all the works planned,"

Yediyurappa said.

Noting that there were around 84.5 lakh vehicles registered in the city, officials said it was planned to encourage public transport usage, speed up "Namma Metro" and suburban railway project along with construction and maintenance of good roads and smart traffic management to make commuting easier and faster.

Key initiatives for this include 12 high-density corridors, totalling 190 kms, to be taken up in mission-mode, installation of synchronous signal lights; promotion of shared electric vehicle mobility across the city, faster metro completion and expanding bus priority lanes, they

said.

Bengaluru with a population of more than 1.2 crore was generating 5,800 tons of garbage every day, an official release said adding the waste management system will be made technology driven for efficient collection and monitoring the whole system. Also, community participation will be promoted and citizens will be encouraged to adopt zero waste home concepts, it said. Under Green

Bengaluru, it is planned that priority will be given to create clean waterways and lakes. As many as 25 lakes would be developed and bio-diversity in surroundings would be conserved. To enhance the green cover in the city, lands of some public sector units such as Mysore Lamps and NGEF would be developed into gardens.

Also, two large tree parks would be set up and mini forests developed and popularised in Thurahalli, Kadugodi, JP Nagara and Mathikere, it said. Under the citizens connect plan, a unified digital platform will be created for providing citizen services, sharing information and also for addressing public grievances, the release added.

— PTI

A vision for clean, green Bengaluru by 2022

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE capital, groaning under the burden of growth, will look to be future-ready with focus on four key areas. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Thursday launched the vision for development of the city — ‘Mission Bengaluru 2022: Revitalising Bengaluru’ — which will focus on enabling faster commute, Swachha (clean) Bengaluru, Hasiru (green) Bengaluru and connecting citizens to the city.

Speaking to reporters at the launch, the CM said: “I assure the citizens that the works listed out will be completed within the stipulated time. Also, six months from now, the progress of whatever has been done will be reviewed. I will also go on city tours to take stock of the ground realities.” He added that all projects which are essential for the city have been included. **P4**

PROJECT INCLUDES

Creating 12 high-density corridors, totalling 190 km, by KRDL, installation of synchronised traffic signals, enhanced road appearance and annual maintenance of arterial roads of 400 km, expanding bus priority lanes, promoting shared electric vehicles mobility, completing Metro works faster to increase its carrying capacity, operationalising of suburban rail project

MISSION MODE



HASIRU BENGALURU

Launch of two new lung spaces at NGEF and Mysuru Lamps, two mega tree parks in Machohalli and Bhootanahalli, popularising mini forests at Turahalli, JP Nagar, Kadugodi and Mathikere, intensified monitoring of air quality by setting up air quality testing metres to 500, K-100 rajakaluve project for waterway beautification, restoring 25 lakes, enhancing water quality and improving biodiversity, real-time monitoring of water quality in 20 lakes.

CITIZENS CONNECT

Online access to citizen services, online access to road history, location-wise information on civic services, programmes and officers, redesigning the Sahaya portal, Bengaluru culture, heritage and crafts museum at NGEF, contemporary public recreational spaces and cultural events hub at NGEF, creating living city lab at Mysuru Lamps factory, setting up Itihaasa-Bengaluru technology history and setting up of Bengaluru innovation centre at Mysuru Lamps factory

SWACHHA BENGALURU



Specialised entity for end-to-end professional waste management, rehabilitating and refurbishing existing processing plants to operate at maximum capacity, remedy and rehabilitating legacy dump sites, planning and implementing model material recovery facility and GPS-enabled monitoring of waste transportation, citizen partnership programmes for SWM, setting up Kalika Kendras in each zone, compost and manage waste at home

‘Bengaluru Smart City work to be completed by March-April 2021’

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

HOWEVER, some of the essential projects like development of 110 villages on the outskirts and addressing issues related to the health sector in Covid-19 times, like setting up super-specialty hospitals, advertising and hoarding policy, encroachment of drains and public spaces and making officials accountable for the lack of proper development were not included in the agenda.

While Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa spoke about strengthening public transport, there was no mention if there would be a cap on the registration of new private vehicles. The mission document also did not specifically mention about coordination between various civic agencies, which is crucial for the development of Bengaluru. It also did not have any special mention of creating more clean public toilets in the city.

However, Chief Secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar, Additional Chief Secretary, Urban Devel-



Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa at the Bengaluru Mission - 2020 event at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Thursday **NAGARAJA GADEKAL**

opment Department, Rakesh Singh, and BBMP Administrator Gaurav Gupta said works were ongoing and tenders were also called.

Bengaluru Development minister Byrathi Basavaraj used the platform to announce that Smart City road works

will be completed by March-April 2021. “I have held a detailed meeting with the officials and addressed the issue of proper coordination between all civic agencies. Directions have been issued to complete the works within the set time,” he said.

CIVIC SOLUTION

Court commissioners to check condition of roads

Karnataka High Court appoints personnel as a solution to grievances pointing out BBMP's failure to repair potholed stretches



MLA Rizwan Arshad interacts with Shivajinagar residents on Thursday. (NEERJANA SASTRY)

PROJECT SHIVAJINAGAR LAUNCHED

Bengaluru: BBMP on Thursday launched Project Shivajinagar, to ensure proper garbage management in the area. Spearheaded by MLA Rizwan Arshad, the project aims to create awareness among residents on garbage segregation, proper waste disposal, scientific handling of waste and other civic affairs. It is aimed at bringing in a positive change among people in the neighbourhood. Under the programme block committees will be launched in all wards for household management of waste, proper door-to-door collection, cleanliness, and timely collection of waste. MLA Rizwan Arshad said: "Garbage menace has always been an issue in my constituency. To address the issue, I consulted various experts in the field and studied models of other cities that managed to overhaul their garbage collection system. And now, with #ProjectShivajinagar, I want to ensure that Shivajinagar is a garbage-free neighborhood." The cost of the project will be borne by Rizwan Arshad Foundation, a philanthropic forum. Ugly Indians, a NGO, has also partnered in the initiative to convert 10 block spots into clean spaces, starting this weekend. **ENS**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Thursday appointed court commissioners to ascertain the present condition of roads and footpaths in the city.

A division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice S Vishwajith Shetty passed the order with regard to a public interest litigation petition filed by Vijayan Menon and three others from the city in 2015.

The petitioners' grievance is regarding Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) failure to maintain roads and repair the potholed stretches.

The bench said that it has perused the various orders passed from time to time which contained several interim directions and reminded the BBMP about its obligation.

"This court has held that

the right to have a good road and footpath is right to life. BBMP is unable to appoint an agency to inspect the present condition of roads," the bench said.

This was after BBMP counsel K N Puttegowda submitted that the Indian Institute of Science IISc had sought Rs 5.94 crore to inspect and submit a report on 70 roads for which the civic body has spent Rs 70 lakh on repair works.

"We direct the Secretary of the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA) and Secretary of Bengaluru Urban District Legal Services Authority to create a panel of paralegal volunteers and panel of advocates," the bench said.

It said that these two panels should identify various public streets in BBMP jurisdiction. They should be requested to visit the designated public streets with a view to ascertain their present condition, the bench ordered.

"It will be appropriate for the Secretary of KSLSA to invite the petitioners and their counsel for a meeting to identify which public streets are to be visited. The two panels should act as commissioners of court and submit a report along with soft copies of the photographs," the bench said.

It directed the Secretaries of both the Authorities to compile a report and prepare a gist which should be submitted by February 5, 2021. On February 6, 2020, the bench had directed the BBMP to appoint IISc to conduct an audit of pothole-filling works in the city.

“This court has held that the right to have a good road and footpath is right to life. BBMP is unable to appoint an agency to inspect the present condition of roads

Karnataka High Court

NO HUGS, HANDSHAKES, CROWDING FOR XMAS, NYE

Chief Secretary T M Vijayabhaskar has issued guidelines to be followed during Christmas and New Year celebrations



DCs and police chiefs can impose additional restrictions in select areas

All Covid norms should be strictly followed

Bursting of only green crackers allowed

Children under 10 years and senior citizens above 65 years should stay indoors

Crowding in churches on Christmas Eve not allowed: Strict social distancing norms must be followed

Hugging, handshakes not allowed during exchange of greetings



Clubs, pubs and restaurants can function as usual, but special events such as DJ parties prohibited



Hotels, pubs and restaurants should encourage pre-bookings online

Public cannot gather in large numbers on main roads and public places during New Year celebrations

VACCINE OR NOT, MASK IS HERE TO STAY

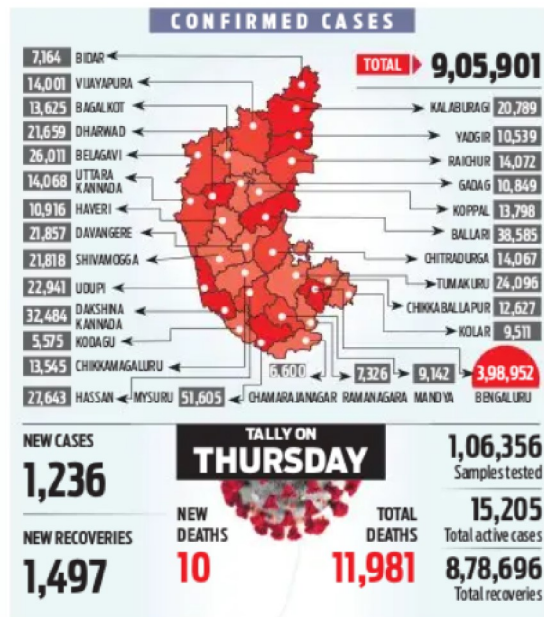
Getting a jab may not prevent transmission of virus, does not mean people can abandon caution: Experts

IFFATH FATHIMA @Bengaluru

GIVEN the tragedy and havoc that SARS-CoV-2 has wrought across the world, a vaccine against Covid-19 has almost acquired the halo of a panacea, a cure-all that would restore life as we knew it. Experts however, point out that there is much we still don't know and that washing hands, wearing masks, and maintaining physical distance will be required even after the immunisation programme begins.

The efficacy of vaccines being developed across the globe ranges between 70-95%, but experts say that getting a shot does not mean that people abandon all caution, not just because the best test for a vaccine's effectiveness will be in the real world, but also because the immunisation drive would last several months.

"A vaccine only prevents someone from getting symptoms, or protects from developing a serious form of the dis-



ease. There is no guarantee that a vaccinated person will not transmit the virus to another person. There are many asymptomatic people, who have no symptoms but the virus is present in their nasal passage. When they breathe, cough or sneeze, they can still transmit the virus to others," said Dr Giridhara Babu, epidemiologist and member of the state's expert committee on Covid.

Dr Babu also said that how long the protection of the vaccine will last is still not known. "So we need to continue to take all precaution. Wearing masks will also help prevent respiratory diseases," he added.

94% efficacy is achieved only after two months of vaccination. During this period people who have been vaccinated still need to be cautious and are required to continue wearing masks and follow physical distance measures," he said.

Dr Jagadish Hiremath, medical director at Ace Suhas Multi-specialty Hospital said that many variables affect individual immunity and virus transmission.

"The vaccine will increase antibodies which will circulate to the nasal mucosa and stand guard there. But it's not clear how much of the antibody pool can be mobilised (by the body) or how quickly it can be mobilised to infect others. A lot of people are thinking that once they get vaccinated, they won't have to wear masks any more. But it's critical for them to know that they have to keep wearing masks, because they could still be contagious."



HC sets timeline to hold polls to urban bodies

Elections of three municipal corporations are due

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Thursday set a timeline for holding elections to Urban Local Bodies. It issued notice to the state government and the State Election Commission (SEC) on a suo motu public interest litigation for not holding elections to 21 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) even after the expiry of the term. Observing that it is a shocking state of affairs, a division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice S Vishwajith Shetty observed that there is a constitutional mandate to ensure local self-governance and elections are to be regularly held every five years.

The bench noted that the Supreme Court held that elections should be held to the municipalities within the time as per the Article 243-U and under no circumstances they should be delayed. However, in various municipalities including BBMP, elections haven't been held. The elections of three corporations are due and similarly elections are not held to 10 city municipal councils, six town municipal councils and two town panchayats, after the expiry of the term, the bench said. It said that with regard to BBMP, directions have already been issued on December 4, for holding elections in a time-bound schedule. As regards Belagavi, reservation notification has to be issued. The SEC stated that the electoral rolls for Belagavi City Corporation are ready.

"We, therefore, direct the state government to complete the exercise of reservation and publish the notification of reservation within two months from today. The SEC should issue a calendar of events within 45 days from the date of reservation notification," it ordered. The court also set a schedule for polls to Kalaburagi City Corporation, Ballari City Corporation and Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation.

'Await orders on caste bodies'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka State Backward Castes Federation approached the Karnataka High Court, questioning the legality and validity of the policies and actions of the State government in establishing, administering and financing boards and corporations for the benefit of individual castes, communities or religion.

Hearing the public interest litigation questioning the constitution of Maratha Development Corporation, Karnataka Veerashaiva Lingayat Development Corporation, Karnataka

State Brahmin Development Board and Aryavysya Development Corporation, a division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice S Vishwajith Shetty issued notice to the State government and said that all further steps on the said Boards and Corpo-

rations will be subject to orders to be passed by court.

A similar order was passed on a PIL questioning the establishment of the Veerashaiva Lingayat Development Corporation.

The petitioner sought directions from court to prohibit permanently unconstitutional establishments in the state. The

State government is promoting caste organisations in favour of the most advanced and powerful castes of Karnataka, without sanction of law and as an affront to all constitutional values, secularism, equality and non-discrimination, the petitioner claimed. Aiming to win the bypolls in Sira, Belagavi Lok Sabha constituency Basavakalyan and Maski assembly constituencies, the State government is announcing boards and corporations, and the government's action is illegal and unconstitutional, the petitioner added.



Citizens question BDA law

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Thursday issued notice to the state government and Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) on public interest litigation filed by some citizens questioning the BDA (Amendment) Act, 2020.

The petitioners Vijayan Menon and four others have stated that the BDA Amendment Act was brought to legalise the illegal occupation and construction on land owned by the BDA. It is like the Akrama-Sakrama scheme, and is prima facie in violation of Articles 14, 21 and 243ZE of the Constitution, they alleged.

The petitioners contended that the implementation of the

BDA Amendment Act will render infructuous the Akrama-Sakrama Scheme which is pending before the Supreme Court. The amendment Act detrimentally affects the residents of Bengaluru as it incentivises land-grabbers to illegally occupy government land which can later be legalised and regularised as a result of the amendment. They have also contended that the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Amendment Act will allow an increase in the floor area ratio for buildings by mere payment of premium charges to the government. The Akrama-Sakrama scheme, which has been stayed by the SC, had sought to regularise illegal constructions, particularly those wherein constructions had taken place over and above the permissible floor area ratio.



Strategy for City: CM Unveils Mission '22 Document

Charts out a set of projects and milestones to be achieved in next 2 years

Our Bureau

Bengaluru: The state government is planning an institutional framework to deal with the 5,800 tonnes of waste Bengaluru generates every day, chief minister BS Yediyurappa said on Thursday. The chief minister unveiled a set of projects and milestones to be

Towards A Better City

5,800 tonnes of waste

AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO DEAL WITH THE 5,800 TONNES OF WASTE CITY GENERATES EVERY DAY

BBMP to be divested of garbage-related tasks like collection, segregation, transport and disposal and entrust it into a separate entity

12 arterial roads with high density traffic to be upgraded

Carrying capacity of Namma Metro to be increased from present 7 lakh to 10 lakh by 2022

Completion of 148-km suburban rail project in six years

achieved in two years in a document called Bengaluru Mission-2022, and credited prime minister Narendra Modi for driving him to come up with a strategy for the city in view of its importance globally for its technology sector, aviation industries and world-class research and development institutions.

The government is planning to divest BBMP of garbage-related tasks like collection, segregation, transport and disposal and entrust it into a separate entity, Bengaluru, the chief minister said, was home to one-sixth of Karnataka's population, and accounted for half of the state's GDP.

The city is home to about 1.25 crore pe-

ople, and has 84.5 lakh vehicles, causing both congestion and pollution. The government has identified 12 arterial roads in Bengaluru including ring roads that have a very high density of traffic flow for rapid improvement. The government will uplift these roads by building elevated corridor wherever necessary, he said.

To make the life of commuting public easy, the government will step up the carrying capacity of Namma Metro from the present seven lakh commuters to 10 lakh by 2022, the chief minister added. The government, he said, has targeted to complete the 148-km suburban rail project in six years.