



**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
BANGALORE**

**ENGLISH NEWS PAPER
CLIPPINGS**

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14-year-old girl run over by garbage truck

BENGALURU BUREAU
BENGALURU

A 14-year-old girl, who was returning home after writing her last exam of Class IX, was killed, while a biker and another woman pedestrian escaped narrowly when a speeding garbage truck knocked them down in front of Hebbal police station on Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Akshaya, daughter of Narasimha Murthy and Geetha. The family hails from Kolar and was residing in Vishwanatha Nagenahalli.

Police said the incident occurred around 12.45 p.m. when the girl was crossing the road opposite Hebbal underpass to return home. It is alleged that water logging in the underpass after heavy rain on Sunday evening had forced pedestrians to cross the busy road.

The driver of the truck heading towards Airport Road hit the girl and crashed into a bike and car. The bike rider, a private company employee, escaped with injuries, while Akshaya died on the spot as she came under the rear wheel.

Another woman pedestrian, identified as Soumya, 40, was also injured and they were shifted to a private hospital in Hebbal and are recovering, the police added.

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14-year-old girl run over by garbage truck

The truck also collided with a cab before coming to a halt. The driver escaped, leaving the truck behind, but was later arrested.

Based on a complaint by girl's father, a case has been registered in R.T. Nagar traffic police station. The driver, Manjunath, 35, was arrested on charges of reckless driving and causing death due to negligence.

Water-logged underpass

Mr. Murthy alleged that there was water logging in the underpass due to heavy rain on Sunday evening and pedestrians were not able to use the underpass. This forced Akshaya, along with two women, to cross the main road when the truck driver, who was speeding, lost control and hit his daughter and two other vehicles, he said.

An officer from Hebbal police station said the staff had complained to BBMP control room about the water logging early morning, but no one came to clear the water. The police are contemplating booking a case against BBMP officials.

The spot, where the student was mowed down, is yards away from a skywalk and a pedestrian underpass. The BBMP, which is the custodian of roads and foot-



14-year-old Akshya was killed in an accident near Hebbal flyover in Bengaluru

paths in the city, claims that both the underpass and skywalk, which is equipped with lift, is used by citizens.

Around six months ago, home guards were posted at pedestrian underpasses that are actively used in the city, including the one at Hebbal junction.

After inspecting the spot with Additional Chief Secretary of Urban Development Department and administrator Rakesh Singh, BBMP's Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta said the signal-free corridor witnesses heavy density of vehicular movement, nearly 30,000 PCU (passenger car units) per hour.

The median is also very high - around 4 ft - to pre-

The staff had complained to BBMP control room about the water logging but no action was taken. We are contemplating booking a case against BBMP officials

POLICE OFFICER
Hebbal police station

vent surface crossing by pedestrians.

"The traffic police are looking at CCTV footage. BBMP will also take stringent action against officials concerned in case of any negligence," he said.

Admitting that there was some amount of water stagnation in the underpass, he said the home guards deputed at the spot had informed civic officials that the underpass was being used. The water had been cleared from the underpass, he claimed.

Meanwhile, the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Cell officials stated that the truck that was involved in the accident had come from Hombegowdanagar.

"It is a private truck that was working for the BBMP. However, there is no insignia of BBMP on the truck," a senior civic official told *The Hindu*.

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Need to study pedestrian facilities comes to the fore

Several underpasses and skywalks built by the BBMP remain unused

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The accident at Hebbal junction that took the life of a 14-year-old student has not only underscored the importance of pedestrian facilities, but also their accessibility.

There are many pedestrian underpasses and skywalks that have been constructed by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) across the city. But for a few, many of these facilities remain either under-utilised or largely unused, as citizens seem to prefer at-grade crossing.

Statistics over the past three years show that a total number of 598 pedestrians have been killed in and around the city - 278 pedestrians were killed in 2019, 164 in 2020 and 161 in 2021. Though the number of deaths have slightly reduced, the death rates could further be contained if traffic rules are followed.

Analysis of the pedestrian accidents conducted by the traffic police revealed that over 70% of the pedestrian deaths in and around the city occurred due to crossing the roads other than designated pedestrian crossing. Though there are



The garbage truck that killed a 14-year-old girl near Hebbal underpass in Bengaluru on Monday • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ample number of pedestrian crossings present, people jaywalk on roads and jump medians which is a matter of serious concern, B.R. Ravikanth Gowda, joint Commissioner of Police (traffic) had noted.

Recently, as part of a special drive, the traffic police had surveyed and prepared a list of 240 high rise pedestrian crossings across the city. The BBMP had committed to taking up 50 high rise pedestrian crossings on priority and remaining in a phased manner. Meanwhile, to create awareness among pedestrians, the traffic police have selected highly sensitive places across the city to conduct awareness drives, which includes levying violators a fine of ₹10 for symbolic

purposes, as mentioned in the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988.

BBMP's chief commissioner Gaurav Gupta admitted that many pedestrian underpasses were not utilised. Citing the example of Basaveshwara Circle, he said many of the underpasses did not find favour with citizens, who preferred to cross the road at the signals.

"This is, however, not possible on radial, arterial roads that witness heavy vehicular movement, such as Tin Factory, Silk Board Junction, Hosur Road and Ballari Road," he said, adding that civic officials were in constant touch with traffic police on road and pedestrian safety issues.

Sapna Karim, head of civic participation at Janaagra-

ha, stressed on the need for a comprehensive plan for pedestrian mobility. "Instead of knee-jerk reactions to accidents, the BBMP must have budgets and target deadlines to fix issues, which must be done locally. The ward committees may be involved in surveying the footpaths and roads. A multi-year plan is needed to fix the problems," she said.

She also said there was a need to study the pedestrian usability of underpasses and skywalks, apart from stronger traffic calming measures in areas with high pedestrian footfalls. "This has to be done by the traffic police in coordination with the BBMP," she added.

Bengaluru NavaNirman Party's Srikanth Narasimhan recalled the protests by local communities that led the BBMP to construct a skywalk at the Beniganahalli junction on Old Madras Road.

"There is no doubt that more such pedestrian facilities are needed. Crossing busy roads where such pedestrian facilities exist should be made a punishable offence. The BBMP could put up signs urging citizens to use pedestrian facilities," he said.

COVID-19 fourth wave expected in August: Sudhakar

'However vaccination has covered a large population'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

While the number of fresh COVID-19 cases fell below 100 in Karnataka after nearly nine months on Monday, Health Minister K. Sudhakar said the fourth wave was expected in the country in August this year but added that there is no need to panic since vaccination drive had covered a large population.

Insisting that the COVID protocol had to be followed, the Minister informed the Legislative Council the variant BA.2 that was first detected in Philippines had been reported in 40 countries so far. The mathematical calculations of Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur has also predicted peaking of the fourth wave

in August, he said responding to a question by BJP member Sashil Namoshi. "We need to be on high alert and I will also discuss the issue with Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai soon."

Dr. Sudhakar pointed out that 4.97 crore persons in the State has taken vaccination, of which 4.76 crore have been vaccinated with both doses. In all, 10.25 crore doses of vaccine has been administered in the State, which took the vaccination rate to 96 %. "There is no need to panic as most people have been vaccinated."

Meanwhile, Karnataka on Monday reported 71 new cases of COVID-19 taking the total to 39,44,785. It was on June 28 and 29, 2021 last

when Karnataka had reported 89 and 93 cases respectively. Of the 71 cases, 53 were reported from Bengaluru Urban. The day's test positivity rate in the State stood at 0.35%.

With two deaths, the State's toll rose to 40,039. With this, the day's Case Fatality Rate (CFR) touched 2.81%. This is apart from 42 deaths of patients due to non-COVID-19 reasons. As many as 173 persons were discharged on Monday taking the total recoveries to 39,02,813. Active cases reduced to 1,891.

As many as 20,272 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, including 17,460 RT-PCR tests. With this, the total number of tests rose to 6,53,15,408.

Govt mulling booster jabs for all adults

Experts say a third Covid vax shot will boost immunity

NEW DELHI, DHNS

With 97% of adults having received a single shot and 84% fully vaccinated, the Centre is considering allowing booster doses of Covid-19 vaccines for all adults amid a new surge in infections in parts of Asia and Europe.

Currently, healthcare and frontline workers and those aged above 60 years are being administered precaution doses. All people aged above 60 have been made eligible for the precautionary third dose of Covid vaccine.

Public health experts, on the basis of scientific evidence, are also in favour of a third shot to boost the immunity.

“Based on the data from the UK, the vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease (all vaccine brands combine) against BA.1 and BA.2 variants drop from around 69-77% in the first four weeks (after the vaccination) to 10% against B.1 and 18% against BA.2 after 25 weeks. Assuming symptomatic diseases as a proxy for complications seen during post-Covid infection, it is reasonable to expand

BOOSTER SAGA
(doses administered)

43.68 lakh
Healthcare workers

66.83 lakh
Frontline workers

1.08 crore
Over 60 years

boosters to all the eligible age groups,” Giridhar Babu, an epidemiologist at the Public Health Foundation of India, told *DH*.

The issue echoed in the Rajya Sabha after Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi asked the government to come out with clear guidelines for boosters for those under 60. She said several countries were imposing strict conditions for foreign travellers.

When asked about extending boosters to all adults, a health ministry official said, “No decision has been taken yet by the Union Ministry of Health on considering lowering the eligible age limit to receive the precaution dose.”

► **Booster doses, Page 5**

Govt may be mulling booster doses for all adults

BOOSTER DOSES,
FROM PAGE 1

The clarification comes in the wake of reports that such a proposal is under review. “The government is considering allowing booster doses of Covid vaccine to all those above 18 years in view of a surge in infections in parts of the world and ease difficulties faced during international travel,” news agency PTI re-

ported quoting an unnamed source.

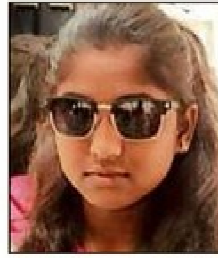
The sixth phase of India’s Covid-19 vaccination programme began on March 16 when the campaign was expanded to include for children in the age group of 12-14 years. In less than a week’s time, nearly 32 lakh children received the first dose.

More than 181 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered so far.

14-year-old girl run over while trying to cross road in B'loru

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 14-year-old girl died after she was run over by a garbage tipper while trying to cross the busy Airport Road near Hebbal bus stand. Akshaya was a student of Stella Maris school in Sadashivanagar limits.

Akshaya along with four others were forced to walk across the road median as the pedestrian subway was



Akshaya

waterlogged due to rains on Sunday. “A speeding BBMP garbage tipper knocked her down and she died on the spot,” said an eye-witness, adding that the tipper subsequently rammed into a two-wheeler and a car. **P3**

Akshaya's dreams of becoming a pilot came to a crashing end

BENGALURU, DHNS

Fourteen-year-old Akshaya aimed for the skies as she dreamt of becoming a pilot. But her life had been tragically cut short by a speeding garbage tipper that ran her over near the Hebbal police station on Monday.

Akshaya, said to be a talented student, was on her way home in Kunti Grama near Hebbal when the accident

happened. In the company of her younger sister and three others, Akshaya tried crossing the city's busiest road.

Eldest of the three children, Akshaya always told her father Narasimhamurthy, a BMTC driver, and homemaker mother Geetha that she will make them proud. But the father was distraught when he got a call from his second daughter informing him about the tragic incident.

“She always wanted to be a pilot and studied hard. She would study till late night and wake up in the morning to revise what she studied the previous day. She would never spend even a single paisa and collected every amount handed over to her,” Narasimhamurthy recalled.

To make her pilot dreams come true, the family had begun saving money two years in advance. “We are a poor fami-

ly. It will be difficult to muster such a huge amount for higher education after PUC. So, we had started saving from now. She was aware of our hard work and always consoled us by recalling her dreams and with her good scores,” Narasimhamurthy said.

The anguished parent asked: “Who do we blame in this system?”

“As commoners, we can't change anything in the society.

This is our mistake. As parents, we failed to earn more and send our children safely to school in a van or bus. This will continue to haunt us till our death.”

Rs 2 lakh compensation

Hebbal MLA Byrathi Suresh, who visited the accident spot in the evening, regretted the incident and condoled Akshaya's death. He also handed over a cheque for Rs 2 lakh to Akshaya's father as compensation.

Speeding garbage tipper runs over 14-year-old girl at Hebbal

Dies crossing busy Airport Road

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 14-year-old girl died on the spot when a garbage tipper ran her over while crossing the road at the busy Airport Road at the Hebbal bus stand.

Akshaya, a class 9 student at Stella Maris School in Sadashivanagar limits, was forced to cross the road with four others over the median since the pedestrian subway was flooded due to rain that pounded the city on Sunday.

"An overspeeding BBMP garbage tipper knocked her down and she died on the spot. Two others were also injured in the chain of accidents as the tipper rammed into a two-wheeler and a car," explained an eye-witness at the Hebbal police station.

DCP (Traffic) North S Savidha, who visited the spot, said: "The girls were crossing the road from the Seeds Corporation side to the Hebbal police station around 12.50 pm. Police personnel had flagged the BBMP officials about the wa-

terlogged subway at 9 am and asked them to clear the water."

However, the BBMP personnel arrived at the spot only after the accident and cleared the water. The DCP explained that they will soon submit a detailed report to the control room.

The group of five children included Akshaya's younger sister as well as Soumya, 28, who suffered minor injuries in the accident. Vikas, 42, who was riding the moped suffered a fracture in the leg. "Soumya had a minor swelling and was given first aid and left the hospital, whereas Vikas was shifted to Manipal Hospitals (Hebbal) for further treatment," said a source at a private hospital where the injured were first taken.

Manjunath, 35, who drove the tipper, has been arrested and a case has been registered against him for negligent driving and overspeeding at the RT Nagar traffic police station.



The garbage tipper involved in the accident.



People gather at the accident spot where the class 9 student died while she was crossing the road at the busy Airport Road at Hebbal. DH PHOTOS/B K JANARDHAN

BBMP chief: Don't take risks while crossing roads

BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta, who visited the spot along with BBMP Administrator Rakesh Singh, said: "We should ensure such an accident never happens again."

"The public shouldn't risk their lives," he said. "Though crossing the road

on a skywalk or a subway takes more time, they should opt for it," Gupta said.

"In this particular incident, I don't want to discuss who is at fault. Police will decide that based on their investigation," Gupta added, pointing out that

the subway is in a usable condition. "I inspected it. It is not dark or in an unusable state. Pedestrians are using it even now."

Sources said officials had instructed engineers to raise the median's height on the particular stretch of the road.

Fourth wave likely in Aug: Sudhakar

BENGALURU, DHNS: Amid reports of a new Covid variant (BA.2) surging globally, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Monday told the Legislative Council that India is likely to witness the fourth wave in August. The minister, however, allayed fears, pointing at widespread vac-

ination. Recalling the mathematical model and studies conducted by IIT-Kanpur, Sudhakar said, "The fourth Covid wave is likely to peak in August as per their report. But we need not panic as we have extensively carried out vaccination drive."

Details on Page 5

Covid fourth wave likely in August, says Sudhakar

BENGALURU, DHNS: Amid reports of a new Covid variant (BA.2) surging globally, Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Monday told the Legislative Council that India is likely to witness the fourth wave of Covid in August 2022. However, the minister said there was no need to panic, given the widespread vaccination.

Replying to a question by BJP member Shashil G Namoshi during the Zero Hour, Dr Sudhakar said, "A new variant of the Omicron (BA.2) was first reported in the Philippines and now this has spread to 40 various countries. Hence, we need to be on high alert and take Covid-appropriate precautions."

The minister said that he would soon hold a meeting

with the chief minister as well. Recalling the mathematical model and studies conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Kanpur, the minister said, "The fourth wave is likely to peak in August as per their report. But we need not panic as we have extensively carried out vaccination drive."

So far, Karnataka has administered more than 10.25 crore doses of the Covid vaccine.

"While more than 4.97 crore persons have taken the first dose, more than 4.76 crore persons have been jabbed with both the doses, with an overall vaccination rate of 96% in the state. The vaccination among the 12-year-olds and above category is also progressing as per expectation," Sudhakar said.



Vehicles navigate a flooded Palace Road following a downpour on Monday.

DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGHT

City receives light rain for second consecutive day

BENGALURU, DHNS

Many parts of the city experienced light rain on Monday evening as the depression over the Andaman Sea intensified.

Much of the rain fell over the South, East and Mahadevapura zones. Between Sunday and Monday, the city received 6.2 mm rainfall, ac-

ording to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).

“The deep depression is centered 120 kilometers away from the Andaman Sea. There is another upper air cyclonic circulation in South Chhattisgarh, 1.5 km above the sea level,” a senior IMD meteorologist said.

City residents were thrilled to feel the chill in the air by

the evening once the rain subsided. The rain affected traffic movement in the Central Business District (CBD), parts of South Bengaluru, and airport road. Cloudy weather and gusty winds are expected to continue in the city for the next two days. “Thundershowers are likely at some places until March 23,” the meteorologist added.

SC may allow govt to probe fake claims for Covid ex gratia

Says deadline of 4 weeks for seeking solatium 'too low'

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Monday indicated that it may allow the Centre to make a random check of overall claims processed by the States for ex gratia payments to the families of Covid-19 victims.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and B V Nagarathna also said the top court may grant 60 days time for filing claims for the persons who have already died and in case of future deaths, such claims can be made within 90 days time.

The court also said the Centre's suggestion for fixing four weeks time for making claims was "too low".

The bench reserved its order on the application filed by the Union government for fixing a timeline of making ex gratia claims and allowing it to conduct sample scrutiny of the claims, in view of "flourishing racket" to make claims on the basis of fake or forged death certificate in connivance with local officers. It said the order would be passed by Wednesday.

It also asked Solicitor Gener-

al Tushar Mehta to give some statistics on States which were high on a number of fake claims.

In his submission, Mehta said the Centre wanted to probe claims made in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Kerala.

During the hearing, the court sought to know the agency which can be entrusted to launch a probe into fake claims.

The court was told the National Disaster Management Authority or the Legal Services Authority can be asked to look into the matter.

"There has to be some check on the claims. There should be some statutory power to probe," the bench said as the counsel said it can be done under Section 52 of the Disaster Management Act.

The top court has been examining the compliance of its judgement of June 30, 2021 for disbursement of ex gratia to kin of Covid-19 victims, passed in a PIL filed by advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal.

So far over 5.16 lakhs deaths have taken place due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.





‘Expect an uptick in Covid cases in US due to new BA.2 variant’

WASHINGTON, PTI

A highly contagious sub-variant of Omicron variant of Covid-19, known as BA.2, could soon lead to another uptick in coronavirus cases in the US, the country’s top infectious disease expert has warned.

White House Chief Medical Advisor Dr Anthony Fauci said the subvariant is estimated to account for around 30 per cent of all new cases in the US, and is also the most dominant variant in the country, CNBC reported on Sunday.

Fauci said BA.2 is about 60 per cent more transmissible than Omicron, but it does not appear to be more severe.

“It does have an increased transmission capability,” Fauci said on Sunday on ABC’s “This Week.” “However, when you look at the cases, they do not appear to be any more severe and they do not appear to evade immune responses either from vaccines or prior infections,” he explained.

Fauci said that vaccines and booster shots remain the best means to prevent serious illness from the virus. “The variant has already caused a surge in cases in China and parts of Europe. Indian-origin US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy on Sunday expressed concern

HK to lift ban on flights from 9 countries

HKong will resume international flights from the United States, Britain and seven other countries, the government said Monday as it announced a loosening of some of the world’s toughest Covid-19 restrictions, reports AFP

over the lack of funding to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

“When we look at what’s happening around the world and over the last two years, we recognise that when cases increase in one part of the world, that often leads to increases in the other part of the world. And we should be prepared that, you know, Covid-19 hasn’t gone away,” he told Fox News in an interview.

“There may be rises and falls in cases in the months ahead. But here’s the key, our goal is to keep people out of the hospital, it’s to save their lives, and we have more tools to do that than ever before. So, our focus should be on preparation, not on panic,” he said.

BBMP garbage truck mows down girl crossing Ballari Rd

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A 14-year-old girl, who was attempting to cross Ballari Road as the nearest pedestrian subway was filled with dirty water, was mowed down by a BBMP garbage truck in Hebbal, north Bengaluru, on Monday.

The class 9 student, Akshaya N, was returning home with her sister, Sandhya, 12,

► **She'd be alive if BBMP had cleared subway: Mother, P 2**

and two other schoolmates.

The quartet, all students of a private school in Vyalikaval, near Sadashivnagar, alighted from a BMTC bus around 12.10pm and were to go towards the other side of the national highway to reach their homes.



Akshaya (L) was forced to cross the road since the nearest subway was waterlogged

Sandhya said they came to the subway at the start of the flyover to cross the road, but decided against entering it as it was inundated with dirty water.

"We came back to the road. Two others and I crossed the road. As I was reaching

Driver of Pavagada bus granted bail

Raghunath, 34, the driver of the speeding private bus who fled after the vehicle toppled in Pavagada taluk on Saturday killing six passengers, was arrested and released on bail after a few hours in police custody. He has been booked for causing death due to negligence and for rash driving. **P 3**

the median, I turned back and noticed Akshaya was trying to cross the road and was shouting: 'Please wait for me.' As I looked on, a speeding truck knocked her down," Sandhya said amid sobs.

► **'Informed BBMP', P 2**

She would be alive if BBMP had cleared subway of water: Mom

Bengaluru: Housender Geetha never forgets to tell her daughters every day that they should always take the subway and not cross Ballari Road. On Monday, Akshaya N and Sneha N had their mother's counsel in mind when returning home from school and first walked to the subway, only to find it waterlogged.

"Had BBMP cleared the waterlogged subway, my daughter would have been alive today. As the subway was

BALLARI RD ACCIDENT

full of dirty water, she chose not to use it and instead sought to cross the road," said Geetha N, mother of Akshaya, hours after the girl was moved down by a BBMP garbage truck on Ballari Road.

Akshaya was the elder daughter of Narasimhamurthy and Geetha, residents of Kempegowda, behind Hobbsal Flyover. Narasimhamurthy is a driver with BMTCL.

"Akshaya was a studious girl and scored more than 80% in all subjects. She wanted to

become a pilot and take us to Paris and show us the Eiffel Tower. Her teachers would always tell me that my husband that come what may, we should ensure that Akshaya gets a good education. Now, everything is destroyed," Geetha said in front of Hobbsal police station, a few feet away from where the accident occurred. The girl's body was handed over to the family in the evening.

A cab and a two-wheeler, which were ahead of the killer truck, slowed down on seeing the sisters crossing the road, only to be rammed by the truck, which then ran over Akshaya. The two-wheeler rider, Vikas Kumar, a private company employee, sustained a fracture in his leg. Another pedestrian, Sowmya, was also injured.

Palike officials told to increase median height

BBMP urban manager Balasub Singh and chief commissioner Gaurav Gupta were among the Palike officials who visited the spot. Gupta said they will take measures to ensure such incidents do not happen in future. He advised citizens not to take such risks and cross the road

safely, and has instructed his officials to increase the median's height.



Akshaya's mother said as the subway was filled with dirty water, the teenager chose not to use it. BBMP officials termed the incident unfortunate but said the girl could have taken another subway



LIFE SWAPPED DATE: (Left) The BBMP truck involved in the heinous accident on Monday (Above) Akshaya N who was killed

This stretch on Ballari Road is a high-traffic density corridor and also a signal-free one. We have a skywalk roughly about 150 metres away and there is also a pedestrian underpass close to the bus stop, unfortunately. They tried crossing the road here despite the high median. **Gaurav Gupta** BBMP Chief Commissioner

but the child was not able to cross," Gupta claimed.

"When I visited the spot, the subway was being used and the two home guards deployed there showed me images of the subway," he said, adding that he will, however, ask officials to look into poor maintenance of underpasses.

Another senior official from BBMP said, "Hobbsal received heavy rain on Sunday which led to the flooding of

this particular subway which was being cleaned. But, there is a subway about 100 metres away which is at the ground level and could have been used by the girl."

"In some places, we have also placed barricades. However, a death has occurred, and it is very unfortunate. We convey our deepest sympathies to the family members who lost such a young girl to this accident," the official said.

Previous tragedy
About a kilometre from the spot where Akshaya was killed, a 17-year-old girl, Sarjana Singh, returning from tuition on a rainy evening at June 2020, sought to take shelter from the rain by standing next to a retaining wall near CHB Junction on Ballari Road. The wall collapsed on the girl, claiming her life. The incident had led to a major campaign, but it didn't make any headway.

Had informed Palike of flooding: Cops

► Continued from page 1

Police shifted a seriously injured Akshaya to the Yelahanka government hospital where she died a little later. The truck hit a cab and a two-wheeler which had slowed down on seeing the girls crossing the road and then ran over Akshaya. DCP (traffic-north) Savitha S said traffic police had informed BBMP as early as at 9am that the pedestrian subway was waterlogged, but little was done to clear it.



Driver arrested

"Had BBMP acted in time, the child's life could have been saved. As of now, we have booked the truck driver under IPC 304A (causing death due to negligence)," she said.

The driver, **Manjunath**, 35, has been arrested.

What's the status of Covid-19 vax for U-12 kids: HC to govt

Centre Asked To File Report In 3 Weeks On Plea By 12-Year-Old

Abhinav.Garg
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Delhi HC on Monday asked the Centre to inform it on the status of Covid-19 vaccination for children below 12 years of age.

A bench of acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Navin Chawla sought a status report from the Centre on the issue and gave it three weeks time to present its report.

It gave this direction after hearing a PIL filed on behalf of a 12-year-old girl and another petitioner, seeking directions for immediate vaccination of those in the 12-17 age group on grounds that there are fears that the third wave of Covid-19 could affect them.

Senior advocate Kailash Vasdev, appearing for the petitioners, submitted that more than 50% of children are not able to go to school as they are yet to be vaccinated, which is a serious issue.



AP/Photo for representation

BACK TO SCHOOL: More than 50% of children are not being able to go to school as they were not yet vaccinated against Covid-19, argued the lawyer for the petitioners in Delhi high court

The bench noted that children aged 12 years and above have started receiving vaccination recently, so the petitioner's grievance stands partially addressed.

"We are asking for vaccination of all children. Please give it to everyone, all are entitled to go to school and the government must come out with a policy on this at the earliest," Vasdev contended,

urging the court to seek a timeline by which the Centre plans to roll out vaccination for those below 12 years.

The high court noted that it is for expert bodies involved in the process, including Niti Ayog, which has to take a call if a particular vaccine is safe or not.

Filed last year by one Tia Gupta, 12, and another petitioner, who is the mother of

a minor child, the petition claimed that according to the data of number of people infected from April to May 2021, the number of reported cases where children were infected "has risen tremendously", compared to 2020. "That, globally, countries have fully recognised the importance of vaccinating children, alongside adults, to curb and mitigate the ill effects of the present pandemic... and have accordingly and effectively taken measures," the plea states.

Anurag Ahluwalia, standing counsel of the Centre, submitted that he will file a status report regarding vaccination for children below 12 years of age. The Centre had earlier said vaccination is the top most priority of the government and all efforts are being made to achieve 100% vaccination in the shortest time possible, keeping the available resources in mind and availability of vaccine doses into consideration.

TN digs up 1939 law, tells SC vax mandate is legal

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New Delhi: The Tamil Nadu government invoked its 1939 law to impress upon the Supreme Court on Monday that making Covid vaccination mandatory is legal and justified its decision to bar unvaccinated people from accessing public places under Tamil Nadu Public Health Act.

Defending its decision which has been challenged in SC by ex-NTAGI member Jacob Puliyel, the government said Section 76 of the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939 empowers the government to confer special powers on officers to control notified diseases and Section 76(2)(b) empowers the government to make vaccinations compulsory.

Responding to the PIL filed against vaccine mandates issued by various states, Tamil Nadu's additional advo-

cate general Amit Anand Tiwari in his submission said, "It's submitted that the state has come out with the said mandate for the reason that vaccination against Covid is essential to prevent serious disease in the population..."

In a move to make Covid-19 vaccination compulsory for those eligible, the directorate of public health and preventive medicine has invoked provisions

MAKING JAB A MUST

under the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939, to ensure that public places, including markets, theatres and factories, are occupied only by those vaccinated against Covid-19.

Justifying the decision, the state stated, "The circular issued by the state is a precautionary and preventative measure."

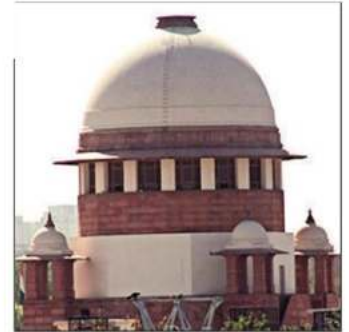
SC OK with scrutiny of Covid certs to nail fakes

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday decided to order random scrutiny of Covid death claim applications to identify those who got compensation with forged documents after the issue was flagged by the Centre which received complaints from several states.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and BV Nagarathna reserved its order on Centre's plea for random checking of documents and said it will pass order on March 23 when it will also decide which agency will carry out scrutiny.

To start with, random scrutiny of 5% of claim applications filed in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala and Maharashtra will be carried out, the bench said. The number of claim applications were far more than the offi-



The SC said it will pass its order on the issue on March 23

cial Covid toll in these states.

It agreed with the Centre's plea that a time period be fixed to file a claim application. Though the Centre pleaded that a period of four weeks be fixed to apply for compensation, the court said it was too short and agreed with petitioner Gaurav Kumar Bansal's submission that 90 days be given in case of a fresh death due to Covid to file claim.

K'taka daily cases in 2 digits for 1st time in 22 months

Bengaluru: Karnataka recorded under-100 Covid-19 cases on Monday, with 71 patients turning Covid positive. This is for the first time the state is reporting fresh cases in two digits after May 20, 2020, when 67 infections were reported. The state breached the three-digit mark in a day for the first time on May 19, 2020.

Bengaluru saw 53 new cases on Monday. However, the low numbers could be due to lesser testing done during the weekend. In the past 24 hours, the state conducted 20,272 tests. **TNN**

Centre studying if boosters can be given to all over 18

Move After Spike In Omicron Cases In Several Nations

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New Delhi: Even as the Centre is close to taking a decision on expanding its Covid-19 vaccine booster programme to cover more adults in the wake of the surge in Omicron infections in several countries, active deliberations are on over whether it should be done in phases or made available to all who are 18 years and above, official sources said on Monday.

When asked whether bo-

WHEN WILL U-12s BE VAXXED: HC TO GOVT

► Delhi high court asks Centre to file status report on when it plans to start **vaccinating children below 12 years, FLAP OPP**

► Tamil Nadu cites its 1939 law to impress upon the Supreme Court that **making Covid vaccination mandatory is legal**, justifies its decision to bar unvaccinated from public places, **FLAP OPP**

► After Centre flags issue, SC decides to order random scrutiny of Covid-19 death claim applications to identify those who got compensation with forged documents, **FLAP OPP**

► **Sales of hand sanitisers plunge to 10-20% of peak-pandemic levels; small players shut shop while larger ones liquidate stocks, P 11**

oster or "precaution dose" will be given to all adults, the health ministry said, "No decision has been taken yet."

At present, health and frontline workers along with elderly above 60 years are eli-

gible for the "precaution dose". Over 2.18 crore such doses had been administered in the country till Monday since its rollout on January 10.

► **Maximise coverage, P 8**

Govt's priority to maximise vax coverage among adolescents

► Continued from page 1

Apart from age eligibility, the government is also evaluating several other factors, such as vaccine production and supply timelines and Omicron spread in other countries, to assess how soon boosters need to be administered in India, an official said. Sources said the government's immediate priority is to maximise coverage among adolescents, particularly among 12-14-year olds — which is the latest target group added to the inoculation programme. Besides, the government also wants to ensure full immunisation among adults at the earliest and, therefore, the gap between two doses of Covishield could be reduced to 8-16 weeks.

At present, 96% of those who are 15 years and above have received at least the first dose of a Covid vaccine, while over 82% are fully immunised. Besides, 33.73 lakh doses have been administered to those in the 12-14-year age group. However, it is likely that the government will continue to administer booster shots under the national programme and not make it available in the retail market in the near future as that may hamper vaccine equity and pose a challenge in maintaining vaccination data and issuance of certificates required for international travel. "We are looking at this issue too but at this stage it may not be feasible to open the retail market," the official said.

Should you be alarmed by the rising global Covid numbers?

In mid-January, the world saw more than 3 million Covid cases daily. Soon after that the number of new infections fell sharply and kept declining through February. However, March brought another surge in parts of Asia and Europe. Although cases have risen, **Atul Thakur's** analysis shows deaths have remained low

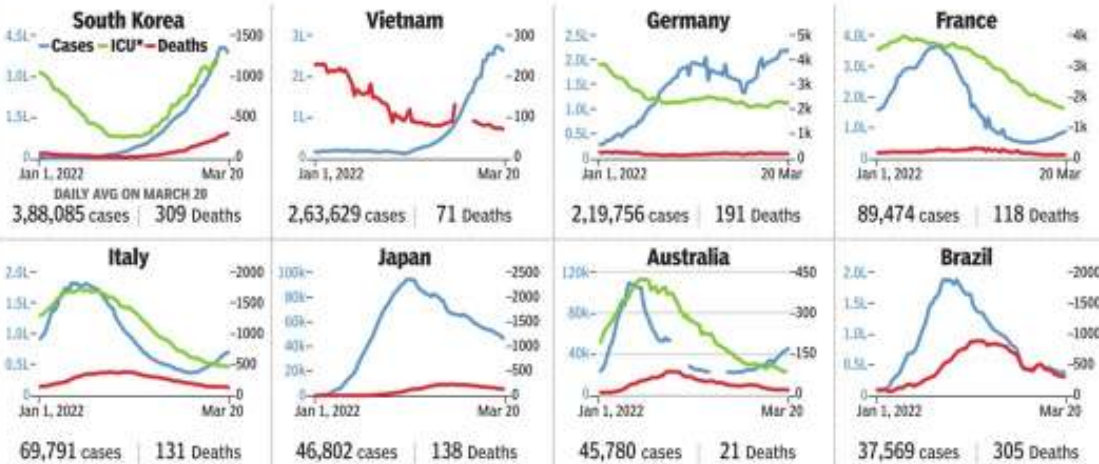
Global Daily Average Cases



Not A Deadly Wave

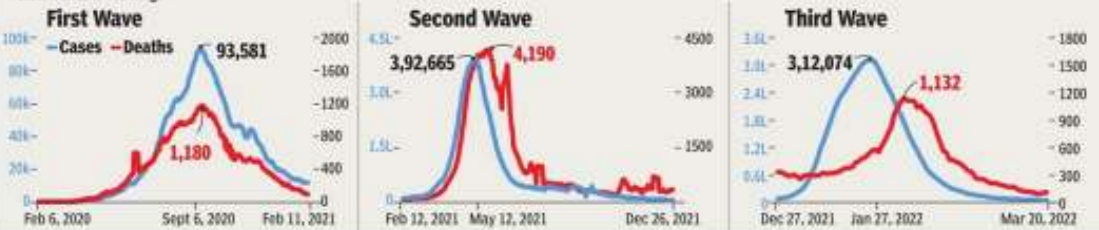
► Cases are rising in south and east Asia with countries like South Korea and Vietnam reporting the highest numbers. Deaths, however, have not increased proportionately. Vietnam is recording lakhs of cases but fewer than 100 deaths daily.

► In Vietnam and Japan, deaths are on a declining trend despite the increase in cases. Across Europe, daily deaths are steady despite the rise in cases. South Korea is an exception as cases and deaths have risen in step there.



India Shows 'Immunity'

The third wave, which was the least deadly of all Covid waves, continues to be in the cool-down phase in India as both cases and deaths are falling.



Vaccine Inequity May Breed Variants

More than a year after vaccines were rolled out, many countries have not vaccinated even half of their population. Only about 4% of Nigerians are fully vaccinated. As WHO has warned, this vaccine inequity will keep the global Covid situation volatile.



Covid 4th wave likely in Aug; meeting on steps soon: Min

Says No Need To Panic; Vax Drive Will Help Reduce Severity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: As cases of the new Omicron variant continue to rise in different parts of the world, experts have predicted that India is likely to see the fourth wave of Covid-19 in August, health minister K Sudhakar said on Monday.

The state government will shortly hold a meeting with experts to discuss measures to be taken to minimise the impact of the fourth wave, he said in the legislative council. "There is no need to panic since the fourth wave may not be as severe as the second or third but we must not lower our guard," Sudhakar added.

Responding to a question raised by BJP MLC Shashil Namoshi during the zero hour, the minister said the state govern-



File photo of a swab sample being collected for testing

ment is prepared with the required medical infrastructure to handle the fourth wave.

Namoshi said multiple countries affected by the new variant have taken measures like lockdown, adding it was a warning bell for India too. He asked the government what steps were being taken in the state.

"The new BA.2 sublineage of Omicron was first detected in the Philippines and has now spread to 40 countries. The researchers from IIT

Kanpur, who made predictions (based on mathematical models) during the third wave, have now forecast that India will face the fourth wave in August," the minister said.

He added the vaccination drive conducted in India has covered a vast majority, which will help reduce severity of the next wave.

Suggestions on compulsory mask usage in indoor facilities have been made, and there will be a meeting with the chief minister in this regard so-

Sudhakar said the fourth wave may not be as severe as the second or third but we must not lower our guard. Suggestions on compulsory mask usage in indoor facilities have been made, and there will be a meeting with the CM in this regard soon

on, he said.

Sudhakar added that in Karnataka, the first dose of Covid vaccine has been given to 101.7% of the eligible population aged above 18 (over 4.9 crore persons). The second dose has been administered to 96% of the eligible persons (nearly 4.7 crore). In the age group of 12-18, a total of 1.2 crore doses of Covid vaccines have been used," he said.

Speaking about vaccination among children aged 12-14, the minister said efforts will be made to convince parents and spread awareness.

20-dose Corbevax vials opened only if 15-16 children are available

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Bengaluru: Covid-19 vaccination for adolescents aged 12-14 is witnessing a new set of challenges. Amid vaccine hesitancy and exam season being cited as a reason to not get jabbed, those willing to take the shot are also being forced to wait for long.

As Corbevax comes only in 20-dose vials, medical officers have been strictly instructed to open them only when at least 15-16 children are available, to ensure there is little wastage. Hence, kids registering at government centres in the morning have to wait for a message from the facility saying they can come and take the jab.

Of the estimated 20 lakh children in the age group of 12-14 in the state, only 1.1 lakh have been jabbed since March 16.

"Once opened, a Corbevax vial has to be used within four



As of now, we are administering Corbevax only at government facilities and not in schools. Now that Covid cases have dipped, people have no fear. The feeling is that Covid has gone. It's the same situation that was seen prior to the third wave

Dr Arundhathi Chandrasekhar

MISSION DIRECTOR, NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION, KARNATAKA

hours. We cannot afford to waste the doses and hence we ensure there are 15-16 children who have confirmed they'd take the shot before opening a vial," said a doctor from a BBMP primary health centre where Corbevax is being administered.

A district health officer from North Karnataka said the vaccine is available only in district hospitals and there is hardly any demand. "When exams are going on or are about to start in some schools from

March 24, many parents don't want to get their kids vaccinated now. Fear of fever post vaccination is making them worried. Once exams are over, we will visit schools and create awareness. Instructions from the health department are awaited," the doctor said.

Dr Arundhathi Chandrasekhar, mission director, National Health Mission, Karnataka, said Corbevax vaccination would pick up pace in a couple of weeks, after exams get

over. She added there is a sense of hesitancy towards Corbevax as it is new and many parents would want to wait and watch for some more time.

Besides, fear of syringes (tryphobia) is more among adolescents. "Kids below the age of six can be given a chocolate to divert their attention before being given any jab, but adolescents' case is different. Clearing their doubts and winning their confidence are important prior to vaccination," said a paediatrician from a government hospital who was part of the launch on March 16.

Dr MK Sudarshan, chairperson, technical advisory committee, said in case of kids' vaccination, one needs to be sensitive towards the child's privacy. "Parental consent and the child's assent is a must. The benefits of Covid vaccination have to be explained to the child and parents," he said.

Blinding lights

Dazzling headlights are banned as per law, but 'thanks to potholes, motorists are queuing up'



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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Potholes in the city are becoming a perennial problem. So motorists are now modifying vehicle headlights. City mechanics said they are getting a lot of requests from the motorists for powerful lights.

"There have been a spate of accidents on the road especially during night-time as many fail to spot potholes. So, motorists are demanding powerful headlights so that they can have proper vision. We are trying to convince motorists that it is a violation of norms. Yet, many are queuing up for the same," said mechanic Satish M.

Dazzling headlights are banned as it is against the law to use blinding lights; yet many people do use these.

The Central Motor Vehicles Rules specify the prohibition of dazzling lights. A majority of motorists, on the other hand, ignore it. In city limits, using high beams is illegal, but due to lack of knowledge and technology, drivers get away with it. The deflection of lights is precisely defined by the Central Motor Vehicles regulation. However, most drivers do not follow it. This infringement

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >>

Night vision to escape potholes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

is responsible for a large number of traffic accidents, particularly at night.

Road accidents caused by high beams are seldom noted in police reports or accident reports. "In addition to developing an awareness campaign, enforcement agencies should come up with the newest technologies to penalise drivers who violate the high beam law," said traffic expert MN Sreehari.

According to the Motor Vehicles Act, the light bulb used in the headlights should not be more than 7 watts; it is also illegal under Section 177 of the Indian Motor Vehicles Act (improper use of headlights) to modify headlights.

Keshava, a mechanic from Marathahalli, said: "I did not know



it is prohibited to set up a light beam higher than 7 watts. Everyone's been using it. The head-

light bulbs I install are more than 65-80 watts."

Sreehari added that a traffic

expert said 'RTO and traffic police should seize vehicles with high beam headlights as these create a blinding effect to the oncoming vehicle/pedestrian/commuter which results in a higher number of accidents.'

Motorists also argued they are forced to go for powerful lights due to the absence of streetlights. "Street lights have not been installed in all parts of the city," claimed Bharath, a mechanic from Indiranagar.

Meghan, who injured his arm because of poor road conditions, after the accident, chose a high beam headlight since there are no street lights on the road back to his home in Panathur.

Sreehari said if the road condition is bad, one has to complain to the municipal authority and not take the law into one's own hands.



Showers and their aftermath

Bengalureans go about their business in the midst of a March downpour; (inset) an uprooted tree blocks the road in Sadashivanagar

PIC: KAUSHIK JN

Garbage truck rams, kills 14-yr-old

A 14-year-old girl was killed and a biker and a pedestrian narrowly escaped death, sustaining injuries, after a speeding garbage truck knocked them down in front of the Hebbal police station on Monday afternoon. The RT Nagar traffic police arrested the driver, Manjunath, 35, on charges of reckless driving and death due to negligence for further investigations.

The deceased has been identified as Akshaya, a stu-

dent in the ninth grade and the daughter of Narasimha Murthy and Geetha. The family hails from Kolar and is residing in Vishwanatha Nagenahalli. Murthy, works as a conductor in BMTC, the police said.

The accident occurred around 12.45 pm and the girl who was in her uniform was crossing the road across the Hebbal underpass and returning home after writing an exam, the police said.

The driver of the BBMP

truck, heading towards the Airport Road ran over the girl and crashed into a bike and car which were going on the side of the road. The bike rider, a private company employee escaped with injuries while Akshaya died on the spot as she came under the truck, police said.

The pedestrian, identified as Soumya (40), was also injured and the biker and her were shifted to a private hospital in Hebbal and are recovering. —BMB

Dogs, feeder face neighbourhood's brutality

| Garima Prasher
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Two women approached the Kodigehalli Police station with a complaint stating that their neighbour attacked one of them for feeding stray dogs. The dogs were also allegedly attacked by other residents, and the feeders abused.

Complainant Veena Kumari Jaggarai (inset, top), a resident of AMCO Layout and Manjusha (inset, bottom) of Dee Enclave told police that the latter was attacked by their neighbour on Thursday while she was feeding the dogs.

"I take care of seven dogs and Manjusha, who is my neighbour,

feeds four dogs. On Thursday, the man threw a stick at them from his first-floor balcony. The same man had hit one of the dogs on Wednesday too, causing the animal to bleed. We did not take it up then, but when he went after them on Thursday again, we reached out to Hoysala."

According to Manjusha, two dogs of the pack are young and are mischievous. They steal shoes and damage the clothes that the residents leave unattended on the road.

Many residents have taken objection to the duo feeding stray dogs and have been harassing the women and animals too.

"All the dogs are vaccinated and neutered. However, people keep jolly stones on their terraces and hit the dogs at night and when we are not



The streeties have been attacked with sticks on multiple occasions

around. We have had instances when residents have abused us. They walk with sticks during feeding time," said Jaggarai.



Officials from the Kodigehalli police station informed that an NCR has been filed and action will be taken.

Dr. Lakshmi narayana Swamy, assistant director, Yelahanka zone, animal husbandry, BBMP visited AMCO Layout on Saturday to take stock of the situation.

"We met the accused and warned him of dire consequences. In that case, we will file an FIR immediately. The accused says that the dogs destroy his vehicle parked on the street. We have

instructed him to remove the vehicle from the road, informed Dr Swamy.

He said people should understand that BBMP can pick up a street dog only when the animal shows signs of rabies. "We cannot relocate any animal otherwise."

Harini Baghavan of Citizens for Animal Birth Control, said: "The police told the accused and other residents that they can reach out to BBMP for help. He wrongly informed them that BBMP will relocate the dogs at their request. This is not a responsible comment from a police official."

According to Dr Swamy, while BBMP has been training the police officials at local police stations on animal laws, they are now planning to take up the exercise with the DCP offices.

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Problems in your area?

Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Rocky terrain
Kengeri



Someone has dumped rocks in the middle of the 80 feet road across St Francis Church. This is dangerous for motorists who may fall due to the rocks.

Gets their goat
Benson Town



A resident has encroached a pavement in the area for their goats. Other residents are worried about the hygiene in the neighbourhood due to this.

Dustbin-like
Mysuru Road



Construction workers have been dumping debris at this vacant site across BHEL Factory near Pride Enchanta, an apartment complex. Residents of the apartment complex complained about dust pollution due to these activities.

Even at night, they keep time for waste collection

As part of clean street challenge, Mahadevapura Task Force - Mobility deploys one tipper per BBMP ward in constituency to collect garbage at night time

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Waste is collected during the daytime in the city. But the timing is inconvenient for commercial shops shutting after 11pm, who look to unload their day's load at night. This means, many dump their waste at convenient spots nearby causing littering. Mahadevapura Task Force - Mobility has floated a proposal to collect garbage at night as a part of its clean street challenge to reduce instances of such littering.

"A key objective of the challenge is to have 'No Garbage On Ground' (NGOG). We're determined to deal with the root causes and achieve sustainable improvement. We observed, a major source of roadside dumping were small commercial shops and footpath vendors," said Clement Jayakumar, secretary, Mahadevapura Task Force - Mobility.

As part of the challenge, cleaning and beautification drives are being conducted across a 75-km-stretch in the Mahadevapura constituency. People participating in the initiative also monitor residents to prevent dumping at night time.

"One tipper has been deployed per BBMP ward in Mahadevapura. Garbage will be collected between 6 pm and 12 pm," said Jayakumar.

Such an idea was first implemented in Church Street. But this is the first time something like this is being implemented at the ward level. Based on the success of this initiative, more auto tippers will be de-



Garbage collection at a ward in Mahadevapura in the night time

ployed to enable a larger coverage in the Mahadevapura constituency. Officials noted, despite the initiative being launched just a week ago, there is considerable improvement and there is a rising demand for more auto-tippers.

"It has made cleaning easier for garbage collectors in the morning. Marshalls have also been doing rounds at night to catch offenders and educate them. But there is a need to increase the number of auto-tippers," said Basavaraju, junior commissioned officer (JCO), BBMP.

“We plan to establish manned garbage stations; people can dump garbage even after the auto-tipper has left”—Clement, secretary, Mahadevapura Task Force - Mobility

Further, Jayakumar told BM the task force hasn't noticed such issues in residential areas. "We haven't

seen this problem in residential areas but (streets with) paying guest (PG) accommodations seem to have similar problems. People working according to UK shifts can't find the time to get rid of garbage on time (at day time). We have planned to install garbage bins outside (PGs). If that does not work, we will consider extending the night service to these PGs as well. We also have plans to establish Kasa Kiosk (manned garbage stations) so people can dump garbage at the station even after the auto-tipper has left the area."

Fourth wave predicted in August: Sudhakar

Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister K Sudhakar on Monday said the fourth wave of Covid in the country has been predicted for the month of August.

Responding to a question by BJP MLC Shashil Namoshi during the Zero Hour, he said it would be made mandatory to wear masks at indoor facilities. A decision would be taken regarding this issue after holding a meeting with Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

He said the new sub-variant of coronavirus B.A.2 surfaced first in Philippines and later, spread to 40 countries.

The minister stated that there was no need for people to panic even if a fourth wave surfaces, as the vaccination drive had been effectively conducted in the state.

He further stated that as many as 10.25 crore doses of vaccinations have been administered in Karnataka.

"Booster doses have been given. Parents are



Health workers conduct covid tests at bus stands in the city

also convinced on vaccinating children above the age of 12 years," he added.

Vaccination prevents spread of Covid. However, precautions must be followed by the people, he said.

"We have made arrangements for 55,256 oxygenated beds. The capacity of oxygen production has been increased from 300 metric tonne to 1,270 metric tonnes."

A total of 265 laboratories have been established and the testing capacity has been increased 2.5 lakh per day. "With the experience of three years, doctors are well equipped to provide treatment," he said.

Ballari Road jinx: BBMP truck runs over school girl

2 injured; Pedestrians forced to cross road as BBMP fails to clear water in subway

MANJU SHETTAR @ Bengaluru

IMPROPER water draining works in the partly inundated Hebbal subway under the high traffic density Ballari Road snuffed out the life of a 14-year-old girl on Monday afternoon. The girl, Akshaya, while returning home from school around 12.45 pm, was forced to avoid the subway as it was partly filled with water and had to instead try and jump over the three-foot-high road divider near the Hebbal underpass.

Akshaya, a Class 9 student at Stella Maris English School, had attended an exam, taken a BMTC bus and got down at the Hebbal stop opposite the Hebbal police station to return home in Vishwanatha Nagena-halli. She and two women pedestrians were crossing the road towards the police station and were approaching the road divider when the speeding garbage truck of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike ran over Akshaya, killing her instantly. The truck also injured one of the women pedestrians, Soumya, 40. It then crashed into a two-wheeler and a car, injuring the rider - Vikar, 42.

Akshaya, daughter of Narasimha Murthy who is a conductor with Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation, and Geetha, a homemaker, hailed from Kolar. Murthy filed a complaint with the RT Nager Traffic police, and the garbage truck driver Manjunath was arrested.

He alleged that there was water-logging in the subway due

to heavy rain on Sunday evening and pedestrians, including his daughter, were unable to use it.

A police officer from Hebbal police station said they had alerted the BBMP control room about the subway inundation. "But no one came to clear the water. We have decided to file a case against BBMP officials," he added.

A BBMP official said, "Water had gushed into the subway from all sides. Pumps were brought and water was cleared from 9 am till 11 am."

Despite the official's claims, the subway continued to be partly inundated even after the fatal accident took place, indicating that the works were not done properly forcing pedestrians to cross the road at the grade level risking their lives. Also, there were no Home Guards or traffic police to regulate the traffic at the time.

BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta, who visited the spot, said he has sought a detailed report from the engineers and is awaiting the police report. He said he will talk to the BBMP administrator and state government to give due compensation to Akshaya's family.

"It is an unfortunate incident. People should not take such risks. There is a skywalk and a pedestrian underpass which should have been used. Three to three-and-a-half-foot-high road dividers have been erected on the stretch to prevent people from crossing the road at grade level. CCTV footage details are being obtained," he said.



Akshaya (inset), who was run over by a BBMP garbage truck at Hebbal in Bengaluru on Monday. One of her shoes lies by the side of the road after the mishap; also seen is the entrance to the subway, which was flooded with rainwater | VINOD KUMAR T

'ROADS DESIGNED ONLY FOR VEHICLES, NOT PEDESTRIANS'

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

THE death of a 14-year-old girl on Ballari Road in Hebbal has once again raised questions among citizens and experts, one being that the city roads are designed keeping in mind automobiles, not pedestrians.

They also point out that there is no seriousness and accountability among officials to ensure that basic civic amenities are in place and that commuters are not inconvenienced.

Several pedestrians point out that they rush on the roads to cross at grade, since the skywalks and subways are not safe, or have simply failed to serve their purpose.

A BBMP engineer admitted that rainwater had indeed gushed into the underpass and there was also seepage due to which it was filled with water. An expert working with BBMP

said: "BBMP officials have stated before the High Court and the government that underground drainage work is being done and silt is being cleared. But it does not look like it is happening. Also, the BBMP has not learnt any lesson and has not done its job to ensure that rainwater harvesting pits below the underpasses are clean, so that there is no water logging."

According to India Meteorological Department reports, there was no rain at Kempegowda International Airport, however, the rain gauge at Kar-

nataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre recorded 48 mm rainfall at Hebbal.

Apart from this, the Directorate of Urban Land Transport along with the traffic police department, is working on a pedestrian safety Bill.

Urbanist and civic evangelist V Ravichandrar said people need humanity in the system. "There is no heart, someone has to be accountable. Unless there is a culture of punishment, things will not improve. This incident has once again shown that there is bad implementation of design, improper de-silting of drains and poor quality execution of work," he added.

Srinivas Alavilli, Head, Civic Participation, Janaagraha said the problem with road design is that they are created only for vehicles. Skywalks and underpasses are an attempt to push people off the streets.



The BBMP has not learnt any lesson and has not done its job to ensure that rainwater harvesting pits below the underpasses are clean, so that there is no water logging

An expert working with BBMP

BDA CALLS TENDERS FOR KARANTH LAYOUT

ENS @ Bengaluru

BANGALORE Development Authority (BDA) on Monday finally called tenders to the tune of Rs 1,865.34 crore for Dr K Shivaram Karanth Layout. The tenders have been awarded in the form of nine separate contracts for

the nine sectors in the layout.

The layout will be BDA's second biggest, and 28,000 sites will be readied on 3,546 acres and 12 guntas. It will extend across 17 villages, between Doddaballapur and Hesaraghatta.

BDA Commissioner Rajesh Gowda told *TNIE* that the ten-

der covers formation of sites, construction of roads, roadside drains, water supply, underground drainage, cross drainage works, storm water drains, rain water harvesting and electrical works in each of the sectors, with an 11-month period given after the work order is issued.

The cost of the contracts ranges between Rs 147.98 crore and Rs 274.87 crore. The last date for submission of tenders is April 25, said the tender document released on Monday.

BDA has periodically demolished illegal buildings which have come up on the layout.



Bomma to hold meet on precautions for fourth wave

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WITH the number of Covid-19 cases on the rise in many countries, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai will soon hold a meeting with senior officers to discuss precautionary measures to be taken in the state.

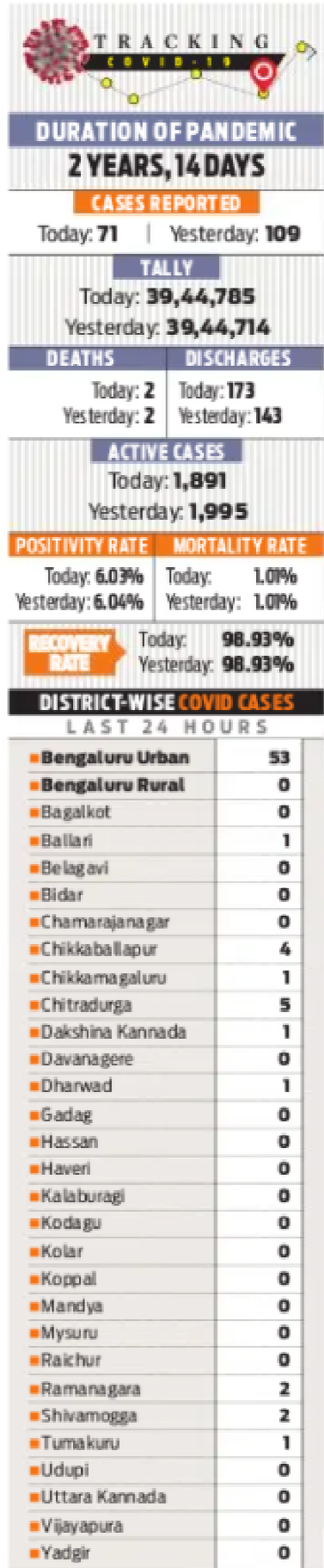
Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Monday informed the State Legislative Council that there are suggestions on making the use of masks compulsory indoors in public places, which will be discussed at the meeting. While there is no need to panic, people need to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour, he said.

The new Omicron variant BA.2 was first traced in the Philippines and is now found in around 40 countries. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, which had forecast the third wave in the country has now indicated that if there is a fourth wave, it would be

in August 2022, the minister said. While the extensive vaccination drive in the country will help fight the next wave, there is a need to follow Covid protocol, he added.

In Karnataka, the first dose coverage has been 101.7 per cent, with 4,97,67,326 doses; the second dose coverage is 96 per cent, with 4,69,70,758 doses, Sudhakar said.

On the preparedness to deal with the fourth wave, the minister said the state had ramped up infrastructure after the first wave and now has 55,256 oxygenated beds, oxygen generation and storage capacity has been increased from 300 tonnes to 1070 tonnes, and 265 labs have been established to do tests, he said. "Ewxperience gained while fighting the last three waves of the pandemic will help to effectively face the fourth wave, if it comes. We have made preparations and will continue to prepare, and people of the state need not panic, but we have to be alert."



Soon, All Adults may Get to Take Booster Doses

Reuters

New Delhi: India is considering making all adults eligible for booster doses of Covid-19 vaccine, two sources with knowledge of the matter said on Monday, as infections grow in some countries and some Indians find it hard to travel abroad without a third dose.

Only frontline workers and those older than 60 are currently allowed to take booster doses in India, whether free in government centres or paid for in private hospitals.

The government is debating whether to provide boosters to other groups for free, said one of the sources, who both sought anonymity as the government has yet to make a decision.

A health ministry spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment. The Serum Institute of India (SII), whose Covishield vaccine dominates India's immunisation programme, said on Monday it stopped the shot's production in December but still had a stock of 200 million doses. It has produced 1.9 billion doses in total.

Its CEO Adar Poonawalla told CNBC-TV18 that they would restart production of the vaccine if demand returned through boosters or any other way.

CORONA METER

CASES ON MONDAY **1,065***

ACTIVE CASES **24,364 (-865)**

Recovered **42.47 M (+1M)** Deaths **516,338 (+11)**

TOTAL CASES **43.01M**

Sources: Serum Institute of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India. *As of 11:00 AM. Includes World Journal and Associated Press.

Daily Infections

5 Worst-hit states	CASES per lakh	DEATHS
Kerala	495	0*
Mizoram	123	1
Karnataka	109	3
Delhi	108	8
Madhya Pradesh	95	8

4 Main Metros*

	CASES ON MON	ACTIVE CASES
Delhi	108	589
Bangalore Urban	91	1706
Mumbai	25	299
Chennai	19	300

VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED IN INDIA

1815.76 M (+2.82M)

1 st dose	2 nd dose
973.16 m (96.07%)	820.72 m (81.02%)
56.72 m*	35.33 m*

13-14 yr 1st dose **3,318,350**

*10-12 yr 1st dose: 1,100,000

BOOSTER DOSES

18-59 yr **11.05 m** 60+ **10.82 m**

TOTAL **21.88 m**

DOSES ADMINISTERED

Top 10 States/UTs	NO. OF DOSES	% of Total
AP	391,000	21.58%
Rajasthan	370,000	20.40%
UP	278,200	15.32%
Madhya Pradesh	232,700	12.81%
Gujarat	226,900	12.49%
West Bengal	198,700	10.94%
Tamil Nadu	188,200	10.36%
Other	183,800	10.12%
Chhattisgarh	162,000	8.92%
Odisha	161,300	8.88%

Samples Tested so Far*

783.05 MILLION **384,499** in last 24 hours

POSITIVE TESTS **5.49%**

GLOBAL COUNT

Total Cases	471.56 M	Vaccine Doses Administered	11115.91 Million
Deaths	6,102,544		
Recovered	407.71 M		

NEW INFECTIONS IN 5 WORST-HIT COUNTRIES*

S. Korea	334,708
Vietnam	161,251
Germany	90,525
France	81,283
Italy	60,495