



**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
BANGALORE**

**ENGLISH NEWS PAPER
CLIPPINGS**

22-06-2022



INDEX

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

BBMP spent ₹23 crore to redo 14 km of road for PM's travel

This included stretches of Mysuru Road and Ballari Road

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

As the bumpy ride on many of the city's roads continues to attract anger and ridicule from citizens, residents of areas where Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled recently got lucky over the last week. The city's civic body spent ₹23 crore to redo 14 km of road ahead of his visit, including stretches of Mysuru Road and Ballari Road.

This is apart from road works that Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) took up near Kommaghatta, where the Prime Minister held a public rally and laid foundation stone for several infrastructure works.

P.N. Ravindra, Special

Commissioner (Projects), Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), addressing a press conference on Tuesday, said the roads that Mr. Modi travelled were taken up for redevelopment a week ago on top priority and works were carried out day-and-night.

"The road works involved re-asphalting of roads, re-doing service roads, replacing faulty street lights, medians, painting of kerb stones, and other related works," he said. The works were taken up with funds from the chief civic commissioner's discretionary funds, with the approval of Urban Development Department (UDD), he added.

When quizzed on the

priorities of the civic body, as to how these roads were redeveloped in a week even as they blamed rains for filling potholes in the rest of the city, Mr. Ravindra said other works were also underway and claimed only 1,600 odd potholes were left on the city streets to be filled. "Filling potholes is tedious work and usually affected by rains. But redeveloping an entire stretch of road is far easier," he said.

Apart from this, the BDA took up redevelopment of 5.5 km road from Shirke Apartments to Kommaghatta, while Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL) also sped up its work on Mysuru Road.



Widening of NH 48 stretch to eliminate 13 accident black spots

In the last three years, 797 road mishaps reported on the 45-km stretch

SUCHITH KIDIYOOR
BENGALURU

In 2016, a young man, Harish, was cut in half after a truck ran over his bike at Thippagondanahalli on Tumakuru Road. He succumbed to his injuries after 20 minutes of the accident. Knowing that he would not survive, he had asked ambulance staff to inform doctors that his organs should be donated.

This selfless service of Harish had also forced the then Congress government to introduce 'Mukhyamantri Santwana Harish Yojana,' providing cashless treatment in the crucial hours after an accident.

Now, after a gap of over six years, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has decided to eliminate 13 black spots that include Thippagondanahalli located between Nelamangala and Tumakuru of NH48.

The NHAI is widening the road to six lanes for a stretch of 45 km, building service roads, flyovers, underpasses, and a bypass at Tumakuru. The project will cost ₹2,032 crore.

On Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation for the project along with other highway projects of the NHAI that are going to be built on the outskirts of the city connecting satellite towns.

The move helps in decongesting the traffic on Tumakuru Road that connects



The NHAI is widening the road to six lanes, building service roads, flyovers, underpasses etc. ■SUCHITH KIDIYOOR

Bengaluru with the districts located in the middle and the northern parts of the State. The existing infrastructure of four lanes is not sufficient to accommodate the growing traffic.

Every day, thousands of heavy trucks and buses use the road to reach various parts of the city. The police say that heavy congestion on the road and presence of black spots are resulting in accidents. They say that most victims of the accidents on this stretch are pedestrians and bikers.

In the last three years, 797 accidents were reported on the stretch, claiming 185 victims. Other than Thippagondanahalli, 12 more black spots were identified, such as Kuluvanahalli, Yedehalli, Chikkahalli, and Hirehalli.

A senior official of the

NHAI said, "Widening of the existing main lanes from four to six lanes and construction of service roads will help in decongesting traffic. Elimination of black spots is also very crucial to bring down the accident rate, thereby reducing fatalities. An important feature of the project is that 45 km will be controlled. The project also proposes the construction of a flyover at points such as Kyathasandra".

A senior police official of Nelamangala said that the existing infrastructural constraints do not allow smooth flow of traffic on the main lanes. "At present, road accidents are happening at the U-turn points or to pedestrians crossing the roads. When repeated accidents or fatalities happen, black spots are identified. The authori-

Number of accidents and fatalities reported in the last three years

Year	Number of accidents	Fatalities
2019-20	332	76
2020-21	268	66
2021-22	197	43
Total	797	185

Names of black spots that are going to be eliminated

- Kuluvanahalli
- Kyatsandra NH 48 circle
- Manchakal Kuppe
- Rayarapalya
- Thippagondanahalli
- T. Begur- 1
- T. Begur- 2
- Yedehalli
- Kengalkempohalli
- Bhubhihal Gate
- T. Begur-3
- Hirehalli
- Chikkahalli
- Nelamanagala to Tumakur, including Tumakuru bypass section

ties concerned will be approached to fix engineering faults, putting up signboards, and others. The proposed widening will help in decongesting the road. At the same time, the NHAI should also take up measures to build FoBs wherever required for crossing the road," the official added.

Only two in 10 people know name of last Mayor: Survey

Fact sheet

Only two out of 10 people know the name of the city's last Mayor	22% approached the MLA for grievance redressal, 8% the MP, and only 12% the councillor	More than half of Bengaluru voters do not recognise wards as the basic unit of governance
87% of them not aware of ward committees	88% of them never met a councillor	95% of them never attended a ward committee meeting

Interest in civic polls



STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Ahead of civic polls in the city, only two in 10 people know the name of the last Mayor: Gautam Kumar, who demitted office in 2020. Elections to the civic body haven't been held since then.

A survey by the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy also revealed a majority of them approached MLAs and MPs, but only 12% approached a councillor for grievance redressal and 88% of the respondents had never met a city councillor.

The survey also revealed more than half of the voters (52%) do not recognise wards as the basic unit of governance, while 87% of the respondents are not aware of ward committees.

However, the survey also revealed a contradictory picture that though many lack awareness and connect with civic governance, first-time voters evince a keen interest to engage with civic polls.

Among the first-time voters surveyed, 86% of them strongly expressed their in-

terest to cast their vote in the upcoming civic polls and 88% of them believe strong local governance is the key to a better future of the city.

Further, 79% of the city's youths are concerned with the impact of climate change on the city, and an overall 89% of the respondents are concerned with environmental issues, including soaring temperatures and unseasonal rains.

"The results show that very few understand the role of BBMP, ward councillors, and ward committees, but are keen to vote and want civic polls to be conducted on the basis of everyday issues that affect them. To improve our city, the institution of local governance must be strengthened, beginning with participating in local elections," said Srinivas Alavilli, Head, Civic Participation, Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.

He also added that the survey results would be submitted to all political parties in the fray for the civic polls, to help them present a compelling vision to seek votes.

'Allow free booster doses for 18-59 age group'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI**

Tamil Nadu's Department of Health has sought the Union government's approval for administering free booster doses to eligible persons aged 18-59 at government vaccination centres with the available stocks of Covishield and Covaxin, instead of private vaccination centres at the prescribed rates.

As of now, only healthcare workers, frontline workers and persons aged above 60 are eligible for the precautionary doses at any COVID-19 vaccination centre, including free vaccination at government centres. The rest – those aged 18-59 – can get the booster shot at the prescribed rates at private centres. Till June 20, 12,25,301 precautionary doses had been administered in the State. The low uptake was a cause for concern.

A few weeks ago, T.S. Selvavinayagam, Director of Pu-

blic Health and Preventive Medicine, wrote to the Union Health Ministry, seeking permission for free precautionary doses to be administered to the 18-59 age group. Then, the State had 69,01,860 doses of Covishield and 25,09,785 doses of Covaxin. The present stocks were 55,24,830 doses of Covishield and 21,29,880 doses of Covaxin.

The official said the Health Department had requested the Centre to allow the use of the available vaccines for precautionary doses for the 18-59 age group. This was because it felt that the paid vaccines for this age group would impact the booster vaccination coverage among a significant section of the population. In fact, the department also sought permission for free vaccination of those aged 15-17, who did not receive the first dose, at government centres with the available stocks of Corbevax.

Rs 23 crore spent on roads for PM's brief visit to B'luru

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), which has been receiving flak for its delay in filling potholes, spent Rs 23 crore to asphalt 14 km of roads ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's short visit to Bengaluru.

The roads that were developed are: Kengeri to Kommaghatta (7 km), Mysuru Road (0.15 km), a stretch after Hebbal flyover (2.4 km), Tumakuru Road (0.90 km) and roads in the Bengaluru University campus (3.6 km).

The civic body also used the grants to repair the median, fix street lights and paint roads and kerbs.

Interestingly, the quality of work executed on the 14 km stretch was far better than the

BBMP's regular road repair work. Ravindra P N, special commissioner (projects), BBMP, told reporters that asphaltting roads is part of the protocol ahead of the Prime Minister's visit.

"The PM's visit was confirmed to us by the state government 15 days ago. We used the funds under the discretionary use of the Chief Commissioner for the work. The approval was given by BBMP administrator (Rakesh Singh)," he said.

To a question on BBMP neglecting roads that are in a poor state, Ravindra said BBMP has so far fixed close to 14,500 potholes. "We have another 1,500 potholes to fix. The monsoon is delaying our exercise," he said.

Survey finds 87% of voters unaware of ward committees

Very few understand role of BBMP, corporators, panels

BENGALURU, DHNS

Decentralisation of Bengaluru's administration may remain a far cry as the concept of ward committee – introduced at least three years ago – is yet to gain popularity in the city.

Nearly 87% of the voters – who were surveyed by Janaagraha, a not-for-profit, had no knowledge of the ward committee, where grievances related to BBMP, BWSSB,

BESCOM etc are heard by officials.

The survey, which covered over 506 samples across 27 wards, also found only 17% of the people knew the name of the last mayor, while 97% knew prime minister's name and 83% knew the chief minister's name. Over 95% of the respondents said they did not attend the bi-monthly ward committee meetings so far while 88% of them said they never met their ward council-

SRINIVAS ALAVILLI,
HEAD OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION, JANAAGRAHA

“We tried to understand the degree of awareness citizens, particularly the first-time voters, have about BBMP. The results showed that very few understand the role of BBMP, corporators, ward committees etc. However, they are keen to vote and want civic polls to be conducted on the basis of everyday issues.

lor in the past.

The response also mirrors the voter turnout for BBMP elections that is far less than the percentage of voters who go out to vote for the Assembly and Parliament elections. Comprising of 29 questions, the survey – called City Politics Survey, 2022 – was conducted to gauge awareness of voters regarding the governance of their city and ward ahead of

the BBMP polls likely to be held in September or October.

Among the notable findings of the survey are: pedestrian infrastructure (23%) was cited as the most significant issue as compared to traffic congestion (16%) and lack of availability of clean water (15%).

The survey found access to water as key issue faced by the urban poor while the middle and upper class were lament-

ing the traffic.

Srinivas Alavilli, Head of Civic Participation, Janaagraha, said, “We tried to understand the degree of awareness citizens, particularly the first-time voters, have about BBMP. The results showed that very few understand the role of BBMP, corporators, ward committees etc. However, they are keen to vote and want civic polls to be conducted on the basis of everyday issues that affect them,” he said. “To improve our city, the institution of local governance must be strengthened, beginning with participating in local elections.” He appealed to the political parties to present a compelling vision for our city and seek votes.

Monsoon gains vigour in coast; red alert sounded

Rains likely to continue in coastal districts till June 25

MANGALURU/BENGALURU, DHNS

After a sluggish start, the southwest monsoon has gained momentum as all the three coastal districts - Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada and Udupi - are experiencing heavy showers for the past two days.

The intensity of rain increased considerably on Tuesday and it is expected to remain so till Wednesday. The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre has sounded a red alert for the coastal districts for Wednesday and a yellow alert for the next four days.

The inclement weather played spoilsport to mass yoga demonstrations in all the three districts.

Incessant showers have left several residential areas and roads, including high church road, Nandanagadda and railway station road in Karwar flooded. The national highway 66 in front of Ravindranath Tagore beach and the state highway at Habbuwada were inundated with rainwater affecting the vehicular movement for hours. Heavy rain and strong winds battered coastal



Umbrellas come out as skies open up in Udupi. DH PHOTO



Vehicles navigate a flooded road in Karwar on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/SADASHIVA M S

taluks of Uttara Kannada - Ankola, Kumta, Honnavar and Bhatkal - throughout the day.

Honnavar recorded 82 mm of rain in the last 24 hours (ending 8 am on Tuesday) followed

by Karwar 71 mm and Kumta 59 mm. Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts also witnessed intermittent spells of rain on Tuesday. Torrential showers have left Karavali Junction,

Ambalpadi, Mudanidamburu flooded in Udupi. More than 20 electricity poles have been uprooted due to rain and strong winds in the district.

According to the weather department, the twin districts are most likely to witness heavy rain (up to 20.4 cm) till June 25. The met department has warned the fishermen not to venture into sea owing to high tides.

Also, the people close to the coast and river mouth should relocate to a safer place, the IMD release said.

Kodagu district received moderate to heavy showers in the day. Parts of Malnad and north interior Karnataka also witnessed scattered rainfall.

Scooterist trying to avoid pothole hit by truck, dies

Bengaluru: A 48-year-old computer operator was killed after a truck rammed his scooter at NTTF junction in Peenya Industrial Area on Monday night.

Police said the man had slowed down his scooter to negotiate a pothole when the truck hit him from the rear at 9.30pm. Cops identified the deceased as Shiju aka Shriju, a resident of Shettihalli near Jalahalli West. Pillion rider Prashanth, 39, sustained minor injuries.

Police said Shiju and Prashanth were on their way home after work. Shiju was a computer executive in a footwear manufacturing company and Prashanth a manager. Shiju was riding the scooter and noticed the pothole while taking a turn to enter 14th Cross. He slowed down the scooter to avoid the pothole when the truck coming from behind hit his vehicle. Both Shiju and Prashanth fell on the right side of the road; Shiju came under the truck's rear wheels and was crushed to death.

Peenya traffic police registered a case and seized both vehicles. TNN

Yoga enthusiasts hit the mat, stretch in style

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Yoga was the flavour across the length and breadth of Bengaluru and neighbouring districts on Tuesday, with enthusiasts cutting across age groups hitting the mat in huge numbers and flaunting their skills in striking postures on the occasion of International Yoga Day.

Government departments and private organisations led from the front as thousands of people took part in the celebrations. Schools and colleges too joined with enthusiasm.

A mega yoga display at Terahalli village on the outskirts of Kolar saw the participation of more than 20,000 people on a 40-acre plot. The event saw people from all walks of life.

While civic officials led the show at Rajkumar Glass House in the BBMP headquarters, the department of women and child development, along with other departments, organised a yoga programme for children on MH Marigowda Road, adjacent to Kidwai Hospital, at 8am.



Raman Research Institute observed the day with a yoga workshop which had students, faculty members and their families attending, along with online participation by the wider community. The organisers donated biodegradable yoga mats, developed with the technological support of North-east Centre For Technology Application and Reach.

The Bengaluru branch of The Southern India Regional Council of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, along with the state government's department of Ayush, organised an event in front of Bangalore Palace.

The day was also celebrated at the Indian Air Force's Train-

ing Command campus with the theme 'Yoga for Humanity', with over 300 personnel and their families in attendance.

The high court and Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, in association with Advocates' Association of Bengaluru and others, also organised 'Yoga for Humanity' on the HC premises at 6.45am.

More than 4,500 cadets, along with officers and staff of NCC, participated in the celebrations held at Field Marshal Manekshaw Parade Ground at 7am. The event was organised by the Karnataka and Goa NCC directorate along with headquarters, Karnataka and Kerala sub-area.

Central Police Reserve Police personnel celebrated the day at Lalbagh from 7am. A 'Yoga Lecture' programme was held at the legislative assembly at noon.

While Bangalore University's department of yoga held an early-morning event to educate and inspire students to take up yoga as part of their daily lives, Bishop Cotton Women's Christian College celebrated the day on their campus.

K Sunil Prasad & TOI



700 prisoners take part in sessions

At the Central Prison, 600 inmates practised yoga for over two hours, along with 100 women prisoners. Led by superintendent of prisons CS Ranganath, 500 undertrials and 100 convicts took part in yoga sessions that began at 6.30am.

The celebrations were jointly organized by Art of Living, Satsang Foundation

and Prajapati Brahmakumari organisations.

Month's practice

"Some prisoners who regularly practise yoga had guided the 600 inmates for over a month on the basics of yoga. The prisoners were trained in Suryanamaskar, breathing exercises and other simple practices," a senior official said.

BIG-TICKET VENTURES Infra Works To Ease Commuter Woes, Give StartUp City Momentum

K-Ride decides to fast track suburban rail work after Modi sets 40-month deadline



COMING SOON: An artist's impression of a proposed suburban rail station

Christie.Matthew.Phillip@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Bengaluru suburban rail which was delayed for 40 years will be completed in 40 months, K-RIDE, the SPV executing the project, has decided to expedite work. The target is to complete all four corridors by December 2025.

Modi laid the foundation stone of the project on Monday. K-RIDE officials said the section between Byappanahalli and Heelalige (23km) will be ready by December 2025. It will have stations at Heelalige, Bommasandra, Singapur Agrahara, Hissur, Ambolkar Nagar, Carmelaram, Bellandur Road, Marathahalli, Kaggadasapura and Bemisangahalli. This is part of the 48km Hosdurga-Yelahanka-Rajmangala corridor (Kanaka Line).

Kanaka Line comprises 13.5km elevated and 32.9km at-grade corridors. The entire line will be completed in 2026. However, K-RIDE is yet to float a civil work tender for it.

"We have already finalised a tender for Byappanahalli-Yeshwantpur Chikkabavara (Mallige Line) and the work order will be issued at the next board meeting scheduled in two weeks. Kanaka Line civil work tender will be out by next month. Tenders for the remaining two corridors KSR Bengaluru City-Devanahalli (Sampige) and Kengeri-Cantonment-Whitefield (Parjanta) will be invited by December 2022," said a K-RIDE official.

On Kanaka Line getting operationalised first, he said: "Most of the 23km Byappanahalli-Heelalige section is at grade except the 4km elevated section. The alignment is parallel to the existing railway track so less private land is required. This work is less complex," said an official.

Officials said Germany-based KIW and France-based APD have committed to provide 500 million

and 300 million (pounds) funds, respectively.

"Communication-based train control (CBTC) system will be adopted for high-frequency operations. The initial operations will be with a six-car rake with a headway varying from 12 to 30 minutes. CBTC can reduce train headway to less than 90 seconds. The services will run from 6am to midnight at a design speed of 90 kmph with a station dwell time of 30 seconds," said an official.

"The train operation plan is envisaged with a six-car rake composition. However, platforms are being designed for nine-car composition, considering the future growth in traffic demand. We are also thinking of having more seating capacity for suburban trains since our network will be huge and passengers will have to come from peripheral areas," said an official.

He added: "We are planning depots in Devanahalli and Chikkabavara. We will also set up a mini depot at Heelalige along Kanaka Line for operational requirements."

Metro-like fares?
According to the DPR, the minimum fare could be Rs 11 for less than 10km. In Chennai and Mumbai, a train trip for the same distance costs Rs 3 currently. For a 15km trip, the fare will be Rs 11. In the 2009-2021 Union budget, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said Bengaluru suburban rail fares will be on the Metro model. This essentially means there won't be a major difference between the ticket prices of Metro and suburban rail, unlike in Mumbai and Chennai where rail commute costs much less than Metro trips.

"It's too early to comment on the fare structure but facilities will be on par with Metro standards," said a K-RIDE official. Bengaluru will be the first city in India to get a modern suburban rail system.

NOD FOR HIGH-DENSITY CORRIDOR PROJECT FUELS HOPE OF SMOOTH TRAFFIC MOVEMENT IN CHOKED B'LURU

The government's green signal for the much-awaited multi-crore high-density corridor project aimed at decongesting Bengaluru's major roads has elicited mixed response. While a few civic leaders have lauded the decision saying this will put an end to hours-long traffic crawls, a few others have expressed concern over speed affecting quality of work. The project envisages decongesting 12 major road corridors that bring large chunks of traffic into the city and are also used by a large number of motorists for inter-city commute.



FUTURE VIEW: An artist's impression of the planned high-density corridor

“These major roads carry about 70% to 80% of traffic, especially peak-hour traffic. Being the lifelines of Bengaluru, these roads must be kept in complete state of functionality and get special attention. We are happy that finally we are moving towards that direction. With designs from DULT experts, there is no doubt that these corridors will address the city's mobility problems to a great extent. The government must create a separate cell headed by a chief engineer within BBMP along with other executive engineers to focus on work and ensure timely completion of the project.”

RN Misra | URBAN MOBILITY AND PUBLIC POLICY EXPERT

“Given the present scenario, these corridors are extremely useful for Bengaluru, and developing them is a solution to growing traffic on city roads. There is no doubt that this will ensure smooth flow of traffic sans the snarls that we often get to see now. Also, one must understand that this is not new infrastructure but an upgrade of an existing one.”

Reevathy Ashok | CEO, ISAC

“In urban mobility sector, it is important that development must happen in a network and not individual roads. We are happy that the government has realised this and taken up the project as a network. However, it must ensure that there are dedicated bus lanes and other amenities so that public transport is given more importance to reduce vehicular density. These facilities in the long run will help in larger integration of other transport facilities within Bengaluru.”

Srinivas Alavilli | HEAD OF CIVIC PARTNERSHIP, INRAGADGA

THE 12 KEY ROADS			PROJECT IN NUTSHELL	ROLE OF CONTRACTOR
CORRIDORS	ROADS	Revised length (in km)		
			Initial Cost ₹1,116cr	Maintenance of carriageway, median, footpath, drains, service roads, bus shelters, road markings, signages, streetlights, speed-breakers, road sweeping, tree pruning and tree guards DEFECT RECTIFICATION DEADLINE Potholes 24 hours Cracks in road surface 7 days Road depression 10 days Damage to pavement edges 7 days Replacement of cement slabs 15 days Restoration of utility cuts 3 days Road sweeping Daily Footpath damages 7 days SCOPE OF WORK > Footpath management including kerbs, bollards and tree guards. > Road surveillance, including hazard response, dissemination of information, patrolling > Road safety and furniture management, including replacement of road markings, signages. > Streetlighting > Road sweeping
			Revised cost ₹594cr	
			WHAT THEY ENTAIL	
Bafari Road	Chalukya Circle to Hebbal Flyover	7.4	Bus priority lanes	
Old Madras Road	Trinity Circle to Medihalli Jn	18.5	Cycle lanes (1.5 mtrs)	
Old Airport Road	ASC Centre to Kadugodi via Varthur Kooli	17.1	Wide footpaths - 2.5 mtrs	
Sarjapur Road	Hosur Road to Carmelaram Bridge	8.7	All time vehicle lane marking	
Hosur Road	Vellara Junction to Central Silk Board	6.4	Pothole free surface	
Bannenghatta Road	Hosur Road to Anepalya Junction to Kollaram Gube	3.3	Avg speed: Not less than 25 km/hr	
Kanakapura Road	KR Road to NICE Junction	13.7		
Mysuru Road	Hudson Circle to Jnanabharati Junction	15.4		
Magadi Road	Old Banni Mill to NICE Road	12		
Tumakuru Road	Sengolirayana Circle to Gengantoppalya	7.9		
West of Chord Road	Soap Factory to Mysuru Road	8.4		
Outer Ring Road	Mysuru Road to Old Madras Road	27.1		
Total length		146.4		

File photo of 1km high-density corridor that was created on a pilot basis on Old Airport Road

By S. S. Srinivasan

Survey: 87% in the dark about ward committees

Bengaluru: Nearly nine of 10 or 87% Bengalureans participating in a survey to gauge political and civic awareness said they were ignorant about the existence of ward committees, which were formed to ensure citizens' participation in local governance.

The survey, conducted by Janaagraha, an NGO, also showed that 95% of the respondents had not attended ward committee meetings and 94% were unaware that each panel is allocated Rs 60 lakh by BBMP for development work.

Despite lack of awareness about local governance structures, the respondents are deeply concerned about footpaths, garbage, flooding, poor roads, water and air quality. The survey cohort comprised 503 respondents from 27 wards in BBMP's eight zones.

While respondents said they will vote in upcoming BBMP elections based on civic and infrastructure issues, many were unaware who the last mayor was. Most even believed that MLAs and not corporators are responsible for fixing the problems. While only 17% of the respondents knew who the last mayor was, 97% and 83% (respectively) knew Narendra Modi was the prime minister

TIMES VIEW

The lack of awareness about ward committees only points to a huge communication gap between the civic agency and residents. The absence of an elected municipal council seems to have only widened it. In the past, even people familiar with such panels have complained of a disorganised structure and unfair representation. While authorities need to draw up rules on membership and reach out to citizens, Bengalureans must take active part. Fleeting concerns about garbage or potholes aren't enough. A proactive approach by all stakeholders alone will improve governance.

of India and Basavaraj Bommai the chief minister of Karnataka.

About 22% of the respondents met MLAs seeking help to resolve civic issues and only 12% consulted ward corporators. In fact, 88% of the respondents had never met their ward corporators.

As for issues affecting them, 23% cited pedestrian infrastructure as the most significant concern, whereas nearly 20% said they were worried about garbage collection. TNN

Modi's promise to decongest B'luru a shot in arm for BJP

Sandeep.Moudgal
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise to decongest Bengaluru in the next 40 months has buoyed the ruling BJP, which has been struggling to set a narrative for fast-approaching Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and next year's assembly elections.

That Modi made it a point to go into details of infrastructure projects for the capital has increased the confidence of BJP legislators from the city and party aspirants for the BBMP polls. Saffron party MLAs say they expect the political impact of the promise to be "huge".

EYE ON POLLS

"Promises are made by every political leader who comes to power, but when PM Modi makes them, people tend to believe it," said Uday Garudachar, BJP Chickpet MLA. "This automatically has a significant impact on voters and will definitely prove beneficial for us."

Satish Reddy, party chief whip and Bommanahalli MLA, said the PM's promise also encompassed the Peripheral Ring Road (PRR) project, which he claimed is "now on track".

"Besides the larger issue of decongestion, the PM's statement also comes in the

wake of significant progress being made on completing the PRR, which has been long pending," Reddy said. "This being the case, Modi's statement which dwells on details of plans being drawn up to decongest the city will help us immensely in elections."

However, some functionaries say the PM's promise will only fructify if there is proper allocation of funds by the Centre. "While larger projects will be spoken about and dwelt upon, wards require regular and equitable allocation of funds to maintain roads and other infrastructure to avoid congestion," said one BJP MLA.

Some BJP legislators allege the disparity in allocation of funds is extremely high, with a few "select" MLAs getting Rs 400 crore for their segments, while others get only Rs 140 to Rs 160 crore.

Meanwhile, Congress dismissed PM Modi's statements, labelling them as yet another 'jumla' (false promise).

"The PM is known to make such election-centric statements. This is no different," said Rizwan Arshad, Shivajinagar MLA. "People know that his words are hollow and do not translate well on the ground. If there was any intent to decongest Bengaluru, then why was the suburban rail project pending for the past 40 months?"



SMOOTH WORK: A road in Kammaghatta, Kengeri, that was asphalted ahead of PM Modi's visit

Palike spent ₹23 crore on sprucing up city roads

BBMP spent Rs 23 crore to develop several road stretches ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bengaluru on Monday. "As protocol dictates necessary preparations for the PM's visit, the urban local body developed multiple roads, spending Rs 23.5 crore.

The roads fall in areas where Modi attended several events," Ravindra PN, special commissioner (projects), told reporters on Tuesday.

Ravindra said a total 14.1km of roads were developed. Data shared by BBMP showed Rs 4 crore was spent on a 2.4km stretch of Ballari Road; Rs 1.6 crore on 0.9 km stretch of Tumakuru Road; Rs 6 crore for 3.6km of University Road; Rs 0.4 crore for 0.2km of Mysuru Road and Rs 11.5 crore for 7km stretch of Kammaghatta Road.

The Palike also repaired service roads, fixed footpaths, installed streetlights, and painted medians. "Our workers toiled day and night and completed the work in a week. Work was taken up on priority because of protocol," Ravindra said.

Ragpickers allege abuse; cops suspect illegal migrants

Waste-picker released as citizenship confirmed

About two weeks ago, police picked up a man identified as Yar Ali, a waste-picker. He was allegedly detained for over five days at Hebbagodi station, and was released only after Riju Nagar police from Murshidabad district in West Bengal emailed their counterparts saying he was a resident of Kashipur in their jurisdiction and not an illegal migrant. Anjun Burman, a police officer with Riju Nagar station, confirmed the same. "We even sent a letter to Hebbagodi police station confirming Yar Ali's citizenship."

'Govt should resolve issue'

R Kaleem Ullah, national vice-president of All India Shramik Swaraj Kendra, said over 1 lakh migrants from West Bengal are working in Bengaluru, adding police are torturing them and accusing them of being illegal migrants. This has to stop as the families are depressed. The state government has to resolve the problem, he said.

Shreyas.HS@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Residents of colonies home to ragpickers working for BBMP on Monday complained to the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC), alleging police harassment. They also met additional superintendent of police Lakshmi Ganesh, requesting action against constables troubling them.

While the commission promised to look into the ragpickers' complaints, police said they are carrying out raids on the suspicion that these colonies have become havens of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. Most of the colonies are located in Marenahalli and Hulimangala, off Electronics City, on the southeastern fringes of Bengaluru.

According to police, seven illegal Bangladeshi migrants have been picked up from these colonies and sent to a detention centre in Nelamangala, from where they'll be deported to their country. Police said they have a strong suspicion that many Bangladeshis have crossed the border and taken shelter in the ragpickers' colonies. Five of the arrested were from Marenahalli and three from Hulimangala.

Confirming the raids on these settlements, Bengaluru district SP Kona Vamsi Krishna said, "Drives are being conducted in multiple areas where wastepickers live to ascertain their identities as we strongly suspect some people have arrived there from Bangladesh. We have sent seven pe-

ople to the detention centre."

He added they had recently arrested Sydul Akoon, a Bangladeshi who was the mastermind in a document scam. He would arrange fake documents for his fellow nationals in the name of BBMP health officers. Vamsi asserted that the drive will continue.

'Beaten up, threatened'

Residents of these colonies, however, allege they have been facing police harassment even after submitting the required documents to prove their Indian citizenship. A video accessed by TOI shows Hebbagodi police beating up a man at Hulimangala village where nearly 120 families from West Bengal live. A majority of these families work for BBMP at its dry waste collection centres.

Azharul SK, a resident of the colony, said five policemen from Hebbagodi station arrived and started harassing people. Despite the settlers showing the documents, they asked them to leave, arguing that they had crossed the border illegally.

Aneesh claimed that he was beaten up by the cops and threatened with dire consequences if he didn't leave the place as he was told he's not a citizen of India.

"I showed them my Aadhaar card but they still accused me of fabricating the document. This has been happening ever since we came here from West Bengal." He alleged police visited many shacks, beating up the men.

Meagre ₹5.9 cr collected in access benefit sharing since 2015 from firms using natural resources; bulk of funds not utilised for biodiversity conservation

NATURAL INJUSTICE

Bengaluru BMC yet to receive funding

| Garima Prasher
c-garima.prasher
@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The Karnataka Biodiversity Board (KBB) has signed 401 benefit sharing agreements with traders and manufacturers of herbs and herbal products from 2015 to date.

The board has collected Rs 5.9 crore through these agreements under the Access Benefit Sharing (ABS) scheme of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. However, the majority of this amount is unused.

"Most of the ABS funds that we have generated are lying with us. Although, as per the biodiversity act, 95% of this fund has to be given to Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) for conservation work in their respective areas and 5% can be used for the board's maintenance work. So far, we have released Rs 58 lakhs to eight BMCs across Shivamogga, Uttara Kannada and Ballari," said a KBB official.

As per India's Biological Diversity Act, 2002, BMCs have to be set up at the panchayat level. The role of BMCs is to ensure biodiversity conservation in specific areas,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>



“ Total Ecosystem Supply Value of forest ecosystem in Karnataka is equivalent to 18.1% of GDP... It was Rs 2,91,200 cr in 2019. ABS amount of Rs 5.9 cr in eight years proves there are many using resources, but few are sharing benefits.

— Dr TV Ramachandra, IISc

Cost of exploiting nature

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mapped and documented in People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR).

Nagoya Protocol

India is a party to the Nagoya Protocol, a supplementary agreement ratified by the country in 2014, under which, the users of biological resources are supposed to share a percentage of profits with local communities. This percentage of profit, known as Access Benefit Sharing (ABS), must be disbursed to local BMCs for biodiversity conservation purposes or to promote the livelihoods of local people from where natural resources were accessed.

While the biodiversity board has funds lying unused for BMCs activities, the Bengaluru BMC is yet to receive any funding to get started with its activities. BMC members told BM that while they had submitted a proposal to procure funding under the local municipal body, no fund has been allocated yet.

"We submitted the proposal to the BBMP to procure funding for our activities. It was up to the BBMP to reach out to the biodiversity board with a funding proposal under access benefit sharing. It just shows the lack of will to implement any biodiversity conservation work," said Akshay Heblkar, a member of Bengaluru BMC.

However, the biodiversity board said ABS rules were ratified only in 2014 and the officials are still learning the ropes. "The rules are still new to us as well as the companies that are utilising natural resources for commercial purposes. The board is soon convening an expert committee meeting to discuss the dispersal of funds," said a technical staff of KBB.

The member secretary of KBB remained unavailable to comment despite many attempts from BM.

Fund generation

While the ABS money collected is yet to be utilised, experts said, Rs 5.9 crore in eight years is a small amount. According to TV Ramachandra of Centre for Ecological Sciences at the Indian Institute of Science, the Total Ecosystem Supply Value of the forest ecosystem in Karnataka is equivalent



to 18.1% of the GDP.

"While there has been a degradation of supply value of the state's forest ecosystem since 2005, we calculated it to be Rs 2,91,200 crore in 2019. The ABS amount of Rs 5.9 crore in eight years only proves that while there are many using the resources, very few are sharing the benefits. The big players are still flouting the rules and escaping. We need to come up with a proper mechanism so that pilferages are addressed," said Dr Ramachandra.

However, as per the state biodiversity board, a low amount of access benefit sharing money is due to non-

compliance on part of the companies.

"We have sent notices of non-compliance to around 200 companies, most of them from Bengaluru. We have been writing letters to these companies and asking them to submit Form I. They are supposed to provide information regarding the usage of natural resources in the form and seek permission before moving ahead and using the resources. However, there are many defaulters," said an official.

The board said the companies are mostly unaware of the Nagoya Protocol and regulations under it.

"The companies that are sharing the benefits are those that are aware of the regulations. We have conducted workshops for these companies in the past and we are planning to conduct a few more over the coming months to spread awareness," the KBB official told BM.

Experts disagree

"With 21st century surveillance mechanisms at our disposal, it is difficult to understand so much non-

“ We submitted the proposal to the BBMP to procure funding for our activities. It was up to BBMP to reach out to the board with a funding proposal under access benefit sharing

compliance. The biggest loophole of the system is a lack of monitoring at the ground level due to inadequate staff. We need more foot soldiers keeping an eye on natural resources and illegal extraction; activate Village Forest Committees (VFCs) that can rejuvenate and restore degraded forest patches by involving local people. How do these restrictions work beautifully in the case of researchers?" wondered Dr Ramachandra.

Money break-up

Year	Number of Agreements	ABS Money received (In Ru)
2015-16	94	19,23,470
2016-17	69	15,97,530
2017-18	45	56,74,856
2018-19	71	1,68,99,844
2019-20	45	82,67,060
2020-21	38	1,43,54,771
2021-22	39	96,55,086

₹23 crore spent for 1-day Modi visit

But most potholes remain as they were as only roads where VVIP convoy would pass were given facelift

| Sridhar.Vivan@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @sridharMirror

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) which always claims it is short of funds to take up developmental work has spent a whopping Rs 23 crore to give a facelift to roads for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's one-day trip to the city. Modi landed at the Yelahanka air base, visited IISc, headed to Kommaghatta to address a rally and announce a few projects. From here, he was off to Mysuru.

To give Bengaluru a new look, BBMP asked its personnel to work day and night for the last one week to ensure that the 14-km road length which Modi travelled on got a makeover. According to BBMP, Rs 2.06 crore was spent to give a facelift to 2.4 km of Kempegowda International Airport Road, Rs 1.55 crore for 0.9 km of Tumakuru Road, Rs 6.05



The Shivakumara Swami Road linking Kommaghatta with Kengeri underwent an overnight transformation

crore for 3.06 km of Bangalore University Road, Rs 35 lakh for 0.15 km of Mysuru Road and Rs 11.5 crore for upgrading a seven-kilometre stretch of Kommaghatta Road.

BBMP's Special Commissioner

Ravindra PN said, "It is our duty to fix the roads which the PM is visiting. The amount for the road works was drawn from the BBMP Chief Commissioner's discretionary quota. Prior permission was also taken from

Rakesh Singh, who is the BBMP Administrator as well as the Additional Chief Secretary to the Urban Development Department. As per the upgradation project, the roads were asphalted along with the service roads (whenever available), the medians were cleaned and beautified, kerb stones were painted and street lights were fixed. We took up the project one week before the PM's visit so that all the works were completed before he arrived."

However, citizens want all areas in the city to be treated with the same kind of attention. "In the last few weeks, we have seen the areas where VVIPs visit. Many roads got a facelift when President Ram Nath Kovind visited. This was followed by PM Modi's visit. BBMP has posed that if it wants to fix the roads, it can do it at very short notice. Now, we want to know why the other roads which are in a bad shape are not fixed at the

same speed," said Kishore Nanda, a techie. Sulcumar R, a college student said, it was strange that for the last few years, the civic agency had failed to make Bengaluru free of potholes. He said it seems only VVIPs can make the BBMP work. So far, BBMP has failed multiple times in meeting the self imposed deadlines to fill up potholes.

Reacting to this, Ravindra said that so far the BBMP has identified 15,679 potholes based on the official entries in the Fix My Street app. Of this, 14,263 have been filled up. "We are unable to fill potholes on time due to incessant rainfall. If we have dry conditions, then we could have completed the road on time," he said. However, when asked how the BBMP completed the fresh asphalt for Modi's visit despite rainfall, he said, "Filling potholes is a tedious job but it is always easier to go for asphaltting the entire road."

Citizens bat for better civic body coordination

| Y Maheswara Reddy
s-y.reddy@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

It is perhaps the brazen digging of roads on regular intervals by one city agency or the other that has made over 80 per cent of voters feel that the need of the hour is more coordination between them.

They feel that the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and civic agencies such as Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company, Bengaluru

Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation need to join hands to ensure better local governance.

In the survey conducted by Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy to gauge public perception on local governance, issues that affect the quality of life, their expectation from the upcoming BBMP elections, city budget, and city issues, 23 per cent of the people cited pedestrian infrastructure as the most significant issue. This was followed by 20 per cent who cited garbage

collection, 16 per cent who said traffic congestion, and 15 per cent who spoke for clean water.

Using stratified random sampling methodology, 503 people from 27 wards belonging to eight zones were asked 29 questions. The survey was conducted between December 16, 2021 and January 2, 2022, and included people from different ages and socio-economic groups.

89 per cent of Bengaluru voters were concerned about environmental issues and climate change, yet only 25 per cent of voters felt that corporators accord environmental issues noteworthy significance. Only 17 per cent of those surveyed knew the name of the last Mayor, while 97 per cent of voters knew the Prime Minister's name, and 83 per cent knew the Chief Minister's name.

Using stratified random sampling methodology, 503 people from 27 wards belonging to eight zones of Bengaluru were asked 29 questions

Released on Tuesday, the survey showed that first-time voters were eager to vote in the upcoming BBMP elections. Their main concern was tackling climate change, and 88 per cent of them believe strong local governance is the key to a better future for Bengaluru.

Srinivas Alavilli, Head of Civic Participation at Janaagraha, said, "Voters of Bengaluru are waiting for the BBMP elections. We tried to understand the degree of awareness citizens have about BBMP, particularly the first-time voters. The results showed that very few understand the role of BBMP, ward corporators, or Ward Committees, but are keen to vote and want civic polls to be conducted on the basis of everyday issues that affect them. We appeal

to the political parties to present a compelling vision for our city and seek votes."

Sapna Karim of Janaagraha said, "While a large percentage of citizens and voters of Bengaluru may not fully yet understand the nature of ward level governance, it is clear that their expectations from the BBMP and the new council that will be formed is to ensure there are walkable footpaths, clean neighbourhoods, an efficient compost, access to clean water, and there is a focus on mitigating negative impact on climate and environment, among other civic issues.

She said the pandemic has proven that decentralisation of governance through Ward Committees and bringing government closer to the citizens brought merit. This, she said, was evident from the significant number of Ward committee meetings taking place in the city.

"However, the BBMP has to build its capacity and resources to strengthen the platform of Ward Committees, deepen citizen engagement and through that fulfil citizens' aspirations," she further said.

Good news for cyclists!

DULT all set to introduce unique 2.5 m wide bi-directional cycle lanes

Melvin Mathew
c-melvin.mathew@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

In an effort to improve the cycling lane network, the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) is piloting a bi-directional cycle lane on SK temple road in Doddanekundi.

As part of this pilot project, three unique designs have been chosen for testing, and the remaining lanes will also come up in the same area. A 1.5 km stretch of road has been chosen in Doddanekundi to test the designs.

One might have seen the protected cycle lane on Outer Ring Road (ORR) with two unidirectional lanes on both sides, but now DULT is looking at a bi-directional lane where cyclists will be travelling in two directions and the cycle lane will be present only on one side. These cycle lanes are slightly wider than the usual, each lane being 2.5 metres wide. Usually, the lanes are on both sides of the road with a width of 1.5 metres each.

The design could be useful in narrow stretches where demarcating two cycle lanes is not feasible.

The cycle lane is separated by unique X-shaped separators, different from the long plastic bollards on the ORR stretch.

"As part of the Suma Doddanekundi project, we received a proposal to construct a lane in this area. We held a bicycle separator challenge and selected three designs. DULT provided a grant ranging from 18 lakhs to 20 lakhs, and based on our requirements, the teams designed the separators," said DULT Commissioner, Manjula V.

She further informed that one of the designs has already been in-



The X-shaped separators, if placed closely, will make it impossible for motorists to enter the lanes

stalled for a stretch of 500 m on SK Temple road.

The new lane will prove helpful to students cycling to school.

"The stretch starts at Gopalan School and all of them cycle to school every day. While a protected lane on both sides is not possible, a bi-directional lane will provide a safe community to these students," said Co-founder of Sensing Local, Sobia Rafiq, sensing locals have been playing a crucial role in bringing up cycling infrastructure in Doddanekundi.

Speaking about the unique design of the bicycle separator, Co-founder of Elemental Motor Works,

We held a bicycle separator challenge and selected three designs. DULT provided a grant ranging from 18 to 20 lakhs

—Manjula V, DULT Commissioner

the designing company of the X-shaped separators, Piyush Verma, said, "As part of the challenge, we were supposed to design the separators that prevent water-logging, remain theft-proof (metal-free), have

a low carbon footprint. While it's made from recycled plastic, it provides less incentive for theft. The X design also allows cyclists to slide outside, but would deter motorists from entering the lane as they would have to take a sharp turn."

The separators have been placed closely and would make it nearly impossible for motorists to enter the lane. They are designed in a way that the angle of the X can be changed and the height is also adjustable. "The yellow stripes on the separators are reflectors and with 50 per cent reflective coating. They will be visible at night as well," he added.

KAUSHIK JN

whatsapp
MIRROR
9591233247

Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Lights please
Cunningham Road



None of the streetlights here in Cunningham Road are functioning for the past one month making it very difficult for motorists.

Clean the road
Shantala Nagar



Construction debris dumped three months ago at Langford Gardens Corner, Ward no 111, Shantala Nagar. It has not been cleared despite notices and calls to BBMP.



Kayaking Association conducts special yoga session on water

Floating yoga

On the occasion of International Yoga Day, the Kayaking Association conducted a special yoga session on water. Along with the rest of Bengaluru, the association held a yoga session on the ground on Tuesday, but to showcase their expertise with water, the association decided to hold a session on water as well. The yoga session on the water was conducted for the kayaking athletes who practise in the Yele Mallappa Shetty Lake in KR Puram.

Captian Dilip Kumar, Secretary of Kayaking and Canoeing Association of Karnataka, said, "As water sports athletes, we want to do something related to water. Nineteen players took part in the session using two dragon boats.

Each dragon boat can accommodate 10 members."

He said as they practise regularly on the boats, the athletes have good balance. "So, it was easy for us to do yoga on boats. Since the players had to stand and maintain balance, we installed minor supports in the lake but the boat was not anchored." Earlier, the athletes would struggle to practise in the Yele Mallappa Shetty kere due to the excessive growth of weeds. But the association said the weeds have been displaced by the recent rains. "We have also received principal approval for funds from a company as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility to take up lake rejuvenation," he added.

—Melvin Mathew

Get, set, booster-ready

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) door-to-door campaign advocating for precautionary doses for Bengalureans 60 or above has finally started. While the campaign was supposed to kick off in the first week of June, it got delayed due to the recently completed sero-survey involving unvaccinated children in the age group of 6-12 years.

A BBMP official said that the programme would be accelerated to make up for the delay. "We plan to accelerate the coverage among the vulnerable population. We have been directed to scale up the precautionary dose vaccination and the door-to-door campaign will help us achieve that."

Under the program, officials will visit individual houses to inoculate those above 60 years of age with the booster dose. Officials will be checking for individuals in this age group who have completed nine months after the second jab. These individuals are being contacted and the officials are trying to convince them to get the booster dose as soon as possible.

Despite the vaccine being available free of cost for the elderly, not many have come forward to take it.

According to official data, only about 36 per cent of the population above 60 years has received the booster dose. While around 9.5 lakh individuals in this age group received their second dose of the vaccine, only about 3.5 lakh have received the precautionary dose so far.

"We have covered all eligible people in the age group of 60 and above with the first and the second dose of vaccine. The door-to-door campaign will speed up the inoculation of precautionary doses in this age group too," said the official.

When it comes to the age group of 18-59, only about 2.2 lakh individuals have taken the booster shot in the city so far.

The drive was planned by the BBMP after the centre announced launching a two-month, door-to-door campaign to accelerate the coverage of booster jabs.

Let's call them up

A helpline number to help address civic issues in city

Iffath.Fathima
@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP) has come up with a helpline number for citizens to resolve civic issues in their respective wards. 080 47190000, is the helpline number. This is done in an effort to address unresolved civic issues like potholes, sludgy roads, fallen branches owing to recent rains.

Once the backend team notes the civic problem and the locality, the issue is then forwarded to the BNP team located in the specific ward, who will further escalate the issue to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) ward engineers.

Lalithamba BV, core working group member of BNP said, "We will take prompt action, because we believe in getting work done. As we are actively involved in the ward and zonal meetings of the citizens with BBMP officials. We are regularly in touch with the officials." Issues involving other departments like BWSSB and BESCO will also be taken up and forwarded to the officials. They also have an email id to report the issues. "One can even email at info@nammabnp.org about the civic problem. BNP has tracked ward meetings and has encouraged ward residents to play an active role in them. This is to ensure that every rupee is well spent within their respective wards," added Lalithamba.

The BNP team said that though Rs 20,000 crore has been spent on road construction in the last five years, most roads are in a pathetic state.

Citizens said the BBMP Sahaaya app has not worked well for them. "In spite of the number of complaints made on the road condition at Pottery Town, it remains unsolved. Apps like these should help citizens in resolving complaints," said Adithya Mahesh, resident of SK Garden.

Young eager to vote, want strong BBMP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IN a refreshing sign, 86 per cent of Bengaluru's first-time voters expressed their intention to cast their vote in the upcoming BBMP polls. Janaagraha's City Politics survey showed these young voters are eager to exercise their franchise. While their main concern is tackling climate change, 88 per cent of these voters believe that good local governance and a strong BBMP are the keys to a better future for Bengaluru.

With BBMP elections likely to be held this year, the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy conducted a City Politics survey to gauge public perception on local governance.

Srinivas Alavilli, head of

Civic Participation at Janaagraha, said, "We tried to understand the degree of awareness citizens have about BBMP, particularly first-time voters. The results showed a few understand the role of BBMP, ward corporators, ward committees etc. Voters want civic polls to be conducted on the basis of everyday issues. To improve our city, local governance must be strengthened, beginning with participation in local polls. We urge parties to present a compelling vision for our city."

Using stratified random sampling methodology, 503 people from 27 wards across eight zones were asked 29 questions. The survey was conducted between December 16, 2021, and January 2, 2022, and included people from different age and socio-economic groups, Alavilli said.



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Only 17% of those surveyed know the name of the last Mayor, 97% know PM's name and 83% knew CM's name
- ▶ 88% have never met their ward councillor, 87% are unaware of ward committee meetings, 95% have never attended a ward committee meeting, 22% had approached an MLA to resolve an issue. By comparison, only 12% have met a councillor
- ▶ 87% of Bengaluru voters believe a strong councillor can ensure better services and improved infrastructure for their wards
- ▶ 23% cited pedestrian infrastructure as the most significant issue, 20% cited garbage collection, 16% traffic congestion, 15% lack of availability of clean water
- ▶ 89% of voters are concerned about environmental issues and climate change, 25% feel councillors accord environmental issues noteworthy significance

BBMP chief knee-deep in flood, pothole complaints

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Bengaluru

BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath was flooded with complaints and suggestions over civic issues during the 'Mukhya Ayuktara Nade Valayada Kade' (Chief Commissioner's walk towards zone) initiative at Bommanahalli.

Dozens of Resident Welfare Associations and people submitted representations.

After the meeting, Girinath told TNIE that he has received many complaints regarding flooding of homes, overflowing of drains due to piling of sludge, illegal construction and others.

"The silt will be removed soon, and notices will be sent to building owners. Residents have also asked for shredders in their zones as tree branches and leaves are going to waste sites. There are complaints of footpath encroachment, potholes and drainage problems at Sector 6 and 7, which will be looked into," he said.

Palike's acquiring of revenue pockets have added to HSR Layout's woes. The chairman of all sectors' associations of HSR Layout, BNR Reddy said the residents in some sectors fear flooding of homes during rain when the storm water drains swell.

"It has been long since the drains were cleaned. The BBMP took many revenue pockets into its limits without planning. The residents from the revenue pockets let the waste water, garbage into drains," he said.

**₹23.5
CRORE**

SPENT ON BENGALURU MAKEOVER FOR PM VISIT

Drains and streetlights fixed in one week

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's visit gave a major infrastructure boost to Bengaluru, with BBMP spending around ₹23.5 crore to do up the city. Expenses included tarring of roads, fixing potholes, covering drains and marking fresh white lines on newly tarred roads.

Special Commissioner Ravindra told TNIE that it was a long-term project and sprucing up was not done only for the PM's visit.

It is said that Rs 14 crore was spent on fixing roads in and around Kommaghatta, Hebbal and the surroundings, around Rs 10 crore for fixing existing streetlights and installing new ones, and also fixing drains with concrete slabs. "The Palike spent around Rs 23.5 crore. We took up development work and it is for long duration," said Ravindra.

As per information, expenses for the visit are taken from the accounts of the commis-



Secretariat staff perform pranayama at Vikasa Soudha | NAGARA JA GADEKAL

sioner and administrators. It is said these areas were craving for attention from civic agencies for the past few years, but suddenly the BBMP completed work in just 4 to 7 days.

RWAs smell a rat

General Secretary of Nagrikara Kshembhivridhi Sangha (an RWA forum) S Sudarshan said work in Kengeri Upanagara, Hemmigeputra and Ullal wards was taken up in a hurry with roads being repaired or tarred even when it rained. "In a month's time, BBMP's work will be exposed," he said, adding that work was done without job code, estimation and work list.

The project estimation was prepared by the Chief Engineer and AEE of Yeshwanthpur assembly segment, but work was taken up by the Major Roads section to help contractors, he alleged.

BBMP official from Major Roads department refuted the charges and said work was taken up under 4G exemption from the government itself.

Infrastructure expert MA Sreehari said as the PM's visit was decided months in advance, the Palike should have done its work earlier, to avoid inflationary costs. "The exercise was to please the PM. As per the Indian Road Congress, a road's durability is 10 years, but now, two heavy showers are enough to destroy it," he said.



Members of the Kayaking and Canoeing Association of Karnataka perform yoga on Yele Mallappa Shetty lake in KR Puram on Tuesday

Stretch, breathe in, exhale

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

BENGALURU was up early on a cool Tuesday to stretch on yoga mats.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed yoga in Mysuru, civic agency officials from Bescom, transport department, and high court judges, led by example in the city.

But what enthralled many Bengalureans was the Kayaking and Canoeing Association of Karnataka which performed yoga session on boats at YMC lake in KR Puram on Tuesday morning, executing executed asanas to the hilt.

Judges and advocates of Karnataka HC participated in the International Yoga

Day event on the high court premises while BBMP chief commissioner Tushar Girinath along with other zonal commissioners and staffers performed asanas at the head office. UrbanDC J Manjunath also took part.

Many schools and colleges organised special sessions for yoga day. In Greenwood High School, students performed yoga along with their fathers. After performing yoga, many private and government schools decided to call it a day while others continued with their regular classes.

IT-BT Minister Dr CN Ashwath Narayan also participated in the yoga session on Tuesday along with more than 900 students in his constituency in Malleswaram.

DURATION OF PANDEMIC	CASES REPORTED	DEATHS	DISCHARGES					
2 YEARS, 105 DAYS	738	0 0	646 637	B'uru Urban: 698	Chamarajanagar: 0	Dharwad: 3	Kolar: 1	Shivamogga: 0
	530	POSITIVITY RATE	MORTALITY RATE	B'uru Rural: 3	Chikkaballapur: 0	Gadag: 0	Koppal: 0	Tumakuru: 3
	TALLY	5.93% 5.93%	1.01% 1.01%	Begalkot: 0	Chikkamagaluru: 0	Hassan: 0	Mandya: 0	Udupi: 0
TODAY	39,62,099	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERY RATE	Ballari: 3	Chitradurga: 0	Haveri: 0	Mysuru: 13	U Kannada: 0
YESTERDAY	39,61,361	5,020	98.86%	Belagavi: 0	D Kannada: 13	Kalaburagi: 0	Raichur: 0	Vijayapura: 0
		4,928	98.86%	Bidar: 0	Davanagere: 1	Kodagu: 0	Ramanagara: 0	Yadgi: 0

Omicron sub-lineages behind Covid surge, shows waste water analysis

BA.4, BA.5 variants in 30 cases, samples of 370 awaited; No fourth wave yet

SHILPA P @Bengaluru

GENOME sequencing (GS) tests on samples of 30 Covid-19 infected persons as well as sewage surveillance has indicated that the sudden spurt in Covid cases in Bengaluru has been due to two sub-lineages of the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes the disease. However, the Indian Sars-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) at the national level is yet to confirm this, according to health department officials, who said this is not yet the fourth wave of the pandemic.

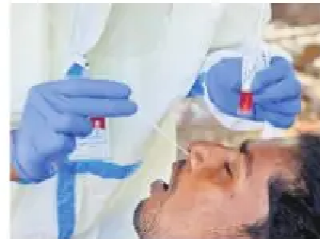
The two sub-lineages, BA.4 and BA.5, were detected in waste water analysis — or sewage surveillance — done in multiple samples in Bengaluru.

The reports of GS tests of

samples of the 30 people who had tested positive for RT-PCR tests, revealed the presence of BA.4 and BA.5, while reports of tests conducted on samples of 370 other infected people are awaited.

“The viral load analysis of waste water of over 100 samples from sewage treatment plants, manholes, and open drains was done in all wards of Bengaluru this month. These BA.4 and BA.5 sub-lineages of Omicron are being mainly found in samples of waste water of Bellandur, where nine clusters are found,” officials said. However, Health Commissioner D Randeep said, “There is neither a steady nor exponential rise in cases or multiple clustering cases. So we cannot term it as the fourth wave yet.”

Meanwhile, a Covid Techni-



cal Advisory Committee (TAC) member said: “Unless a new ‘Variant Of Concern’ (VOC) that is immune-escaping, is reported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Centre’s INSACOG and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC&P), we cannot call the surge in cases the fourth wave of Covid.”

In Bengaluru, while 25 clusters were found in apartments, health officials said most clusters were detected when those

travelling abroad underwent Covid tests. In Mahadevapura zone alone, among 24 clusters in apartments, nine clusters are in Bellandur, two are in Hagadur, four in Varthur, one in Kadugodi, one in Horamavu and one in Vignan Nagar. One cluster is in an apartment in Rajarajeshwari Nagar zone, and another in an individual house in Yelahanka. At present, there are 28 clusters in Bengaluru.

“Cases are rising mainly because people are travelling since there are no travel restrictions. Besides, people are not following Covid protocol even in public rallies and spaces, and are showing reluctance in taking the precautionary dose,” said an officer.

On Tuesday, Karnataka reported 738 Covid-19 cases, with 698 from Bengaluru.



NOT A GREEN SPOT

Bengaluru is truly living up to its reputation as the Garden City of India. Here, residents of Bilekahalli have placed a palm in a pothole to attract the attention of BBMP officials | **ASHISH KRISHNA HP**

'Some Omicron Variants Escaping Antibodies from Sinopharm Shot'

Reuters

Beijing: A small Chinese study detailed in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal showed neutralising antibodies against some Omicron sub-variants were largely undetectable after two doses of a Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine, with a booster shot only partly restoring them. The study comes as China, which has approved only locally developed Covid shots including the Sinopharm vaccine, strives to improve vaccination rates, maintaining a "dynamic zero Covid" policy



aimed at eradicating all outbreaks while many countries have adopted an approach of learning to live with the virus. The vaccine, BBIBP-CorV, is one of the two Sinopharm Covid shots approved for use in China, and is also the main shot that the state-owned firm has exported. Among 25 individuals who received two doses of BBIBP-CorV vaccine, the neutralising activity against sub-variants such as BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 "was not or only minimally detectable", researchers said in correspondence published on Monday.

Neutralising activity against those sub-variants was observed in just 24-48% of subjects who received a BBIBP-CorV booster shot.



CORONA METER

CASES ON TUESDAY 7,105[^]

ACTIVE CASES 80,773 (+1,265)^o

Recovered 42.72 m (+5,836)

Deaths 524,900 (+4)

TOTAL CASES 43,328,616

Source: State bulletins; PEU; 14 states/UTs (incl. Kerala, Karnataka & UP) as of 7:52 PM; net of recoveries/deaths (Change since 12am, 21 Jun)

4 Main Metros	CASES ON TUE	ACTIVE CASES
Mumbai	1781	14146
Delhi	1383	5595
B'uru Urban*	494	4723
Chennai	383	2103

Source: State bulletins; *Mon

VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED IN INDIA 1964.77 M (+1.14m)

1st dose... 1015.02 m (93.62%)

2nd dose 907.52 m (83.71%)

(1.12m+ population)

BOOSTER DOSES TOTAL 42.23 m

Source: dashboard.covid.gov.in, 07:52 PM

GLOBAL COUNT

Total Cases 545.00 M

Deaths 6,342,137

Recovered 520.34 M

Vaccine Doses Administered 12031.89 Million
(204 countries/areas)

Source: worldometers.info, 07:52 PM

NEW INFECTIONS IN 5 WORST-HIT COUNTRIES*

Brazil	51925
Taiwan	35594
US	22762
Australia	20207
North Korea	18820

*as of Mon