

## Issuing of Occupancy Cert: BDA accused of irregularity

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The Lokayukta has received a complaint against the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) over suspected irregularities in the issuance of Occupancy Certificates (OC) to two apartment complexes.

The complaint claimed that the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of society were not given the flats that had been reserved for them by the OCs.

Dhananjay P lodged a complaint alleging that the developers had failed to build the 100 and 68 EWS flats, as promised, in addition to the 580 and 657 regular flats. He suspects irregularities as no such flats exist at the spot.

"The BDA is not transparent to home buyers in disclosing floor area ratio (FAR) of the project and validate deed of declaration to ensure that home buyers are given due rights in the project land as per the FAR approval of the project. OCs should be issued only after all validation," he said in the complaint.



## Techie dies in road accident

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** A 28-year-old software engineer died in a fatal accident in Nagenahalli.

At 2.30 am Sunday, 28-year-old Ramesh from Domlur was riding his scooter without a helmet when he struck a tree at the Nagenahalli cross near Hennur. The impact caused severe head injuries, and Ramesh died instantly.

His body was taken to the Yelahanka government hospital, where he was declared dead. His body has been handed over to his parents.

## Man caught on video smashing cars' glass panels

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** A man was caught on video breaking the glass panels of three cars in Malleswaram on Sunday, but none of the vehicle owners complained about the vandalism to the police.

The video footage showed the man smashing the windows and windscreens of an SUV and two other cars with a machete at 1.30 am. The vehicles were parked on the roadside at Malleswaram's 2nd Main, 13th Cross.

Police claimed the owners told them they would fix the broken panels and did not want to file a complaint. "If they file a complaint, we will take necessary action."

## ◆ IN THE CITY ◆

**GENERAL**  
**Bangalore International Centre:** "The Sweet Requiem" narrative feature film screening; Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam; Bangalore International Centre, Domlur; 8 pm.  
**Ragigudda Sri Prasanna Anjaneya Swamy temple:** Lecture on the contributions of Shankaracharya in today's society; Manjunath Bhat Vinayak; Temple premises, Jayanagar; 6.30 pm.

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## ◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

**FORECAST**  
Mainly clear sky  
**TEMPERATURES**  
Maximum 32.0°C  
Minimum 17.0°C  
Rainfall --  
Humidity 64%  
Sunset (Feb 6) 6:23 pm  
Sunrise (Feb 7) 6:46 am  
Moonrise 6:10 pm  
Moonset 6:29 am  
(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

# Purpose defeated? Waste management firm is not in charge of processing plants

## Company CEO cites high court order as the reason

NAVEEN MENEZES  
BENGALURU, DHNS

Although the state government formed the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) to expertly handle the city's 4,500 tonnes of waste two years ago, the entity is yet to assume control of the eight waste processing facilities.

The plants, which cause air and water pollution, also draw citizens' ire for failing to meet operational standards. There was a hope that these plants would be operated efficiently by the newly formed BSWML.

These plants, which currently process close to 1,000 tonnes of waste generated in the city, continues to be handled by the BBMP. With less focus on processing, much of the waste continues to be dumped in the landfills against

the solid waste management (SWM) rules.

Currently, the BSWML handles the less complex landfills, while the processing plants, which face constant attacks from local residents, are managed by joint commissioners in different zones, who already have multiple responsibilities.

BSWML CEO Harish Kumar told *DH* that zonal joint commissioners continue to be responsible for managing the waste processing plants as per a high court order.

"We have created an escrow bank account to run these plants. The joint commissioners will oversee operations," he said.

Experts noted that the necessity of BSWML could be called into question if it does not take control of the processing plants, which is a major part of solid waste management.



The landfill at Mittaganahalli. DH FILE PHOTO

## Rs 100-cr grant

Meanwhile, the BSWML has been put in charge to develop approach roads and drains around the eight waste processing plants and the landfill in Mahadevapura, Yeshwantpur and Byatarayanapura, for which the state government had recently granted Rs 100 crore.

Though the Seeghalli plant is not yet operational, the government has allocated Rs 8.36 crore to asphalt roads around the plant. Authorities have also allocated Rs 8.36 crore each for similar works around Lingadheeranahalli and Sub-

barayappapalya, which receive less than 10 compactors a day.

BBMP sources have pointed to a conflict of interest in the current management of BSWML.

The Additional Chief Secretary of the Urban Development Department is the Chairman of BSWML, while the BBMP Chief Commissioner is the Managing Director of the new entity. This setup presents no scope for checks and balances as the resolutions passed by the board are approved by the same set of officers.

## Student who died in Pattanagere wasn't stopped at metro FOB over mask: BMRCL

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has denied that it contributed in any way to the fatal road accident under the Pattanagere metro station overbridge on February 2.

A 20-year-old college student was run over by a car while crossing the busy Mysuru Road that day.

Chaitanya Ganesh, a BE student from RV College of Engineering who lives in the hostel across the road, claimed that the BMRCL "indirectly contributed" to the accident by insisting that pedestrians using the metro overbridge wear facemasks.

He said many pedestrians avoid using the overbridge because they do not carry facemasks and thus risk their lives

by crossing the busy road.

The BMRCL clarified that this was not the case.

"BMRCL never insists on mask-wearing by pedestrians who use foot overbridges at metro stations having road-crossing facilities. BMRCL also allows passengers to travel on metro without masks though the advisory is given to that effect for the general welfare of commuters for their own safety while they travel in crowded AC metro coaches.

"Many passengers travel daily without wearing masks. In Pattanagere, too, they are being permitted through security checks," it said.

BMRCL further stated that it examined the CCTV footage of the foot overbridge at the Pattanagere metro station and found that the girl who lost her life neither tried to use the

metro FOB nor did any metro staffer stop her for not wearing a mask.

The video recordings of the day also show many passengers entering the metro station for crossing Mysuru Road without the staff asking them to wear masks during security checks, BMRCL said in a statement.

Ganesh, however, said that metro security guards continue to insist on mask use and he was almost stopped from using the FOB on February 3 because he didn't mask up.

He said the authorities had now constructed a hump and painted a zebra crossing at the accident spot.

"These things aren't needed when we have a functional pedestrian bridge. People should be able to use it without any restrictions whatsoever," Ganesh added.

## Day 3 of traffic fine collection: BTP rakes in Rs 6.31 cr

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Three days after the state's slashing of traffic fines came into effect, the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) collected Rs 6.31 crore from violators.

As of 8.30 pm on Sunday, traffic violators in the city cleared 2,06,326 cases by paying a total of Rs 6,31,77,750 via various modes of payment.

Once again, Paytm emerged as the preferred mode of payment for traffic violators, as 1,14,617 cases were cleared via the application, raking in Rs 3,79,95,900.

Payments made using per-



sonal digital assistants (PDAs) at various traffic police stations brought in Rs 1,97,56,950 after clearing over 70,716 cases.

After day three, the total number of cleared traffic fine cases stands at 7,41,048.

The total amount collected since Friday, as of 8.30 pm on February 5, is Rs 22,32,47,491.

Speaking to *DH*, Dr MA Saleem, Special Commissioner (Traffic), is hopeful many cases will be cleared in the week, although, he said, about 2 crore cases are pending.

"People have been coming and paying even today, a Sunday, so we are hopeful that many people will clear their pending fines," the traffic top cop said.

## Pourakarmika union demands direct payment for waste management workers



A pourakarmika at work in Indiranagar. DH FILE

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The BBMP is under pressure to bring waste collection staff under its payroll since the task is non-technical and would slash monthly expenditure by 20 to 30%.

The civic body spends close to Rs 55 crore a month to collect and transport (C&T) waste from houses and commercial establishments by engaging private companies.

The current system in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike requires paying approximately Rs 59,000 per month per auto tipper and nearly Rs 2 lakh per month per compactor.

There are around 4,700 auto tippers (with 20 vehicles per ward) and 600 compactors (used for collecting waste from tippers and transporting it to processing plants and landfills). The estimated monthly cost is expected to exceed Rs 60 crore as the BBMP is planning to bring in new bidders.

The current and proposed

system only benefits contractors, according to waste collection staff.

Although the BBMP pays a monthly salary for both the driver and helper of each auto tipper and compactor, the contractor only employs one staff member in most vehicles. There is also pilferage since the contractor does not send vehicles to every house daily, as required by the tender.

Maitreyi Krishnan of the BBMP Pourakarmika Sangha has suggested that the civic body should put drivers, helpers, loaders, and cleaners working in solid waste management under the direct payment

system, similar to the pourakarmikas (cleanliness staff).

"The present system treats drivers and helpers as slaves. Workers do not receive minimum wages, are being paid late or not at all with wages being kept pending for three to six months. They do not receive social security benefits," she said.

The Sangha said tenders floated to collect and transport waste to be cancelled.

## Pros and cons

Dr Harish Kumar, Special Commissioner, Solid Waste Management, BBMP, stated that the demand they presented had both advantages and disadvantages. "It requires major capital investment as we have currently outsourced both men and machinery (vehicles) to private enterprises."

Regarding the issue of staff not receiving minimum wages, Kumar stated that the BBMP has decided to pay drivers and helpers directly once the new tender system is implemented.

## IN BRIEF

### Park renamed Gandhada Gudi in honour of Puneeth Rajkumar

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar, producer and wife of late actor Puneeth Rajkumar, inaugurated the 'Gandhada Gudi' park opposite Vishnuvardhan Park in Jayanagar 4th T Block on Sunday.

She was joined by MLA Sowmya Reddy, BBMP Corporator N Nagaraju, *Gandhada Gudi* film director Amoghavarsha J S, who inaugurated the 101 saplings planting project, a green waste composting centre, and a cutlery bank in the park.

Around 350 schoolchildren participated in the environmental essay and painting competitions held as a part of the Gandhada Gudi Habba. Stalls displayed information on environmental awareness, composting, and waste segregation along with exhibiting biodegradable articles.

Ashwini emphasised the importance of preserving the environment. "We cannot pay to bring back the environment once destroyed. So let us plant more saplings and do our bit," she said.



Ashwini Puneeth Rajkumar was joined by MLA Sowmya Reddy and others at the event. DH PHOTO/S K DINESH

### St Joseph's University alumni organise centennial celebrations

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The St Joseph's Alumni Association celebrated 100 years of its formation on Sunday.

During the event, held at the campus auditorium on Lalbagh Road, they released a special postal cover commemorating the centennial celebrations of the St Joseph's Alumni/ae Association, the oldest alumni association in the state.

Bijou Kurien, Chairman, Retailers Association of India, was the chief guest. He joined Fr Dr Victor Lobo,

Vice Chancellor, St Joseph's University (SJU); M Lakshminarayan, President, St Joseph's College Alumni Association; Surekh Reghunathan, Senior Superintendent of Post Offices; Rev Fr Dionysius Vaz, Chancellor, SJU; and Fr Swebert D'Silva, Pro-Chancellor, SJU, on stage.

The association also screened a documentary on the launch of the new university campus that will soon be set up at the cost of Rs 2,000 crore.



Dignitaries at the event on Sunday. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

### Awareness drive on bird feeding

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** Adamyia Chetana, in association with Ananth Kumar Foundation, held an awareness campaign at Lalbagh on Saturday, urging people to refrain from feeding birds.

"People have a misconception that feeding birds with bread and other bakery products is a good practice. However, this results in breaking the food chain and it can have long-term effects," said Tejaswini Ananth Kumar, founder,

Adamyia Chetana. She pointed out that processed food can reduce the digestive ability of the birds. "Once it is a habit, birds wait for us to feed them instead of searching for food, which is the natural way. This will trigger an environmental imbalance," she said.

Environmentalist Gopinath Subramaniam echoed Tejaswini's views. Volunteers from BMS College and Nrupatunga College were part of the campaign.

## Cleaned and recharged, six wells spring to life in B'loru suburb

R KRISHNAKUMAR  
BENGALURU, DHNS

Left unused, underused, or reduced to litter pits for years, six open wells in Hunasamaranahalli in Yelahanka taluk have been rejuvenated with fresh inflows and a promise of replenished water supply for the surrounding areas.

After the rejuvenation, taken up under the Million Wells for Bengaluru campaign helmed by Biome Environmental Trust, the Town Municipal Council (TMC) has initiated work to supply water from at least two of the wells. Traditional well-diggers, the mannu vaddars, worked for weeks on the six wells — some of them more than 50 years old — before they were opened for the drawing of water.

The rejuvenation involved desilting, removal of vegeta-



The open well rejuvenated in Bettahalasur. CREDIT: BIOME ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST BETTAHALASUR

tion and cleaning, pumping out of the water, and installation of grilles, pulleys and meters to measure the extraction of water. In Kodagalhatti village, the workers also increased the height of a well's parapet wall by one foot.

Biome said two months after a 75-year-old open well was rejuvenated, the TMC supplies about a lakh litres of water

from the 65 feet-deep well, every day, to three municipal wards. The council is also laying a pipeline to connect water from another rejuvenated well to an overhead tank, near Vidyanagar Cross.

The water from a 33 feet-deep well near Bettahalasur Cross is now being used by about 100 households. The mannu vaddars' work

here included the removal of vegetation on the battered grille, which was subsequently replaced with a new grille. "The largely Tamil-speaking community of the area has chosen to manually draw the water, instead of using a motor pump, to avoid wastage," Shubha Ramachandran, water sustainability consultant at Biome, told *DH*.

The Million Wells project, launched in 2015, encourages communities to dig and maintain recharge wells and provides employment to the well-diggers. The project tries to address, through recharge wells, the problem of limited rainwater percolation in Bengaluru that contributes to the city's groundwater table depletion.

In December 2022, the project was adjudged winner, in the water category, at the People's Choice Awards instituted by

international civil society collective, Transformative Cities.

### Spreading the word

Biome is a technical partner in a pilot project on shallow aquifer management in 10 cities — Bengaluru, Chennai, Dhanbad, Gwalior, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Pune, Rajkot, and Thane — taken up by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation.

Shubha said most of the cities have submitted the project plans. "The work on the ground is set to commence soon. The sites are being identified; training programmes and other capacity-building measures are being implemented," she said.

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike is the nodal agency for the project in Bengaluru.