

# THE BEACON

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## Microplastic in human veins

**Nikita Priya**

Microplastics also used in food packaging and paint have been discovered for the first time in human veins, signalling a hazardous turn in the pollution caused by plastics. Concerns have been raised regarding the potential health effects of these tiny plastic particles in the human bloodstream.

Research has revealed the presence of microplastics, including polymers, in human veins. The findings show that 15 microplastic particles per gram of vein tissue were discovered in patients undergoing heart bypass surgery, indicating that these particles can cross biological barriers like blood vessels and vascular tissues. "This is a wake-up call for all of us to take action and protect human health," said environmentalist Ashok Gosh. He emphasised the need for immediate action to reduce exposure to these particles and limit their impact on human health.

He pitched for a reduction in single-use plastics, improved waste management methods to prevent plastic from entering the environment and human bodies, and a re-evaluation of present plastic-use regulations to provide adequate public health protection.

He highlighted the need for increased investment in research to understand the impact of microplastics on health and the extent of the problem. "We have the power to make a difference, and we need to act now before it's too late," he added.

## Return or compensate: Demand vendors

**Ishika Bhattacharjee**

**Bengaluru:** The street vendors organised a protest after the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and police evicted over 100 street vendors from Jayanagar 4 block on February 4 and assigned marshals to ensure the sellers did not return.

The BBMP and police officials allegedly forced and illegally took possession of the street vendors' tables, carts, and merchandise. Individuals who have allegedly encroached on the Jayanagar commercial area, both within and outside, have been directed to vacate by the BBMP commissioner, according to BBMP officials. Vinay Srinivas, an advocate and a member of the street vendors association in Bangalore, said that street vendors should not be considered intruders as the BBMP has issued them identification cards. "After the protest, the



Vendors stage a protest at Jayanagar 4th block

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BBMP officials met with us and said various things, but it is not fully decided yet. However, we have told them that the vendors need to be allowed to sell out there," he said.

"As per the Street Vendors Act, 2014 (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending), vendors with ID cards cannot be evicted

without a survey being done, and the previous survey did not include all ID cards; hence it is a violation of Section 33 of the Act," he said while speaking to The Beacon.

A vendor can only be evicted after giving one month's notice following Section 18 of the Street Vendors Act. The eviction

can be carried out only if the vendor does not respond satisfactorily. In this incident, he explained that no prior notice was given to the vendors before the eviction drive, leading to a violation of Section 18.

The items of vendors can only be confiscated if they fail to respond to a notice

that has been served on them. However, BBMP officials seized all of the vendors' goods, including pushcarts worth thousands of rupees.

Vinay said, "We've detailed all these violations and given a letter to the BBMP's South Zone Joint Commissioner and said that goods of 100 vendors have been seized and they have not yet been returned." They have demanded that the BBMP give them permission and protection to continue to sell. After an inspection of the commercial complex, the BBMP decided to remove the street vendors after noticing that they were obstructing pavements. However, they had official ID cards, which permitted them to vend on that spot.

The vendors demanded that the unlawfully taken products be returned to them and to be compensated for their losses.

## BBMP worker's demise sparks protest

**Jeba Janet**

**Bengaluru:** A sanitation worker from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) Solid Waste Management (SWM) division named Shri Kumar, 37, died in a tragic incident, while working in the Hanumanthanagar ward. The family and co-workers were awaiting the post-mortem report.

Following the death of Kumar on February 9, a large group of drivers, helpers, and pourakarmikas gathered in front of the BBMP office to demand compensation for his family. Maitreyi, an advocate work-



Voice demands justice

Special arrangement

ing with the All India Central Council of Trade Union (AICCTU), said that the protest began after he died on duty and aimed to get fair compensation for his family. The protestors demanded Rs 15 lakh in compensation, and the government as-

sured 'it would look into it.'

The contract system is where employees are hired to work for BBMP but are paid by a contractor. Speaking to The Beacon, she said, "Contract work is hazardous due to the lack of safety measures, insufficient

job stability, and a high degree of risk involved. The first thing is that the contract system has to be removed, then everyone else will be made permanent. Though the government had said that it would take certain steps, they haven't come up with anything."

The lawyer highlighted the lack of action by the authorities despite repeated complaints about neglect and stated that an investigation had been launched. Once a system is in place, the problem will be fixed, and the community will be secure, she added.

## Union Budget promotes startups

**Sreeja Deb**

The Union Budget 2023 has continued to support a growth strategy for startups. A wide range of measures aimed at promoting the growth of startups in the country has been proposed. Startups have been at the forefront of the Indian economy's growth in recent years, and the government has made significant efforts to support the sector in its journey toward becoming the engine of growth.

One of the key measures announced in the budget is the establishment of a dedicated fund of Rs 5,000 crores to support startups. This Fund will be used to provide seed capital and other support services to startups enabling them to grow and scale their operations. The government has also proposed to set up a "Startup India Hub" to act as a one-stop shop for all the support and services required by startups.

The budget has introduced measures to simplify the compliance and regulatory environment for startups. This includes easing compliance requirements for startups, creating a single-window clearance system, and introducing a 'Startup India Patent Protection and Commercialisation Program'.

## Resilience against drug trafficking

**Yachi Jebisow**

With a high unemployment rate and young people trapped in addiction and substance abuse, the future of Arunachal Pradesh seems less promising, said Indong Nong, the program coordinator of Drug De-addiction Cum Rehabilitation, Namsai district, Arunachal Pradesh.

Arunachal has a long-standing concern about drug addiction among its young population and continues to seek solutions. According to Nong, drug usage has

reached alarming levels in 15 out of the 25 districts in the state.

"Drugs come from neighbouring states like Nagaland and our neighbouring country, Myanmar. Therefore, the easternmost regions of the state are the most severely hit. Most of the drug addicts are between the age group of 13 to 30, and a huge chunk of them are college students," said Nong.

According to Nong, alcohol and opium use are inseparably linked to tradition and culture in Arunachal. "Every household participates in the

ritual of making the regional brew, often known as rice or millet beer. Opium, on the other hand, has a long medical history of being used to treat cuts, bruises, and diarrhoea. Illegal trade and cultivation of these substances have been heavily commercialised in several regions of Arunachal," he added.

Nong believes that due to the evolving lifestyle and modern conveniences, young people are increasingly tempted to engage in drug use regularly.

## SJU unveils new knowledge

**Angeline & Dhamini**

**Campus:** St Joseph's Research Institute (SJRI) inaugurated its first PhD programme, on Friday, at the university campus. The dignitaries for the event were B Thimme Gowda, Vice Chairman of Karnataka State Higher Council, and S Madheswaran, Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bengaluru. The occasion was attended by the university's Vice-Chancellor, Fr Dr Victor Lobo and Fr Dr Xavier, the Director of SJRI, along with the members of the academic fraternity.

Thimme Gowda, while delivering the inaugural address on the theme 'The Importance of Research in Higher Education,' said that research allows you to explore the world from different perspectives and offers credibility.

"It is important to inculcate research bent of mind in the undergraduate level," said Gowda, emphasising the significance of research in a student's life. Madheswaran highlighted the plight of research scholars and the intellectual obstacles they encounter today, urging them to stand out to achieve success.