

# THE BEACON

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## NHIDCL blamed for landslide

Echenren Changkiri

A landslide in Chumukidema, NH-29 highway of Nagaland, which claimed the lives of 6 people on September 3, has brought to light the faulty construction done by contractors.

In recent years, the NH-29 highway, intended to facilitate connectivity between the state and its neighbours, has become a hotspot for landslides. The tragic incident occurred on the evening of September 3, when heavy rainfall triggered a landslide, claiming the lives of six individuals. The landslide also swept away three eateries and damaged numerous vehicles.

This incident has revealed the sub-standard construction undertaken by the contractors under the National Highway and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL). According to the Additional Deputy Commissioner of DDMA, multiple warnings from the government to take hasty measures to avoid landslides in August due to heavy rain in the area were ignored. "The contractors, despite instructions to dig into the land and to extend the road, opted for earth filling from the riverbanks to extend the road; this (landslide) could have been avoided if they had built a retaining wall from the riverbank. Only then should they have filled the land," he stated.

The Chief Minister criticised the contractors heavily and stated that an FIR had been lodged against the NHIDCL officials.

## Citizens question BBMP's 'flawed' data

Olivia Debroy

BENGALURU: BBMP's Sahaaya App, intended to provide a single-window compliant platform for all civic issues, has been criticised from various quarters. Civic activists believe the recently released consolidated report on the progress of resolving the complaints received is grossly misleading.

Rajkumar Dugar, founder of Citizens for Citizens (C4C), criticised the BBMP for presenting misleading figures on complaint solutions through the Sahaaya App, calling them either distorted or untruthful. He opined that the app wastes time without a proper redressal mechanism that involves complaint confirmation.

The BBMP shared a consolidated report of the progress of the Sahaaya App on September 3, 2024, which aggregated



Sahaaya App logo

data since January last year. The report showed that BBMP received 2,37,359 complaints, of which 2,22,483 were resolved. BBMP claims only 6,875 complaints are pending. Bengaluru East and South filed most of the complaints, while the most pending complaints are in the Mahadevapura zone. Many citizens noted their disappointment, grief, and anger as they

felt their complaints were unresolved.

"I had a bad experience when lodged a complaint in the app. I got nothing at all from their side. Not even a message or call of acknowledgement. So, this is how they discourage and deter people, wasting our time putting up their complaints there," Dugar said. "When you have developed an app in an IT city, there

should be a method where the BBMP, which takes in crores of rupees as taxes, allows the complainant to assure that the complaint can be marked closed using something like an OTP."

A resident from Mahadevapura expressed frustration with the BBMP, saying that their complaints portal exists only to list issues on paper. They recounted an experience where a stray

dog bit their daughter. After raising a complaint on the app, the BBMP did nothing to help; instead, they told them to track the dog and check its vaccination status.

Several residents expressed their dissatisfaction on X (formerly Twitter). "The BBMP engineer told me straight away that it's impossible to clean up the road (which is dusty and broken thanks to stormwater drain works) and that they don't have funds. This is how they close most complaints," wrote a user.

Sandeep Anirudhan, the founder of Conscious Communities, strongly condemned the complaint application for frequently closing issues without solving them, lacking proof or reasons, and hiding behind tagging the complaints as long-term, making it challenging to track their progress.

## Cauvery Brindavan theme park under public scrutiny

Ourouge R F

The Cauvery Brindavan Amusement Park project at the Krishna Raja Sagara Dam (KRS), said to be Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's pet project, is in the preliminary stages. However, it might not go down well with the citizens of Mysore, who are voicing disapproval of the project.

KRS is set to transform into a Disney-style amusement park. The Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been finalised. It is awaiting permission from central agencies like the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the



The 92 year old KRS Dam

Ourouge R F

Central Water Commission (CWC), to name a few. "Over the years, we have had various proposals like Mysore Eye, Ropeway, Akshardham-like Park in front of Lalitha Mahal, and now an amusement park. Mysore is no stranger to these absurd plans that never

come through," pointed out Devaraja, a retired professor expressing his discontent.

The KRS vendors express their anxiety about the eventual displacement due to the project. Asgar (name changed), a vendor stationed in KRS for the past

10 years, mentioned there was no statement issued on the compensation. "Our stalls run on the fishing we do here. We are unsure what to do, but I have spoken to the other stall owners, and we have decided to look for work elsewhere," he said.

An official from KRS, speaking to The Beacon, said, "Since the vendors are on government land, they will be compensated under R&R (Resettlement and Rehabilitation). Apart from the DPR, nothing else has been finalised. This process takes a lot of time. The vendors need not be worried."

## 'AWC Bill has more teeth than others'

Debarpita M

West Bengal's recently passed Aparijita Woman and Child Bill (2024) has improved upon the past bills that were passed to punish the perpetrators of rape crimes against women, said Calcutta High Court Lawyer Meghabarna Bhattacharjee.

Governor CV Ananda Bose referred the anti-rape Bill to President Droupadi Murmu for consideration. The Bill has further strengthened the legal provisions and is more stringent than POCSO (2012) and section 64 BNS.

Speaking to The Beacon, Bhattacharjee said, "If the victim goes into a vegetative state, then the accused will face the death penalty, which was not there before," she pointed out. The Bill majorly focuses on the quicker investigation and the death penalty, or life imprisonment for the accused, which a state-level special task force will handle. Bhattacharjee also noted the importance of educating people on the basics, like instructing them about gender roles. She mentioned the lack of such advice as a factor for heinous crimes against women.

## Dominance of cricket over Olympics

Chukki T

Even as Indian athletes made significant milestones in the recently concluded 2024 Paris Olympics, the national athletes have expressed dissent over the government's lack of monetary and institutional support. The job security, facilities, and glamour associated with cricket, a commercialised sport, attract youth more than any other sport, and hence, institutional support is plenty. They opine that a lack of support is

threatening the survival of other Indian sports.

"The whole fund for the Olympics is less than the funds of the Cricket World Cup. The government should encourage other games too, or else it will become too difficult to win the medals in the next Olympics," said Darshan TM, a national-level kho kho player. Examining the Sports Authority of India report reveals the glaring disparity between the support for the Cricket World Cup and other games.

According to the Indian

Olympic Association, a mere 470 crores was allocated for the entire Olympics this year across 16 disciplines. In stark contrast, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) awarded the T20 World Cup winning squad a staggering cash prize of 125 crores, on top of the 20.41 crores prize money. The government released 37.80 crores for wrestling and 12.92 crores for table tennis, but the athletes' plea for more funds fell on deaf ears. The Mission Olympic Cell has condemned the government for failing to meet the athletes' needs.

## Are schools failing in sex ed?

Anusree Balan Menon

The rise in sexual violence by young adults and minors, assaulting peers and relatives, has raised a serious concern about the effectiveness of sex education in India. In recent cases, a minor raping another minor and a son assaulting his mother sparked questions that only heightened the concern.

Anisha, a school mentor and psychologist, highlighted the need for expert-led sex education. "It requires specialised knowledge beyond what teachers contribute," she

said. "Schools focus on safety but don't teach how not to become abusers."

Jayasree Sudhir, a concerned mother, expressed her fear about media content and lack of detailed sex education in her children's school. "Puberty was taught to them, with no detailed information. Detailed classes in schools will help them to open up to their parents," she said. Sex education should not be solely the responsibility of schools, but parents should also reinforce these lessons at home, she added.