Metro

Mayor raps engineers

Mayor G Padmavathi took the zonal-level engineers to task for not even preparing an action plan to complete works as only five months are left for the current financial year to end.

At a meeting on Tuesday, Padmavathi directed the Mahanagara Palike engineers to gear up and prepare an action plan at the earliest and ensure that the works are expedited.

She expressed displeasure over the functioning of some senior engineers who she felt were too lethargic.

E-attendance at colleges, varsities

Bangalore University vice chancellor K N Ninge Gowda said e-attendance has been successfully implemented in seven departments. In the coming days, it will be extended to all the 52 departments.

He said that e-attendance has helped increase the attendance of students and decreased dropouts. Students should have at least 75% attendance.

There has been an order to implement e-attendance in all government colleges including higher education department and Visvesvaraya Technological University.

The Additional Chief Secretary of the Higher Education department, Bharath Lal Meena, said that e-attendance has been implemented in 80 government colleges and all universities in the state.

Cash van without documents seized

The Transport department on Tuesday conducted an intensive drive in Rajajinagar jurisdiction near Gorguntepalya, Mysore Road and the surrounding areas on Tuesday for vehicles with permit violations and other offences.

More than 500 vehicles were checked, 100 vehicles were booked and 15 vehicles were seized in this drive.

Private buses, maxi cabs, construction equipment vehicles and Public Service Vehicle (PSV) were booked for plying without permits, valid documents (emission test and insurance certificates) and with defective number plates.

"A cash van outsourced by the Kotak bank bearing registration number KA 02 AA 567 was found carrying cash and running without payment of tax and without valid fitness certificate and insurance was also seized," a press release issued by the department stated.

PAN-based registration

Commissioner of Service Tax (Service Tax-II Commissionerate) has instructed all business units with temporary registrations to convert to PAN-based registration.

A release stated that the list of units having temporary registrations with their jurisdictional details has been uploaded on http://centralexcisebangalore.gov.in under 'whatsnew' menu.

"All temporary registrations are required to apply online or can approach jurisdictional officer in charge for assistance for conversion of temporary registration to PAN-based on or before October 31, 2016," the release stated.

The temporary registrations not adhering to mandatory PAN-based conversion will be revoked after the deadline.

Aadhaar numbers sought

People, who are availing of various pensions and social security schemes such as Sandhya Suraksha, Maitri and other social schemes, have been asked to furnish their Aadhaar numbers before October 31.

Pension would be withdrawn upon failing to give their Aadhaar details, from November 1.

People can submit their Aadhaar card numbers at their respective tahsildar offices, an official press release stated.

Citizens to move NGT against axing of trees for steel flyover

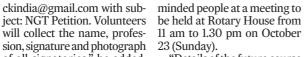## Plan to start round-the-clock 'tree vigil' on November 1

BENGALURU: Bengalureans are in no mood to allow the axing of 812 trees for constructing the proposed steel flyover even as Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced that the project will not be stalled. Citizens are now planning to approach the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

Just a day after the Siddaramaiah announced that the steel flyover will be constructed till Esteem Mall on National Highway-7, concerned Bengalureans on Tuesday held a meeting and came out with a six-point agenda to ensure that the controversial steel flyover project is stalled.

As a major step in this direction, they decided to file a petition before the NGT.

"We will soon be filing a petition before the NGT and want to make it a people's petition," said Srinivas Avalilli, coordinator of Human Chain Citizens Against Steel Flyover.

"We are collecting Rs 100 each from citizens. Contribution will be voluntary and it will ensure that people are serious about the cause. Names of all those who pay Rs 100 will appear in the list of petitioners. Those who want to sign up can email to winbackindia@gmail.com with subject: NGT Petition. Volunteers will collect the name, profession, signature and photograph of all signatories," he added.

The team is seeking opinion of legal experts on the detailed project report, structural and financial analysis. All these issues will be discussed with like-minded people at a meeting to be held at Rotary House from 11 am to 1.30 pm on October 23 (Sunday).

"Details of the future course of action will be concretised at the meeting. Before that we will also be placing boxes across the city asking people to vote 'for' or 'against' the steel flyover. People will have to write 'yes' or 'no' along with their names and contact numbers in the slips. The boxes will be opened at the meeting on Sunday. Everything will be transparent," added Prakash Belawadi, film maker and committee member.

Tree vigil will commence from November 1, 2016. Citizen volunteers will hold regular day and night vigil on the stretch from Basaveshwara Circle to Hebbal to save the trees.

The aim is to ensure that the contractors do not chop trees stealthily when the city is sleeping. Some Bengalureans have already done a preliminary assessment of the trees. Some others have started measuring the distance between each tree.

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The green canopy will disappear as 812 trees will be felled to make way for the steel flyover from Basaveshwara Circle to Hebbal. DH PHOTO

Volunteers' meeting today

A meeting of volunteers of Human Chain Citizens Against Steel Flyover and all those who participated in the 4.6-k-long human chain on October 16 will be held at 5 pm at Band Stand in Cubbon Park on October 19. Those interested in taking part in the campaign can participate. The meeting is being held to decide the further course of action as the name of the campaign has been changed from 'Steel Flyover Beda' to 'Steel Flyover Bedave Beda.'

House encroaching on road yet to be razed despite BBMP orders

BENGALURU, DHNS: A house built on a 1,200 sqft plot stands untouched though the BBMP had twice ordered its demolition for gross violations.

Besides erecting the structure without a sanctioned building plan, building owner Edwin, in Nageshwara Nagenahalli near Horamavu in KR Puram Assembly constituency has reportedly encroached at least four feet of the road. The khatha of the property is also fake. Encouraged by the inaction of the Palike authorities, other neighbours in the lane too have encroached upon the road reducing the 20 ft road to a mere 12 ft.

Hampered by the narrow road hindering vehicular movement and causing regular traffic jams, residents in the area lodged a complaint with the BBMP and the Lokayukta. The BBMP engineers woke up to realise the illegalities only when the Lokayukta officials summoned them to explain their inaction. Before going to the Lokayukta office, the Palike engineers razed the compound wall and its pictures were submitted to the Lokayukta officials. Once the officials left the place, Edwin constructed the compound wall encroaching upon the road. According to documents available, the BBMP issued a stay order on construction activities on July 13, 2015. The Palike directed Edwin to produce the sanctioned building plan, which he failed. His explanation that his building could be regularised under the Akrama Sakrama scheme did not impress the Palike officials. Further, on December 2, 2015 the Palike directed Edwin to raze the structure. The owner remained defiant compelling the BBMP to orders its demolition. A demolition plan was prepared at an estimated cost of Rs 1 lakh earlier this year. Yet, the plan was never executed for reasons best known to BBMP officials.

Requesting anonymity, the complainant, said, "I am running from pillar to post for the last three years to rid the road of encroachment. Even after passing the final demolition order, the BBMP did not execute it, which raises doubts."

When contacted, the executive engineer of the KR Puram division Ranganath said the assistant executive engineer is responsible for looking into the illegalities and issue orders.

"It is the AEE who has to implement the orders and he has all the details pertaining to the case," said Ranganath.

Attempts to reach the joint commissioner and chief engineer of Mahadevapura zone went in vain. Edwin was also not available for comments.

Tree-cutters don't see reason, just want people to see ads

BENGALURU: More than 25 trees were axed illegally in the city in the last five months, for the frivolous reason that advertisement boards are visible, says a survey by 'Save Green' organisation.

'Save Green' volunteers, who visited key commercial junctions where advertisement hoardings have been put up on a large-scale, documented tree-cutting on Old Airport Road, near the Trinity Metro Station, at Nagawara Junction, Hebbal and other places.

"Nine trees were axed on Old Airport Road, in front of Kemp Fort between June and October, four at Trinity Metro Station and 12 trees at Nagawara Junction (Manyata tech park) in September. Just a few days ago, we saw another tree being illegally cut, opposite Seshadripuram police station. Despite taking up the issue with BBMP many times, there has been no action against the culprits," said Hemanth Kapoor, the 'Save Green' chairman.

Ashwini K, the vice-chairman, said if the hoardings are not visible to the public, the hoarding agencies will not be paid by the clients. Hence, they tie up with contractors to cut the trees. She said the tree-cutting takes place at midnight usually.

"More than 50 trees have been chopped in the last year by tree-cutting contractors and it seems like they are hand in glove with the BBMP officials. Besides axing trees in front of hoardings, advertisers inject chemicals into the trees to kill them slowly," Kapoor said.

The organisation recently registered a case at the Seshadripuram police station against miscreants responsible for cutting a tree opposite the police station.

Citizens who witness tree-cutting in their localities can contact Save Green volunteers via WhatsApp on 8147478006 or mail to info@savegreen.in.

Mayor G Padmavathi told *DH* that she will convey to the BBMP forest department officials about the illegal tree-cutting. "Without the permission of Palike, contractors cannot axe trees and doing so will land them in trouble. I will look into the matter immediately," she added.

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One of the trees axed on Old Airport Road. (Right) Trees that faced the cut at Nagawara Junction. DH PHOTOS

PIL filed against increase in noise level

BENGALURU: A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Karnataka high court seeking directions to the state government to issue certificates to the vehicle owners who comply with the noise level standard and levy heavy fine of not less than Rs 5,000 to those who do not have certificates.

The public interest litigation filed by Mohan Krishnan H, a resident of Hesaraghatta Main Road, has sought directions to the government to ban all kind of horns and defective silencers.

A serious concern

He has contended that the increase in noise level has become a serious concern not only to him and his neighbours, but also to the citizens of Bengaluru.

Vehicle movement and horns contribute most to the noise in the city and it is disturbing peace and silence even in residential areas/silent zones, he claimed in the petition. A division bench comprising Chief Justice S K Mukherjee and Justice R B Budihal adjourned the hearing of the case.

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Alluring

Actor Lakshmi Gopalaswamy poses with jewels at a press conference to announce the 18th Jewels of India expo on Tuesday. DH PHOTO

Rs 8-crore development plan for Church Street

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has earmarked Rs 8 crore for the development of Church Street in the city centre, which is marred by infrastructure woes.

If all goes according to plan, the 800-metre stretch from Brigade Road entrance to St Mark's Road will be ready in three months after the work order is issued to the eligible contractor. "We have already floated tenders and the bids will be finalised soon. The entire stretch will be white topped (concrete) with wide footpaths (granite stones). The work will be completed in three months after the selection of contractors," BBMP commissioner N Manjunath Prasad said.

Church Street, which is a popular hangout, is in a bad shape. The Palike had promised to upgrade a road several times in the past. Besides, architect Naresh Narasimhan had also designed this stretch for development based on the Paris model. However, nothing has materialised. The development of this stretch is part of the list of first 13 roads, which will be developed under TenderSURE guidelines.

It includes: Brigade Road, Museum Cross Road, Margosa Road in Malleswaram, Palace Road, Gubbi Thotadappa Road, KG Road, Dhanvanthari Road, WH Hanumantappa Road from Sheshadri Road, roads around Gandhinagar, Kalasipalyam and KR Market.

All these roads will be developed at a cost of Rs 200 crore in a span of two years, a BBMP official said.

Playjam

A new fun learning method for pre-schoolers

Meghana Choukkar

BENGALURU: Traditional classrooms with one-way transfer of knowledge from teacher to student will slowly become a thing of the past. Alternative forms of education, which encourage exchange and interaction, are now entering the pre-school space too.

A hybrid between homeschooling and conventional pre-schools, Playjam is one such experimental method for early-learners. Run by George Supreeth, Smitha Shivaswamy, Mubarrah Khan and Aditya B M, Playjam sessions are weekly meetings where parents and children explore concepts from a wide-range of topics. "We call it a rolling micro-school. 'Rolling' because the venue depends on the subject we are exploring and 'micro-school' since the group is limited to 8 to 10 kids for optimum learning," Supreeth explained. Kids between the ages of two and seven can join in at any time of the year.

Sometimes the class may be in Cubbon Park or even in the aquarium!

A typical session lasts two to three hours. After an introduction, each parent makes a short presentation on what their children have been learning in the past week. The theme for the day is introduced and after a discussion, the children and parents engage in projects.

At the session, there is a facilitator but there is no feeding of information. "We discuss and learn from each other. During a session on sea creatures, rather than telling the kids how many tentacles an octopus had, we let them figure it out on their own by seeing pictures and later drawing them," Supreeth explained.

This system benefits children who are homeschooled. One of the reasons Shilpa Srinivas brings her five-year-old to Playjam is to socialise. "I have decided to homeschool my child at least in his formative years. But that means he does not get to interact with kids his age as much. Playjam solves that and it has taught him to work in groups with other kids."

Following the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) principle, numeracy, literacy, nature, even robotics are explored. Nothing is considered too complex or advanced. "Most pre-schools would consider engineering too advanced for this age group, But the idea is to give them exposure to all streams. A basic workshop had the kids using drinking straws to build structures which can take weight."

The education system is often blamed for killing a child's natural curiosity with the dry manner of instruction and teaching them to think in a certain way. This style of learning could help put that off for a few years.

"I think it can definitely replace pre-schools. They are unnecessary and only serve the purpose of mainstreaming your child in preparation for school. Playjam has nurtured my daughter's imagination and allowed her to remain a curious child," said Sanjana Govindan, who has been attending regularly with her child since 2014.

There are assessments but they are qualitative rather than quantitative. The best part for many is that parents get to be involved too.

"In schools, we are called in only when there is a problem or for PTA meetings. However, in Playjam, we are a part of the learning process. Because of this, my daughter and I have done many projects together even at home," Govindan added.

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A hybrid between homeschooling and conventional pre-schools, Playjam is an experimental method for early-learners.

People wait to collect food at a distribution centre in city.

NGO aims to provide 22K meals to slumdwellers per month

BENGALURU, DHNS: City-based Swabhimaan Public Charitable Trust, which collects surplus food from corporate companies, has set a target of serving 22,000 meals per month in slum areas of the city.

To achieve the target and feed the hungry efficiently, the trust has now launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise money for distributing 22,000 meals. "We provide 500 meals a day and serve 11,000 meals a month, barring weekends at present. It costs us Rs 36,000 per month to distribute 11,000 meals. We are looking to scale up this initiative so that we can reach more people and support the logistics that include transportation, storage and other processes," founder of trust Venkataraman Iyer said.

He and his wife Vijaya Iyer started the food distribution to the needy in 2015. This is one of the trust's initiatives. Iyer said they collect surplus food from canteens of three corporate companies and distribute it to underprivileged and slum areas in Koramangala apart from other slum localities.

The crowdfunding link is https://www.fueladream.com/home/campaign/380 through which people can help through donations.