

THE BEACON

PRACTICE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE PG STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Friday, 27 September 2024 / St Joseph's University / Vol:17 Issue: 38 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

Bengaluru braces for Mpox virus

Tiani Longkumer

BENGALURU: With the rising number of cases of the Mpox virus detected in the country, the Karnataka government has designated five hospitals as centres to isolate and test for Mpox patients.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Dr Monisha, a microbiologist working at the testing facility, confirmed that the designated hospitals are well-equipped to handle Mpox testing and potential outbreaks. With sufficient RT-PCR testing kits, the facility operates 24/7, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and the results are given within 24 hours. While the tests are currently limited to symptomatic individuals, the facility remains vigilant in its screening efforts.

"Victoria Hospital has a capacity of around 1,000 beds, while the trauma and emergency care centre has around 200 beds. Vani Vilas Hospital has around 500 beds, and Minto Hospital has around 200 beds," she added.

To prevent the spread of Mpox in the hospital, safety measures such as hand hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE) during sample collection are strictly followed. No vaccination programs are available yet, and treatments focus on symptomatic patients with fever, headaches, and skin lesions.

When asked if there are plans to expand testing capabilities to more hospitals, Dr Monisha said that plans still need to be implemented.

Language barrier fuels Bengaluru's hostility

Dishita Sharma

BENGALURU: A social media post stating, "Bengaluru belongs to Kannadiga" recently went viral, reflecting the flaring tempers against non-Kannada speakers in Bengaluru. A series of events have unfolded in the last few months, causing concerns among the non-Kannadiga population. The city now grapples with divisive tensions, threatening peaceful coexistence.

Recently, a customer accused Swiggy of being incompetent because the assigned delivery agent could not speak Kannada. She rhetorically questioned the company, saying, "Bangalore is in India or Pakistan?" followed by severe backlash.

Another incident occurred when a customer was offended by a Zomato notification in Hindi. He accused Zomato of sending him a threatening message in an alien language. He confronted the



Representational Image

United employees law group

customer care officials about their operations in Bangalore, questioning whether they could converse in Kannada.

Political parties, too, are fishing in troubled waters. Parties across the political spectrum have advocated for the promotion of Kannada, which has further encouraged fringe groups. During a recent foundation-laying ceremony, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah opined that all Kannadigas are responsible for safeguarding the Kannada language,

insisting that everyone living in Bengaluru must learn to speak the local language.

Furthermore, politicians have voiced concerns about Kannada being overshadowed by other languages, particularly Hindi or English, leading to Kannadiga's feeling their language is being sidelined in professional communication settings.

Commenting on the rationale behind the hike in hostility on X (formerly Twitter), former CBI Director M Nag-

eswara Rao IPS said, "More than 50% of Bengaluru's population are non-Kannadigas, and thus Kannadigas in Bangalore rightly feel their identity is in danger of erasure."

Questioning the bias in job recruitments, Kannada Development Authority Chairman T S Nagabhara opined, "The state government has given corporates several concessions, including tax rebates and subsidies, to encourage investments in Karnataka.

However, the companies barely give jobs to locals."

"Only the managers and a few others are Kannadigas. If they speak Kannada, it doesn't really matter if you know it. You are not really asked. I also have friends from my college who work with me here, but most of them are Kannadigas, and they communicate in Kannada", said Kushal (Name Changed), a corporate Employee.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Jayaraj, Leader of Namma Karnataka Rakshana Vedike, stated, "Given Karnataka's tourism tagline of 'one state, many worlds', we have been welcoming and hospitable. Then, don't we at least deserve the language of our state to be respected and spoken by them? If immigrants want jobs, salaries, food, a good family, and a good environment in Karnataka yet refuse to learn Kannada while staying here, then it's utterly saddening."

EY employee's death sparks welfare reassessment

Devika VinodKumar

The recent death of Anna, an employee of Ernst & Young (EY), casts doubt on the effectiveness of welfare programs and hotline systems that aim at supporting people in EY. Anna's death, which is believed to be connected to work stress, has made a reevaluation of the company's resources.

"We have several well-being programs and open channels of communication available in the firm to ensure that you always have a safe space to voice your concerns anonymously, including through our existing speak-up forum and



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India Today

ethics hotlines," stated Rajiv Memani, Chairman and Managing Partner of EY India, in his mail, which was forwarded to the employees and noted not to be shared. However, the effectiveness of these systems is now being questioned.

Multiple employees have voiced concerns about the impact of these support mechanisms. Norah Ranson, Associate analyst, EY, JP Nagar, stated that she has been working there for the last six months, has worked overtime and

has non-cooperative managers. She was even declined a leave, as they cited the peak work time. There are welfare forums and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) in the company, but no one dares to share their problems as managers questioned them for even minor issues, which made the employees not even want to speak up, added Norah.

"Even after the incident, everything at EY ran smoothly and without any disruption. There's no sign of regret, internal investigation, or apology. This says a lot about the leadership there," said Urmi Bhattacharji, senior consultant at EY.

Commuters affected by pipe replacement

Sudheeksha Easwar

BENGALURU: Road dug up for replacement of sewage pipelines in the residential locality of Anandnagar poses challenges for daily commuters. And to make matters worse, there is a complete lack of coordination between the government departments in charge of the civic infrastructure.

The traffic police in charge of Anandnagar said no NoC was sought to divert the traffic on the said road.

The road construction began last Friday, and Sunil (name changed), a resident of Anandnagar, said, "The roads are being dug up because the pipes are being changed."

N Bhanu, a resident of Cholanagar who travels through Anandnagar, mentioned, "Some of the roads are blocked, and I had to go through all of Anandnagar to reach my house. The roads are in a pathetic condition."

When Lakshminarayan, an Anandnagar Resident Welfare Association member (RWA), was asked about traffic management, he said that Anandnagar has common routes and that commuters should find alternative routes to commute.

Shyam (name changed), a traffic police officer in the Hebbal police station, said they were unaware of the road construction.

Theatrics of love and freedom

Errol Moraes

BENGALURU: An emotional plot with subtle political messaging captivated theatre lovers with mind-blowing props, innuendos and fluid movements. Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield, hosted a performance titled 'Remember, Remember' directed and written by Prashanth Kumar Nair last Sunday with rave reviews.

The play is a melange of the sunshine and vagaries of love in Bengaluru, as well as stories of losing one's voice to the political establishment. The desired raw vulnerability

is reflected in the masterful acting, from the ear twitches to the wails of pain. The stories of love cross paths with the untold stories of the 'genocide' in Gaza and the brute muscle power during the ten years of the BJP government in India.

The standing ovation solicited was a testament to Nair's artistry. Sharing his thoughts with *The Beacon*, Nair described the play as a call to hold onto hope, love or freedom in testing times. "The play explores the duality of human existence: of being

politically aware and finding your home in your creative output or a person. Your society dictates your freedom to love freely," he added.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, theatre enthusiast Lisa Marie Fernandes said, "The minute details and the production struck a chord with me. The idea of the time continuum was thoughtful." In an era of non-commitment, the storyline of pure love was relatable and deeply moving. "I felt different emotions, from love to happiness and sadness to warmth," she added.

CCU fire raises safety concern

Vaishnav VK

BENGALURU: An accidental fire incident in the Critical Care Unit (CCU) of the M. S. Ramaiah Memorial Hospital on 19th September highlighted the critical need for fire safety training programs.

The National Building Code (NBC) mandates that 40% of occupants in public buildings must receive fire safety training. Despite this requirement, many individuals in urban public buildings remain untrained, leaving them vulnerable in fire emergencies. According to Mr. Anil, the

government notified the NBC bill in 1971 for fire safety. "People will panic during the situation and they don't know how to control the situation. Free demonstrations should be given to the people that can help them to manage the situation of a fire accident", he added.

The President of Karnataka Association of Resident Doctors (KARD), Dr Sirish Shivaramaiah said, "Fire drills should be made mandatory among all the health care workers and they should be able to manage these emergencies when required."