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Drain repair delay disrupts daily life

Rupasree

BENGALURU: The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has dug up and left open drains in Koramangala's 5th and 7th blocks for the past ten days, reportedly to store rainwater. Residents and shopkeepers face inconveniences as the drains block the entire road with mud and filth.

"We contacted them long back to clean the drain, but they took a lot of time to figure out how to go about the situation. Right now, they are working on it, but the delay is still persistent," said Parvati, a resident of Koramangala 7th block.

The *Beacon* team contacted BWSSB regarding the issue, to which Junior Engineer Naveen Chandra replied, "Open drains are constructed to collect the wastewater that is not sewage; something like sanitary waste as well, and also dirty water so that it can be channelled to the KCP canal here from the east part of Bengaluru," he added that people must rely on rainwater harvesting to channel the rainwater somewhere else instead of overflowing on the roads.

Chandra also mentioned that they get more complaints from ladies' PGs. During menstrual cycles, the pads are flushed into the sewage system, and cleaning them is not their duty. People must understand and dispose of them properly.

Nostalgic return to SJU for the First Lady

Ourouge R F & Olivia Debroy

CAMPUS: In an interview with *The Beacon*, the First Lady of Maldives, Sajidha Mohammed, shared her experiences about her student life at St Joseph's Institution, Bangalore city, and her intention to develop food safety standards in her country in collaboration with the Indian government. She arrived in Bangalore on October 9 with her husband, President Muizzu, as part of a diplomatic visit to India, aiming to reboot the strained ties between the two nations.

Sajidha Mohammed was an alumna of St Joseph's College, where she pursued a BSc in Microbiology from 2000-2003. While reflecting on her days as a student, she said, "St Joseph's has taught me a lot, and



First Lady of Maldives at St Joseph's University

Merwin Mathias

the city gave me a lot of exposure. Maldives is a very small country. We have one culture, one religion, one language. When you come to India, you see a diverse city where you have a lot of languages and cultures."

How does it feel to return to St Joseph's College, now a university, as an alumna after more than two decades?

I have no words to express how I feel. It's a pleasure for me to be here, to see my lecturers and some of my friends. When I was finally able to come to Bangalore, the first thing I thought of was St Joseph's College. And I told myself I needed to visit, and that is the reason I'm here today.

Given your educational background in microbiology, what

inspired you to become a civil servant?

Before coming for my undergraduate degree, I was a civil servant and a lab assistant.... I got a scholarship from WHO and came to Bangalore. Back then, I was working in the microbiology lab, and that's why I started doing microbiology. Once I graduated and went back, I joined the office

again. We were working in the food sciences area of microbiology, which influenced my decision to pursue a Master's in Food Sciences.

Following your recent meeting with the FSSAI in India, you mentioned a potential collaboration to improve the food safety standards in Maldives. What are the specific areas you want to focus on?

We are a very small country. We can gain a lot of technical expertise from India. One of the main things that we were looking at was risk assessment. We need laboratory collaboration with FSSAI. That is something we talked about during our meeting. I think that is the most important collaboration that we need.

New lifesaving initiative mooted to create big impact

Merwin Mathias

BENGALURU: A new initiative to create a database of voluntary donors for rare blood groups was launched on October 2 by state Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao in collaboration with the Karnataka State Blood Transfusion Council. This aims to address the demand for these blood types as the government and private hospitals struggle to find donors, leaving rural patients in panic and uncertainty despite awareness campaigns.

Shashi Kumar, a resident of Mandya, shared his struggle to find a rare blood group for



Rare blood donor drive at BMST

The Hindu

his son, who is suffering from dengue and has low platelet counts. "He needs blood now, but there's no stock here, and they're asking me to search for it. I'm new to the city and uneducated; I don't know where to go," he said with tears in his eyes, awaiting a

family member's donation.

Vijay Reddy, Manager of Bangalore Medical Services Trust, told *The Beacon* that securing blood is the responsibility of government hospitals. He noted that inconsistent blood donation camps often lead to shortages,

and hospitals need to be more proactive in addressing the issue. Reddy added that rare blood groups like "Bombay phenotype" and "Rh null" make finding matches harder. He emphasised the importance of donating, calling it "a most virtuous act" and urging more people to contribute.

Satish M, Coordinator of the Red Cross blood bank, stated that hospitals often struggle to find donors, especially for rare blood groups. "We want people with rare blood types to live healthy lifestyles and donate blood. This can save someone's life," he said.

TCC's incessant motor repair woes commuters

Chukki

ATumakuru Mahanagara Palike official has admitted responsibility for not addressing the persistent flooding of the Shettihalli underpass since October 6. The flooding was caused by a delayed repair of the faulty motor meant to pump out rainwater. Speaking to *The Beacon* on Monday, Manjunath, Tumakuru Mahanagara Palike Senior Chief Engineer, said, "I will speak to the residents of Shettihalli and apologise to them on behalf of the city corporation. The new motor will be fixed soon, and the issue will be sorted."

Despite reporting the issue multiple times to the city corporation, Tumakuru residents allege that no adequate action was taken. Savitha (name changed), a Tumakuru resident, said, "We are struggling to ride our vehicles in the flooded underpass. Even recently, we informed the corporation about the faulty motor, but they still have not resolved the issue." The unresolved issue continues to inconvenience both residents and travellers in the area.

'Hire and fire' spark workers protest

Anusree Balan Menon

BENGALURU: Workers at Prism Johnson Ltd.'s RMC, a construction company (India) division in Yelahanka, Bengaluru, have been protesting since July 19 against the factory's sudden lockdown. The 107 workers, supported by the All India Students' Association (AISA) activists, called this closure illegal as it exploited the workers' vulnerability.

AISA's Bengaluru District Secretary, Aratrika, stated that the company's



Protest at RMC

AISA

earlier laws ensured some job security. However, the "hire and fire" law severely impacts this, and the proposed compensation is grossly inadequate.

This law, implemented

in September 2020, gives employers the freedom to terminate employees without cause or notice, subject to certain legal limitations. Prism RMC is reportedly offering the franchise to other parties to get rid of all liabilities to workers despite the union being officially recognised. "Lack of prior notification makes the termination illegal, and also, the job security, which was severely impacted by the new law, makes it difficult to unionise," she added.

Untold misery of rural sculptors

Debarpita

BENGALURU: Durga Puja celebrations in Bengaluru are possible because of the tireless efforts of sculptors from West Bengal who travel to the city annually during Dussehra and produce idols. However, these artisans face harsh realities, struggling even to cover the cost of raw materials. The condition of these rural Bengal-based sculptors directly affects their livelihoods.

Bengaluru has been celebrating Durga Puja for many years. "Most of

our raw materials come from Kolkata, especially the clay from which we make the idol, which we transport by lorries," said Chandrashekhar Paul, a sculptor. With the rise in the cost of raw materials, mainly clay, the idol makers struggle to get funds to source the soil from Kolkata. Adding to that, with the limitations on the idol's size imposed by the government, the sculptors don't earn profits, leading to problems covering the cost spent on raw materials.