

100 trees crash in just a week

Bengaluru has a monsoon problem. Trees and branches are falling in unprecedented numbers, and the dangers to life and limb are huge

At least 500-odd trees have crashed in Bengaluru over the past four months, 100 in the last week alone. Gusty winds accompanied by thunderstorms and heavy rain are uprooting trees.

According to environmentalists, most affected trees are exotic-soft-wooded trees nice to look but unable to stand up to a storm. Concretisation of footpaths is another reason: the trees get no water to nourish their roots.

The falling trees and branches have damaged cars, bikes and private property, but thankfully no lives have been lost.

Several parts of the city are regularly plunged into darkness because of falling branches.

Dr TV Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), additionally cited global warming for the problem. "We have started experiencing changes in the climate - with erratic rain, high-intensity wind and rainfall, fewer rainy days, and higher intensity rainfall in shorter duration," he says. He believes most existing trees have become weak due to mismanagement.

"Concretising footpaths and choking the base deprives the trees of nutrients. Also, root respiration gets affect-

CBD affected, says top cop

On Monday, when it rained heavily, police cleared fallen tree branches at 300 places, according to Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) P Harishekar. "This was a joint operation by the BBMP and the Bengaluru traffic police. Trees were uprooted in 40 places and fallen tree branches obstructed the smooth movement of traffic in other places," he told Metrolife.

A tree inside the compound of the All India Radio was uprooted. "We are working in close coordination with BBMP officials in the departments of road work, and stormwater drain and solid waste management to ensure a hassle-free commute for citizens during the monsoons," he adds.

ed, leading to weakening of branches and trunk with pest attack," he points out. The need of the hour is to replace fallen trees with native species, he contends. "Raising awareness among the public to develop mini



A two-wheeler was damaged after a tree fell on it near Vyalikaval Police Station limits on May 27. DH PHOTOS BY JANARDHAN B K



An uprooted tree came crashing down on a Nano parked in Sadashivanagar last weekend. The heavy downpour damaged both public and private property in several parts across the city.

Bigtime damage to electric poles

Hundreds of electric poles were damaged as trees and branches crashed on them. Bescom says 982 falls have caused damage to 564 poles. "We have replaced 545 of them," a senior official says. Additional Bescom staff are on the job of fixing poles and restoring electricity.



An electric pole in Sadashivanagar broke after a tree branch fell on it.

forests of native species would help in groundwater recharge, micro-climate moderation, and development of habitat for diverse organisms," he suggests.

Vijay Nishanth, Bengaluru-based 'tree doctor' and tree committee member of Project Vruksha Foundation, says shoddy underground drainage work has literally cut through tree roots and rendered them weak. "The root is the strongest point of a tree. The trees are falling because they are weak. Also, only single trees have fallen because the rains

and gusty winds literally cut through them. Where there is a continuous line of trees, they are unaffected," explains Vijay.

Suresh Heblikar, actor and founder of Eco-Watch, says trees that fell were in busy commercial areas around MG Road, Malleswaram, Gandhi Bazaar, Ballari Road, Cox Town and Indiranagar, and they had been planted more than 50 years ago.

"The roads back then were broad and automobiles were few. Concrete did not restrict the trees from absorbing rainwater. We did

not kill the trees by strangulating the roots," he says.

Suresh says concretisation of footpaths has led to the weakening of trees. "We should have a relook at the trees that have been planted," he says.

It is important for the government to include planting of trees when it plans infrastructure. The two must go hand-in-hand, he recommends.

"The existing trees are not being cared for and are left to decay and die. Pruning doesn't prevent uprooting," Heblikar explains. **Nina C George**

RJ Shruti's narrow escape

Shruti, aka Pat Pat Pataki Shruti, and her family had a narrow escape when a big tree branch fell on their car last weekend. Shruti, whose show is aired on Big FM 92.7, narrates her ordeal to Metrolife:

"We were driving from Sankey Road towards Hebbal. It's a long signal and we were stuck in traffic when a tree

branch fell on the car in front of us. We were frightened and our worst fears came true when a branch fell to the left of our car, damaging it. We moved ahead and just when we thought things had settled down, another huge branch came crashing down on the rear window. The glass shattered into pieces and the impact left a



Pat Pat Pataki Shruti

huge dent on the boot. It was raining heavily and water came gushing into the car. My mother and in-laws were in the back seat and the glass shards fell on them. Luckily, they didn't suffer major injuries. Because of their reflex action, they dodged the fall. Water mixed and glass pieces filled the backseat. We didn't wait but drove as fast as we could to get home. Had the branch fallen anywhere in the middle then we would have been severely injured."



The rear window of Shruti's car was damaged after a tree fell on it. She was driving on Sankey Road last weekend when the incident happened.

Who's who of Indian cinema attend Ravichandran's daughter's wedding



Superstar Rajinikanth flew down to Bengaluru to bless the newlyweds.



Mega star Chiranjeevi greets other celebs at the event.



Anant Nag poses for the shutterbugs after wishing the couple while Ravichandran looks on.



R Gitanjali and N Ajay tied the knot on May 29. PHOTOS BY DEEPAK_VIJAY_PHOTOGRAPHY



Actors Ganesh and Rangayana Raghu in conversation with the groom.



Tamil actor Prabhu was also spotted at the reception.



Actor Shivarajkumar posing for a picture with the couple.

Kids had a nice time too

The VIPs were welcomed with paper bombs, making heaps of it near the entrance. The kids there took this opportunity to entertain themselves.



The paper rain at the entrance of the reception hall kept the kids engaged.

Premaloka' star Ravichandran's daughter R Gitanjali and businessman Ajay tied the knot in a grand event yesterday at White Petals, Palace Grounds.

A reception party was held on Tuesday at the same venue which saw the presence of the bigwigs of politics and the film fraternity.

Metrolife reporters attended the reception party, and we present you the inside scoop.

The entire Palace Grounds stretch was jam-packed on Tuesday night and the invitees found it hard to enter the venue.

Tight security for star-studded affair

Big names from the film fraternity including Rajnikanth, Chiranjeevi, Shruthi, Prabhu, Anant Nag, Sundar Raj, Shanvi Srivatsava, Srinath,

Upendra, Priyanka Upendra, Ramesh Aravind, Shivaram, Vijay Raghavendra and Ganesh graced the occasion.

We also spotted a few politicians including B S Yeddyurappa and Cheluvarayyaswamy. There were also separate entrances for the celebs and public. An e-cart was also deployed at the entrance of the hall to ferry the VIPs to the stage.

Father dedicates song to his daughter

Ravichandran also wrote and composed a song on the father-daughter relationship as a wedding gift to his only daughter.

Highlighting the significance of daughters in a father's life, the song goes... "Belada mele neenu, naanu maguvaade" (I became a child after you grew up).

Malini Raghu and Rakshitha M N

Music by Hamsalekha

The music at the grand affair was presented by veteran music director Hamsalekha and troupe. Hit numbers from Hamsalekha-Ravichandran's movies 'Premaloka', 'Ranadheera', 'Ramachari' and 'Preetsood Tappa' were performed.

Also part of the musical evening was percussionist Sivamani, who enthralled the audience with his toe-tapping beats.



Music composer Hamsalekha performed the Crazy Star's hit numbers.



An arrangement of the 'aarati' dolls at the entrance of the wedding hall. This is an important part of South Indian weddings.