




Your honour, please help Bengaluru

Here are some other very pressing issues needing a similar push to make our Bengaluru a liveable city



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By Express News Service

BENGALURU: Bengaluru seems to be a failure on almost every civic front. There appears to be an utter lack of conscious efforts to set things right to make Bengaluru liveable again. Judicial intervention saw Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) bringing some improvement by trying to correct the wrongs on illegal hoardings standing across the city and potholes dotting the roads. Here are some other very pressing issues needing a similar push to make our Bengaluru a liveable city...

Senseless parking chokes every nook and corner of Namma city

With 76 lakh vehicles on the city roads spanning 93,000km, parking is a major challenge for motorists. The lack of parking space is compounded by the lack of adequate enforcement of parking rules by the short-staffed traffic police. This in turn allows negligent motorists to park waywardly. Adding to the problem is unregulated registration of newer vehicles - up to almost 2,000 per day.

With people parking on both sides of a road, passage ways shrink and this gives the parking mafia opportunities to victimise hapless motorists who are starved for parking space. One factor that contributes to the parking mess is residential areas such as Jayanagar being converted into commercial areas. As Bengaluru keeps burgeoning, parking problem in the city is bound to loom large to paralyse this megapolis.

With lack of real ones, almost every wall turns into public toilet

Stinking loos and lack of public toilets are a major concern. This problem is not just for the public but also for pourakarmikas who avoid drinking water to stop themselves from urinating. While men choose to relieve themselves out in the open, women have no other option but to hold their bladders till they get home.

According to a survey by Silicon Valley of India, a non-profit organisation, the city is short of at least 1,000 public toilets if one goes by the Union government's Swachh Bharat guidelines. The guidelines prescribe one toilet seat per 100 men and two per 100 women and at least one toilet complex every seven km. The survey however found that on an average there is only one toilet for every 24km stretch. According to the survey, 64 of the 198 wards in BBMP limits do not have any public toilet.

Vanishing green cover could soon leave us all gasping for breath

Bengaluru is losing its green cover. According to a study by Indian Institute of Technology - Kharagpur and Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, satellite images of the city last year showed an acutely inadequate tree cover spread in Bengaluru. The study states that there should be at least eight trees for every person to generate enough oxygen to equal the amount of carbon dioxide exhaled. Instead, there is just one tree for every seven people in Bengaluru. In some areas the density is just one tree per 500 people. While some wards have more than 40,000 trees, others have less than 100 — a result of rapid

concretisation. The study said that Bengaluru will soon be left with just 3 per cent tree cover — a serious forecast for a city once known as ‘Garden City of India’.

It is hop, skip and jump on footpaths; that is, if there are any

Bengalureans often joke about how walking on a footpath in the city is like traversing an obstacle course — you have to step over ditches, trip and fall over broken tiles, OFC cables, garbage, or go around parked vehicles and street vendors. Ill-maintained footpaths or the lack of them is the more common complaint citizens have.

Experts and citizens repeatedly stress that if the government wants to discourage people from using vehicles and encourage them to walk, walkable footpaths are a must. However, it is an issue that has seen little or no improvement over the years. The lack of proper footpaths forces pedestrians to walk on the roads, putting them at a risk of being run over by a speeding vehicle. But if the High Court wants, a dedicated drive by the BBMP could bring some hope for the citizens.

Poor last-mile connectivity makes it a long journey to Metro stations



Namma Metro came to the city with a promise to ease traffic congestion by providing cheap public transport. But with a 3.7 lakh ridership per day, Metro has, on the contrary, contributed to more traffic closer to its stations. The reason being commuters travelling to the Metro stations in their private vehicles. And none can blame them. There is no last-mile connectivity for them to reach the stations, forcing them to get their own vehicles. Citizen groups have been demanding Metro feeder buses, and some of them were even started on a few routes. Unfortunately, these feeder buses were discontinued due to lack of passengers. The reason being that while buses took you to the Metro stations, there were no buses from many other stations.

VIPs zoom past on empty roads at the cost of aam aadmi's time

Motorists stuck in traffic already cut a frustrated figure daily. But there is something that makes them feel worse — the sight of VIP convoys allowed to speed through at the expense of stopping traffic on an already busy road. Police personnel stop traffic for several minutes before VIP convoys arrive. The

problem becomes acute every time a minister undertakes a tour of the city, usually to inspect civic projects. However, owing to the prevalent VIP 'ego culture' in the country, there is not much hope for change in the situation any time soon. And while VIPs themselves publicly instruct traffic police to give precedence to ambulances and not stop them at the expense of VIP convoys, the very ambulances are seen getting stuck in traffic pile ups caused by VIPs.



Heaps of garbage everywhere leave city stinking 24 hours

Five years on, looks like BBMP authorities are yet to get rid of the garbage stink in public areas. BBMP is not alone to blame. It is the common citizen too, who carelessly throws garbage by the roadside. The problem prevails due to lack of strict enforcement and almost zero effort to book offenders. Waste segregation at source is not happening as per the rules and directions, which forces pourakarmikas and garbage truck drivers to carry mixed waste.

The city generates about 4,000 tonnes of waste daily, of which 40 per cent is wet waste. The garbage crisis worsened in 2012 after Mavallipura residents stopped taking city's waste at the landfill sites in their backyard. In 2014, Mandur landfill was shut after villagers there protested too. The same happened at Lakshmipura and S Bingipura landfills. The issue reached the Karnataka High Court, which asked the BBMP to segregate waste at source. But surely, more needs to be done.

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