

PF grievance redress

BENGALURU: The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation will organise 'Nidhi Aapke Nikat' or 'PF near you' on May 10 to redress the grievances of the PF stakeholders, including subscribers, employers and exempted establishments.

It programme will be held at the office of the Regional PF Commissioner, 13, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Road; at the sub-regional office at 570, Rajarajeshwari Regency, Ideal Cooperative Housing Colony, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, and at sub-regional office at 2, Maruthi Complex, 1st A Main, A Sector, near SBI, Yelahanka New Town.

The stakeholders may send the details of grievances indicating their name, address, correct PF code number and account number and employers' details, on or before May 1.

They may appear before the Regional PF Commissioner-1 and office-in-charge at sub-regional office, Rajarajeshwarinagar and Yelahanka on May 10. The timings for the subscribers will be from 10.30 am to 1 pm; for employers, from 3 pm to 4 pm, and for exempted establishments, from 4 pm to 5 pm. Details can had at 080-2220118, 27603108 or 27460842.

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Minor hangs self over opposition to marriage

» A 14-year-old girl committed suicide by hanging herself at her house in KR Puram on Friday. The deceased was identified as Pavithra, 14, a resident of Devasandra. She was studying in Class 9 in a local school, said the police.

According to the police, the girl was in love with Ramesh, her neighbour and a cab driver. She wanted to discontinue studies and marry him. Her parents had opposed her decision and had advised her to concentrate on studies, said the police. She was disappointed by her parents' advice. She hanged herself from the ceiling when her mother and father, a cab driver, had gone outside. The incident came to light after they returned home around 12.30 pm, said the police.

In a death note, the girl stated that she decided to commit suicide as she could not marry Ramesh, added the police.

CAT Bench vacation

» The Central Administrative Tribunal, Bengaluru Bench, will remain closed for 20 days from May 2 to May 27 on account of summer vacation.

The Vacation Bench will sit on May 4, May 11, May 18 and May 25 (all Wednesdays) from 10.30 am onwards to dispose of urgent matters and such other matters as the Bench may direct. During the vacation period, the members constituting the Bench will be available at the headquarters.

The filing counter in the registry of the tribunal will remain open from 10.30 am to 1 pm during the vacation period and will receive only urgent applications.

KG Layout site 1st list in June

» The Bangalore Development Authority has stated that applications for the formation of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout were being processed and that the preliminary list, based on seniority, will be released and uploaded on the website within a month-and-a-half.

After this, applicants will be given 15 days' time to file their objections. The final list will be prepared after that and will be uploaded on the website. According to an official release by the BDA, the applications are being processed and sites are being distributed as per the BDA rules 1976. They caution people not to fall into the trap of middlemen or third party and get cheated by falling for false promises. They also request people to bring such cases to the notice of the BDA immediately.



NEW JOURNEY: A Metro train chugs into the underground section between Cubbon Park and the City railway station on Friday. (Right) Chief Minister Siddaramaiah rides the Metro with Union ministers Ananthkumar, M Venkaiah Naidu, state minister R Roshan Baig, BMRL Managing Director Pradeep Singh Kharola, Mayor B N Manjunatha Reddy and others. **DH PHOTOS**



Key Metro link opens today, brings east and west closer

4.8-km underground section may wean people off pvt vehicles

BENGALURU: The 4.8-km underground stretch of the Namma Metro East-West line was officially green-signalled at the Dr Ambedkar Vidhana Soudha station here on Friday.

Even as this completed the 18.1-km corridor from Baiyappanahalli to Mysuru Road, Union Minister Venkaiah Naidu and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah talked the future, envisioning a third phase for the Metro network.

The second phase is now in land acquisition phase. But a Phase III would boost the network to 151 km. Naidu assured all support from the Centre to make this phase a reality once the State was ready with its plan.

"I am delighted to know that the state government has taken up feasibility study for the Phase III of Namma Metro. It is a far sighted and timely step to solve the transport problem of Bengaluru," said the Minister.

Packed with political bigwigs and celebrities, the launch at the imposing Vidhana Soudha steps was grand. It appeared to be designed to compensate for the delay in completing the 42-km first phase, the deadline for which has been pushed to the year-end.

So far, the state government has spent Rs 5,335 crore on

Rajyotsava deadline for Phase 1

The entire 42.3-km first phase of the Namma Metro project might be completed in November in time for a Rajyotsava launch. Inaugurating the underground stretch here on Friday, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the first phase will be open for the public on Rajyotsava day, celebrated on November 1.

He said almost 90% of the project is complete and the remaining 900-metre stretch will be ready in the next six months.

But the first phase has missed several deadlines in the past, primarily due to delays in completing the tunnelling work. A part of the North-South corridor is currently operational from Mantri station to Nagasandra.

the project. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the first phase would eventually cost Rs 13,845 crore. He acknowledged the financial support of the Centre and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Phase II
On Metro Phase II, the Chief Minister said the state government has released Rs 900 crore this year out of its share of Rs 9,000 crore. The total project cost is Rs 26,405 crore, and the entire construction is expected to be completed by 2020. An estimated 20 lakh people will benefit by the completion of the two phases, he said.

Responding to Naidu's assurance of support for the

third phase, Siddaramaiah expressed the state's gratitude and hoped for timely co-operation by the union government.

Public transport

Earlier, Naidu vociferously pushed for a shift from personal vehicles to public transport. To facilitate this transition, he said, as many as 316 km of Metro lines have been completed countrywide. Work on another 490 km is in progress. The Centre proposed to build an additional 580 km of Metro tracks in cities across the country.

A mix of public transport options such as Metro, suburban railway, cycling and Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) is essential to break the stran-

Phase 1

Consisting of East-West (Baiyappanahalli to Mysuru Road) and North-South corridor (Nagasandra to Puttenahalli), the Phase I network of Namma Metro features five underground stations. Credited to be the first underground metro stretch, the project, costing Rs 13,845 crore, covers a total length of 42.30 km. With the completion of 90% of the work, the entire Phase I project would be completed in six months. It's expected to see a footfall of two lakh per day.

Phase 2

With a total length of 72 km, the Phase II of Namma Metro is estimated to cost Rs 26,405 crore. The project was okayed in February 2014. At present, BMRL has started acquiring land for the project that consists of 61 stations including 12 underground stations. Expected to be completed by March, 2020, the project would be major boost for people to connect the periphery of Bengaluru.

Phase 3

The project is proposed to cover about 150 km that connects heart of the City as well as Bengaluru International Airport. At present, a private agency is tasked with the work of preparing a Detailed Project Report (DPR).

glehold of private vehicles on our cities.

Naidu noted that only 15% of commuters used public transport.

He listed the reasons: "Inadequate road spaces, transport infrastructure, and rising ownership of private vehicles have led to alarming congestion in urban areas. Every second Bangalorean has a vehicle.

Public spaces including road spaces have been exploited by the car owning class."

The minister assured support for the early completion of sub-urban train network for Bengaluru. "We will take personal interest to realise this dream. This will considerably take off the traffic load from the city roads," he said.

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Four, including woman, held for abduction charges

BENGALURU: Four persons, including a woman, who had staged an abduction drama over a financial matter, have been arrested by the police. The suspect have been identified as Shabana, 28, Satish, 31, Ranjith, 37, and Mohan Kumar, 45, all residents of Rajarajeshwarinagar.

According to the KR Puram police, Shabana had connived with others to abduct Yuvaraj, an autorickshaw driver, as she had some financial dispute with him. Yuvaraj, a suspect in a theft case, met Shabana, accused of murdering her husband, at Parappana Agrahara. The duo got involved in financial transactions after they came out of jail, said the police.

Shabana invited Yuvaraj for a talk on April 27. She, joined by a few others, pretended to hire his autorickshaw from ITI Gate at Chikkadevasandra. Shabana and her accomplices forced Yuvaraj into Mohan's house, where they thrashed him repeatedly for a day. They called up Yuvaraj's wife Shobha the next day and demanded Rs 2.5 lakh ransom to set him free. They brought it down to Rs 1.5 lakh after Shobha expressed her helplessness, said the police.

Meanwhile, Shobha lodged a complaint with the police, who started tracing the suspects based on mobile phone call details. Shabana reached Jaraganahalli and the police followed her. The police arrested the suspects once Shobha identified them, added the police.

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Colours missing from city as flowers on trees wither due to heat

Bosky Khanna

BENGALURU: The yellow and purple flowers on Bengaluru's avenue trees are now withering due to the intense summer heat this year.

Tabebuia trees, which were brought to the city by the British, added colour to Bengaluru in summers. The bright yellow, purple and pink blossoms around the city, especially in the central business district, were a star attraction for tourists and Bangaloreans. But this year, their blooming has come down by 30-40% across the city, say botanists and experts.

Environmentalist A N Yelappa Reddy said blooming has come down primarily because of lack of moisture in the air and soil. These trees are sensitive and due to excessive heat, the buds have withered. Thus, the percentage of flowering has come down. The number of trees have also come down because of increasing urbanisation. Slight variation in temperature is a critical factor controlling their phenology.

Most tabebuia trees start blooming from early summer. Normally, they would be seen in full bloom in April and May.

But that is not the case this time. Some have already bloomed while others have withered and some are in bloom now.

"The trees are confused with changing seasons. Nobody had ever expected Bengaluru to be so hot. The ground water, which is essential for the tabebuia to bloom, is depleting," said botanist from IISc Prof K Sankara Rao.

The onset of summer normally starts in Bengaluru with blooming of tabebuia impetiginosa (purple), followed by tabebuia caraiba (yellow) and tabebuia impetiginosa (pink). This is then followed by the Pride of India (red).

Environmentalist Suresh Heblikar said over the last 3-4 years, there have been drastic changes in temperature. Humidity has come down.

"Some flowers are blooming early and some late. Once, one could find many such trees near Raj Bhavan, Cubbon Park, High Court and Vidhana Soudha, but not any more. The vision group should keep all these in mind while planning the development of the city as these trees were the colour of the city," he said.

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Slight variation in temperature is a critical factor controlling the phenology of Tabebuia flowers which bloom only in February, March and April every year. **DH PHOTOS**

BWSSB set to begin treatment for sick Bellandur lake

4 STPs to treat 55 MLD of waste water will be set up

Naaven Menezes

BENGALURU: In a bid to restore Bellandur Lake, the city's largest but highly polluted water body, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewage Board (BWSSB) has initiated the process of constructing four sewage treatment plants (STPs) at different locations. Touted as a panacea for the toxic foam on the 900-acre lake, these STPs will be able to treat 55 million litres a day (MLD) of waste water.

The project is estimated to cost Rs 165 crore. While the Union government would provide only 33% of the total cost under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme and the state government would contribute 20%, the board will have to bear 47% of the cost, Ramakrishna S M, chief engineer (Wastewater Management), BWSSB told *Deccan Herald*.

The STPs will come up in Hulimavu (10 MLD), Sarakki (5 MLD), Chikka Begur (5 MLD) and in Agara (35 MLD), all in the Southern part of Bengaluru that connects Bellandur

Lake, he said. Ramakrishna also said the board would use funds from AMRUT scheme to take up restoration work of sewage pipelines.

The board's former chairman T M Vijaya Bhaskar said it would take at least three months for civil work to begin. The board would use funds collected from pro rata charges and raise a loan from the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation for these projects, he said.

Dredging work

Earlier, researchers of Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru had advised government agencies to take up dredging work as a first step towards the lake's rejuvenation. Prof T V Ramachandra had pointed out that a large quantity of sediment accumulated in the lake was blocking groundwater recharge. Their study had also revealed that the economic value of the silt was as high as Rs 2,000 crore.

Commissioner of Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), which is the custodian of Bellandur lake, T Sham Bhatt told *Deccan Herald* that there is a discussion with the Bengaluru Development Minister on taking up dredging work in Bellandur Lake. "However, we do not know who will fund the cost. It's still the initial stage", he said.

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A study by a team from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) suggested that silt accumulated in Bellandur lake is blocking groundwater recharge. **DH FILE PHOTO**

Woman corporator injured in melee in council during property tax protest

BENGALURU: A woman corporator was injured while her male colleague was rushed to a hospital as BJP members resorted to a protest against hike in property tax, at the BBMP council hall here on Friday.

A meeting of the Palike council was scheduled on Friday. The BJP members, who had assembled at the council hall earlier, were staging a protest against the hike in property tax.

They had even locked the council building. However, Mayor B N Manjunatha Reddy arrived at the council hall from another entrance. As soon as the meeting began, the BJP corporators began to shout slogans against the ruling party. The mayor suggested the protesters that the House could take up a discussion on the issue.

However, the BJP were unrelenting and continued with slogan shouting and the mayor adjourned the meeting amid chaos. The mayor suspended four BJP members - Padmanabha Reddy, Umesh Shetty K, Ramamohan Raju C R and M Nagaraju - from the council for two months.

The protesters prevented the mayor from leaving the meeting hall by blocking his way. Soon, a melee ensued with BJP and Congress corporators pushing and shoving each other. A woman corporator was injured while leader of the Opposition Padmanabha Reddy took ill in the ruckus. Reddy was immediately rushed to Mallya hospital by an ambulance.



BJP corporators prevent Mayor B N Manjunatha Reddy from leaving the BBMP council hall during their protest against hike in property tax on Friday. A BJP corporator is being taken out of the venue after he fainted. **DH PHOTOS**



Congressmen want rollback

Members of Bengaluru Mahanagara District Congress Committee on Friday submitted a memorandum to Bengaluru Development Minister K J George and Mayor B N Manjunatha Reddy requesting them to reduce the quantum of hike in property tax. President of the committee, G Shekhar has sought that citizens should be allowed to pay tax at BBMP offices and BangaloreOne centres.

Addressing a press meet later, the mayor described the incident "third-class" politics. He said that the chaos had marred the image of the BBMP. "Were the BJP corporators dead when it was decided to hike the property tax last year? They had the time to raise objections and why did not they do it?" the mayor wanted to know.

BJP corporator B S Satya-

narayana told reporters that they would stay in the council hall overnight and continue their protest till Saturday 11 am. He added that BJP state president B S Yeddyurappa had already given them a green signal to hold protest on May 3.

Umesh Shetty, a corporator from Nagarabhavi ward said that they want a complete rollback of the hike in property

tax. The civic agency on Thursday restricted the hike in property tax to 20% for residential properties and 25% for commercial buildings.

'It's minimal'

BBMP Commissioner N Manjunatha Prasad told *Deccan Herald* that the hike in property tax was minimal and it was necessary considering the money the Palike had proposed to spend on improving the city infrastructure.

"This year, we are spending Rs 9,000 crore on various projects and the property tax was not hiked since 2008. With this hike, we get an additional revenue of Rs 250 crore. Citizens are not objecting to the tax hike."

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