

We have messed up, floods in Bengaluru are here to stay

City paying the price for encroachment of gomal land, drains, wetlands; concrete killing percolation system; officials fail to understand ecology, say experts



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BENGALURU: Why is it that even the lightest showers can lead to pools and high waters on Bengaluru's roads? The reasons are many: Encroachment of drains, wetlands and buffer zones, absence of green cover and area base maps. And concretisation. City planners, it seems, have cemented the city into a mess.

Retired Indian Forest Service officer and noted expert AN Yellappa Reddy said: “I had worked with AT Ramaswamy and prepared a report on land encroachments, where 40,000 acres of gomal land was encroached. But where is the report now? No action has been taken to recover the land. These acted as a buffer to collect water. Also, 80 per cent of storm water drains carry rain and drain water mixed, so they overflow each time it rains.”

Ideally, only rainwater should flow through storm water drains, sewage in underground drains and drinking water in separate lines. Rajakaluves mean large drains measuring 30-60 feet. But at present, they measure 8-10 feet, Reddy said.

Experts admitted that the rain Bengaluru has received so far, if stored properly in kalyanis, water bodies and other sources, would have been sufficient to meet the city’s water supply needs for the next three years. “The government is now talking of constructing more drains and draining out two feet of water from lakes. But they don’t know where to dispose of the water. It was earlier proposed to have an empty lake bed type of structure in the city, just like katte (tank bund) which could store excess lake water. But government officials never understood it. All dried lake beds were looked at as potential real estate, which are now flooding,” Reddy said.

Srinivasa Reddy, retired scientific officer, Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, said while remodelling drains, angling has also been altered, which is one of the reasons for flooding. Natural percolation systems have been lost because of concretisation. These basics have not been understood by engineers. The government has made rain water harvesting mandatory, but no check is done on implementation. If every building has rain water harvesting apparatus, then the runoff will be controlled from the present 80-85 per cent.

Noted urban planner V Ravichandar pointed out that the government is using outdated rainfall statistics while planning. “Instead of taking 70mm rainfall as the base, they should take 130mm. Storm water drain remodelling has been going on for 15 years, but so far there is no holistic approach because it is not in the public domain,” he said. Prof TV Ramachandra from Indian Institute of Science said today, commoners are more environmentally conscious and talk of climate change, compared to knowledge among government officials.

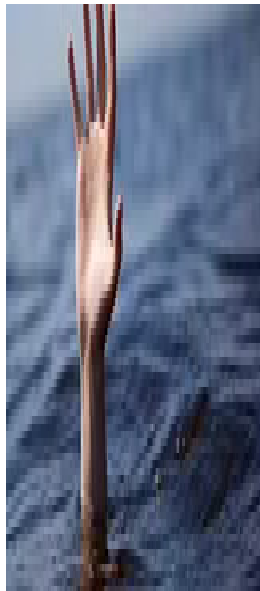
B'loru to see more rain in the coming week

After a rather sunny Wednesday afternoon, Bengaluru is set to be inundated with rain for the next week. According to the Indian Meteorological Department, the city will see more rain for at least the next five days. The IMD said that the showers were due to a low pressure area that will form in the next 24 hours over the Bay of Bengal. Though the rain is not attributed to any cyclones, there will be a prevalence of cyclonic circulations.

Potholes will be filled after rain recedes, says Bommai

Bengaluru: Highlighting the pathetic condition of the roads in Bengaluru, which are scarred with a large number of potholes, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday said that potholes will be filled up in a phased manner. In the first phase, potholes which are 1-foot deep or more will be filled up, after which, long stretches of bad roads will be re-laid, the CM added. Addressing reporters on the sidelines of a meeting with BBMP officials, the CM said the first priority will be given to deep potholes. Bommai said the matter was discussed with BBMP officials and directions were also issued to the Chief Commissioner to take up repairs on priority basis.

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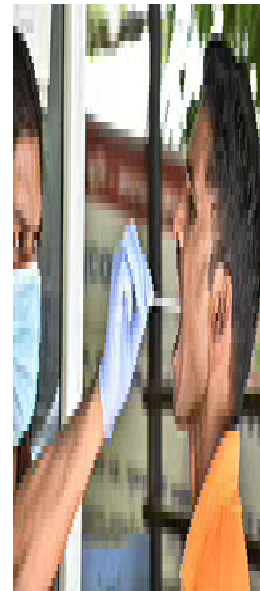
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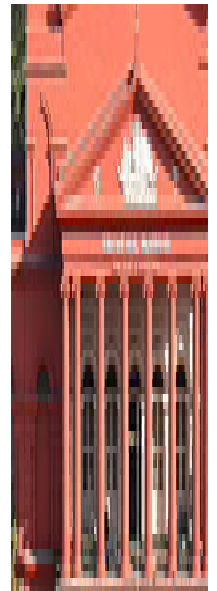
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