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Flyover loop eases traffic around Hebbal

Aryan Arun

BENGALURU: The new Hebbal flyover loop, inaugurated on 18 August, 2025, has been received positively by citizens and the police alike, with a common opinion that traffic is being reduced during peak hours. However, the citizens are also voicing concerns about traffic getting held up at Mekhri Circle.

"Traffic has reduced for people coming from the KR Puram side; it's constantly moving. Pressure has gone down drastically after the opening," said police constable Parashuram, Hebbal station. While the officer noted that there haven't been any blocks or chokepoints due to the loop, there is some buildup of traffic at Sanjaynagar, located towards the exit. "There is some slow movement of traffic near Mekhri Circle as the flyover merges into the main road," he added. The benefit of the ease of travel has been voiced by the commuters and residents living in and around the area, with many highlighting reduced congestion. "Traffic is slightly faster for now."

Earlier, I used to get stuck in Hebbal for 25 minutes at a minimum, but now it seems quicker," mentioned Shreya Devdas, a resident living opposite the flyover, while speaking to *The Beacon*. "To prevent further jams, extending the service road to the complete length of Mekhri Circle is essential to maintain the current traffic flow," Parashuram mentioned.

Wilson Garden tragedy sparks debate on safety measures

Ameya Krishnakumar

BENGALURU: The casualties in the cylinder blast at Wilson Gardens on August 15 rose to two as 8-year-old Kyle passed away at Victoria Hospital on August 18, 2025. Kyle and her mother Kasturi, suffered heavy burns and were admitted to Victoria Hospital on the 15th after the explosion.

The blast occurred around 8 a.m. at Kasturi's house, a compact colony in Chinniahpalya. Kasturi and her daughter, Kyle, were sleeping when the blast took place. Police suspect that the blast was caused by leaking gas in the house and a light switch being turned on. Officials are waiting for the forensic reports to confirm the exact cause. Kasturi is a customer



Aftermath of the tragedy

FreePress Journal

of a local gas cylinder company which provides orange cylinders. She had bought a new cylinder on the 14th and the cylinder was leaking gas. The gas remained in the house as all the windows were closed due to the cold weather, which the family noticed once they had woken up to see black smoke surrounding the house. All the houses in the

colony are built quite closely together, as the residents are either daily wage workers or vendors with minimal income and the blast was strong enough to shatter 15-16 houses nearby, largely owing to the wall debris. Kyle was stuck under pieces of rubble for 8 minutes before she was rescued, and they were taken to the hospital after.

11-year-old Mubarak from a neighbouring house was stuck under 9-inch-thick walls for 30 minutes before anyone could rescue him, and the injuries proved too severe, and he passed away that same day. Another resident Sarasamma's hand had to be amputated after being stuck under debris. "My husband had to get 10 stitches on his head

after debris struck his head," said Jayamma, who works as a maid and left for work early in the morning. Most of the residents who were rescued and admitted to hospitals have now been discharged and will be allocated government shelters until their houses are restored.

CM Siddaramaiah and Home Minister Parameshwara have visited the colony and have promised restoration of the houses and compensation to the victims' families. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Johnson, a resident, opined that the building should be spaced with enough distance between them so more houses won't be caught in the crossfire if a similar incident occurs.

Bengaluru pushes ABC over shelter model for strays

Niranjana J & V.Nayonika

BENGALURU: City officials say Bengaluru cannot accommodate its nearly three lakh stray dogs if the Supreme Court's August 11 directive to confine strays in shelters is extended beyond Delhi-NCR. The Court, which had ordered all dogs in the capital region to be permanently detained, has since reserved its judgment, leaving other cities to assess whether such a model is feasible.

For the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), the idea is impractical. "It would be like setting up a small village just to house dogs," said Vikas Suralkar Kishor, IAS, Special Commissioner for Health. He



Shelters struggle to accommodate strays

snouters.com

noted that even existing Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres struggle with land shortages, public conflict, and limited manpower. "Finding, building, and maintaining shelters for 2,75,000 dogs is practically impossible," he added. Animal welfare organisations

warn that mass shelters could deteriorate conditions. "No city can shelter that many dogs without overcrowding and suffering," said Jonathan, co-founder of Voice of Animals. He urged increasing sterilisation, expanding veterinary facilities, and raising public awareness

as more concrete solutions.

The shelter approach also challenges India's ABC law, which requires sterilisation, vaccination, and release of strays. Bengaluru has followed this model for years, linking it to anti-rabies vaccination drives under the National Disease Surveillance Programmes. Officials stress that long-term progress depends on community involvement. "Without community connect, no system will succeed," Suralkar said. Until the Court delivers its ruling, Bengaluru plans to strengthen ABC measures while preparing for wider implications.

Mining threatens ecological habitats in Aravalli hills

Disha Banthia

Mining operations in the Aravalli hills continue to damage critical wildlife habitats, threatening over 10 species, including leopards and striped hyenas, while the contamination of water has led to serious health hazards for the residents.

The Aravalli is one of the oldest mountain ranges in India, stretching across Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi. It is home to thousands of plant species and rare wildlife. "There is no holistic system to protect the Aravallis as a whole. Waste dumping and illegal mining persist, and the process of filing complaints is slow and ineffective," said Vishwas Tanwar, member of People for Aravallis, while speaking to *The Beacon*, highlighting the impact on wildlife and humans.

Dr Ghazala Shahabuddin, senior ecologist, added that "Toxic metals seep into the plants and get into animals, which poison the Aravalli landscape." Three buffaloes died in one village alone due to contaminated water. Mining practices have eliminated crucial wildlife

Karnataka shepherds demand protection bill

Harivalagan E

BENGALURU: A massive crowd of shepherds from all over Karnataka gathered to protest for the safety and protection of their community at Freedom Park on August 19, 2025.

Despite the introduction of the Traditional Migratory Shepherds (protection against atrocities and provision of welfare) bill introduced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during the budget back in 2024, the community continues to face atrocities.

The protest was led by advocate Yellappa Hegde under the aegis



Shepherds unite for justice

Harivalagan E

of Siddaramananda Swami, along with other leaders. Animal Husbandry and Sericulture Minister K Venkatesh assured protesters that the bill would be presented in the cabinet's next state assembly session.

Incidents of the murder of shepherds Sharanappa Jamannakatti (Bagalkot)

and Prabhu Metre (Bidar) by sheep-nappers and the rape and murder of Lakshmi Kallimani (Dharwad) stand as examples of the crime committed against the community. The shepherds were promised rifles to protect their sheep, but only 400 have received the rifles, but no license to use them.

Ownly emerges profitable for eateries

Allen George Easo

BENGALURU: Rapido's new fast food delivery 'Ownly' is being picked over Swiggy and Zomato as the more profitable option by restaurant owners for both merchants and customers alike because of their zero-commission model.

Ownly has been introduced as a commission-free alternative with no hidden charges or platform fees. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Prakhyath from WIKIWIKI foods has said that Swiggy and Zomato charge around 35 - 40 per cent commission. The restaurant will be

responsible for the delivery cost of the order within and around a 4-5km radius, and the rates are fixed according to the value of the order.

Launched on August 14, 2025, Ownly is now live in select parts of Bengaluru, namely, Koramangala, HSR Layout, and BTM Layout. "We have received around 20 orders so far, and the delivery charges were only 20-25 rupees. We get more orders through Ownly, and we're looking forward to more profitable orders," Prakhyath mentioned.