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Water shortage hits PGs

Ancy James

BENGALURU: Sudden water cuts are posing challenges for paying guests (PGs) across Bengaluru, leading residents to worry about possible water shortages as summer approaches. Students and PG owners say the situation is slightly better than last year, but daily routines remain disrupted. In several areas, water supply is cut off without prior notice, sometimes in the middle of the day and often late at night, even on Sundays. The residents are finding it difficult to manage their daily routines with the abrupt water cuts and the summer coming.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Apoorva Thakur, a college student staying in a Bengaluru PG, said, "The water supply is abruptly cut off, in the middle of the day and mostly at night," which affects her daily routine. "As a student, there are specific parts of the day when I'm in the PG, and if the water is short during those hours, it gets difficult," she said, adding that continuous water outages like these during the summer would be difficult to manage. Shabeer Muhammad, a Bengaluru PG owner, told *The Beacon* that he calls water tankers at least five times a week when the water supply runs out. To manage the shortage, he goes room to room, telling residents, "No shower, no water," to avoid unnecessary use so that the basic needs of all residents living in the PG can be met.

Karnataka road safety campaign shows results

Diana Saldehna S

BENGALURU: Efforts to curb speeding through public awareness campaigns and stronger enforcement are beginning to show results in Karnataka, according to an evaluation report released by the Government of Karnataka on March 2. The report assesses the impact of the statewide "Motorcycle Reconstruction" campaign and indicates that combining communication with enforcement can influence driving behaviour and help reduce road deaths.

The study was conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) with support from Vital Strategies under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety. Researchers analysed road user behaviour, speed observations, enforcement records and crash statistics, comparing data collected



Authorities present the evaluation of anti-speed campaign

Diana Saldehna S

before and after the campaign.

The campaign was launched by the Karnataka State Road Safety Authority (KSRS) in November 2024 and ran for three months across the state. Awareness messages were aired on television channels, screened in theatres and displayed on roadside billboards. The campaign also reached audiences through radio broadcasts and newspaper advertisements. According to the report,

average vehicle speeds in Bengaluru decreased by about 9.4 km/h, from 45.91 km/h before the campaign to 36.56 km/h afterwards. The proportion of vehicles exceeding speed limits fell slightly, from 6.41 per cent before the campaign to 5.99 per cent after. During the same period, road fatalities reduced by 13 deaths. Public awareness also increased during the campaign period. Around 42 per cent

of respondents said they remembered the campaign messages. Nearly half of those who had seen the campaign reported consistently following speed limits in the previous two months. After watching the campaign, 93 per cent of drivers said they had become more concerned about speeding. Officials say these findings highlight the importance of combining awareness campaigns with enforcement.

Karthik Reddy, Joint Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru Traffic Police, said media narratives play an important role in supporting enforcement efforts. "Media campaigns amplify our job of saving lives on the road through enforcement. The reduction in deaths and average speed in Bengaluru is a positive outcome of this collaboration between government stakeholders," he said.

J. Purushotham, Additional Commissioner of the Karnataka State Road Safety Authority, said the state has increasingly relied on data-driven campaigns to address road safety issues. "The reduction of 13 deaths observed before and after the campaign is a testimony to how mass media campaigns paired with targeted enforcement can improve road safety," he added.

CBSE schedule change triggers debate

Jessica Maria

BENGALURU: Debates over academic pressure and the need for breaks before the board examination year have emerged among teachers, students and psychologists in Karnataka following a recent decision by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to delay the start of Classes 10 and 12 for the next session. For CBSE schools, beginning the academic year early was a strategy to cope with board exam schedules. With board exams now beginning in February, Moncy Biju, a CBSE teacher based in



A CBSE classroom in session

The Financial Express

Bengaluru, told *The Beacon*, "If we begin early, we have enough time to complete the portions well... and then there is enough time for revisions," adding that this approach reduces last-

minute stress. However, mental health professionals consider the extended break necessary. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Maria Smita, a psychologist, noted that delaying the start allows

students "To have a proper break... to refresh their body and mind to be open for the coming academic year," adding that students often experience burnout due to constant pressure to perform well. Students appear to welcome this decision. Vidhathi S, a student, said, "We students need a short break between academic years to relax and refresh our minds because a calm and balanced mind helps us to perform our upcoming board exams well," calling the board's decision a good idea that considers students' overall well-being.

Public reacts to illegal tree cutting

Meinar Efel Nahak

BENGALURU: Environmentalists and residents have demanded that the police and officials of Bengaluru East City Corporation take measures to address the destruction of public property after 20 well-grown trees were cut overnight in the Old Madras Road area between KR Puram and the Hanging Bridge by unidentified persons, triggering outrage among residents and environmental volunteers. "We want strict action, a transparent investigation by the government officials, and clear steps to ensure such destruction never happens again," said Smitha S, a local resident. The greening effort was community-led. For the locals, the trees symbolised their hard work and persistence in protecting the environment. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Rammurthy, Police Inspector of KR Puram, assured their assistance. "We are still checking CCTV, till now we couldn't find anything," he said. Residents have urged authorities to take immediate, strict action against those responsible. They demand a transparent investigation, accountability under relevant tree protection laws, and the prevention of such incidents in the future.

Organic colours gain popularity

Vaishnavi Savant

BENGALURU: Holi celebrations across Bengaluru on March 3 and 4 highlighted a growing shift toward organic colours and eco-friendly events, as locals now largely prefer safer and more environmentally friendly celebrations, residents and retailers said. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Koramangala resident Amita Devanga opined that concerns about chemical colours have influenced how people celebrate the festival. She also mentioned her experience of developing skin rashes after using chemical colours, which eventually made her shift to organic alternatives. "My skin



Bowls of organic Holi powder

Vaishnavi Savant

reacts to the chemicals in Holi colours, and I get rashes, so I switched to organic colours," she said, adding that people are becoming more environmentally conscious now. Vivek Deshpande, a local retailer who sells Holi colours, highlighted a rising demand for organic

products among many customers. "Earlier people didn't think much about the type of colours they bought, but now most customers ask if the colours are organic," he said, adding that some customers even return colours if they realise, they are not organic or safe to use on their skin.

IT layoffs raise job concerns

Sanjana Shaji

BENGALURU: Young professionals in Bengaluru are becoming increasingly concerned about job security following a recent layoff at a tech company that affected 40% of its employees. The incident has sparked serious conversations across the tech sector about the security of jobs in startups. Speaking to *The Beacon*, Tesa Maria Shiju, an IT professional at Tata Consultancy Services in Bengaluru, said the news prompted many employees to reflect on their own careers. "When I heard about the

layoff, it made me realise how unpredictable this industry can be. Even high salaries don't always guarantee job security," she said. However, startup founders say such decisions are often caused by financial pressures. Anu Wilson, a Bengaluru-based startup founder, explained that as funding becomes tight, companies sometimes have to reduce their team size to survive. The incident has made many young tech workers think more seriously about job stability as they plan their careers.