Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP)

NEWSLETTER

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MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER

Dear Bengalurigas

During October, the BNP team started to re-engage with various BBMP departments like Finance, Revenues, Admin & IT, with the objective of putting in place systems & processes to resolve citizens' issues and achieve transparency in BBMP's works and workings. To understand the importance of this engagement and how it could potentially make an impact, please read further!

Do you know why the BBMP Sahaya App fails to work most of the time? After all, technology is supposed to help make things easier & more efficient. Well, the reason why this app, or any technology deployed by BBMP fails, is because there is no proper underlying system, process or workflow to take an issue to its logical conclusion.

Technology does not solve civic issues by itself. It is merely a facilitator to make the process smoother and more efficient. However, if there is no underlying process to systematically address issues, the app or technology acts merely as a cosmetic without the ability to remedy an underlying problem.

When a citizen uploads an issue onto the app, the first and foremost thing is for the issue to be tagged to the relevant Assistant Engineer (AE) of BBMP of that Ward. The AE should then be tasked with the responsibility of not just responding to the issue, but also to take action, and ultimately resolve it to the satisfaction of the citizen who has raised that issue. It is this part of the system which is completely broken.

The AEs in most wards are not held responsible or accountable for the issues in their respective wards. There is no system of setting Key Result Areas (KRAs) for them or measuring their performance. To compound the problem, there is no defined escalation mechanism for citizens to take up the matter further, if the AE does not respond, which happens almost all the time.

Along with our brilliant BNP Team, I am working on putting a system in place through which issues are systematically captured, tagged to the right AEs, tracked for progress, escalated to the next level when there is no or limited progress, and eventually, closed with a logical resolution or follow-on action on the same. We are calling it the BNP Citizen Portal.

We are putting this system in place and gradually engaging with the BBMP Departments and officials to work towards implementing a similar system in the BBMP, that I hope will be the precursor to a properly-functioning BBMP Sahaaya App. Stay tuned for more updates on this front in the coming few months.

As always, I am happy to receive inputs and feedback from you at
srikanth.narasimhan1975@gmail.com

SRIKANTH NARASIMHAN, Founder
Bengaluru NavaNirmana Party (BNP*)***

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BENGALURIGA BYTES
(October)

MEETING WITH BBMP REVENUE, FINANCE AND ADMIN OFFICIALS

BNP Founder Srikanth Narasimhan, and BNP Governing Council Members Poongothai Mahesh and B. V. Lalithamba met several Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials at BBMP Head office on 27th October 2023, to discuss a range of issues. A Government Order (GO) had been passed in September 2023 to resolve the long-pending Property Tax Zonal Classification issue. However, the BBMP Revenue department had not yet implemented this Order. The BNP Team met Smt. Lakshmi Devi, Joint Commissioner Revenue, to request prioritisation of this matter as soon as Sri. Munish Moudgil, New Special Commissioner Revenue took up office. Smt. Lakshmi Devi assured the team that all issues affecting citizens have been listed for discussion, including the GO on the Property Tax issue.

The high level Team from BNP also met Sri. Shivananda Kalakere, Special Commissioner Finance and Smt. Jothi, Additional Commissioner Finance. A request was made to upload the BBMP audit and budget information on its website for public view. Team BNP also requested information about budget allocation for projects, role of BBMP finance team, and State & Central Government grants in city budget/implementation. The Finance officials assured Team BNP that all available information would be uploaded shortly in an easily accessible format.

Team BNP also met Sri. Manjunath, Deputy Commissioner Administration, and highlighted the absence of contact details of BBMP Central and Zonal level officials on the BBMP portal. Sri. Manjunath said that he has initiated the process of collecting these details and reassured Team BNP that the information would be uploaded on the website shortly.

ELECTORAL ROLL REFORM UPDATES

BNP Governing Council Members B. V. Lalithamba and Poongothai Mahesh met Sri. Ramachandran, Additional Chief Election Officer on 6th October 2023. They requested updates on two matters: Voter ID rationalisation and the booth map. He assured BNP that he would check on the process of migration to a single polling station for a family.

DEMANDING TRANSPARENCY IN BBMP

The same team also met Sri. Mahesh, Additional Commissioner Admin and discussed the BBMP Transparency project. They also requested the contact details of the Ward AEE, AE and Health Inspectors of all Bengaluru Zones. He shared inputs on the IT team responsible for updating the citizen Zone of the BBMP website, and shared the contact details of the concerned officer. Team BNP also submitted two letters to the Chief Commissioner BBMP's office. The first letter pertains to the execution of the GO on Property Tax and the second letter provides details of the BBMP Transparency project.

AREA SABHAS IN ACTION

Iblur, Bellanduru, Doddakanahalli and AECS Layout Wards have witnessed a flurry of activities during the month of October. Area Sabhas have already been constituted and many are in active mode. They hold regular meetings, discuss pressing civic issues and take them up promptly with local officials. For instance, in the Vibgyor School Area Sabha, local community members are active participants. During a **Ward Walk** with the BBMP AEE, members of this Area Sabha identified all the potholes and drains that needed fixing. The AEE promised to tackle the problem once the required resources became available.

It is heartening to know that work is in progress and that Area Sabha members, many of them working professionals, are taking turns to oversee the quality of the work. This is a clear demonstration of how much teamwork can achieve. Kudos to all the active Area Sabha members in Iblur, whose success will no doubt inspire Area Sabha members in other Wards.

BNP's Regular On-the-Ground Work

Vote4Bengaluru

BNP Voter registration camps went into overdrive mode during October. In Iblur, camps at Embassy Pristine (1st October 2023), Sobha Onyx (7th Oct), Sai Poorna Paradise (8th Oct), Sai Poorna Luxuria (14th Oct), and ND Sepal (15th Oct), led to 95 registrations, even though voter registrations could not be completed at the last venue due to technical glitches. The drive in Bellandur at SJR Park Vista (15th Oct) brought in 40 Voter registrations, while the 29th October drive at BSR Mantralaya apartment, Agara, also featured a briefing about BNP activities and registered 12 voters. Full credit to B. V. Lalithamba, Jeevan, Mahesh, Madhusudhan, Sampath, Manoj, Kamesh, Sreekumar, Jayasimha, Keya, Srinivas Reddy and Umang for their tremendous efforts. Many thanks to the volunteers from these communities in Iblur and Agara for their support and hospitality.

NOTE: Publication of Final Electoral Rolls for the forthcoming elections will be on 5th January 2024

BNP requests all voters with Electoral Photo Identity Cards (EPICs) to go through the Draft Rolls to check if their names appear on the list, and all eligible voters without EPIC to register as Voters well before 12th December 2023, when the 'Period of Claims and Objections' closes.

If you are a New Voter seeking to register or you stay in a layout or apartment complex and want to arrange a voter registration camp, simply give a missed call to BNP on **080-47190000** OR send an email to vot**ers@nammabnp.org** OR refer to the **Voter Portal User Guide** on our **BNP Website. Let's Vote For Bengaluru!**

CIVIC ISSUES ADDRESSED

STREET LIGHT FIXED
In one of the streets of Friends Layout, Doddanekundi, the street lights were not operational for more than a month. The BNP Team spoke to the authorities and the issue was resolved in a day.

BESCOM POLE FIXED
In AECS LAYOUT Ward, the alignment of supporting beams was disturbed, leading to a risky situation where the BESCOM pole could slip into the box type Rajakaluve. BNP Team followed up with BESCOM's Team and got it fixed.

WATER LOGGING ISSUES RESOLVED
BNP's Iblur Team followed up with BBMP Lakes team to get the water removed from the tank (Kalyani) in Somasundarapalya lake, as there was a concern about Dengue mosquitoes breeding there.
Towards the same concerns, the BNP Team in Iblur ward also followed up with the owner of the site behind DSR Rainbow Heights apartment to get the stagnant water removed using a motor.

STRAY DOGS
Concerns were raised in Bellandur about a number of dogs that are highly territorial and aggressive outside SJR Redwoods, Harlur road. Vishnu Reddy spoke to BBMP Animal Husbandry and the authorities saw to it that the dogs were all vaccinated.

FOOTPATH CLEARED OF OVERGROWTH
In Iblur, during a ward walk, the BNP Team found that the ND Sepal Apartment's compound wall had overgrown plants protruding outside. The Community took proactive steps and the footpath is now visible.

MANHOLE LEAK FIXED

An overflowing manhole in Agara, was followed up by the BNP team with the BWSSB and it was fixed.

GARBAGE ISSUES – BURNING AND PILING UP

In Puttenahalli, garbage was being burnt in a private open Plot. BNP team members discussed with the local health inspector and he instructed the citizens staying in the vacant plot not to burn the waste. There was also a discussion on ways to encourage neighbourhood citizens not to throw waste in the vacant plot.

Accumulation of garbage near Royal Placid Layout, Somasundarapalya, was persistent, with uncollected garbage piling up for almost 3 to 4 months, resulting in unsightly surroundings and stench. This issue raised concerns about public health and sanitation and were taken up with the Contractor who cleaned it up.

Congratulations to all these BNPians for making Bengaluru a better place!

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

HSR LAYOUT

GPS Map Camera

GOTTIGERE

The month of October started off with the BNP Team of Iblur with BNP Governing Council Member B. V. Lalithamba coming together on 1st October 2023, for a Swachata hi Seva cleanliness drive in HSR Layout. The weekend of 7th-8th Oct saw BNP Governing Council Members Poongothai Mahesh and Indira Belde conduct Community Meetings at Kalenagaraha, Gottigere and Gopalan Habitat Splendour, AECS Layout respectively. At these meetings, local citizens got together with the BNP Leaders to discuss and decide on the local area's civic issues to be taken up for follow up, action and resolution.

The same weekend saw BNP Founder Srikanth at a Community meeting at Adarsh Palm Retreat in Doddakanahalli. There was also another Community Meeting held at
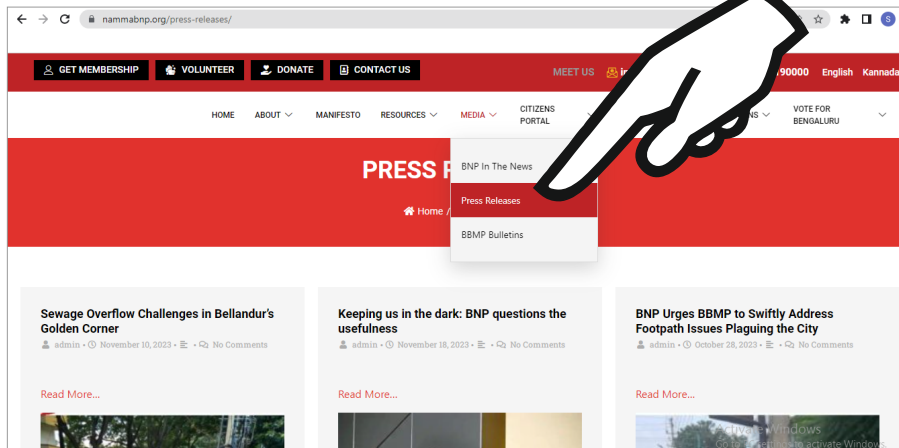

AECS LAYOUT

DODDAKANAHALLI

Doddakanahalli (28th Oct), at BM Lotus by BNP Zonal President (Mahadevpura) Vishnu Reddy.

DODDAKANAHALLI

BNP PRESS RELEASES

BNP issued five Press Releases in October. The first one, released on 5th October 2023 highlighted the sewage water woes of Kaverappa Layout and pointed out how the lack of local representatives has led to a plethora of unresolved civic issues. The October 14th Press Release talked about the civic issues that plague AECS Layout and Doddanekundi Wards and the October 15th one about the sewage woes at Hosapalya Nursery. The October 20th Press Release focuses on the incomplete RCC drain that is endangering the residents of Astro Greenwood Regency while the October 28th one draws attention to the numerous footpath issues in different parts of the city. All these Press Releases seek to underscore the apathy of the authorities and urge them to take immediate action.

You can access them all on our Namma BNP website **HERE**

In the run-up to the BBMP elections, the spotlight falls on the Ward Manifestos, which summarise the electoral promises made by the BNP. It is the only city-based party to offer no less than 25 specific assurances to the electorate. The party promises to deliver good grassroots governance at the ward level, through citizen participation, accountability and transparency, by implementing the following key measures:

Who are Civic Warriors? Citizens who raise civic issues with government officials and coordinate with them to resolve them are civic warriors. Anyone interested in resolving civic problems, creating better amenities and improving their ward, can aspire to become a civic warrior.

How can I become a BNP Civic Warrior? The best way to become a civic warrior is to join the BNP Area Sabha in your neighbourhood. These Area Sabhas meet to address, discuss, and take up civic issues in the area.

What kind of civic issues should I focus on? BNP takes up a range of local issues and any of these could be the subject of focus. BBMP-related issues include roads, footpaths, drains, parks, horticulture and tree cover. BWSSB-related issues pertain to drinking water and sewage. BESCOM handles matters relating to electricity supply and streetlights.

How do I identify the main civic issues in my ward? An effective way to identify civic issues is by conducting an Area Walk to observe the major problems affecting the ward or seeking information by interacting with Resident Welfare Association (RWA) leaders or residents in the neighbourhood, to find out what particular problems they are facing.

How can I decide which issue to tackle first? All maintenance issues should be tackled on a priority basis, followed by other issues. Resolution of any issues that require a new budget allocation should be aligned with the planning and budgeting process followed by the concerned department.

How can I form a team to take up the issue? By connecting with BNP groups in the area, reaching out to active residents in the neighbourhood, conducting Area/Ward Walks and meeting regularly with like-minded people.

How can I ensure support from the public? Every community has like-minded people willing to support a public campaign. Even if there are only a few such persons or even none, civic warriors must go ahead without losing heart. When people see that good work is being done, more and more people will join hands. Posting regular updates of successfully tackled civic issues via Whatsapp or other social media will help to build up, maintain and even boost public support.

What is the best way to tackle these civic issues? Citizen awareness, alertness and participation is important but resolution usually happens through interaction with the concerned local officials and perseverance in following up the matter until it is fully resolved.

Should I approach the concerned BBMP officials? It depends on the nature of the issue. You may need to visit the relevant officials in the BBMP or in BESCOM or BWSSB. Local BNP Leaders can guide you on who should be met regarding a particular issue.

What should I do if the local officials are indifferent? BNP Leaders and team members can suggest alternate ways to tackle the problem. One effective way is to escalate the problem to an official higher up in the hierarchy.

Will it help to get the media to highlight the problem? Highlighting the problem through the media is definitely helpful. Many times, it has worked wonders. When the officials realise that the matter has been brought to the attention of the media, they understand its gravity and promptly undertake measures to fix the problem.

Can you share examples of a complex civic issue that was tackled successfully? One recent example is the government waiver of the Property Tax which had been levied for erroneous Zonal classification. The BNP team of civic warriors and leaders was able to ensure relief for taxpayers through a sustained public campaign over 2 and a half years which involved public petitions, online campaigns, press releases and discussions with local officials at different levels.

In another case, construction debris was dumped on a footpath of a new road constructed just before the elections. For three months, BNP civic warriors made personal efforts to get the local officials to remove the debris but nothing happened. Then the media carried a news article focusing on the debris dumping and the very next day, the construction debris was removed and people could finally reclaim the footpath and walk safely.

Important Civic News in Bengaluru

BIG LEAP IN VOTER NUMBERS

The Draft Electoral Roll for Karnataka, published by the Election Commission of India for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections reveals some interesting figures. The state-wide total of 5,33,77,162 voters indicates a leap of 2.91+ lakh voters compared to the electoral roll for the Assembly elections earlier this year. Bengaluru Urban with 37.19+ lakh voters, is second only to the whole District of Belagavi, and accounts for nearly 7% of the total electorate of the State. The Bengaluru South Assembly segment with 7.06+ lakh voters is the constituency with the highest number of voters. These figures underscore the importance of Bengaluru in Karnataka's electoral scenario.

QUENCHING RURAL THIRST

Even as the water dispute with Tamil Nadu continues, Deputy Chief Minister (Dy CM) Sri. DK Shivakumar announced the completion of the Cauvery Stage V project, saying drinking water will be supplied to Anekal, Attibele, and 110 villages within the BBMP at the earliest. He declared that 750 MLD (million litres per day) of water would be sourced from Cauvery Stage V and 20 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) are being upgraded with disc membrane filters to be added to treat the water. The Dy CM pointed to the constant influx of around 3,00,000 people annually to Bengaluru. "Estimates are available based on the increasing number of electricity connections. The city is increasingly witnessing problems including drinking water woes and traffic congestion. Eight different teams are formed to plan and solve these issues, and a plan will be formulated based on their report," he said.

GRANDIOSE PROJECT OR POTENTIAL DISASTER?

After the traffic fiasco on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) delayed an international comedian's show, Karnataka Dy CM DK Shivakumar has revived his 190-km tunnel road project. A four or six-lane underground road that will cover strategic areas like the Silk Board junction, Bellary Road, Old Madras Road, Esteem Mall Junction to Mekhri Circle, Sirsi Circle, Outer Ring Road and KR Puram. However, data shows that more road space only generates more vehicles. Bengaluru currently has a 1:1 ratio of people to vehicles for a population of 1.2 crore. Experts urge that unless at least 60-65% of people use public transport, traffic congestion will not ease. The tunnel project has raised concerns over large-scale road digging, possible tree-felling and potential flooding risks. The availability of government-owned land for such a massive project and possible delays in private land acquisition are also matters of concern. The total project cost could exceed ₹ 85,000 crore. A fraction of this outlay could improve the existing public transport infrastructure with much better outcomes.

MORE THAN A NUMBER PLATE

What's in the new vehicle number plate? Not just a row of numbers but several security features. The Transport Department has made it mandatory for all vehicles (new and old) to have High-Security Registration Plates (HSRPs) installed by 17th November 2023 (*NOTE: The deadline has now been extended to 14th February 2024*). After that deadline, fines ranging from ₹500 to ₹1000 will be imposed on vehicle owners without HSRPs. While vehicle manufacturers have tie-ups with authorised HSRP manufacturers to supply these plates to the dealers, owners of old cars can place orders for installation of HSRPs through authorised vehicle dealers. These HSRPs carry some unique security features: a Permanent Identification Number and a chromium-based hologram. They will ensure uniformity and are tamper-proof.

REDUCED RESOURCES FOR POTHOLE REPAIRS

The BBMP has allocated ₹15 lakh each to 225 wards to fill potholes. The work will commence from November, with monitoring by the ward committees. The allocation was ₹5 lakh less than the previous year. The Government has asked the civic body to spend the money judiciously as there is a lack of funds. This could explain the reduced allocation. However, with a budget of ₹15 lakh, many of the existing potholes can be filled at the cost of approximately ₹1,200 for 1 sqm. Dy CM and Bengaluru Development Minister Sri. D K Shivakumar has also directed the BBMP to display boards where construction is underway giving the name of the contractor, project cost, and other details.

GRILLING THE RESTAURANTS

After the Koramangala restaurant fire on 18th October 2023, many city restaurants are feeling the glare of official scrutiny. By 29th October, BBMP had audited 1333 eateries, shut 60 for unlicensed functioning and threatened closure of another 600 for violating safety regulations. During the audit, at least 200 bars and restaurants were found running without the mandatory trade licence, most of them located in Eastern parts of Bengaluru, including Mahadevapura. Other than those violating hygiene regulations, the BBMP's health officials primarily inspected establishments for the necessary fire extinguishers and those operating on rooftops. While restaurants without licences have been shut down without any chance to contest the closure order, those that have been served notices can comply and operate thereafter without any hindrance. However, the ongoing drive has been criticised for ambiguity and some restaurant owners have complained to the Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels Association about being served notices unfairly.

CONTAMINATION IN LOCAL VEGETABLES

In a shocking revelation, research by the Environment Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI) on 400 samples of 10 kinds of vegetables from 20 outlets across Bengaluru has indicated high levels of heavy metal contamination above the permissible limits set by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This is attributed to the use of waste water for vegetable cultivation.
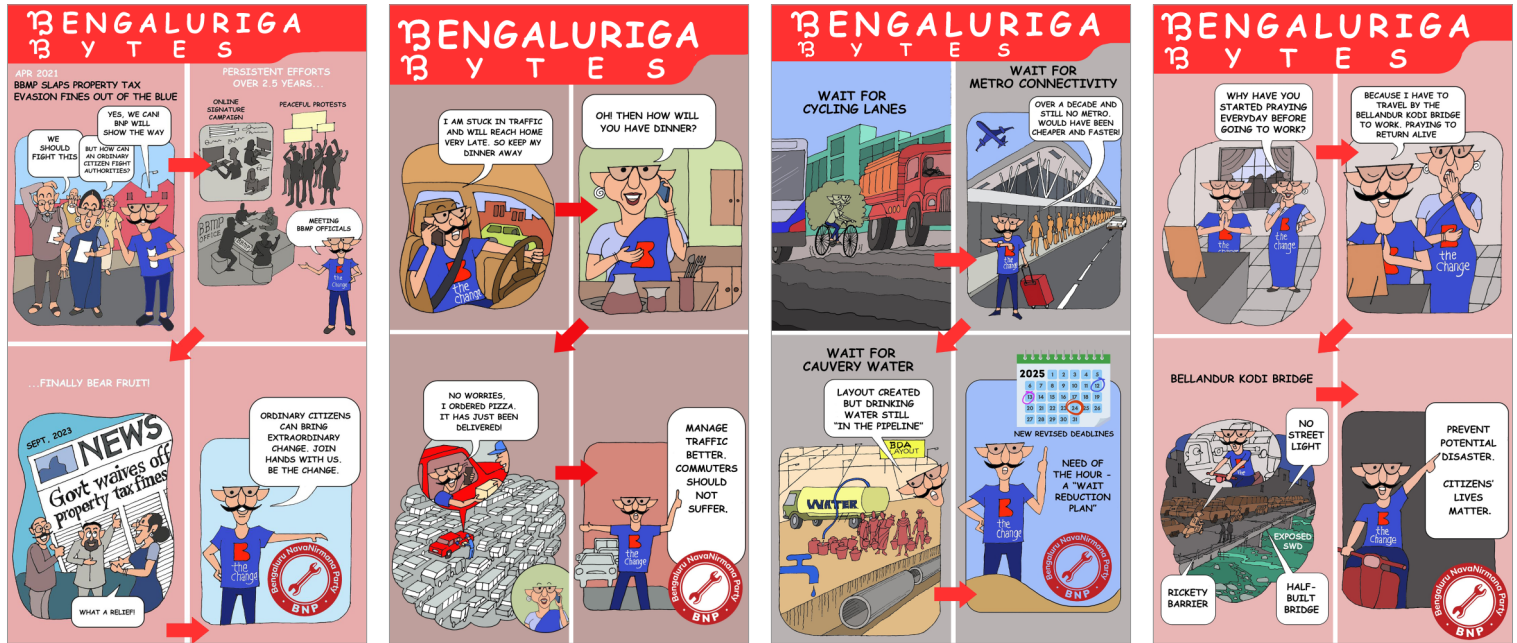
"It is clear from the present study that the edible portion of vegetables are hyper-accumulators of heavy metals. Taking into consideration the health risks associated with the consumption of these vegetables, it is suggested that cultivation should not use waste water as a source. Farmers should not resort to unethical farming practices such as irrigating crops with drainage and effluent waters," the study said, adding a word of caution particularly about spinach. Bengaluru sources its vegetables from farmers' networks in the outlying areas of Bengaluru Urban, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Ramanagara and Bengaluru Rural.

Bengaluriga Bytes (September)

Bengaluriga Bytes (BB), the BNP's tongue-in-cheek look at life in Bengaluru, draws attention to pressing civic issues that need rectification if Bengaluru is to become a model city. **This month, BB touched 25!** Enjoy the Instagram reels of October's cartoons by clicking on the different images. Like, Share, Comment and Follow **namma.bnp on Instagram** for more.

If you would like to see them as images, zoom in, or, see all the cartoons **HERE**

That's it for now! Look out for more such newsletters every month!

Thank you once again for your unwavering support which is helping BNP to go from strength to strength!

Not yet a member of the BNP? Click HERE to volunteer and join hands with the BNP – India's first and only city party!

Stay updated on BNP's activities. Follow us on