

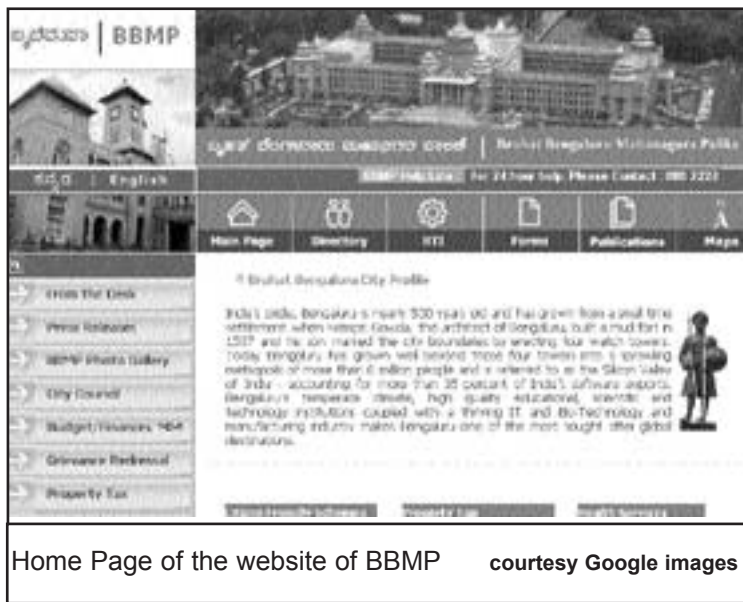
Technical glitches galore in BBMP website

NAMITHA VISWANATHAN

The Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) website, bmonline.org, has many spelling mistakes and other technical problems. The photo gallery has no captions to tell the visitor what s/he is looking at. There is no search engine to swim through the sea of information. The link to the administrator's message never opens.

In the link of the City Council, the word 'councilors' is once spelt as 'counselors', while the following link spells it as 'councillers'. The link of Grievance Redressal says that "Suggestions and complaints departmentwise may please be forwarded (instead of forwarded) to concerned department mail ids". Another link proclaims: "Electrol Registration". It should be electoral registration.

The website is usually accessed by people who look for tenders etc. and also by the general public who want any information about the corporation, said Nandini, software engineer with the server room of BBMP. The site has an extensive directory of all the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of the officials of the BBMP. It has copies of bye-laws of the BBMP. Forms of their various schemes are also available on the site.



Home Page of the website of BBMP courtesy Google images

Ayesha, a student of journalism is quite satisfied with the website. She hadn't expected it to be so organized and up-to-date. But Vidya, another student, found some links not functioning. Also, some of the telephone numbers given in the directory are not valid, she said. Sharankumar Yedal, a software and business analysis professional was also quite satisfied with the site. But he said, "They should include the procedures for buying a property, all the hassles involved and also tips on it." Pranav, a regular blogger and a visitor to the site said, "To attract more people to the site, there has to be more

interactivity. Two things that immediately come to mind are: online RTI query filing, as Hyderabad has, and an online grievances redressal forum, which was promised but has still not showed up on BBMP website. Mysore site has it." He opined, "there should be regular updates on at least major projects, and updated list of all works in progress at all wards. Basically, BBMP just shows tenders on website. Instead they need to put up the full project lifecycle up there (tender, the bids, who won it, work detail, auditing details)." Moreover, he thought that the site should provide better

access and exposure to content 'hidden inside'. A "search" feature would help. As a last word, Pranav put in, "All in all, it's a good website and looks like it would get better once grievance and RTI systems come online."

Dr. W M Shivakumar, Additional Advisor- IT at the BBMP admitted that there are mistakes. After all, everything will have its good and bad, he said. He was eager to know the problems and directed the reporter to the server room engineer Nandini. Both of them said that the mistakes in the main page or sub-pages can be rectified but the mistakes that happen before the laws, etc. are converted into PDF files cannot be corrected. It is the duty of the respective department heads to avoid spelling and grammar mistakes. Both of them also admitted to the other glitches like lack of captions for photographs and promised the reporter that they will be immediately looked into. Dr. Shivakumar said that if the general public shows a critical eye, then the working of the BBMP can be made much smoother.

The reporter noticed a couple of the spelling mistakes corrected, like 'electrol' corrected to 'electoral.' The spelling discrepancies in 'councilors' was also found to be rectified.

Post-Dasara cleaning of Ulsoor Lake

SHIKHA SHAHDEO

Ulsoor Lake has finally been cleaned up. This lake had been in news for some time due to the stink and the pollution that it had been causing. The lake was used for the immersion of idols of Goddess Durga during Dasara celebration. The residents had lodged complaints against the muck in the lake. It has now been cleaned by the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) authorities.

S M Nagaraj, BBMP Joint Commissioner (East) said, "There is no controversy now, the lake is clean as all the silt and mud that had been collected has been removed manually. The lake no longer poses a threat to the health of the residents there".

D S Umesh, Assistant Executive Engineer in Lake Development Authority said, "An idol immersion tank has been created; the dirty water will not be allowed to enter the lake. It will be diverted from the lake. This was a step taken by the BBMP to safeguard the water body".

He added that if a separate tank were not created for idol immersion, the BBMP would have to clean the whole lake, which would have been an even more difficult task to undertake.

Auto drivers' drive for smoke and drink

GAYATHRI VAIDYANATHAN

An auto rickshaw driver was smoking marijuana while driving, thus breaking road laws and endangering his passengers and pedestrians.

The driver, Manjunatha, was driving three passengers at the time. When the passengers asked him to throw out the joint, he refused and continued to smoke.

One of the passengers, Kalden Lachungpa, a university student, said, "Initially I didn't know he was smoking marijuana. When we got inside the auto, I got the smell of marijuana. I asked him to throw the marijuana out, but he said 'no, I can't'. I was scared we would meet with an accident.

"I asked him 'why are you smoking when passengers are there'. He just smiled but didn't utter a word. His eyes were red and he was high on whatever he was smoking."

According to the Motor Vehicles Act, section 185, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a crime punishable with a fine of Rs. 2000 and/ or six months of imprisonment.

B. Nagaraj Sub- Inspector of Traffic East, Indiranagar, said that such drivers are sent to a hospital for check up. If test results are positive for drugs or alcohol, they are fined in court, as per the Motor Vehicles Act.

He said most of the drunken driving cases were booked on Saturday mornings. But, in his jurisdiction, there have been no cases so far of drivers taking drugs.

"We can only instruct them," he said.

BMTC buses turn veggie lorries on rural routes

Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) considering luggage racks atop buses

ANIL DAS

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (B.M.T.C) buses serving rural routes carry more vegetables in their aisles than passengers. The aisles in B.M.T.C buses meant for passengers are frequently obstructed by vegetable sacks in the mornings, causing a huge inconvenience to the commuters.

Driver Manjunath of bus 228 serving areas around Golahalli said that there is no facility to carry luggage atop the bus, and if he objects, the villagers make a ruckus. Therefore he is forced to carry them in the bus. He is under pressure to



Vegetable sacks carried in buses by author

carry them, he insisted. A passenger, Rangappa, said that this was a routine problem. He would not raise his voice against them though since he has to commute on this route regularly.

Mr. Naveen, Divisional Traffic Officer (DTO) of B.M.T.C said that this issue has been addressed on certain routes. He is aware of this situation where vegetables are dumped in the last seats and he admitted that it causes inconvenience to passengers.

To counter these activities the BMTC has line inspectors to check the buses on routes. The BMTC is also carrying out a feasibility study with our engineers to find out whether a carriage facility can be introduced atop buses to carry goods. Once the study is done they will introduce the facility to make travel more convenient, he said.

Corporation Maternity Home unrepaired for seven years

Maternity Home at Borebank Road closed for floods, not opened as yet

VAISHNAVI VITTAL

The Bangalore Corporation Maternity Home on Borebank Road was closed down seven years ago. The building is in a state of disrepair. But the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has not done anything about it. The residents of the area are not happy about this.

The Bangalore Corporation Maternity Home was set up in 1963. It was serving the poor in surrounding areas, including Pottery Town and Frazer Town. A resident of the area, Chandra, said, "It was flooded. That's why they closed it. It's been seven years. The councilor and MLA said they

will build a new one. Sangliana came and did a puja and said he will build a new one but he hasn't come. Reddy was the one who got it closed down. We were born here only. Our family children were born here only. Nobody has lodged any complaint. There were very nice doctors here."

Shyam, a clerk at Ward No. 92, said, "It was in a low lying area and it got flooded. There is a department called MPD. They have to demolish the building"

The building is in a bad state. There is garbage strewn inside. The only reminders of the old maternity home are the painted signs on the wall that read 'Doctor's

Room' and 'Labour Room'.

Roopa, a resident here, said, "Shyamala doctor was here for the pregnant women. All the doctors helped everybody. The pediatrician was also good. They used to give us glucose. They used to even treat accident victims. It had improved a lot."

The premises have been encroached upon by labourers who cook and sleep there. Narasimha, a construction worker, said, "We work nearby and stay in this compound. We are about five or six of us."

The residents of the area want the hospital to be open again. The slum-dwellers are forced to travel

long distances for medical help in case of an emergency.

Shanti, also a resident of the area, said, "We asked for a hospital. They said they will build a new one, but they only come and see the place but nothing has been done about it. We have to go the city for the hospital and it's a problem."

The residents of the area are unhappy about the Bangalore Corporation Maternity Home being closed down. Repeated complaints have gone unheard. The BBMP Commissioner, Dr S Subramanya, said he will look into the matter and get back to us in a week.