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## Back to Bannerghatta

*Jungle Lodges and Resorts will soon see tourists again*

DIELLE D'SOUZA

Bangalore—Monday might see the reopening of the Jungle Lodges and Resorts at Bannerghatta National Park (BNP).

The lodges and resorts have been closed since October 28, 2007 on account of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the park. But K B Markandaiah, the executive director of the park is confident that they will soon be reopened to the public as the disease has been contained. "After the incident some 15 days back, there has been no further instance of the disease. It is completely under control," said the executive director.

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services has taken care of the cattle vaccination programme of villages surrounding the park, which is still underway. K B Markandaiah of BNP said that the number of domestic cattle is

reducing and therefore the problem of using the park as a pasture is also decreasing. "The villagers can use agricultural land in the villages," he continued. "People can also grow grass themselves for fodder." Besides, cattle are merely carriers of the disease.



Bannerghatta National Park. File photo

They respond very well to vaccination and treatment, unlike wild animals who respond poorly, maintained the executive director (BNP). Therefore, the best way to keep the disease in check is to maintain a distance between the carriers and the wild animals. After the outbreak, park personnel had sprayed disinfectants around the animal enclosures. Vehicles were banned inside the zoo and visitors had to step into water containing disinfectants before entering the zoo.

But things are looking brighter at Bannerghatta National Park. "I am in Delhi at the moment. When I come back I will see about the reopening," said Markandaiah. "Maybe on Monday."

## Malaria on the rise in Karnataka

RATUL SUR

Bangalore—The number of malaria cases in Karnataka has increased due to shortage of staff in the health centers.

According to the report published by the National Institute of Malaria Research (NIMR), Karnataka ranks fifth in India among the malaria affected areas. The report says that the number of malaria cases recorded last year in Karnataka was 5,023. But this year the figure is 6,251 as recorded up to September 29, 2007, and the number of deaths recorded are 12. The main cause behind this increase is government delay. Dr. A.K. Ghosh of NIMR says that government steps like cleanliness drives have failed. "The main cause behind this is that Plasmodium vivax, the vector causing malaria has developed resistance to chloroquinone," said Dr. A.K. Ghosh. He explained that the tropical climate provides a good ground for breeding of mosquitoes and mainly affects low-lying lands. "Malaria has a focus on the slums because of its unhygienic ambience and as such, areas become vulnerable," he added.

The Malaria and Filariasis Department of Health and Family Welfare agreed that this was the problem. "We are trying our best to fight the situation," said Dr. H. Ramesh, deputy director of Department of Health and Family Welfare. "Presently we have three kinds of approaches to treat malaria. These are- Active Surveillance, Passive Surveillance and Biological Control. The Active Surveillance method in which the health workers go to villages and treat patients is lacking the requisite number of staff." He pointed out that this shortage

occurs due to the elaboration plan of the government. The government is planning to move into more villages but is not taking the required number of health workers. More than that there is some problem with the workers. "Some of the health workers are sent only after a short training. If we don't take them then there will be more shortage," he said. Besides, some of these health workers quit in the middle in search of other jobs because they get just a meager salary. He also mentioned that the number of doctors is not sufficient, since even after the 4th Pay Commission, the starting salary of a doctor stayed at Rs.12,000. He said that they would be using ACT & SD called Combination Therapy, with regard to the resistance of Plasmodium vivax to chloroquinone.

Besides this, pyrethroid insecticides like Synthetic Pyrethrin and organophosphate parasymphomimetics like Malation will be sprayed through Thermal Fogging method, he said.

- Karnataka ranks fifth in India among malaria affected areas.
- No. of cases last year 5,023
- No. of cases this year (up to September) 6,251

*Report by National Institute of Malaria Research*

## Rains spell disaster in Rajarajeshwarinagar

NUPUR ANAND

Bangalore—Rajarajeshwarinagar, after a small spell of rain gets inundated. Being located in the outskirts of the city the drainage of this low-lying area is not properly maintained.

'The Club' is located at a strategic position in the Mysore Road. But the drain that passes in front of it is not even covered properly. As a result, after a short spell of rain, water overflows from the drain and gets accumulated on the road. This in turn becomes a cause for traffic jams. H. Raju, a local resident said,

"There is water logging every other day. There is water up till the divider making it extremely inconvenient to travel. The accumulated water doesn't ebb easily. Even when it recedes, it cuts a sorry figure with the clay causing a menace. The local people say that silt from the storm drains is not removed regularly, which makes it more prone to overflow. M. Mohan, another resident said, "The main cause of water logging has been the failure of storm water drains. We are addressing the issue. They need to be cleared of silt to

ensure smooth flow of water."

K. S. Krishnareddy, BBMP chief engineer, said, "The main problem is the shortage of staff. We are trying our best to address the problem in the other parts of the city." He also said that the natural water outlets of the Nayandahalli Lake have been encroached mostly by the sawmills. The revenue department of BBMP has been demolishing these establishments to end the water logging woes.

"Unhygienic conditions give rise to malaria and other vector-borne diseases," said Dr. D. N. Singh.

## KSRTC proposes, government disposes

*Ethanol seems like a good option to check rising pollution in Bangalore, says KSRTC*

KOMAL CHAUDHRY

Bangalore—In a bid to reduce the pollution of the city, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has proposed to use ethanol-blended fuel, reducing pollution in the city by 70%. Because of its inflammability at low temperature, the petroleum ministry has not approved ethanol as an authorized fuel.

KSRTC is the first organization in South Asia to take up such a project using ethanol-blended fuel to fight air pollution in South Asia. Presently, KSRTC consumes 40

crore litres of fuel per annum. As a result, it increases both the pollution and expense. "The advantage of ethanol is that it is commercially viable as compared to bio-fuel," said Dr. Anand Rao, head of Department of Environment, KSRTC. Clarifying the constraints of this project, Mr. Rao explained that KSRTC had a plan to run 2500 buses out of 6000 buses on ethanol fuel by the end of the year. As of now, there are only 400 buses running on eco-friendly fuel. About fighting the easy inflammability of ethanol, he said,

"Flame arresters have been implemented. Once we are through this, we expect to get the approval by January 2008."

Energics, the Singapore-based company that is undertaking the project is all set to start the project. They are only waiting for government approval, said Tya Atkinsin, product manager of Energics. She maintained that no modification of vehicles is required for the implementation of the project. Stressing that bureaucratic delay in approving the project is causing both economic and health

hazards, she said, "Though the project has got enormous advantage, it is held back by bureaucrats. The people of the city have the right to breathe fresh air. We have invested a huge amount of money." She explained that where one litre of diesel costed Rs. 34, a litre of ethanol costed Rs. 27.

However, the KSRTC is hopeful that considering the all-comprehensive benefit of this project, the State government will give a nod to the mass implementation of this fuel, said Anand Rao of KSRTC.