



Recruitment drive for JD(S) 3		Girls dropout early 5		Australia's new Rudd(er) 6	
-------------------------------	--	-----------------------	--	----------------------------	--

Sakrama earning the BBMP bad karma

Lack of awareness drive by BBMP leads to confusion among Bangaloreans

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA

Bangalore—With less than a week for the closure of the Sakrama Scheme run by Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palike, people are still facing lot of inconvenience. There are complaints of lack of clarity in procedures from the people and ex-councilors of the city.

Harisha resident of Nagawara, who had come to the BBMP office for the registration of his home said that there was utter confusion regarding the different slabs of money for registration of the land. "No one is sure about the money that one has to pay for regularisation of the property. Uneducated people of our locality are facing a lot of problems," he added. There are different slabs for different pieces of land; for example, Rs 650/sq. ft. for some, Rs 450/sq. ft. for others etc., which creates a lot of confusion, he explained. He complained that there were no awareness drives taken up by the BBMP. Aralariah, another resident from Manjunath Nagar said the same.

"Sakrama scheme" is one of the initiatives

taken by the Karnataka government to regularize the unauthorized land within the limits of city corporations, with the payment of the land value and the taxes fixed by these urban governing bodies. This programme is taken up by BBMP according to the amendment in the "Karnataka Town and country planning Act, 1961" passed by the previous government.

The ex-mayor of Bangalore, P.R.Ramesh said that the confusion regarding the rules was a lot. He explained that there were many areas, which would create confusion, like different slabs for regularization of the lay out, construction deviation etc. He alleged that awareness programme was taken up by the BBMP at the last moment. "As this is a piece of unpopular

legislation, they deliberately try to keep people in dark. They are exploiting people through the 'Sakrama' programme," he added.

Somsekhar, an ex-councilor of Jayanagar area said that as most of the people who were affected by this scheme came from lower income groups, there should be a door-to-door approach for addressing people's grievances, which has not been done by the BBMP.

Umesh, general secretary of CPI(M) for Bangalore district said that most of the affected people of Bangalore did not know about this scheme till date. "As they know this is a piece of anti-people legislation, they are going slow about the awareness

programme," he added.

However Vasantha Rao, Deputy commissioner (Revenue) said that the complaints about the awareness drive were baseless. "We have published folders, leaflets which are being distributed among the people," he added. He informed that the BBMP website was designed in a question and answer format to address every doubt of the citizen, along with the advertisement, which has been published in various newspapers. "Joint commissioners are doing site visits to address people's grievances. We have arranged residential meetings with the local people. Our book on this scheme is on sale in every post office of Bangalore", he added, but denied that the awareness was being created in the last minute.

He said that from 14th August, 2007 i.e. opening day of "Sakrama", they have been running this awareness drive. He blamed the citizens for this last moment rush. "What can we do more for spreading awareness?" he added.

"As this is a piece of unpopular legislation, they deliberately try to keep people in dark. BBMP is exploiting people through the 'Sakrama' programme,"
— P.R.Ramesh, ex-mayor Bangalore

Graveyard turns into backyard

SOHINI DATTA

Bangalore—Lines of drying clothes and construction debris are a common sight in the century-old Christian cemetery on Mysore Road.

The sprawling graveyard is shared by Roman Catholic and Protestant parishes. The faithful of many churches like St. Thomas, St. Joseph, and St. Anthony bury their dead here. Yet, in a display of

In a display of apparent disregard for respect of the dead, one finds drying clothes, children walking over the graves, and weeds growing all over the graveyard.

apparent disregard for respect of the dead, one finds drying clothes, children walking over the graves, and weeds growing all over the graveyard. The caretaker of the graveyard passed away few months ago, leaving his wife in charge. She said that the surrounding buildings dump their construction debris into the cemetery and if she complains the building residents threaten her.

M.S.R. Prakash, a lawyer, complained, "Most of my family is

buried in this graveyard. I'm struggling against the Church authorities to get better maintenance facilities.." Reverend Saduri of St. Thomas Church in Chamarajpet said, "The lady caretaker refuses to clean up because there are poisonous snakes. Also, some of her sons suffer from alcoholism." He mentioned that the church authorities allowed her to stay on since her husband had served as caretaker for a long time.

Besides this, the graveyard also plays host to a number of unwanted guests. "Young unemployed youth living in the neighbourhood play cards and do drugs in the evening. It's a collective problem. The whole community needs to understand," continued Reverend Saduri. Father Martin Kumar, parish priest of St. Joseph's Church in Chamarajpet added, "People gamble and even do drugs here."

Message of controlling air pollution lost in thin air

GEETHA JAYARAMAN

Bangalore—The Air Pollution Control Month is coming to an end and no publicity has been generated.

"The stickers and banners reached us only two days ago. We are not going to stop our project in the middle. We are of course going to take this project ahead," said M. K. Aiyappa, Joint Commissioner for Transport, Vigilance and Air Pollution.. Though the Transport department with the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), as sponsors has printed stickers, posters and banners worth rupees five lakhs, nothing much has been distributed. Though they have started putting banners in petrol bunks, the stickers and banners are yet to be distributed. "We believe in spreading awareness in a constructive way rather than sticking stickers and posters in the wall and spoiling the city," said M. K. Aiyappa. Satish Ramesh, owner of a car said, "I know that the month is being observed as Air Pollution Control Month but I have not seen any banners or posters yet."

M. K. Aiyappa also said, "We have also received a Rs.5 lakh grant from the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC). We are



Posters kept unused Pic by author

transport department or anybody else.

Sarala Kumari, Public Relations Officer, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, said, "We are just responsible for printing of stickers, posters and banners; the transport department will do the rest of the things. The stickers, banners and posters have just come from the printers today only." Regarding the plan of action, both the officials said that the air pollution does not increase in the month of November, it's the same throughout the year. Though it's true that the plan of action has taken a long time than it was supposed to be have taken but they will go a head with the awareness programme.

targeting mainly the people who ride vehicles and cause air pollution. We are undertaking awareness programs at various schools and educating them of the harmful effects of air pollution. We are also doing some training programs for the BMTC bus drivers and auto drivers."

George, an auto driver, said that he did not know anything about any training program done by the

Deepak, a bike rider said that he knew that November is observed as the Air Pollution Control Month and he has seen banners in petrol pumps. But the only problem he found with it was that the banners were in Kannada. He said, "I know Kannada,, but Bangalore city has many non-Kannadigas. So the problem is how to make those people aware of it?"