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Cards will be issued to all walkers in the next 40 days for daily stroll

ID inside Lalbagh mandatory

Bangalore, Nov 8, DH News Service:

The Lalbagh Horticulture authorities have decided to go-ahead and issue identity cards at a nominal charge in the next 40 days to every walker using Lalbagh premises for their daily walk.



This decision was taken at a meeting between the Lalbagh Horticulture Director N Jayaram and the members of the Lalbagh Walkers' Association on Sunday, despite objections from many walkers.

Speaking to Deccan Herald, Lalbagh Horticulture Director N Jayaram said the ID cards will be issued to all the walkers' in the next 40 days.

“We are not going to charge Rs 200 for the ID card. Instead a nominal charge would be collected. The walkers association members had some problems about certain amenities like toilets and drinking water facility. We are going to look into solving these problems shortly,” he said. V N Rajashekhar, Co-convenor, Save Bangalore Committee, said that Lalbagh is a public property and there is no need for an ID card to enter a public place. “The Government is slowly trying to outsource public parks. Introduction of ID cards to enter Lalbagh is one of their conspiracies,” he said.

Over 300 members of the Lalbagh Walkers' Association including its president Sadashiva Reddy attended the meeting. Around 50 members including Reddy agreed to the concept of ID cards.

“We agree with the decision to issue identity cards but a nominal charge must be collected for it. Lalbagh authorities must also concentrate in providing good facilities. There is no proper maintenance of toilets and drinking water facility is not available in the premises. There is also dog menace in areas around the jogging track,” said Reddy.

No longer a walk in the park

Soon, Walkers And Joggers Who Want To Enter Lalbagh Must Carry An ID Card

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: The horticulture department at Lalbagh will begin issue of applications for identity cards for morning and evening walkers and joggers in 7 to 10 days. The ID cards for Lalbagh will have to be produced by walkers and joggers between 6 am to 9 am as well as 5 pm to 7 pm. Entry will not be permitted in those hours without ID card.

The implementation of the timings at Cubbon Park will be taken up only after gates, fencing and grills are fixed around the park. An initial set of 10,000 applications will be issued and depending on the response more will be issued. These will be handed out at the horticultural office inside Lalbagh initially, officials told TOI.

HOW TO GET THE ID CARD

Walkers and joggers will have to bring three to four photographs and ID proof like voter ID card, ration card or passport that will also be proof of residential address. They'll have to fill in their age and as well as whether they are morning or evening walkers and joggers or both to enable better regulation.

While the application forms will be issued in 10 days, the issue of ID card after processing will take about a month. The fee for the ID card has not yet been fixed and discussions are on as to how much is appropriate.

GENERAL VISITORS

Visitors can enter Lalbagh between 9 am and 5 pm and need not produce ID cards in this period. They have to pay Rs 10 as entry fee. General visitors will not, as of now, be permitted along with morning and evening walkers and joggers if they don't have ID cards.

WHY ID CARDS?

"The decision to have ID cards for walkers and joggers is primarily because of safety. The police asked us to ensure people are safe in the garden through the day and especially during morning and evening hours. For that, we need to know who is coming in and going out. Regulation and ID cards will enable us to have proper identification and a head count of people entering Lalbagh," senior officials said.

"The issue of safety has come up due to two factors — the bomb attack at Lumbini Gardens in Hyderabad and a recent murder in Lalbagh. We also have to ensure the safety of foreigners who visit the garden," officials added.

TOURIST VISITS

Horticulture officials said no decision had been taken on ID cards for tourists who may want to visit Lalbagh in the morning and evening during the fixed hours. "We'll discuss the issue and work out a proper system. As of now, they can visit the park between 9 am and 5 pm," they said.

SECURITY INPUT

Lalbagh, which falls under Siddapura police station limits, has a police outpost attached to it. It is manned by an ASI and four more personnel. Even Cubbon Park falls under Cubbon Park police station limits. Beat constables are frequently sent to check these parks

CUBBON PARK TIMINGS

The government will enforce timings for Cubbon Park only after iron grills, fencing and gates are constructed all around the park. "This may take at least a couple of months. Only after fencing is completed will we begin implementation of timings. Until then, the situation will be as it is now," horticulture department officials said '**Why pay to breathe fresh air?**'

The entire issue seems simple yet strange. We've been unable to take a clear stand on it due to the

mixed response — some say paying Rs 200 is no big deal while others say why pay to breathe fresh air. This is a futile exercise as it serves no purpose. Having an ID card on you is always good. It helps in easy identification in emergencies. However, don't think it will generate enough revenue to beef up security. Maintaining public parks needs much more funding. More than that, it needs regular screening and implementation.

— **N S Mukunda | PRESIDENT, CITIZENS' ACTION FORUM**

During our walkers' meeting, we agreed in principle on ID cards — we only differed on entry fee. Theoretically, ID card sounds good and necessary. However, the reason cited for the card is security. But, I feel, an ID card cannot be the answer, considering even passports are not always genuine. Further, there are practical problems: i) If I don't have the card with me one day, will they prevent me from entering? If they do, it's not right as the park is a public space and as a member of the public, I have the right to be there.

If a family member or visitor wants to come with me and has no ID card, what's the way out? The freedom of entry to the park should not be curtailed or restricted by the ID card.

M R Doraiswamy | LALBAGH WALKERS' ASSOCIATION



‘Proposed action is totally illegal’

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Cubbon Park has been an integral part of his life since 1994. From the systematic deforestation to the unaccounted for money from irregular parking within the park — Justice (retired) M F Saldanha has been fighting for it, the legal way. “All the devastation of Cubbon Park has taken place at the hands of politicians and officers.

“ID card for security? It's also because of a collusion between the horticulture department, the Cubbon Park police station and anti-social elements. Why restrict the public?” he asks. He's quite clear: “If they still insist on any wrong action, I'll personally challenge it in the high court.” Excerpts from the interview:

What do you feel about the entire issue of entry fee and ID cards in public parks?

I've just returned from Europe. I've also visited public parks across the globe. Nowhere is it being done. The proposed action is totally illegal for the simple reason that there's no legal justification. But,

if they insist on any wrong action here, I'll personally challenge it in the high court.

The park, on an average, has 15,000-30,000 visitors a day. Should all these people pay a fee? The park belongs to the people of Bangalore. All government office workers within a 2-km radius come here for lunch and relaxation.

Horticulture department says the ID cards are for security reasons...

No, ID cards will not help. Suppose you don't carry your card one day, it'll come down to bribing the watchmen. Corruption will slowly come in. The lack of security within is because of the collusion between the horticulture department and the Cubbon Park police station and anti-social elements. For instance, the lights in the park get switched off between 8 pm and 6 am on the grounds that the power has failed.

I've been repeatedly taking up this issue for the past two years. Yet, it still continues. If the minister wants to enforce law and order, you need to maintain proper security. You cannot impose restrictions on people. it'll only stop some people from entering. Soon, the ID cards and entry fee will also turn into a lobby soon.

What's the way out of this issue?

The park should be handed over to a committee of citizens. I can get the committee together — we'll collect the money, get sponsors and out of love for Bangalore, I'm sure, we'll make it a piece of beauty.

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Justice (retired) M F Saldanha

DNA India-Bangalore

Cubbon Park ID card move brings together a rainbow of protesters

It's a move meant to secure the city's parks, but it has got a whole host of citizens het up. They say the government should facilitate easy access to lung spaces that offer opportunities for exercise and recreation, not interfere unnecessarily, Odeal D'Souza reports

Odeal D'Souza



Many Bangaloreans gathered outside Cubbon Park on Monday evening to protest a directive from horticulture minister Umesh Katti that nobody would be allowed to enter the public area without an identity card exclusively meant for the purpose.

The protest, which was initiated by Bhargavi S Rao of the Environment Support Group, benefited from the participation of over 11 non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Speaking to DNA, Bhargavi said, "Our first reaction to such an eventuality was to protest. When we asked other NGOs for their support, they willingly came forward to help us in our pursuit." As many as 300 people, including regular walkers, participated in the protest.

Elaborating on the need to protest this development, NGO activists said that the ID card rule will only create a rich-poor divide among persons who wish to access the city's lung spaces. Stating that though the authorities may give other reasons such as security concerns and misuse of parks by anti-social elements for implementing the rule, the activists said that the end result would only be a situation that puts the have-nots at a disadvantage.

"This policy will only prevent the urban poor and minorities, including transgenders, labourers, migrant workers, autorickshaw drivers and differently-abled persons, from accessing the city parks," Bhargavi said.

Expressing his agreement, Leo F Saldanha, coordinator of the Environment Support Group, said, "Such social discrimination must not happen in our city. Every person has the right to access the city's lung spaces and they should not be prevented from doing so."

Dharma Somashekar, coordinator of the Sanmathi NGO, said that the horticulture department has no moral right to charge the public any further for accessing the city's lung spaces. "We already pay taxes for them under the corporation tax. Why should we pay anything extra? The money should be used efficiently for the maintenance and security of the parks," he said.

Besides NGO activists, many children had also gathered at the spot to raise their own sounds of dissent: 'Beku beku, park beku, beda beda, fees beda'. Raju, who works for an organisation that serves working children, said, "This park means a lot for us kids. Whenever we have any functions or small gatherings, we always conduct them here. However, they are now depriving us of our only hope for recreation."

Haridas Menon, a regular walker, said, "I enjoy my early-morning jog here, I get to meet people from different walks of life. My whole family comes here. The government ought not to interfere unnecessarily in such matters. Instead of encouraging us, it is placing hurdles."

[Expressbuzz](http://www.expressbuzz.com)

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Park protest gains momentum

BANGALORE: Leo Saldhana, of the non-governmental organisation, Environmental Support Group (ESG) said that Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa has directed the BBMP commissioner Bharatlal Meena for “necessary action” after the protest at Cubbon park on Monday, saw people raise their voice against the use of ID cards at Lalbagh and Cubbon Parks.



Aniruddha Chowdhury

Horticulture Minister, Umesh Katti had recently announced that ID cards were mandatory for people to enter these lung spaces.

ESG and other organisations are thinking of writing letters to the Chief Minister and the Minister of Horticulture against the levy of Rs 200 for the ID cards.

“It is the fundamental right of an individual to enter a park,” said Bhargavi, of ESG. “Awareness workshops will be conducted to sensitise Bangaloreans and more protests will be held across the city, unless the minister of horticulture withdraws the ID card rule,” she added.

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