

Editorials

Be proactive to curb Dengue in Karnataka

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An unprecedented surge in dengue cases has forced the Karnataka government to notify it as an epidemic under the amended Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Regulations, 2020. The state has witnessed 25,589 cases and 12 deaths so far this year, with 15,000 cases added in just 45 days.

the government largely put the onus on the people, though the authorities will be monitoring and enforcing the rules.

The dengue virus is transmitted to humans through bites from infected female mosquitoes, primarily the *Aedes aegypti* that breeds in stagnant water. The new regulations require people to prevent mosquito breeding by ensuring there is no stagnant water on their premises. Penalties for non-compliance are based on the type and location of the property. For households, the fines are Rs 400 in urban areas and Rs 200 in rural areas. Commercial establishments including offices, schools, colleges, healthcare facilities and hotels will face fines of Rs 1,000 in urban areas and Rs 500 in rural areas. Active or abandoned construction sites as well as vacant lands are subject to fines of Rs 2,000 in urban areas and Rs 1,000 in rural areas. Despite the seriousness of the situation, the fines are too low to act as deterrence against non-compliance, that too in a country where laws are hardly given a second look while ignoring or breaking them.

The need of the hour is to take proactive measures to ensure that dengue is put down in a foolproof manner, not just levying fines for non-compliance that hardly would pinch most violators. The government needs to act against dengue and other vector-borne diseases in an aggressive manner, adopting a whole range of measures that can include roping in innovators developing mosquito lure-and-trap devices and using guppies that devour mosquito larvae in stagnant waters and drains. It's not just the disease prevalence and mortality that's worrisome. Research at Nanyang Technological University of Singapore has revealed that dengue survivors have a 55 percent higher risk of developing heart issues than those who recovered from Covid. Indian state governments need to remember that destiny is what we create for ourselves; fate kicks in when we fail to create our own destiny.

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