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## YOU MAY BE SWEATING MORE, BUT YOU ARE SWATTING A LOT LESS

Apr 13, 2012, 12.21 AM IST

 A- A+

DIA



Soaring temperature levels and sweltering conditions over the past few weeks has made Bangaloreans sweat, but the unusual weather has helped reduce the numbers of mosquitoes. In previous years, sporadic showers had helped keep the city cool in the summer, but the lack of rain over the last four months has depleted mosquito breeding grounds.

Trivikram Rao, a techie working in ITPB said, "I still remember how difficult it was to sit in office the same time last year. Despite several measures, it was difficult to keep these bloodsuckers at bay, and the constant whine in the ear made life miserable. I stay in Marathalli where it was even difficult to get a good night's rest. We couldn't keep the doors or windows open because a swarm of mosquitoes would enter the house. The stale air and the congested atmosphere indoors used to drive us crazy. But this year it has been pleasantly different. The mosquito menace is considerably less."

The city has often been derided as the 'mosquito capital' of the country. The experts, however, warn that the city is still not totally free of mosquitoes.

They say that in some areas the menace has reduced by 60% and this drop has nothing to do with 'measures' taken by the BBMP. The fewer numbers of these insects is due to a number of factors, including lack of vegetation as mosquitoes largely depend on plants for food.

D V Purushottam, a lecturer in Bangalore University who studied mosquitoes extensively for his PhD thesis, said, "We have not received rainfall since December. As a result, there is no standing water content in many areas. Result: Mosquitoes have not been able to reproduce like before.

Of course, they still breed in water collected in air conditioners etc, but the menace has reduced greatly."

The lifespan of a mosquito is typically 25 to 30 days and while most feed off plants, some suck blood. While this in itself is not threatening, mosquitoes are vectors of diseases such as malaria, dengue and chikungunya. According to records, the civic body has spent `15 crore over the last four years to control the menace, but with little or no results.

Agro meteorologist Raje Gowda agreed that the menace has reduced drastically. "During the rainy or winter season, Bangaloreans have the option of wrapping themselves up in blankets to protect themselves from mosquitoes," he said. "But this is difficult to do in summer.

This year, many people have told me that they don't need a mosquito net. The main reason for the fall in numbers is the lack of rainfall. There is no moisture in the air. Even roadside drains have totally dried up, depriving mosquitoes of breeding grounds. It is welcome news for Bangaloreans."

Prof Ramachandra Mohan, a professor of Zoology at BU, said, "I stay in Vidyanarayapura and can say that the mosquitoes have reduced by almost 60 per cent this year. As there is no standing water in most places, mosquitoes are unable to lay eggs and the eggs which have been laid are unable to grow into larvae."

Dr Ravi Prakash, district malaria officer, concurred. "We conducted a survey recently and found an absence of anaephaelus vector," Prakash said.

"As a result the number of malaria cases has fallen steeply in the last three months. In the three months from January to March last year, we had seven cases of malaria, but in the corresponding period this year we have had only four cases — all the victims being migrants."

**Roadside drains have totally dried up, depriving mosquitoes of breeding ground**

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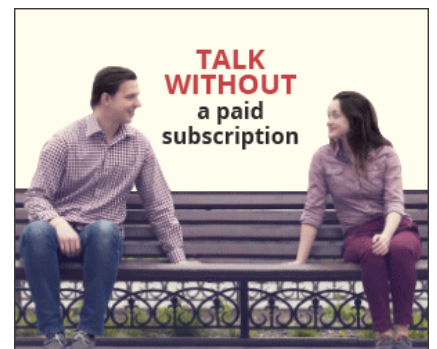
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- 1. Tell him/her in no uncertain terms that you don't want to spend your day off making small talk.
- 2. Buckle up and set off to shop for a three-course menu you're going to serve them.
- 3. Ask your boss if you can work that day in lieu of Monday so you can escape without any

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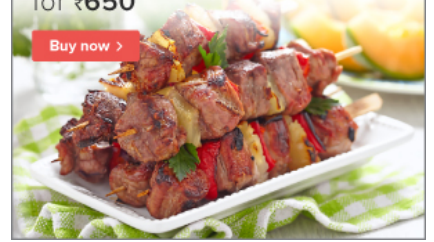
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