

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI

Action for good
Governance &
Networking in
India



AGNI

Editorial

No politician or party is really keen to empower women in the two houses of Parliament and State Assemblies

Who runs the domestic house? It is the lady of the house whether in a village (Rural) or in a City (urban) who successfully runs it. Similarly, women if given an opportunity to run the two houses in Parliament or State Assemblies would be a success. But no politician or political party would like to surrender. That is the reason why for decades Woman's Reservation Bill has never seen the light of the day. It is therefore no surprising when the Constitution Amendment 131 failed to pass the 2/3 members of the Lok Sabha.

The NDA Government at the Centre very well knew that they do not have the numbers and hence clubbed

the women's reservation bill with the amendment Constitution bill where it lost as expected. Then the blame game started by the NDA government and the opposition for its failure.

In fact, there was no need to bring in a new women's reservation Bill as the same was already passed in the Lok Sabha on September 20, 2023 and cleared by the Rajya Sabha the next day in a five-day special session of Parliament. 454 MPs voted in favour while two voted against it. On September 28, 2023 when President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent, the constitutional angle was closed. It only needed the government a resolution to implement it.

Despite the huge applause in September 2023, for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls women made a dismal 10% candidates. This clearly shows that no Political party is keen to put up women candidates.

As per the bill, one third seats would be reserved for women and these would be by draw of lots. So the seats would be reserved for only 5 years and then it goes back to open category thereafter. Thus dummy women candidates would be put up (wife/sister/aunty etc.) to keep the seat warm for five years. This therefore does not really empower women.

This editor, as far back in 1995 in his Voice of Wadala suggested instead of reservation of seats, all political parties should put up one third women candidates who would face even men from other parties. The parties would put up winnable women candidates and this would be the real EMPOWERMENT! This suggestion was given to the then Prime Minister, President and heads of political parties including women MPs who won against men. As expected none were keen to implement.

MMJ

BMC launches 'Marg Pranali' digital hub to revolutionize Mumbai's grievance redressal

 [Aryan Age Bureau](#)

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has launched 'Marg Pranali,' a centralised digital platform inaugurated by Mayor Ritu Tawde to streamline Mumbai's civic complaint process. Integrating GIS technology, real-time tracking, and automated updates, the system consolidates channels like the 1916 helpline and My BMC app to improve transparency, reduce delays, and enhance departmental coordination.

In a decisive move to overhaul urban governance, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has inaugurated 'Marg Pranali,' a sophisticated centralised digital platform engineered to transform the registration, tracking, and resolution of civic complaints across Mumbai. Mayor Ritu Tawde officially launched the system at the civic headquarters on Wednesday, marking a pivotal shift toward administrative digitisation. Developed by the BMC's Information Technology Department, the initiative converges a fragmented array of complaint mechanisms into a unified

interface, specifically designed to eliminate systemic delays and fortify inter-departmental coordination.

The high-profile launch saw the attendance of senior elected representatives, including Leader of the House Ganesh Khankar and Leader of Opposition Kishori Pednekar, alongside various civic committee heads. Representing the administration, Municipal Commissioner Ashwini Bhide and other high-ranking officials were present to witness the transition. Currently, the civic body manages a sprawling network of grievance channels, encompassing the official website, the 1916 helpline, the 'My BMC' mobile application, a WhatsApp chatbot, the specialized pothole reporting system, social media platforms, and traditional written submissions. Marg Pranali is set to consolidate these diverse streams into a singular, efficient framework. Furthermore, the BMC confirmed that a subsequent phase will integrate additional grievance portals operated by both state and central authorities.

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We love women, but not in the house (Parliament)

Every party loves women, especially at election time. Yet, when it comes to sharing power, women will just have to wait.

 [Namita Bhandare](#)

The clue lies in the queues. Women are everywhere. In Tamil Nadu, a record 84.69% turnout with female participation at 85.76%, overtaking male turnout at 83.57%.

In West Bengal, where only the first phase of polling is over, turnout is even higher at 91.78%. Once again,

women lead, 92.69% to 90.92% for men.

The queues result in many things. Stirring words on *nari shakti* at election speeches. Cash in hand via unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) in three of the four states—Kerala is the exception—and one union territory,

Puducherry where assembly elections are underway.

In Assam, among the first states to introduce UCTs, women heads of households receive Rs 1,250. In West Bengal, where Lakshmi Bhandar was introduced in 2021, the transfer now ranges between



Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,700. In Tamil Nadu, it is Rs 1,000. [Contd on Page 3](#)

Each one forward this to all Mumbaikars on your email and whatsapp list

BJP Corporator Makarand Narwekar Writes To BMC Over Decade-Long Delay In Open Space Policy, Demands App & Women-Only Gardens

 Desashri Bhujbal

Highlighting the prolonged delay in finalizing the BMC's Open Space Policy, pending since 2016, BJP corporator from Colaba, Makarand Narwekar, along with local ALM groups, has written to the BMC urging it to develop a dedicated mobile application for open spaces, establish a joint watchdog committee, and create women-only gardens in each administrative ward, among others, while finalizing the policy.

Key Demands

In his letter to Mayor Ritu Tawde and BMC Chief Ashwini Bhide, Narwekar, along with ALM groups such as My Dream Colaba, Colaba Advanced Locality Management, Old Cuffe Parade Residents Association & Strand Marg Residents Association, stated that the absence of a formal policy for nearly a decade has left Mumbai's already shrinking open spaces vulnerable to neglect, encroachments, and misuse.

"The BMC should develop a dedicated parks and gardens maintenance app that enables



citizens to raise complaints, upload pictures, and track redressal in real time. The BMC must reserve women-only gardens and parks in each administrative ward," Narwekar demanded, adding that the corporation must establish a joint watchdog committee comprising corporators, ALMs/resident associations, and the BMC administration to ensure proper upkeep of gardens and prevent encroachments or unauthorized takeovers.

He also stated that parks and grounds should be maintained directly through the BMC's own funds, as far as possible. "The guiding principle should be to entrust open spaces to organisations committed to conservation and community benefit, rather than to those seeking to use them for their own purposes and restrict access to citizens," Narwekar said.

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BMC installs solar-powered benches with mobile charging and Wi-Fi at Fort Garden and Joggers Park In Bandra

 Shefali Parab-Pandit

The BMC has introduced solar-powered benches in city gardens, providing mobile charging and Wi-Fi facilities without the use of conventional electricity. On a pilot basis, the benches have been installed at Fort Garden and Joggers Park in Bandra.

Benches address rising demand for mobile charging in public spaces

Mobile phones have become an essential part of daily life, yet charging facilities are often not readily available, and in some places, users are charged for even an hour of charging. Considering the rising demand for electricity and the need for mobile charging, the BMC has introduced solar-powered benches in city gardens.

"The standout feature of these benches is their ability to harness solar energy throughout the day, enabling visitors to conveniently charge their mobile phones



within garden premises," said an official from the BMC's garden department. He further noted that the benches are equipped with Wi-Fi connectivity, addressing the growing demand for seamless internet access in public spaces.

Beyond convenience, the solar benches are expected to deliver substantial savings in both electricity consumption and operational costs. Constructed from corrosion-resistant stainless steel, they are designed to withstand harsh weather conditions and ensure long-term durability. According to the official, the benches have been engineered with a lifespan of up to 30 years, making them a sustainable, resilient, and cost-effective addition to the city's public infrastructure.

MMJ

Maharashtra Maritime Board Invites Bids For Mumbai Water Metro Phase 1 Project Management Consultant

 Sweety Bhagwat

The Maharashtra Maritime Board has invited bids to appoint a project management consultant (PMC) for the Mumbai Water Metro—Phase 1, marking a key step in expanding the city's water-based transport network. The request for proposal (RFP) was issued on April 17.

RFP Issue Date

The overall project is planned to be implemented in three phases, with Phase 1 targeted for completion by 2029, with an estimated civil infrastructure cost of around Rs 1,621 crore.

Phase 1 of the project, will cover 16 routes—including eight existing and eight new corridors—and involve the



development and upgradation of 26 passenger terminals, along with navigational and emergency infrastructure. As per the Maritime board, out of the total 26 terminals the existing Gateway of India, NMIA, and Nariman Point are being implemented by the Authority and/or other designated agencies, and therefore are excluded from the core scope of this assignment. However, the Consultant is made responsible for coordina-

Contd. on Page 4

An appeal for donations

AGNI is a movement managed and run by volunteers. Being a voluntary movement, AGNI needs the support and contribution of every citizen to continue its work. Citizens are invited to contribute their indispensable ideas, time, effort and financial support. Send Cheque / DD in favour of "AGNI" to any of our Ward Coordinators as listed on Page 4 or to AGNI Office: Chadha Bldg, 1st Floor, Plot

No. 95, Wadala (West), Mumbai 400 031

Bank Details for donations transferred electronically:

Account Name: AGNI, SB A/c No.:

000710210000005

Bank of India, Breach Candy Branch, Mumbai 400 026.

NEFT / IFSC: BKID0000007

AGNI is a Charitable Trust. Donations are eligible for exemption under 80G of the Income Tax Act

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Each one forward this to all Mumbaikars on your email and whatsapp list

We love women, but not in the house (Parliament)

Contd from Page 1 And in Puducherry, women heads of families below the poverty line used to get Rs 1,000, which has been bumped up to Rs 2,500 this election cycle.

As an added layer to the UCTs, are a slew of women-centric schemes. Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam support girls' higher education through cash assistance. West Bengal offers marriage assistance grants. Assam supports grassroots women entrepreneurs through self-help groups.

West Bengal offers free bicycles to girls, Tamil Nadu free bus rides, and Assam free scooters to women in self-help groups. Tamil Nadu even has an official state policy for women. Introduced in 2024, it aims to improve access to health and employment.

Kerala is the only state of the four that does not offer large-scale UCTs. What it offers instead is a robust livelihood programme, Kudumbashree. "Instead of relying on cash transfers, it has invested in institution-building and collective economic empowerment," writes Sunaina Kumar, director and senior fellow at the Centre for New Economic Diplomacy at the Observer Research Foundation.

The generosity of political parties of all stripes and ideology towards woman can only be welcome. There is, however, one crucial area where we continue to see a historical miserliness: Giving women a seat at the table. Women's representation in



Parliament hovers at 14% and in the state assemblies at an average of 10%

The statistics have remained stubbornly, and depressingly, low.

Across party lines: The late Sushma Swaraj celebrates the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill in the Rajya Sabha with Najma Heptullah, then with the Congress and CPI (M)'s Brinda Karat in 1996.

It was clear even 27 years ago that nothing would change unless seats were reserved for women. The first women's reservation bill was introduced in 1996. It lapsed in the face of open misogyny and hostility.

Nearly three decades later, how much had changed when Parliament finally passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, or women's reservation bill, with near unanimity in September 2023.

But, there was a catch. Reservation would only kick in only after the completion of the census, delayed since 2012 first because of Covid and then for reasons that are unclear.

Then after 1.3 billion people had been enumerated, a delimitation commission would be set up. This commission would redraw the constituencies, based on their populations.

This set off alarm bells. States like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh feared they would lose parliamentary seats as a penalty for successfully implementing population-control programmes. Hindi-belt states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh stood to gain representation.

Nobody knew when the census-delimitation exercise would be complete, which meant that women's reservation, a reality in law and on paper, was on indefinite hold.

Does reservation have to wait for an expanded parliament sometime in the indeterminate future? Why not

set aside 33% of seats in the existing 543 seat parliament? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that accommodating women in an expanded house of 851 seats would mean none of the "men's seats" would be taken away.

The entitlement of patriarchal power structures behind a law meant to empower women is evident.

A promise deferred

In Dehradun chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama holds a "mahila jan akrosh" rally against the defeat of the constitutional amendment bill that would have accelerated women's reservation. @pushkardhami/X

For three years no party spoke about *nari shakti*. Then suddenly the government sprung a surprise in the last session: A special three-day extension solely to discuss the implementation of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam or the women's reservation act. The government had a [plan](#): Increase Lok Sabha seats for all seats by a flat 50%. This would take the number of seats in parliament to 850. The additional seats would then be earmarked for women. And the old Census 2011 would be used for delimitation.

A united opposition saw the proposal as an attempt to redraw the electoral map. It was also evident, that if passed, it would give the BJP and its allies the credit for the historic enhancement of increasing women's representation not just for this election cycle but for crucial state elections next year as well.

The constitutional amendment bill failed to get the two-thirds majority to pass.

The BJP is making a virtue of defeat. At an election rally in Coimbatore, prime minister Narendra Modi said: "I only want our sisters to come to parliament in greater numbers. But these noble efforts were delayed. The DMK, Congress and their allies made this bill a target of hatred. If this bill had been passed earlier many Tamil



women from ordinary families would have become MPs and MLAs."

But if the BJP has reportedly planned a 15-day outreach on the women's quota issue, the opposition too is not about to miss an opportunity. It has challenged the ruling party to implement reservation now with 543 seats and an equitable distribution through sub-quotas for OBCs. Failure to do so is political showmanship and a fake concern for women's empowerment, it says.

While women must wait, yet again, for their rightful share in power, nothing stops political parties from proving their bona fides by fielding more women candidates. They can also boost women's leadership within their own internal party structures by appointing women as general secretaries, party treasurers and one the national executive committee.

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States	Womens representation in the assembly
West Bengal	13.7%
Kerala	7.86%
Tamil Nadu	5.13%
Assam	4.76%
Puducherry	3.33%

BMC to launch real-time hospital bed dashboard, shift health purchases to GeM portal for transparency

[Devashri Bhujbalj](#)

To enhance transparency in civic health services and streamline patient care, the BMC will develop an online dashboard displaying real-time data about the

availability of beds in all BMC hospitals. The online dashboard, which will display all available general beds, ICU beds, and 24/7 facilities, is expected to be ready next

month.

GeM procurement and key decisions

The BMC has also decided to procure all health-related purchases through the GeM

hospital bed dashboard

portal. The decisions were taken at a meeting held on Tuesday in the presence of Mumbai BJP President MLA Ameet Satam, Mayor Ritu Tawde, Health Committee Chairman Harish Bhandirge, and Additional Municipal Commissioner Vipin Sharma.

Focus on transparency and Expansion

"It has been decided that all health-related purchases, including medicines and equipment available on the GeM portal, will be procured through it. This will ensure transparency and eliminate corruption," Satam said, adding that since the BMC will add another 2,000 beds capacity in the next couple of years, there is a need to hire medical as well as support staff to ensure complete utilisation of [Contd. on Page 4](#)

Each one forward this to all Mumbaikars on your email and whatsApp list

Maharashtra Maritime Board Invites Bids For Mumbai Water Metro

Contd. from Page 2 ting with these agencies and managing all interface requirements to ensure seamless integration with the Mumbai Water Metro.

The project aims to both strengthen the existing water transport system and significantly expand its reach. Plans include the upgradation of 20 existing terminals and the addition of new routes and modern terminals to improve connectivity across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

Key areas expected to benefit include the western suburbs, Thane Creek, Navi Mumbai and South Mumbai, with enhanced access to the upcoming airport in Navi Mumbai.

Project Objectives

Once completed, the network length is set to increase from 125.40 km to 340.68 km, with over 215 km of new routes being added. Officials project that this expansion will drive a sharp rise in ridership, with daily passenger numbers expected to exceed 2.02 lakh by 2031, and annual ridership reaching nearly 7.39 crore.

At present, nearly 1.6 crore passengers annually use the 21 operational water transport routes across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

Network Expansion

Authorities said the initiative is part of a broader push to tap Maharashtra's 877-km coastline and improve multimodal

connectivity. The Mumbai Water Metro is envisioned as an integrated transport system that can ease pressure on congested road and rail networks while offering faster coastal mobility options.

The project will be implemented under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, wherein the government will develop core infrastructure such as terminals and jetties, while private operators will handle vessel procurement, operations and maintenance.

As part of the consultancy scope, the selected firm will oversee planning, design, procurement support and construction supervision, and will also review the detailed project report prepared by Kochi Metro Rail Limited, which serves as the project's baseline.

Proposed routes:

1 Vasai-Mira-Bhayander 2 Jessel Park – Fountain – Gaimukh - Nagla Bunder – Nagale – Kalher 3 Vashi-Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) 4 Belapur-NMIA 5 Gateway of India – NMIA 6 Gateway of India – Vashi 7 Kalyan - Dombivli – Mumbra - Kalher – Kolshet 8 Bandra – Worli -

LACC (LOCAL AREA CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE MEETING

LACC (LOCAL AREA CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE)* MEETING held BMC OLD WARD OFFICE under Sudhir Phadke flyover.

Civic issues of Ward No 1, 2, 7, & 8 are duly addressed to BMC in this official forum of BMC.

Asst Commissioner R/N Mr

Water Metro

Nariman Point

Existing Routes:

1 Versova - Madh 2 Borivali/Marve-Esselworld 3 Marve –Manori 4 Gateway of India – Elephanta 5 Gateway of India – Mandwa 6 New Ferry Wharf – Mandwa 7 Belapur-Nerul 8 Belapur-Elephanta

Terminal Location Phase 1

Vasai • Belapur • Mira Bhayandar • Gateway of India • Jessel Park • Kalyan • Fountain Junction • Mumbra • Gaimukh • Dombivli • Nagle Bunder • Kolshet • Nagle • Versova • Kalher Madh • Vashi • Borivali • NMIA • Bandra • Marve • Mandwa • Manori • Elephanta • Worli • Nariman Point

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Nainesh Vengurlekar and NGOs/Activists, are attending this meeting.

Issues raised by NGOs / Activists, were discussed with Commissioner and his team of officers, to provide solution to resolve the issues

Willie Shirsat of AGNI & Harsh Pandey of (NLRFF) crusader of SAVING OF MANGROVES coordinated the proceedings of this meeting.

Issues from slums to chawls to residents of Highrise towers, were submitted

Serious concern of issue of garbage was highlighted. Garbage that comes in from 9 pm to 12 midnight on street from street stalls & eateries. Asst Commissioner Vengurlekar instantly suggested workable solution with his SWM chief officer,

In this AUGUST ORGANIZATION LACC of R/N we have excellent response as Mr Vengurlekar ASST COMMISSIONER himself is driving force inspiring his officers team to dedicate themselves to this cause of NGOs who work for betterment of community.

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Hospital bed dashboard

Contd. from Page 3 the added beds.

Real-time dashboard for public access

“It has also been decided that an online dashboard displaying real-time data on all available beds in BMC hospitals will be ready within one month. This will ensure that Mumbaikars have easy access to information on bed availability at their fingertips. It will also eliminate the need to run from pillar to post to find it,” he added.

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To volunteer in AGNI or to form Advanced Locality Management (ALM) contact your respective Ward Coordinators below:-

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F/North	Sion, Wadala, Matunga, Dadar(E), Antop Hill	Nikhil Desai	9819930405	n.c.desai2012@gmail.com
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Published by
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