

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI

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India

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Editorial

Nari Shakti continues unabated with women empowerment

For the last few months we have been reporting about Nari Shakti in ISRO and other places. It keeps continuing unabated.

The 75th Republic Day parade saw maximum participation of women.

- For the first time an all women tri-services contingent march down the Kartavya Path, reflecting the country's growing Nari Shakti
- The Parade was heralded by over 100 women artists playing Indian musical instruments such as Sankh, Naadaswaram and Nagada instead of the traditional military band kick starting the celebration



- Kasyap Monica, Ambika Patil led all women ITBT marching band

- Jaya Sharma commanded SSB women band.

It was indeed a touching moment to watch women marching with such gait and pride. The splined Nari Shakti soaked every Indian with a feeling of Gratified triumphant

In the judiciary -

- 36% of the working strength of the district judiciary are women
- Recently on a single day "senior advocate" status was conferred on 11 women practising in the Supreme Court. Until then, a total of only 12 women has been granted this status
- It is a measure of the changing scenario that in the recent competitive test for junior civil judges, a majority of the posts were captured by women in 13 states, including Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Sooner rather later, women will occupy more judicial posts in the high courts and the Supreme Court said Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud.

India's first woman robot astronaut, "Vyommitra," is set to embark on an uncrewed space mission ahead of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) much-anticipated "Gaganyaan" mission.

Finally, the BMC's Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation) budget for 2024-2025 has announced 'Mumbai Mahila Suraksha Abhiyaan' for the safety of women. About Rs. 100 crore has been kept aside for this campaign, which will include a helpline and app where women can register their complaints. Further, to support women entrepreneurs with Rs. 1 lakh financial assistance, the civic body has allocated Rs.250 crore.

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Unpacking the Paradox: The Conundrum of Municipal Budget between Green Initiatives and Capital Spending

Ujjwal Gurdaswani

February marks a pivotal time of the year as the budget season unfolds. Amidst the widespread attention typically centered around the Union Budget. The announcement of BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) budget stands out, not just for its sheer outlay reflecting the financial strength of the richest corporation in Asia but also for its significant impact on shaping the urban landscape of the financial capital of India.

The BMC budgetary allocation for this year is 10.5 percent more than

previous year estimates rising from Rs 54,256.07 crore (for 2023-24) to Rs 59,954.75 crore (for 2024-25). The corporation has announced a 16.6 per cent jump in capital expenditure (infrastructure development) amounting to Rs 31,774 crore or 53 per cent of the total annual budget against the provision of Rs 28121.94 crore for revenue expenditure (payment staff salary & operational expenses).

For the second consecutive year, and the third time since 1985, Municipal Commissioner Iqbal

Rupees 10,000 crore budgeted for rooftop solar scheme with FREE POWER

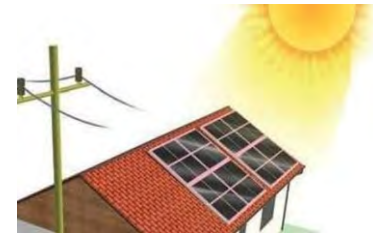
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Pradhan-mantri Suryodaya Yojana will enable one crore families to get up to 300 units of free electricity monthly and help them save up to Rs.18k annually.

"There is provision of Rs.10k crore for rooftop solar (scheme) in the budget" said Finance Secretary T V Somanathan in a press conference later in the day.

Sitharaman in her interim Budget speech said through rooftop solarisation, one crore households will be entitled to obtain up to 300 units of free electricity each month.

This scheme follows the resolve of the Prime Minister on the historic day of consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, she said.

Talking about the benefits, she informed the House that there will be "savings up to



15,000 to 18,000 annually for households from free solar electricity and selling the surplus to the distributing companies".

The Prime Minister had announced that this Yojana with the target of installing rooftop solar earlier in January.

I have taken my first decision after returning from Auodhya that our government will launch 'Pradhan Mantri Suryoday Yojna' with the aim to install rooftop solar systems in one crore houses".

The scheme will also aid charging electrical vehicles; entrepreneurship opportunities for the youth with technical skills in manufacturing installation and maintenance.

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Chahal, serving as the state-appointed administrator, presented the annual municipal budget in the absence of an elected body. Typically, the presentation of an annual municipal budget is the prerogative of the deliberative wing, whose term ended in March 2022.

Having said that, the budget statement is more than an annual document outlining receipts and expenditures; it also acts as an instrument of introducing policy proposals. This year, the BMC has announced the publication of the first ever Green Budget Book (Climate Budget) for the city. Mumbai will be the first Indian city with such a document. The Green Budget Book marks a significant step in

systematically reducing carbon emissions and enhancing climate resilience.

Although the Green Budget will not have any provisions for monetary allocation, as the annual budget does with capital & revenue expenditure. The climate budget will deal with CO2 tracking emissions, reduction and plans to get to net zero along with the support of every department of the BMC. The Green Budget Book as the commissioner emphasized will support the goals of the Mumbai Climate Action Plan(MCAP) and will be detailing the implementation of MCAP at ward level. The Green Budget Book will be out for public scrutiny by the end of the year.

In addition to publishing the climate budget, the BMC has announced the launch of Hindu Hriday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Urban Greening Project. This scheme plans to plant around 5 lakh bamboo plants

Contd. on page 4

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An enlightening walk on footpath

 **Rucha Kanolkar**

In a bustling metropolis like Mumbai, where every step tells a tale of urban life, the Walking Project (WP) has been silently working for the past 12 years to champion pedestrian rights and advocate for safer, more comfortable footpaths. WP has been actively engaging citizens in a transformative experience through community walks.

The community walk initiative is designed to acquaint citizens with the Indian Roads Congress (IRC) guidelines governing the design of pedestrian spaces. During these walks, participants not only explore the existing footpath widths but also delve into various factors affecting the pedestrian experience – from surface quality and encroachment comfort, accessibility, shade, air quality and noise levels. Discussions during these walks span a wide spectrum, touching on urbanism, transport statistics, policy shortcomings and more.

During a recent community walk in Dadar, the observations ranged from poor pedestrian dispersal outside the railway station to encroachments. Surprisingly, even on some of the widest footpaths, poor surface quality prevailed. Some



of them exceeded the IRC-recommended dimensions of 3-4 mt. Modern features, such as proper slopes, kerb ramps, quality bollards, and tactile paving components for visually impaired pedestrians, were noted in certain areas, indicating a step in the right direction.

WP program manager Vedant Mhatre said that their walks in Dadar led them to propose several improvements, including a more effective passenger dispersal system at Dadar railway station's eastern exit, aligning it with the pedestrian-centric models found at Bandra or Thane stations. Some others were parking enforcements, curb extensions and continuous raised crossings.

As Mumbai continues to evolve initiatives like WP serve as beacons of change, prompting a collective rethink on the importance of pedestrian-friendly spaces. The Dadar walk not only highlighted existing challenges but also pointed towards a potential transformation with pragmatic improvements on the horizon.

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India's first woman robot

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced that India's first woman robot astronaut, "Vyommित्रा," is set to embark on an uncrewed space mission ahead of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) much anticipated "Gaganyaan" mission.

Scheduled for the third quarter of this year, the uncrewed "Vyommित्रा" mission aims to showcase advanced capabilities in space technology. The subsequent manned mission, "Gaganyaan," is slated for launch in 2025 and will mark India's inaugural human-crewed space flight, carrying Indian astronauts into space.

Dr. Singh revealed that "Vyommित्रा" is equipped with cutting-edge features, enabling it to monitor module

parameters, issue alerts, and execute life support operations. This sophisticated robot astronaut is designed to simulate human functions in the challenging space environment and interact seamlessly with the life support system.

Highlighting the significance of the Gaganyaan project, the minister explained that it aims to demonstrate India's capabilities in human spaceflight. The mission involves launching a crew of astronauts into an orbit approximately 400 kilometers above Earth and ensuring their safe return.

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Stories of Good Governance

Hospital Healthcare Delivery Patient Satisfaction - 1

 **Shrikant Soman, AGNI Trustee**

The management in most of the hospitals is focussed on medical treatment of the patient. And for the right reasons. Hospitals are meant for precisely that reason. But in the process the satisfaction level of the patient and his relative is almost ignored. Conventionally, it is assumed that patient satisfaction = good medical treatment. In reality, the satisfaction of the patient goes much beyond the medical treatment. The patient and his attending person need to be nicely treated, fairly charged and well looked after in medical as well as in NON MEDICAL areas. In other words, it is not enough if the patient is medically treated, it is of utmost importance that he is also HEALED of his ailment. Let me be more specific.

One of the most important channels of having a feel of a patient's (and of his attending relative's) mind is the feedback form which is routinely filled up by him at most of the hospitals at the time of discharge. As per my direct observation, not much importance is given to this 'chit of paper'. Moreover, it is generally attended at the lower level of management and routinely disposed of (like it is an irritant). In our hospital, I have given it prime importance at the highest level. Our Chairman himself used to personally go through each and every feedback form, make notes thereon and take explanations for negative observations by the patient.

We have developed an elaborate computer system whereby each feedback form was tracked for each department covered therein and corrective action was taken in a time bound manner. We had department performance system and merit/penalty points were allotted to each department and section based on appreciation and criticism of the patient in the feedback form. These points were an integral part of the annual performance review of the staff. We were also having monthly staff appreciation events which

were elaborately organised. At these events, we gave prizes to the best performing departments with award ceremony music and a round of applause from the audience.

Taking a step further, we used to acknowledge by personal letter to each patient about his suggestions in the feedback form and thank him for the same. Important point to note is that this letter was not just a stereotypical 'Thank You' letter. We gave it a unique personal touch by incorporating the specific suggestion / comment given by the patient in the feedback form. There were occasions when the patient was not able to communicate properly about his suggestions or criticism. Then there were also occasions when the patient was very harsh about the facilities / his treatment at the hospital. Sometimes he will just 'tick' the lowest rating without any explanation. We had assigned a mature female staff member with long experience in the hospital and who was specially trained in soft skills with a sweet voice. She would personally call the patient and tactfully, politely, nicely talk to him and try to go to the depth of his suggestion or criticism. A special report was prepared of such interaction. This was attended to at a very senior level.

Taking a step further forward, in selected cases, we used to call the patient or his relative for a one to one meeting with the management to discuss his grievances and an amicable solution was arrived at. In some cases, the patient still was not satisfied with our response. However, even in such cases, he certainly takes note of the extra mile went by the hospital management in resolving his grievances. This went a long way in creating goodwill. In some cases, after we have taken action on the suggestion / criticism by the patient, we used to write back to him updating him about the action taken. This made him feel important and relevant.

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BMC turns to Indore model for cleaner city after weak performance in national swachh survekshan 2023

Learning from the success of Indore's door-to-door collection of solid waste, teams comprising junior officials and engineers from the SWM department will be dispatched to study the Indore model in February and March.

 [SHEFALI PARAB-PANDIT](#)

Following its subpar performance in the 'National Swachh Survekshan 2023,' civic officials in Mumbai are under scrutiny from Chief Minister Eknath

Shinde. To secure a top 10 ranking this year, the BMC is now turning to the 'Indore model' of waste management, which has maintained Indore as the cleanest city in India for seven consecutive years.

Mumbai faced challenges in the survey, particularly in source segregation of garbage (65%) and waste generation versus processing (49%). The city scored the lowest in the remediation of dumpsites, receiving only 9%.

BMC to dispatch teams to study Indore model



Learning from the success of Indore's door-to-door collection of solid waste, teams comprising junior officials and engineers from the Solid Waste Management (SWM) department will be dispatched to study the Indore model in February and March.

AILSG Study Tour

The All India Local Self Government (AILSG) has been appointed to arrange a study tour through which civic officials and sanitary workers would be trained under the parameters of the Indore model.

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"Best RWA initiatives for water management"

JR Nagar RWA, Visakhapatnam, is selected as the "Best RWA in Water Management" by Water Digest World Water Awards, 2023-2024. Water Digest based in New Delhi, is India's premier water magazine.

The Award was presented on 5th February at a Function held in New Delhi, with Sri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Jala Sakthi, Govt. of India, as the Chief Guest. Dr. KSR Murthy, President of JR Nagar RWA received the Award.

This is the third National Award for JR Nagar, in the last 6 years.



Earlier JR Nagar got 3rd Best RWA in the country, in 2018. Dr. KSR Murthy also got "Water Hero" Award in the year 2020.

This time JR Nagar RWA got the Award for dissemination of information on water management through booklets and articles in environmental journals. During the last 6 years, JR Nagar RWA published two booklets and about 6 to 7 articles on RWAs/ rainwater harvesting / water management.

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Footpaths For All! BMC Vows To Maintain 1M-Gap Between 2 Bollards

 [Urvi Mahajan](#)

The fact that less space between the bollards makes footpaths inaccessible for the differently abled and elderly, was brought to the notice of the Bombay High Court

Even as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) assured the Bombay High Court that it would maintain a gap of one metre between two bollards, which are set up at footpath entries and exits, the court questioned the unmindfulness of its officials who were overseeing the process.

Less Space poses difficulty for differently abled

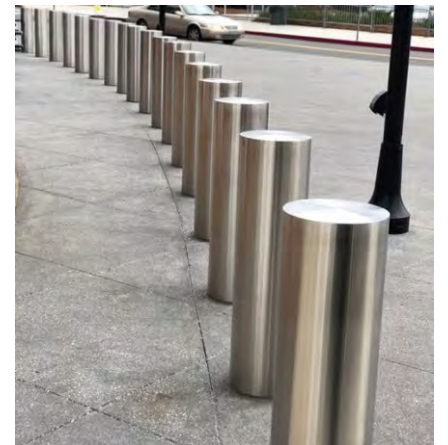
The fact that less space between the bollards makes footpaths inaccessible for the differently abled and elderly, was brought to the notice of the Bombay High Court through an email by Karan Shah, a man who has been wheelchairbound since birth due to spinal muscular atrophy. In October, a bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Arif Doctor took suo motu (on its own) cognisance of the issue.

During the hearing the BMC informed the bench that it had formulated a new policy on May 26 this year, to make footpaths more accessible to differently abled persons and elderly persons.

Senior advocate Anil Singh, appearing for the BMC, said that the new policy would permit selective entry to motorbikes and cycles and hence, a distance of one metre (39.37 inches) would be maintained between two bollards. This would allow easy access to wheelchairs too, since a wheelchair span is just over 22 inches, Singh said.

Corporation to conduct survey

The corporation is in the process of conducting surveys in all 24 wards of the city to track down discrepancies and



fix them. So far, the survey has been completed in 12 wards, Singh added. Singh said that the process would take some time since a contractor/ s would have to be appointed after the survey, to fix the discrepancies.

Bench questions BMC Officials' strategy

At this, the bench questioned how the BMC officials who had supervised the work at the time of setting up such bollards, could have been so unmindful. "Not that the corporation has not spent money. But how can your (BMC) officers be so unmindful? Contractors, as well as the officers, should be taken to task," the CJ said.

Asking the civic body to stick to the policy meticulously, the court noted in its order: "He (Singh) submits that in all the wards of BMC, a survey is underway and reports are being prepared that if any lacunae are found in the design or state furniture, especially used by differently abled, appropriate steps will be taken." "See to it that if such things are found, then the officer who is supervising should act," added CJ.

The court has also asked the BMC to file an affidavit, stating the manner in which the footpath policy is being implemented

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The Conundrum of Municipal Budget

Contd. from Page 1 in Mumbai, with the Garden Department tasked with identifying suitable city locations for planting.

Way forward
This year BMC budget has drawn criticism as an oxymoron while the budget is being labeled as the green budget, a significant portion of its estimates are allocated to capital expenditure without any introduction to new infrastructure projects. Moreover, there has been a reduction in funds for the garden department responsible for increasing green cover and maintaining the existing open space in comparison to revised budget estimates. This reduction has come at a time when Mumbai's grappling with a deteriorating air quality and deluge by heavy infrastructure construction dust.

The announcement of publishing the Green Budget Book may iterated by the commissioner as a step marked in right direction, a subsequent result of Mumbai joining the C40 cities network in December 2020 followed

by an MOU signed between the BMC & the Oslo Municipality, which champions the release of a climate budget alongside its financial budget, guiding BMC in implementing climate Budget. As Mumbai moves forward, it's yet to be determined whether the BMC lives up to its pledge to cut carbon emissions or if this initiative will be merely symbolic.

About the Author
Ujjwal Gurdaswani: An Urban Policy Analyst with a firm interest in promoting sustainable and inclusive cities. Previously, he gained hands-on experience in policy advocacy and research with Mumbai First. His expertise centers on tackling complex public issues in metropolitan areas. With a focus on collaborative efforts, he tends to bring together diverse stakeholders including individuals, businesses, and institutions, aiming to enhance the livability and catalysing a motion for positive urban transformation.

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Felicitation for Clean Mumbai Foundation by Hon'ble Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Deep Cleaning Day for A Ward at the Gateway of India

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75th Republic Day Flag hoisted by 3 ladies

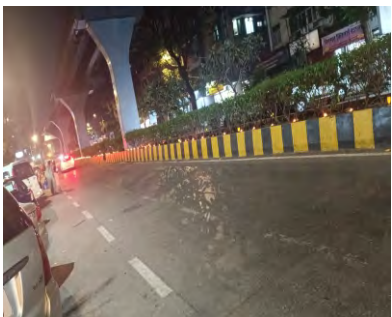
NEWS IN PICTURES in Wadala

Padyatra & Deepotsav at Wadala on January 22

Grand Padyatra procession was held from David Baretto Road (Murali Dairy) to Ram Mandir at Wadala to celebrate Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha at Ayodhya, an event which has taken almost 500 years to see light of the day. This Padyatra was organised by Wadala West Citizens Forum. Our siting MLA Shri Kalidas Kolambkar, Corporator of Ward 178 Shri Amey Ghole graced this momentous occasion in the padyatra.



In the evening Deepoutsav was organised and members and their families lit divas on the divider below the monorail.



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