

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI



Editorial

Evolution of a neighbourhood newsletter – VOW to MMJ & BNJ thanks to Guru Rodney D'Souza!

Today 10th July is GURU PURNIMA, the day when Gurus are honoured. I take this opportunity of thanking my Guru Rodney D'Souza who taught me how to use Corel Draw instead of Pagemaker which I am even today using in preparing Newsletters.

In the 90s, I was surprised to see Neighbourhood Newsletters in Bangalore which made me think of it in Mumbai. Unlike my Newsletters, Bangalores ones were owned by individuals while Mumbai ones were by NGOs.

Thus in 1995, started Voice of Wadala as a fullscale cyclostyled newsletter on behalf of Humanist Centre, Wadala. Later this became Voice of Wadala, Matunga, Dadar & Sion covering the whole F/North Ward in A3 format. At that time I had known of Pagemaker and as the name suggest it was used for making pages for the newsletter. Subsequently, I got newsletters for other Wards of BMC.

After 12 years of bringing of VOW, VOW went into Coma for want of finances!

Being a Trustee of NGO AGNI (Action for good Governance & Networking in India), I got AGNI to bring out the Newsletter for Mumbai and thus MUMBAI MERI JAAN was started initially as a quarterly and later a monthly. However due to Covid, we had to stop printing as we didn't want to risk the lives of volunteers who would distribute them in their localities FREE and instead brought it out as a NET Edition which was circulated on line.

Rodney, who was working with AGNI was helping me in making pages to bring out the issues. I used to make documents of matter to be printed and Rodney would make the pages. Every month, he would come to my house and we would prepare the issues for printing till late night. It was then that Rodney explained how Corel Draw is a better software than Pagemaker. He thus taught me how to do the pages in the Corel draw, which even today I have been doing to bring out MUMBAI MERI JAAN – Newsletter of AGNI and BENGALURU NAMMEJEEVA – Newsletter of CoRWA Bengaluru.

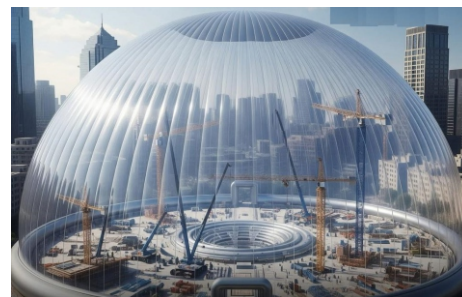


MMJ

China's innovative inflatable dome reduces construction dust and noise

China has taken a bold step in urban construction management by erecting a massive 50-meter-tall inflatable dome over a major construction site in Jinan, the capital of Shandong province. This pioneering move is designed to shield the surrounding environment from the dust and noise typically generated by large-scale building projects, setting a new benchmark for sustainable urban development in densely populated cities.

The newly unveiled dome is not only remarkable for its height—towering at 50 meters—but also for its sheer scale, covering an area of approximately 20,000 square meters. This makes it one of the largest inflatable structures of its kind in the world. The dome is constructed from high-



strength, weather-resistant materials and is supported by a continuous air pressure system, ensuring stability and safety throughout the construction process.

The primary goal of the dome is to minimize the negative environmental impact of construction activities. Traditionally, construction sites are notorious for generating significant dust and noise, which can affect nearby residents, businesses, and public spaces. By enclosing the site within an inflatable barrier, the dome acts as a physical shield, trapping dust particles and muffling

Contd.on Page 4

Bombay HC Upholds Construction Of Colaba Passenger Jetty Project Near Gateway Of India, Calls It Sustainable Development

[Urvi Mahajani](#)

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday upheld the Maharashtra government's and the Maharashtra Maritime Board's (MMB) decision to construct a new passenger jetty and terminal facilities in the sea near the Gateway of India, stating that "the pursuit of development is not an affront to the environment, when it walks the careful path of sustainability, guarded by regulations and reason".

A bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Sandeep Marne dismissed three writ



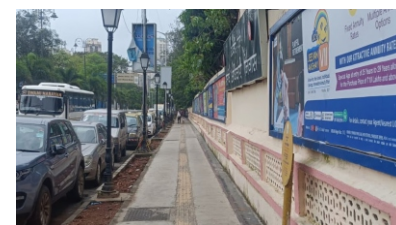
petitions filed by residents' associations and individuals from the Colaba and Cuffe Parade areas, Contd. on Page 3

Walking Plaza: paving way for pedestrians in South Mumbai

[Shefali Parab-Pandit](#)

To clear footpath encroachments and promote walkability, the BMC is developing pedestrian friendly zones across Mumbai, including an ambitious walking plaza in South Mumbai.

About 40% of the work is complete, focusing on a 210-metre stretch between Deepak Jog Chowk (Mantralaya) and Bhai Bhandarkar Chowk (Budhwar Park), including footpaths and traffic junctions. The project is expected to be ready by



December this year.

The project includes aesthetically designed stamped concrete footpaths, vibrant 3D street art, and a multi-utility corridor for landscaping and public use. The boundary wall of Budhwar Park will undergo a facelift, while elegant Ashoka trees and ornamental plants will be planted

Contd. on Page 4

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Maharashtra To Roll Out Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Policy

 Kalpesh Mhamunkar

Maharashtra Minister Uday Samant informed the State Legislative Council that a comprehensive solid waste management policy covering local bodies from gram panchayats to municipal corporations will soon be implemented to address diverse challenges in waste management across the state.

Responding to a question raised by MLC Pragya Satav, Minister Samant acknowledged that the state faces various issues in solid waste transportation and disposal. MLCs Shashikant Shinde and Niranjana Davkhare participated in the discussion, raising serious concerns about the state's failure to formulate solid waste management laws despite a central government directive issued nine years ago.

The opposition highlighted that, as per the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report for the year 2021-22, nearly 41% of the solid waste generated in Maharashtra remains unattended. They also expressed concern that rapid urbanization is outpacing the state's waste management capacity.

MLCs also criticized the conditions at Kanjurmarg dumping ground, stating that foul odors are affecting residents of Mulund, Bhandup, and Kanjurmarg. They pointed out that five dumping grounds in Mumbai have already reached full capacity and alleged that waste is mixing with sewage and river water, contributing to waterlogging and environmental hazards. The government was also questioned on its preparations at the Deonar dumping ground, where a waste-to-energy plant is under construction.

In his reply, the UD department stated that Mumbai generates

approximately 7,000 metric tonnes of waste daily, and the Deonar dumping ground—in operation since 1930—is being cleared. The Kanjurmarg site is now being used as an alternative.

Samant acknowledged common issues such as transportation difficulties and uncollected waste on streets across municipal corporations. The new waste management policy will take these logistical issues into account, he added.

In a written reply, the state government refuted the 41% unattended waste claim, citing data from the Swachh Bharat Mission portal, which shows that garbage collection stands at 89.24% statewide, with 412 local bodies achieving a 99% collection rate.

The government also admitted that no state-level waste management law has yet been enacted, but clarified that the drafting process is currently underway.

Refuting allegations of air pollution near the Kanjurmarg plant, the government stated there is no scientific evidence of foul air or pollution affecting nearby areas. It also denied any leakage of untreated waste into creeks, drains, or rivers.

The state explained that out of the 6,600 metric tonnes of waste processed daily, 6,000 metric tonnes are treated scientifically at Kanjurmarg.

The remaining 600 metric tonnes are processed at Deonar.

Additionally, the government revealed plans to generate 8 megawatts of electricity from waste at the Deonar site. Construction of the waste-to-energy plant is ongoing and is expected to be completed by October 2025.

MMJ

Glamour over outsourcing solid waste pay BMC unfazed

 Shefali Parab-Pandit

Despite strong opposition and strike threats from labour unions, the BMC confirmed it will proceed with the bidding process for a "service-based" waste management system. The plan will outsource cleaning and transport in all 21 wards to private contractors. Alleging that unions are misleading workers, the civic officials will now directly engage with sanitation staff at the ward level to clarify facts.

The BMC's Solid Waste Management Department (SWM) a tender on May 14, 2025, proposing a single agency to handle waste collection, transport, manpower, maintenance citywide.

However, a joint committee of seven labour unions has demanded its cancellation, warning of a strike by all conservancy workers. "A final decision will be made after a polling exercise at around 400 locations on July 8," said Municipal Union General Secretary Ramakant Bane.

A senior civic official said there will be no reduction in worker posts, and assistant commissioners will step in if needed to counter misinformation allegedly spread by unions.

Additional Municipal Commissioner Dr. Ashwini Joshi added, "No official strike notice has been received from labour unions. While waste collection in 21 wards will be handled by

private contractors, no existing staff will lose their jobs. Motor loaders impacted by the change will be reassigned to sanitation duties within the same wards, including second-shift cleaning. The tender process is ongoing and cannot be cancelled due to misleading demands."

At a meeting held by a joint committee of labour unions at Annabhau Sathe Auditorium in Byculla on 1st, Municipal Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani stated Mumbai's growing waste problem demands modern solutions.

"It's not just about cleaning roads, but meeting the cleanliness standards of global cities," he said, clarifying that the new tender does not imply removal of existing municipal workers.

Mumbai generates approximately 7,000 tonnes of waste daily. To manage this, around 1,334 vehicles are deployed some owned by the BMC, while the majority are provided by private contractors.

Currently, the BMC operates on a hiring-based contract model where contractors supply vehicles on a rental basis, while all other waste management operations are handled directly by the civic body. Only four wards—L (Kurla), M East (Govandi), and M West (Chembur)—use municipal vehicles, as these areas are closer to the Kanjur Marg and Deonar dumping grounds.

MMJ

BMC deploys Unmanned Electric Boats to clean floating waste at Gateway Of India

 Shefali Parab-Pandit

In a bid to enhance coastal cleanliness, the BMC is deploying two electric unmanned boats for the mechanical removal of floating waste near the Gateway of India and Budhwar Park in Cuffe Parade. This initiative aims to keep key tourist spots clean,

improve water quality, safeguard marine life, reduce public health risks, and support the local fishing industry.

Rising marine pollution has severely degraded water quality and damaged marine life along Mumbai's coastline. Floating waste often

Contd. on Page 4

Bombay HC Upholds Construction Of Colaba Passenger Jetty Project

Contd from Page 1 who had raised environmental and heritage concerns over the proposed jetty, which is to come up near the Radio Club, approximately 280 metres from the Gateway of India.

Petitioners contended that the project would "cause excessive and needless harm to the pristine environment" and objected to clearances granted by various authorities including the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA), the Mumbai Traffic Police, the Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC), and the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai.

The bench, however, noted that all statutory clearances were obtained and the project did not suffer from arbitrariness or irrationality. "Traversing the entire expanse of material on record, expert opinions, statutory clearances and upon weighing the scales between the progress and preservation... we uphold the validity of the decision of MMB and the State Government in constructing the project," it said.

The project involves building an 80x80 metre terminal platform with parking for 150 vehicles, VIP waiting lounges, ticket counters, and administrative areas. A tennis racket-shaped jetty, extending 570 metres into the sea and 203 metres wide, with 10 boarding platforms on the outer rim, will be built on stilts. The built-up area in the sea will span 25,116 sq. metres. An open-air amphitheatre is also shown in the plans.

Petitioners alleged that a portion of the sea-side wall of the Gateway's promenade would be demolished to create access and that the site's proximity to the Grade-I heritage monument posed a threat to its sanctity.

Rejecting these concerns, the court emphasised that

MCZMA, a statutory expert body, had applied its mind and granted clearance after considering environmental issues. "In absence of any expertise at our command, we cannot sit as an appellate authority over the decision of an expert body like MCZMA," the bench observed.

The bench also noted that after the new jetty becomes operational, the five antiquated jetties currently used at the Gateway of India, serving 30 to 35 lakh passengers annually, would be decommissioned in a phased manner as per Indian Navy directions.

Emphasising on the primary use of jetty, the HC held that the "dominant purpose of the project is to provide facilities to the passenger for embarkation and disembarkation. The other facilities like amphitheatre, restaurant, cafe are only ancillary to the project. Therefore, the same have to be used only to make the jetty functional."

The bench said it was "conscious of the fact that there is no sewage treatment plant envisaged in the project". Observing that the "functioning of the facilities should not be detrimental to the environment", the court issued several directions to the authorities.

It has directed the MMB to ensure that the amphitheatre is used as a sitting area by the passengers waiting to board the jetty and "shall not be used as a place of entertainment in any manner". MMB has been directed to ensure that the proposed restaurant/cafe "shall be used only to provide water and packed food products to the passengers and shall not be used for providing dining facility".

"The MMB shall ensure that after completion of the project at Gateway of India, the existing jetty shall be discontinued in a phased manner as directed by the Indian Navy," the bench added.

MMJ

Flyers With Credit Cards Can Now Access Adani Airport Lounges for FREE

 **Dhairya Gajara**

Indian flyers with credit cards of any major banks will now be able to access lounges at airports operated by Adani Airport Holdings Ltd. (AAHL). This initiative will remove the need of registering with intermediary platforms as the banks are now directly collaborating with the airport operator to allow lounge access.

However, AAHL will now allow travelers to directly access the lounges through their platform in partnership with lounge operators.

AAHL-operated airports across the country have 17 lounges. The chief executive officer of AAHL Arun Bansal announced through a LinkedIn post that passengers across India will now be able to access lounges seamlessly.

"This fintech revolution has eliminated the need for middlemen across sectors, just as companies like Airbnb and Uber did several years ago. We have now brought the same spirit of innovation to our own ecosystem, led by our

outstanding Digital Lab team. Passengers across India can now access lounges directly through our platform in partnership with other lounge operators," read his post.

According to details shared by an AAHL spokesperson, bank's cardholders will be able to access lounges either via a swipe of card at electronic data capture (EDC) machines or through pre-booking via a QR-code process. This programme, offered by Adani Digital Labs, will cover all lounges at all AAHL-operated airports.

It further added that the service is currently only available for customers of Indian banks. ICICI Bank and Axis Bank have already transitioned to the new arrangement while other banks are currently in the process of migrating. "Intermediaries for Indian banks will no longer be required as Indian banks are collaborating directly with AAHL to enhance service quality and experience for their customers," said the spokesperson.

MMJ

NGO pact brings learn by play to schools

A new pact between the social enterprise Rangeet and the education non-profit Pratham Mumbai Education Initiative is bringing a "learn by play" approach to Mumbai's government schools, aiming to benefit approximately 28,000 students this year through its proprietary digital platform and Social Emotional and Ecological Knowledge (SEEK) curriculum. This initiative, which utilizes storytelling, role-play, games, and discussions, focuses on developing holistic skills essential for children to thrive.

Key aspects of this "learn by play" initiative and its broader context in NGO-led education:

Collaboration and Reach: Rangeet and Pratham are partnering to introduce Rangeet's digital platform and SEEK curriculum to government schools in Mumbai, with plans to expand to 28,000 students, 500 teachers, and 50 schools in 2025. This builds on Rangeet's existing impact on 5 lakh children across India.

Focus on Play-Based Learning: The program emphasizes learning through interactive methods such as storytelling, role-play, games, and discussions, moving beyond traditional educational approaches to foster holistic development.

Holistic Skill Development: The initiative aims to develop not only cognitive abilities but also social and creative skills through engaging activities. The SEEK curriculum specifically fosters essential skills for a changing world.

NGO Role in Education: NGOs like Rangeet and Pratham, along with organizations such as PACT Foundation and others, play a significant role in improving public education by implementing innovative and scalable solutions, addressing learning gaps, and advocating for inclusive education. These NGOs often work in collaboration with government bodies and local communities to achieve their goals.

Examples of "Learn by Play" and NGO impact: The PACT Foundation in Goa has inaugurated "Happy Schools" with playgrounds and smart classrooms, promoting joyful learning.

The NIPUN Bharat initiative, launched in 2021, emphasizes engaging classroom learning through puzzles, quizzes, and games for early years.

NGOs are involved in various initiatives, including digital learning platforms and adaptive learning processes, to enhance educational quality and accessibility.

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China's innovative

Contd from Page 1 the sounds of heavy machinery.

The dome prevents construction dust from escaping into the surrounding air, improving local air quality and reducing health risks for residents. The structure absorbs and dampens construction noise, creating a quieter environment for the community. The dome allows construction to continue regardless of weather conditions, reducing project delays and enhancing worker safety.

The inflatable dome is engineered to be both robust and flexible. It is anchored securely to the ground and maintained by a network of air pumps that keep the structure inflated at all times. The material is designed to withstand wind, rain, and temperature fluctuations, ensuring uninterrupted protection for the duration of the construction project.

Inside the dome, advanced ventilation systems manage air quality, while transparent sections allow natural light to enter, reducing the need for artificial lighting during the day. The dome can be quickly assembled or dismantled, making it a practical solution

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B M C d e p l o y s Unmanned Electric Boats

Contd. from Page 2 carries bacteria, viruses, and other harmful germs, making the water unsafe for both humans and aquatic ecosystems.

To address this, the BMC is deploying unmanned electric boats, an eco-friendly and efficient solution for cleaning floating waste from the sea. "We will be conducting a trial of the boat that has arrived at Budhwar Park, and it will be commissioned next week. The second boat, meant for deployment at the Gateway of India, is expected to arrive

Can this not be replicated in India where lot of dust and noise pollution is always a problem at all construction sites? ED

for various types of construction projects.

Local residents have welcomed the dome, noting a significant reduction in dust and noise since its installation. Industry observers believe that such structures could become standard practice in major cities, especially in areas with strict environmental regulations or high population density. MMJ

soon," said a senior civic official.

"These advanced boats, each

costing Rs.1.2 crore, will be remotely operated and deployed during high tide to ensure maximum waste collection. Built to withstand harsh marine conditions, each 4-meter-long boat features a rugged frame and is equipped with a conveyor belt system capable of collecting up to 1,200 kg of floating waste per cycle," he added.

Designed with cutting-edge technology, the boats include cameras, an AI-powered dashboard, solar charging capabilities, and a self-docking system with magnetic locks to remain stable during tidal shifts. Each boat can operate continuously for up to eight hours, making them a sustainable and efficient solution to tackle coastal pollution.

Between June 20 and 27, approximately 279 metric tonnes of waste were collected from Girgaum and Dadar

Chowpatty due to consecutive days of high tides during the monsoon. During this period, sea waves were expected to rise above 4.5 metres, pushing large amounts of garbage from the sea onto the roads and shorelines. MMJ

Walking Plaza

Contd. from Page 1 along the stretch to elevate its visual appeal.

Directional signboards will ensure better navigation for pedestrians. Estimated at Rs 5 crore, the initiative is being funded by the Tourism Department and the District Planning and Development Committee. M/s Surya Engineering and Construction has been appointed to execute the project.

"The road selected for the walking plaza is among South Mumbai's busiest, used heavily by both vehicles and pedestrians. Creating a dedicated pedestrian zone will allow tourists to walk comfortably without traffic disruption," said a civic official.

Efforts are also being made to address parking concerns in the area. To keep the plaza free from hawkers and encroachments, the BMC will carry out regular monitoring. Informational signboards will be installed to help visitors navigate nearby roads and tourist spots. Additionally, the adjacent railway colony wall may be beautified with murals, pending approval from railway authorities, the official added.

Currently, excavation and other works are on hold due to monsoon. The BMC has assured that project will be completed by December 2025. Initially, there was a proposal to add seating along the walkway, but it has been dropped due to concerns over misuse by homeless people. Once this phase is completed, the BMC plans to extend similar pedestrian-friendly walkways to other parts of Colaba. MMJ

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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