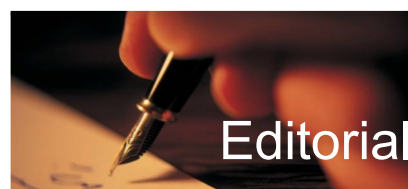


Mumbai Meri Jaan



Forward This To All - And All Forward - Together



Editorial

Three communities get together to make Mahim and its environment beautiful

St. Michael's Church, Mahim Dargah and Matunga Mandal (a Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmin group) come together to preserve and beautify Mahim. In diversity, there can still be unity for a better area. The



BMC has offered its full cooperation in this initiative which includes cleaning mangrove patches, beach clean-ups.

This work is proceeding due to the cooperation of Father Simon Borges, Father Lancy Pinto of St. Michael's Church, Anwar Khan of ALM Durgah Street, Paima Jamalabad of Matunga Mitra Mandal and Kiran Dighavkar, BMC's Assistant Municipal Commissioner of the ward. This example should be replicated in other wards too, which incidentally, is the need of the hour!

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CONGRATS Auxilium!



A stain on our democracy

Ajit Ranade, Founder Trustee, ADR (Association for Democratic Reforms)

Unless we disqualify criminal candidates from standing for elections, our legislatures will keep getting more and more tainted

The Supreme Court last month came down heavily on criminalisation of politics. It asked political parties to explain why they need to give tickets to people with criminal backgrounds. The court also asked them to publicise widely, through websites and social media, the impressive "résumé" of these criminal elements. Let the voters know. The judges also asked whether winability alone counts in ticket giving, and should parties not be doing something to clean the polity. The latest order is actually a reiteration of a similar one passed in 2018, asking parties to give wide publicity to criminally tainted candidates through newspapers. Alas, the top court stopped short of disqualifying tainted candidates. There is no law in the land that prevents criminally charged persons from standing for elections. In the absence of such a law, which seems unlikely to be passed by Parliament, the court

could step in, and put some disqualification criteria.

The right to stand for elections is not a fundamental right. So if we put some restriction on who can and cannot stand, it is not like we are suppressing their freedom of speech or right to livelihood. All we have is a 1951 law on who is qualified to stand for elections to Parliament and assemblies. That law states a minimum age requirement, and that you must not be convicted of certain crimes (typically those that attract minimum two years of jail). But since our judicial system works slowly, and a conviction in a lower court can be appealed in a higher court, and the process can continue *ad infinitum*, technically you are innocent until proven guilty by the highest authority. So this law is not able to prevent any criminally tainted person from standing for elections. The unfortunate trend is that in the past two

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Ropeway project for Metro 2A

Sweety Adimulam

Gorai, Marve villagers will get direct connectivity to Metro 2A

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has floated a tender for the proposed ropeway corridor 1 project between Mahavir Nagar metro station on Metro Line 2A (Dahisar to DN Nagar) to Pagoda in Gorai village on design, finance, build, operate, and transfer (DFBOT) Basis. The authority has scheduled a pre-bid meeting of interested firms on February 25 to discuss the project work and assess their suggestions in detail.

According to MMRDA, the total length of this ropeway corridor is about 7.2 kms and will have eight stations. It is aimed at providing direct connectivity to villagers living in Gorai and Marve with Metro Line 2A. Currently, the residents here have to cross the creek by a ferry boat on a daily basis to use public transport facilities. The implementation of the ropeway service will provide an

Contd. on Page 4

More than 600 trees to be cut for Coastal Road

The residents have been opposing the move to cut 600 trees in south Mumbai for the coastal road project.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has put up a notice near Bhulabhai Desai Road that it will axe 140 trees for the coastal road project and widening of the road. Another 500 trees will be hacked between Worli and Marine Drive for the project.

The residents have been opposing the move to cut 600 trees in south Mumbai for the coastal road project. The BMC notice states that out of the 140 trees, 61 will be cut and 79 will be transplanted as part of the road widening and cons-

truction of parking for the coastal road project. However, residents raised concerns over there being no request for suggestions and objections which are mandatory in any tree-felling proposal. "The notice has no mention about the last date of submitting objections and suggestions. Neither have they mentioned about any public hearing," said Nilesh Baxi, a resident of Bhulabhai Desai Road.

However the BMC maintained that due diligence will be followed and the number of

trees slated to be cut for the project will likely be reduced. "The BMC will be putting out a detailed notice, including the date of filing objections and a public hearing. Seven days for filing the objections would be given," said a BMC official.

The civic body had last year issued public notice on the removal of 140 trees for the Bandra-Versova Sea Link (BVSL), which will be connected by the southern part of the coastal road—from Princess Street to Worli Seaface according to the BMC.

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Swachha Mumbai Abhiyaan

Beautiful zero garbage and pothole free - BMC and citizens must work together: Mumbai Mayor

Beautiful, zero garbage and pothole free are some of the epithets that Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar aims to earn for the maximum city Mumbai in the next five years. However, when asked about hawking pitches, an issue that the civic body is currently grappling with, the Shiv Sena leader promptly said, "Hawking pitches cha vishay Maruti chya shepti sarkha aahe, vaadhatach rahto," (The issue of hawking pitches is like Lord Hanuman's tail...it will just keep growing) while speaking to the journalists of Navshakti and The Free Press Journal at an interactive session.

Last month, the BMC started marking hawking pitches to be allotted to eligible hawkers. However, seeing these pitches being marked on footpaths or right in front of their houses and shops, many residents and shopkeepers have objected to it. The issue was mostly raised by residents and shopkeepers in areas like Dadar, Matunga, Mahim, and Parel, where the process began last week. Not just this, but even hawkers are now seeking a clarification on the eligibility criteria and are demanding a new survey.

Pednekar added, "We have to think about citizens too. While we want hawkers, we also do not want them to encroach in front of our houses/ premises. Hence, we want to make the hawking zones 'time-bound'. Hawkers can sell their products up to a specific time. Once he is done selling his products, he can pick up his things and clear the space before leaving."

While speaking at the session, Pednekar said, Mumbai's need to inculcate civic sense, only then will the city be able to achieve the goal of zero garbage. "Garbage disposal is a

huge issue our city is facing currently. I visited Indore and it was nice to see how citizens and the municipal corporation there work together on the issue of garbage segregation and disposal. We have all the resources in hand, still, we lag behind. Both citizens and BMC administration are to be blamed for this," said Pednekar.

Elaborating on her party's agenda of making Mumbai a tourist destination, she said, "It's sad how most of the tourists only wish to visit places like Dharavi to see how the people there live in such bad conditions. We want to change all that. We want to make Mumbai more beautiful than it is now. Next time, when a tourist visits Dharavi, they will get to see a clean and beautiful Mumbai."

Pednekar also slammed the civic body and Mumbai fire brigade over their "lackadaisical" attitude towards non-compliance of fire safety in buildings across the city. She said, we have been raising the issue since 2013, yet the administration has failed to take concrete measures on the problem. Coming down heavily on the BMC administration, she said that fixing of responsibility and taking action against those who do not do their jobs is important, only then will the system work properly.

Pednekar pointed out that a lot of issues in the city will resolve easily if there is better coordination between ward offices and the central agency. "Ward offices and central agencies lack coordination. Hence, a lot of issues are getting neglected. Delay in projects, mistakes, work not done is all because of this lack of coordination," added Pednekar.

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Malabar Hill building goes solar, saves ₹5L a year

A housing society in Malabar Hill has taken the solar route to reduce its electricity bill while simultaneously contributing to a sustainable future. The 24-storey Silver Arch Cooperative Housing Society (CHS) installed a 28.6-kilowatt power (kWp) rooftop solar plant in May 2019 to power electricity requirements across its common areas including lifts, water pumps, and staircase lighting.

The plant generates 42,000 units of electricity which has led to 32% savings (₹5 lakh) in the society's power bill annually. Prior to the installation, the society was spending ₹15.62 lakh annually on electricity expenses. The society has already saved ₹3.7 lakh since May. "By using solar energy, we will be cutting 38.57 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, which we would have otherwise emitted through the grid," said Mayur



Shah, a society member.

"Climate change poses a very real threat irrespective of the geographical location. It is high time each one of us begin making individual efforts to take care of the environment," said Rajesh Godhwani, another resident. The society spent ₹17.3 lakh on the project, said Animesh Manek, founder and director, Avishakti Rooftop Solar, the company that installed the system. "The initial investment will be recovered in around three years and the overall break-even will happen within four years. The project has a life span of 25 years and was also eligible for the 2019 subsidy scheme by the Maharashtra government that amounted to ₹333,750," he said.

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BMC's footpath beautification work begins on Savarkar marg

The civic body has set a deadline to complete the work by June and will spend Rs 5.69 crore on the project.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has started the beautification work as a pilot project of the 4.5-km stretch of a footpath from Mahim to Prabhadevi. With various religious and tourist attractions in G North ward such as Siddhivinayak Temple, Mahim Dargah, Chaitya Bhoomi, Shivaji Park located in areas from Mahim to Prabhadevi, the civic body is planning to make the footpaths more user-friendly for pedestrians.

Along with the beautification work, BMC will provide eco-toilets, drinking water



fountains, new tiles on the footpath and "tact tiles" for the benefit of visually impaired people. Trees on the footpaths will be landscaped with grass and shrubs.

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Mumbai Meri Jaan is also available as an e-edition.

Those interested may send an email to:

mmj.agni@gmail.com giving their email ids. - Ed.

NEWS IN PICTURES

Seema Redkar addresses AGNI Coordinators on Solid Waste Management

Seema Redkar, former BMC in charge of ALMs, now with Tata Trusts, addressed AGNI Coordinators on how to



propagate zero garbage and composting among housing societies and parents through schools.

Gerson daCunha, AGNI Convenor, thanked Seema for her guidance.

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R/N Ward LACC meeting with AMC Sandya Nandedkar



The meeting reviewed only the escalated chronic/policy/long pending issues as given and compiled.

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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- 400031

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

RTO acts, Kataras taken away in Wadala

Acting on complaints from residents, RTO stuck notices on Kataras on Sumantai



Mhatre Road, in Wadala and later took away six of them.

This road is now free of karathas. The residents are thankful to the authorities.

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Meeting of town vending committee in zone vii

Willie Shirshat

The meeting of the Town Vending of Zone VII comprising Wards R/N, R/C and R/S, was held on Wednesday February 5th 2020 at the BMC's R/S Office. In attendance were the Assistant Commissioners of all three wards with their respective teams. An extended period was given to two vendors to apply

with proper documentation. In the ward pitches are being marked and licenses are being given to vendors. The hawker pitches will be inspected by TVC members. As a TVC member I suggested that the hawkers list should be circulated once more and in case there is any difficulty, the concerned party should be given a hearing.

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Goregaon's BCA unit wins award

The Bombay Catholic Sabha, AGNI's networking organisation, held its Annual Sabha day on 23rd February.



St. Thomas Goregaon East unit was awarded the STAR AWARD for their activities in Civic, Social, Medical & Political awareness programmes.



Anthony Dias, who is also AGNI's coordinator received the award.

Congratulation to the Goregaon unit!

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exemption under 80G of the Income Tax Act.

Once you make a donation, kindly email us your Name, Amount and the Contact details to agni.central@gmail.com so that we can issue the 80G Certificate.

A VERY
BIG
THANK YOU

for donation received in February 2020 from:-

Judy Mary Elaine D'silva Rs. 10,000/=

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A stain on our democracy

contd. from Page 1 decades the number of criminally tainted elected lawmakers has increased. In 2004, 24% of MPs had pending criminal cases. This went up to 30% in 2009, to 34% in 2014 and is now a whopping 43% in the current Lok Sabha. The upward trend is seen in many assemblies as well. The statistics are dismal and depressing.

But there is a predictable howl from politicians. They say most of these cases are frivolous or false charges. And that the ruling party often resorts to filing cases against leaders of the opposition. And the cycle continues with tit for tat. It is as if we have a widespread practice of the politics of vendetta. If that is so, then it is the parties themselves that can put a stop to it. Moreover, if indeed a person is innocent and reeling under false charges, then he or she can clear their name in the court of law, get acquitted and then stand for election. Just wait till your name gets cleared. Maybe institute a fast track court for such cases. Surely a nation of more than a

billion people should be able to find a few thousand clean, untainted candidates? But there seems to be no progress on this front, as criminalisation just keeps getting worse. In fact in nearly 40% of the constituencies, there are three or more tainted candidates. So voters have no choice but to vote for a criminal candidate. That's why we need an activist Supreme Court that can introduce a disqualification clause. At least those charged with heinous crimes such as murder, rape, kidnap and dacoity should be prohibited. Some states like Rajasthan tried to disqualify candidates who did not have some minimum education. This was for municipal and panchayat elections. Some states already disqualify you for a sarpanch's post if you have more than two kids. These conditions are far more anti-democratic than disqualifying on the basis of a criminal record.

While we wait for voters to reject criminally tainted candidates (i.e. the demand

BMC throws in 'garbage' in your property tax bill

The 'water & sewerage charge' that you pay to the civic body as part of your property tax will have a revised nomenclature. This was announced in the budget by the Commissioner Praveen Pardeshi.

From April, it will be shown as 'garbage, sewage and water fees'. This will however, not increase your property tax amount. The change is because the BMC is aspiring for a 'star' rating in the Swachh Survekshan contest.

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side pressure), let us also pass laws to disqualify at least those who have very serious charges against them (i.e. supply side pressure). Only then can we make progress on cleansing politics. Otherwise our record will keep getting murky (the latest Delhi state election outcome is no exception), and our standing as a robust and vibrant democracy will keep getting embarrassing.

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Ropeway project for Metro 2A

Contd. from Page 1 alternative aerial transport mode as last mile connectivity. The metro line 2A is expected to begin operation by 2020. So far, about 77.62 per cent of the metro civil



work is over.

In July 2019, the state directed the MMRDA to begin work on the ropeway project. The erstwhile BJP government led by former CM Devendra Fadnavis had asked the Indian Port Rail and Ropeway Corporation Limited (IPRCL) to draft a detailed project report. Reportedly, in the submitted project plan, the IPRCL had cited the efficacy of New York, Columbia and Turkey ropeways, running successfully and on similar lines, Mumbai too could introduce the ropeway, it stated.

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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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