

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI



Editorial

AGNI's decades project replicated in Bengaluru

Since the time Supreme Court in 2003 mandated Election Commission of India for filing of an Affidavit from all candidates giving their background information like assets, liabilities, criminal cases educational qualification, AGNI along with ADR brought out the Comparative Statements of all candidates in each of the constituencies, This was to make it easier for the voters to vote on AN INFORMED CHOICE, which was the aim of the Supreme Court.

For the 2023 Karnataka Assembly Elections, this Comparative Statements were replicated in each of the 27 Constituencies of Bengaluru Dist. Below is the information.

To help voters vote on an INFORMED CHOICE, the Supreme Court of India in 2003, in response to ADR plea directed the Election Commission of India to get background information on criminal records, assets, liabilities and education through a sworn declaration in the form of an affidavit. The Supreme Court also made it mandatory for all candidates contesting for Parliament/Assembly/Local body (Municipal) elections to submit an affidavit giving background information. Since then, in the last two decades, there have been many improvements in the contents of the affidavit. While the Supreme Court passed the order for Voters to vote on AN INFORMED CHOICE, it was practically impossible for voters to go through affidavits running into almost 15/20 pages of each candidate in his constituency.

Hence in Mumbai, AGNI (Action for good Governance & Networking in India) along with the ADR (Association of Democratic Reforms), came out with a simplified Comparative Statement of all information in the affidavits of candidates in each constituency, all in a single sheet or two, if there were more candidates. This has been done for decades now in Mumbai.

For the Bengaluru Assembly Elections 2023, CoRWA (Confederation of Resident Welfare Association, Bengaluru) along with ADR have brought out a similar Comparative Statements for each of the 28 Assembly Constituencies. This will definitely help voters to vote on an INFORMED CHOICE.

For details please click on the link [Comparative Statements](#) and select your Constituency to get the Comparative Statements of all Candidates in your constituency, thus, fulfilling the objective (AN INFORMED CHOICE) of the Supreme Court Order of 2003.

Police Commissioner warns of Cyber Crime in an AGNI event

Mumbai Police Commissioner Mr. Vivek Phansalkar attended an "AGNI Meet your Police" event organized by Agni H-West Ward at Bandra. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed concern on the increase in cyber-crimes in the city and wanted greater awareness amongst citizens on this matter.



To gear up with the situation Mumbai Police has a dedicated Cyber Crime Wing headed by a DCP rank officer and have already opened 5 Cyber Police stations exclusively to deal with cyber fraud cases in the city.

Further, every police station now has a dedicated "Cyber Cell" to facilitate citizens to file

complaints and to curb rising technology-related cases in the city. The cell comprises a police inspector, two sub inspectors and two to three constables. Mumbai is the only city which has so many police stations catering to cyber cases.

Dinesh Ahir Trustee & Convenor of AGNI in his welcome address stated that there is a greater need for citizens and Police to have regular meetings with the authorities on the lines of ALM meetings with BMC. In fact, he felt that



contd. on Page 4

Stories of Good Governance

Good Governance at School Level - Wablewadi ZP School

Shrikant Soman, MMJ Editorial Board Member

In the stories covered under the series of Good Governance, we have seen the examples in diverse fields of village gram panchayats in various States of India as well as efficient and go-getter IAS Cadre. The purpose of these stories is not just to give inspiration but to demonstrate that good governance is possible in spite of and irrespective of bureaucratic hurdles. It is a path breaking example for others to emulate.

In the current article, we will be covering the wonderful and awe inspiring transformation of a Zilla Parishad Government School. The place is Wablewadi in Shirur Taluka of Pune District. The school (see picture) looks like a resort. But it is the school I am talking about at Wablewadi. This year there were 4,000 students in the waiting list for admission to this school. This school is the third in the whole world and the first in India for 'Zero Energy' operations. This school was visited by the representatives of Bank of New York for giving donations.

Just a few years back, the classes of this school were



conducted in two dilapidated rooms. Now it is a role model for the whole country. Wablewadi village has just sixty houses with a small population of 350. The person behind this magical transformation is Mr Ware Guruji. He put up a plan before the Gram Sabha for the upliftment of the school. All villagers agreed. There were 19 Mahila Bachat Gats (Women Saving Group). They committed to donate all the profits for next 3 years to the school. The youth also decided to reduce the expenditure on festivals of Navratri and Ganeshotsav and give the saved funds to the school.

There was a religious pilgrimage fair in the village. A grand Tamasha for entertainment was held.

Ware Guruji approached the Pilgrimage Committee. They instantly

contd. on Page 4

Supreme Court rejects BMC's review petition, orders refund of property tax

The genesis of the case dates back to 2013 when the Property Owners' Association and others had approached the Bombay High Court challenging the constitutional validity of an amendment to the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888 regarding the levy of property tax.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has been directed by the Supreme Court to rework the capital value of all properties in Mumbai and refund citizens

who have paid property tax for the years 2010 to 2012 as per the Capital Valuation System (CVS).

This comes after the Supreme Court

Contd. on page 3

NEWS IN PICTURES in Wadala

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 Yoga is not just doing asanas at the physical level. It is more to do with the mind, body & soul one-ness.

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Through Yoga, discover the new YOU - healthy both in body and mind.

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Free chaas distribution at Wadala

Wadala West Citizens' Forum along with Geo Roti Ghar has been distributing chaas daily from 11.00 to 11.30 at Wadala Railway Station for citizens to quench their thirst during the month of May Summer Season. On one day it was by ladies only and on another day by children.

Those who wish to contribute for this are most welcome. The daily Butter milk distributed comes to Rs.3600/=, however, any amount could be donated. Geo Roti Ghar has online payment arrangements via Google Pay.

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NEWS IN PICTURES in R/North

Willie Shirsat, AGNI's R/North Ward Coordinator



J A A G R/North conducted voter registration for those above 18 years of age on 22nd & 23rd April 2023 at I. C. Church, Borivli.

There was a very good response from the youth of the area.

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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 400 031

Bank Details for donations transferred electronically:

Account Name: AGNI,
SBA/c No.: 000710210000005
Bank of India, Breach Candy Branch, Mumbai 400 026.
NEFT/IFSC: BKID00000007

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

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Supreme Court rejects BMC's review petition, orders refund of property tax

Contd. from Page 1 rejected a review petition filed by the BMC challenging a Bombay High Court order from 2019, stated a Times of India report.

The high court had set aside certain rules framed by the BMC for retrospective tax assessment, and directed them to frame new rules and issue fresh bills.

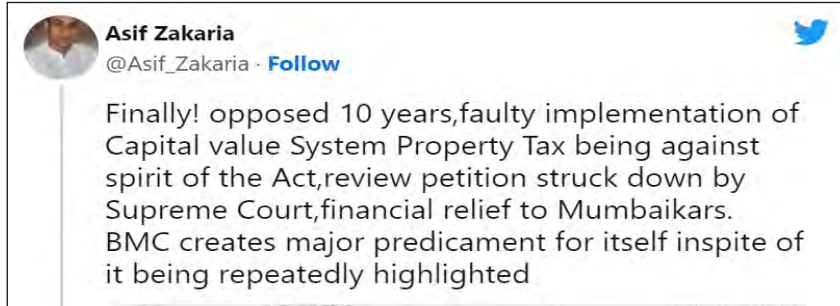
Case dates back to 2013

The genesis of the case dates back to 2013 when the Property Owners' Association and others had approached the Bombay High Court challenging the constitutional validity of an amendment to the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888 regarding the levy of property tax.

Asif Zakaria, former Congress corporator, as a Standing Committee member had repeatedly raised the issue of faulty implementation of tax assessment. He said the order will have major implications as property tax is the second largest source of revenue for the civic agency.

Supreme Court's decision and BMC's obligation

The Supreme Court's rejection of the BMC's review petition means that the BMC will have to rework the capital value of all properties in



Mumbai for the years 2010 to 2012 as per the CVS. This will involve reassessing the properties and determining their capital value for the purpose of property tax assessment.

The BMC is also obligated to refund citizens who have paid property tax for these years based on the previous rules that have now been set aside. The court has directed the BMC to frame new rules and issue fresh bills for property tax assessment.

High Court's order and direction

The Bombay High Court, in its order from 2019, had directed that the assessment as per the CVS must be done prospectively from 2012 when the rules came into being, and not with retrospective effect. The high court had quashed the special assessment order and bills raised under the CVS from 2010 onwards, the report stated.

It further directed the corporation to re-determine the capital value of properties

for assessment of taxes and follow the process as provided in the Act. This means that the BMC cannot levy property tax based on the CVS for the years prior to 2012 and must rework the assessments accordingly.

Impact and implications

The Supreme Court's decision and the high court's order have significant implications for the BMC and the citizens of Mumbai. The refund of property tax for the years 2010 to 2012 will likely result in a substantial financial burden on the BMC, as they will have to reimburse the taxpayers who have already paid property tax based on the now set-aside rules.

The requirement to rework the capital value of properties and issue fresh bills will also involve administrative and logistical challenges for the BMC. Additionally, this case highlights the importance of following due process and complying with the rules and regulations while levying and assessing property taxes.

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PIL seeking display of criminal antecedents of candidates at Polling stations disposed

The Supreme Court disposed of a PIL seeking direction to the Election Commission for publishing information concerning criminal antecedents and assets/liabilities of contesting candidates at the Polling Station.

"You can move the representation and pursue the representation," said a Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud, Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala.

"My prayer is that relevant information must be a part of the list of contesting candidates and (information) must be affixed at the polling station at a conspicuous place," submitted Dr. Adwaita Gahlot, the petitioner.

"But, where?" asked the Court.

"In the list of contesting candidates so that the voter can be made aware of contesting candidates". "I have requested Election Commission to do the same, but if you would direct them, it would be very good for survival of our democracy," she added.

BUT MUMBAI DID IT IN 2017! NOTE FROM THE EDITOR -

For the 2017 Municipal Elections in Mumbai, the State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, had displayed on a flexiboard at all the Polling stations, criminal antecedents, assets, liabilities and educational qualifications of contesting candidates so that the voter votes on an informed choice.

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Unclaimed Deposits: RBI Launches '100 Days 100 Pays' Campaign for Returning Money

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a '100 Days 100 Pays' campaign for banks to trace and settle the top 100 unclaimed deposits of every bank in every district of the country within 100 days.

"This measure will complement the ongoing efforts and initiatives by RBI to reduce the quantum of unclaimed deposits in the banking system and return such deposits to their rightful owners or claimants," the central bank says in a release.

Banks will start the campaign

on 1 June 2023.

Balances in savings or current accounts which are not operated for 10 years or term deposits not claimed within 10 years from date of maturity are classified as 'unclaimed deposits'.

These amounts are transferred by banks to depositor education and awareness (DEA) fund maintained by RBI.

RBI says, from time to time, through its public awareness initiatives, it has been encouraging members of public

to identify and approach the bank concerned for claiming such deposits.

Recently, the [central bank also announced the setting up of a centralised web portal for public](#) to search unclaimed deposits across multiple banks.

Earlier, expressing concern over increasing unclaimed deposits with banks, companies, mutual funds and insurers, finance minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman advised sector regulators to conduct a special drive to settle unclaimed deposits and claims.

Moneylife Digital Team



The value of unclaimed deposits in India is estimated to be over Rs90,000 crore, out of which the total unclaimed deposits transferred to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by public sector banks (PSBs) was Rs35,012 crore as of February 2023. As [reported by Moneylife](#), the total amount of unclaimed deposits was over Rs82,000 crore as of July 2021.

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Good Governance at School

contd. from Page 1 agreed to donate the collections of Rs 1.20 lakhs to the school. This money was used to give Tabs to the students. This is the first Tab School in the State. The land for the school was donated by the villagers. In order to tide over the limitations of the number of teachers, Ware Guruji had a novel scheme. He made groups of 10 students of lower class and gave each of the group a helper friend from a student of the upper class. The concepts of science were imparted with small practical low cost experiments.

In the vacations, the students were given swimming coaching. They were also given orientation in various arts and crafts like drama, music.

This example demonstrates the highest possibilities of a well-managed school in a non-private and non-branded and non-international public sector with affordable fees and top class education.

India needs the likes of Ware Guruji and schools like Wablewadi for progress at the grass root village level.

This is possible and it can be done.

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Police Commissioner warns of Cyber Crime in an AGNI event

contd. from Page 1 ALM meetings should also be attended by the local police. This can bring about better coordination amongst BMC & Police to cater to the various issues of citizens relating to hawkers, encroachments, illegal construction, open spaces, footpaths and pavements, etc.

The CP agreed and welcomed



the idea. In fact, he asserted that suitable instructions would be issued to the local police to attend ALM / citizens' meetings with the BMC.

On the suggestion by AGNI that implementation and enforcement of traffic norms and noise pollution norms need to be strengthened, the CP expressed that citizens should be more responsible to adhere to such norms. Interestingly though the traffic signals were introduced by the Britishers more than 100 years

ago, the citizens even the educated ones do not observe the traffic signals. With the increase in number of vehicles including the two wheelers and the city being dug up for various works including metro work, there is bound to be traffic woes which cannot be easily resolved by the Police with limited resources available with them. Citizens active cooperation in adhering to such norms only can resolve this problem.

On the question raised by Mrs. Madhu Pophale about CCTVs not functioning in some areas, CP said that this may not



be true and needs to be verified since daily reports are



collected from different location about the functioning of CCTVs. The CCTVs that are not functioning due to technical defects are



immediately identified and repaired / replaced immediately, he said.

Government of Maharashtra has provided Mumbai Police a holistic and integrated video surveillance system in Mumbai with the objective of enhancing safety and security in the city, he said. This system is integrated with surveillance systems of different stakeholders with the objective of enhancing safety and



security in the city. The CP also informed that additional 5000 CCTVs are being installed in Mumbai soon. The Police Department is in coordination with BMC for the same. H-West Ward social activist Anandini Thakur who facilitated the meeting expressed satisfaction with the support which they get from the local police and felicitated Mr. Anil Paraskar DCP Zone 9 and Mr. Killedar Sr. P. I. (Traffic), Bandra Division

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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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