

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI

Action for good
Governance &
Networking in
India



AGNI



Invitation to 8th National Conference of Resident Welfare Associations, Ghaziabad

The 8th National Conference of Resident Welfare Associations in India is being held on 23rd and 24th November 2021 at Ghaziabad, Krishna Engineering College. The Conference is supported by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India. The focal theme is "Drinking Water".

All Resident Associations in Mumbai are requested to join. For more details contact Ramesh Prabhu, 9820106768 Maharashtra Societies Welfare Association Mumbai.

MMJ

2nd INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

The 2nd International Sustainability Conference co-organised by the NGO Sprouts and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung will be held online between November 12-14, 2021. Register for the conference by filling in the following Google Form: <https://forms.gle/fujfneQmvBcfFc1G9>. Check the tentative schedule at <https://sproutslip.com/isc2021>

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Important Information for voters of Mumbai

👉 Ar Chirag Dedhi, Volunteer, Wadala West Citizen Forum

As per the Election Commission of India, residents are requested to ensure whether their name and photo is in the voter list at the respective polling stations in the assembly.

Names without a photo will be deleted so be sure to check.

Every Sunday of November (07-11-2021, 14-11-2021, 21-11-2021 and 28-11-2021) from 10.00 AM to 4.00 PM, the photo voter list will be available at the polling stations.

Residents are requested to check their details and if there is any mistake they can fill the form for correction.

Application form can be filled for new voter card.

The following documents will be required to make a new voter card:

- 1) Two color passport size

photographs.

- 2) Photocopy of ration card Or
- 3) Photocopy of Aadhar Card Or
- 4) Photocopy of Birth Certificate.

(Must be 18 Years old.)

- 5) Photocopy of voter card of any one member of the household.

Check your name in the voter list. Do not believe that if you voted in the last election, your name will be in the Voters List.

If your name is not in the voter list, be sure to add your name by filling up Form 6. [21/10, 4:30 pm] Election Voter List for Mumbai

Search for your name in the Voter list here <https://electoralsearch.in/> After your voter card pops up, you can see your polling station and then go check at the polling station. Contd. on Page 2

Greens protest cycle track being built in Powai Lake

👉 Pamela Cheema

Citizen activists and NGOs held a press conference on October 27 at Mumbai Patrakar Sangh, at Fort, Mumbai. The press conference which was well attended focused on the cycle track being built inside Powai lake by the BMC.

The activists discussed the project at length informing the press that the whole project is shrouded in secrecy with not a single document available in the public domain. The project is entitled 'Green Wheels along Blue Lines' and was begun in August 2021.

Representations to the BMC and mails to the Chief Minister, the state Environment Minister, the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests and members of the BMC's Standing Committee have elicited no response.

Instead, the state Environment Minister, Mr Aaditya Thackeray, has criticised the activists and said that 'real green activists' and scientists have discussed the project thoroughly with the BMC. The activists pointed out that the cycle track would shrink the surface area of the lake and this, in turn, would lead to flooding in the city as Powai lake feeds the Mithi river which runs through a large part of the city. The activists declared that in their opinion the BMC is constructing a road and not a cycle track which would open up this eco-sensitive area to housing projects.



Powai lake is a wetland, though it has not been officially notified stated the activists, and this has been upheld by the state forest department's mangrove cell. The lake is also the habitat of the Marsh crocodile, a Schedule 1 protected species and is visited by 200 species of birds, 136 species of butterflies and 24 species of moths. Over 95% of the birds from the Sanjay

STOP PRESS

Bombay High Court has issued a Stay Order till November 18 about the construction of the cycle track inside Powai Lake.

Gandhi National Park also visit the lake, hence the biodiversity of the lake would be irreversibly harmed, pointed out the activists.

Even more ominous is that JCB machines are excavating the basalt hills on the periphery of Vihar lake which supplies water to the city, indicating a deeper plan.

The activists demanded that a stop-work notice be issued to the BMC, cease destruction of the hills of Vihar lake, a DPR of the project be placed in the public domain, a biodiversity map be prepared for Powai lake and the lake be rejuvenated.

Pamela Cheema is AGNI's Coordinator in S ward

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Take the Bull by the Horn

How to make BMC Elections work for citizens

👉 Sharad Kumar, AGNI Trustee, Editor MMJ, State Coordinator, ADR (Association for Democratic Reforms), Senior Vice President CoRWA (Confederation of Resident Welfare Associations in India)

It is most unfortunate that nowadays all politicians and political parties care two hoots about citizens whom they are supposed to represent. It's become a circus with one party attacking the other with no substance. The common words used by them is conspiracy.

Further, all courts in India are today not available to the common public because these politicians file petitions "WITH URGENT HEARING". So there is no space for other cases in all courts. There should therefore be a separate court for all political cases.

The way political parties and politicians are behaving leaves citizens with no alternative but to take the Bull by the Horns.

In November 2018, the State Election Commission, Maharashtra did a very good job of helping the voters with an effective NOTA! By an order dated November 6, 2018, the Maharashtra State Election Commission has effected A RE-ELECTION IN CASE NOTA HAS THE HIGHEST VOTES! Shri U. P. S. Madan, the present State Election Commissioner confirmed that this order will be effective for the forthcoming BMC Elections

due in February 2022.

The citizens have therefore formed a federation of NGOs, ALMs, CBOs etc and will warn the political parties that if they don't put up good candidates with NO criminal records, the voters will not hesitate to use the NOTA button on the EVMs. THIS IS A SERIOUS WARNING TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES WHETHER SMALL OR BIG.

The order also states that re-election can be held only once and if by chance again NOTA gets the highest votes the candidate who gets the maximum votes will be declared elected. In view of this, the voter will vote for the candidate who gets the least votes in the first round. Thus the wrong candidate will not get elected.

The Order clearly states that all political parties in a workshop held on 7th May 2018 by the State Election Commission on "Role of Political Parties towards a Healthier Democracy" expressed the opinion that **NOTA should be treated as a "Fictional Electoral Candidate" and re-election should be held whenever NOTA gets the highest votes.**

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THE BMC ELECTIONS 2022

Now that the pandemic seems to be on the decline and life seems to be getting near normal we need to focus on the upcoming elections in 2022. It's a given that Covid appropriate restrictions will be the new normal.

Corporation elections play a vital role in our lives so do elected representatives. Now

is the time to reflect on the last four and a half years that have gone by. We need to introspect whether the quality of governance has improved or deteriorated. Have the promises made by your Councillor been fulfilled? Would you like to see him/her re-elected? If you are disappointed, then why so? Was your Councillor available

Every Vote Counts

👉 Lillian Pais

After 74 years of Independence, India has not moved forward. The fault lies both with the leaders and the people. Unfortunately, people are driven by religious beliefs rather than what is good for the country. Politicians have taken advantage of this and pander to sentiments resulting in vote bank politics. They are now deeply immersed in frivolous matters rather than paying more attention to uplifting the poor, helping the aged, increasing education levels, preserving the environment, uplifting agriculture, planned urban development etc.

It has been observed that many voters do not take the election process seriously nor do they try and understand the gravity of the power to vote or the responsibility that comes with it. This is especially true in the case of the urban population where registered voters choose to vacation on voting day as the Election Commission has the happy knack of

prefixing or suffixing voting day with a long weekend.

While some of us genuinely cast our vote there are many others who think that their vote doesn't make a difference, nothing will change so why vote and may not even register to vote. When the national attitude changes from thinking "my vote doesn't make a difference" only then will we see an increased voter turnout.

The honest truth is politicians listen to only two things, money and votes. Increasing the voter turnout will give us better representation, more funding to our communities, and a better quality of life. There is definitely power in numbers.

A democracy cannot function if we as citizens don't come out and vote. Without the people, power will default to special interests and their money. Our country can no longer afford this.

Lillian Pais is AGNI Coordinator H/Wes Ward

Every Vote Counts | Be a responsible Citizen. | Get registered to vote.

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Information for voters

[Contd. from Page 1](#)

You can make corrections online, if you are comfortable.

The website for corrections is <https://voterportal.eci.gov.in/>

Here you need to register yourself and then login and select which corrections you want to make.

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👉 Zahida Banatwala, AGNI Trustee

and approachable? Should the candidates educational background, previous track record and performance in the last four years be an indicator? Are you happy with the way your municipal ward is governed?

It's important to note that corporation elections are the most important elections as the candidates you elect, play a

vital role in the well-being of the city and the area you reside in. Hence it is most important to vote judiciously, and to urge people around you to do the same and make an informed decision. It would be a good idea to study the details of all the candidates standing for elections and let their performance help you make your decision.

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Does Mumbai need Desalination Plants?

 Mohit Pande, AGNI S Ward

As per reports, the BMC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with an Israeli water technology company to set up the first desalination plant in the city. The BMC will set up the state's first desalination plant of 200 Million Litres capacity at Manori in Malad (W) to help increase Mumbai's water supply. The project is estimated to cost Rs 1,600 crore and is slated to be operational by 2025. The plant will help in making seawater usable for various non-drinking purposes like gardening and industrial use.

The water supply requirement of the city is around 3,900 million litres per day (MLD). Currently only 3,100 MLD of water is supplied for domestic, commercial, and industrial purposes.

Desalination Process

Two distillation technologies are primarily used around the world for desalination: thermal distillation and membrane distillation. Thermal distillation technologies are widely used in the Middle East, primarily because the region's petroleum reserves keep energy costs low. Membrane distillation uses the temperature difference across a membrane to evaporate vapour from a brine solution and condense pure water on the colder side.

Due to its energy consumption, desalinating sea water is generally very costly. Factors that determine the costs for desalination include capacity and type of facility, location, water salinity, labour, energy, financing and concentrate disposal. The energy cost of the desalination process is around 3kWh/m³. Importantly, water intake structures cause adverse environmental impact by sucking fish and shellfish or their eggs into an industrial system.

Desalination processes produce large quantities of brine, possibly at above ambient temperature. Chemical pre-treatment and cleaning are a necessity in most desalination plants, which typically includes prevention of biofouling, scaling, foaming and corrosion in thermal plants, and of biofouling, suspended solids and scale deposits in the membrane plant.

India already has a few thermal desalination plants. India's National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) commissioned their first low-temperature thermal desalination (LTTD) plant in 2005 at Kavaratti in the Lakshadweep islands. The plant's capacity is 100,000 Litres/day, at a capital cost of INR 50 million. In 2007, NIOT opened an experimental, floating LTTD plant off the coast of Chennai, with a capacity of 1,000,000 Litres/day. A smaller plant was established in 2009 at the North Chennai Thermal Power Station to prove the LTTD application where power plant cooling water is available.

Rain Water Harvesting

Mumbai is fortunate to receive an average of 2200 mm of rains. Mumbai sees flooding



of low-lying areas every year. The fresh water requirement of Mumbai can be supplemented by harvesting rain water instead of allowing it to flow back into the sea. Owing to climate change, spells of heavy precipitation are expected to increase, so widespread harvesting and storage of rainfall could reduce the risk of local flooding.

The BMC has proposed to conserve rain water in underground tanks in or near



low-lying areas. This will not only avoid flooding but provide fresh water for use. The BMC has set a target of constructing two tanks near Hindmata as a pilot project by June 2022. Each tank will be of 100 meters in length, 50-meter wide and six-meter deep with a storage capacity of about 30 lakh litres of water. The project will cost around Rs 130 crore.

Still another option could be to install bore wells and direct flood waters into them. This will raise the ground water level and make water available for use. The Railways can install bore wells and/or construct underground tanks for storing rain water to prevent flooding of railway tracks. Rain water stored in bore wells/tanks will then be available for use.

The BMC may also consider installing a floating Solar Power Plant to meet the energy requirements of the proposed

Desalination plant at Manori. This will reduce the energy cost as well as the carbon footprint in the city. The BMC may also study the feasibility of constructing a barrage for harvesting every drop of rain water, similar to the Marina Barrage at Singapore, which has three benefits: a source of water supply, flood control and a venue for lifestyle attraction.

Rain Water Harvesting appears to be a better alternative than a desalination plant, as its advantages are that it can potentially reduce the extent of flooding, provide fresh water to overcome food security concerns and improve the fast-depleting freshwater resources. These advantages far outweigh the disadvantages of initial high cost, high operating cost, high energy cost and the detrimental impact on the environment of desalination plants.

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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,
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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A VERY BIG THANK YOU
for Donations received

in the month of October 2021:

Chitra N. Pamnani Rs.20,000/=

KEEPING NEIGHBOURHOODS CLEAN

 **Maria D'Souza**

ALM 33 in Bandra (w) includes several societies of bungalows and religious institutions on Mount Mary and Kane Road totalling 42 buildings. There are around 800 families, mostly in high-rise apartments. There is 100% segregation of waste and before the pandemic 20 societies were composting their



waste. But a problem that irks many people in Bandra is struggling to find a solution to dog poop.

Almost every society on an average has four or

five dogs. The dogs are well-cared for, shampooed and pomaded with designer doggie

shirts and dresses but leave behind a trail of dog poop which has defaced our neighbourhoods. It has taken us around 12 years to convince the well-



educated, well-heeled residents to co-operate. I share our journey with you.

1. Sign boards were placed at strategic places that read 'Clean up after your dog' etc. The boards disappeared in 15 days.
2. We got the BMC to institute a fine of Rs 500 with clean up marshalls around. The marshalls disappeared in 5 days.
3. We created Flossy, a doggie-activist character in one of the columns of our quarterly newsletter. It fell on deaf ears.
4. Some people pointed out to the poop by strays. "Do you compare a poor, neglected stray to me, who you love and care?" quipped Flossy. So a

couple of societies adopted the strays. No lesson learnt.

5. Dr.Google in a column in our newsletter, educated us that dog poop is a breeding ground



for germs and bacteria. Hmm.. now it was beginning to sink in.

6. The ALM got the names and telephone numbers of the dog owners from every society. A friendly chat with each of them and all agreed to teach and train their dog walkers. The ALM committee started



speaking to dog walkers on the street and requesting them to pick up the mess. Photos of those who started picking up their dog's poop were posted on the chat with a Thank-you message



ALM 33 roads are now poop free through education and persuasion. If you see dog poop on the street, it is

from a visiting dog. People don't always mean to be rude. They know no other way when there is no guidance from the BMC.

Maria D'Souza is a Volunteer AGNI in H (West).

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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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