

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI

Action for good
Governance &
Networking in
India

AGNI

Editorial

Tata (No Bye Bye) my friend Ratan Tata....

Tata (No Bye Bye) to my dear friend Ratan Tata.... because you will always be in my heart. You were one industrialist who started with being on the shop floor before reaching the top.

I still remember the time we spent together whenever I came to Bombay House decades ago, when you were still a Management Trainee of TAS (Tata Administrative Service) with books, you treated me like a

TOUGH TO SAY TATA
TO SUCH A RATAN!



brother. You were so fond of books that you even told the security to allow me to meet you whenever I came. This was your humility.

Your visionary leadership and ethical approach transformed the Tata group from a largely India-centric group into a global powerhouse (multinational), while your philanthropic efforts touched millions of lives across the

globe. You were the promotor of the salt-to-software conglomerate. No one can forget your quiet work in making "Tata" a Global brand. You ensured that over 65% of the earnings would go to charities. There isn't anyone else like you who would be remembered globally.

I pray for your soul to rest in eternal peace and wish your successors will continue the legacy you left behind.

MMJ

US Consulate installs recycled plastic benches in BKC

The US Consulate General in Mumbai installed 70 new benches made from recycled plastic at its BandraKurla Complex (BKC) After opening an additional **Contd. on Page 4**



Schedule

General Election to Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra, 2024

Poll Events	Single Phase (288 ACs)
Date of Issue of Gazette Notification	22.10.2024 (Tuesday)
Last Date of Making Nominations	29.10.2024 (Tuesday)
Date for Scrutiny of nominations	30.10.2024 (Wednesday)
Last Date for Withdrawal of Candidatures	04.11.2024 (Monday)
Date of Poll	20.11.2024 (Wednesday)
Date of Counting	23.11.2024 (Saturday)
Date before which election shall be completed	25.11.2024 (Monday)

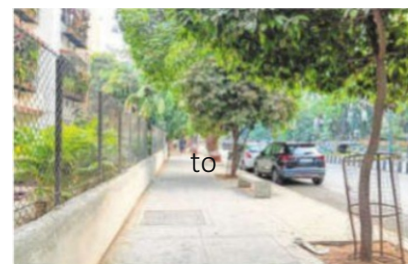
Mumbai Citizens' Group Unveil 'Pedestrian Manifesto' Ahead Of Maharashtra Assembly Elections, Demand Walker-Friendly Streets

Dhairya Gajara

The manifesto includes eight demands, ranging from establishment of non-motorised transport cells to making footpaths accessible for the specially-abled, with a single aim to make Mumbai walkable

As the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections come close and citizens put forward their demands for the future representatives of their constituencies, a group of citizens involved in making the city more pedestrian-friendly has come up with a pedestrian manifesto. The manifesto includes eight demands, ranging from establishment of non-motorised transport cells to making footpaths accessible for the specially-abled, with a single aim to make Mumbai walkable.

In the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, walking is the most common mode of transportation and still the walking infra-structure of the city lacks basic utilities to make the city pedestrian friendly. Walking Project, a



grassroots advocacy campaign to create a safe, convenient and joyful walking environment in Mumbai, recently released its first Pedestrian Manifesto before the upcoming state assembly elections.

The manifesto's foremost demand is establishment of non-motorised transport cells in all urban administrative sub-divisions with a population of over 1 lakh. The cell including urban planners, architects and other permanent staff members will be responsible for designing and overseeing the implementation of pedestrian and cycling **contd. on Page 4**

Badminton veteran Pradeep Gandhe to receive Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Award for Lifetime Achievement

PTI

The Maharashtra government on 3rd October 2024 said the 'Shivchhatrapati' state sports award for lifetime achievement for 2022-23 will be conferred on ace badminton player Pradeep Gandhe.

The state government also announced that 29 sportspersons will be awarded for excelling in

athletics, badminton, carrom, chess, shooting, malkhamb, bodybuilding, boxing, acrobatics, fencing, cycling, billiards and snooker, hockey, kabaddi, judo, kho-kho, weightlifting, wrestling, skating and **contd. on Page 4**



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Free health insurance cover for all 70-plus citizens

 **Meghana Mittal Philip, Money Control**

The newly-introduced provision will be implemented in a demand-based manner, with an initial outlay of Rs 3,437 crore.

In a major move aimed at providing health security to senior citizens, the Union Cabinet on September 11, approved free health insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per year for all citizens aged 70 years and above under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY). This decision will benefit approximately 4.5 crore families, covering an estimated 6 crore senior citizens across the country.

The newly introduced provision will be implemented in a demand based manner, with an initial outlay of Rs 3,437 crore. However, this amount is subject to increase depending on the uptake of the scheme, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said during the Cabinet briefing. He also mentioned that the Health Ministry would soon announce the rollout details for the program.

The new policy extends the health cover to senior citizens irrespective of their income or socio-economic status. "All senior citizens of the age 70 years and above, irrespective of their socio-economic status, would be eligible to avail the benefits of AB PM-JAY," Vaishnaw said. This move aims to provide much-needed support to senior citizens by addressing their healthcare needs through the world's largest publicly funded health assurance scheme.

The scheme, already covering 55 crore individuals across 12.34 crore families, will now include an additional layer of protection for senior citizens. Those who are already part of families covered under AB PM-JAY will receive an extra top-up cover of Rs 5 lakh, which will be exclusively for senior members. "The senior citizens of the age 70 years and above belonging to families already covered under AB PM-JAY will get an additional top-up cover of Rs 5 lakh per year for themselves," the Union Cabinet said in a statement.



For those currently enrolled in other health schemes, such as the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) or the Employees' State Insurance scheme (ESI), they will have the option to switch to AB PM-JAY or retain their existing coverage. "Senior citizens of the age 70 years and above who are under private health insurance policies or Employees' State Insurance scheme will be eligible to avail benefits under AB PM-JAY," Vaishnaw clarified. **MMJ**

Mumbai's BKC To Get Pod Taxis In Three Years



Rs 1,000 Crore Project Awarded To Hyderabad-based Firm. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has appointed Hyderabad-based Sai Green Mobility as the concessionaire for the Automated Rapid Transit System (pod taxi) in Bandra Kurla Complex. **MMJ**

Hospital Tales - New series - Shades of Reality behind the Curtain

 **Shrikant Soman, AGNI Trustee**

Hospitals are often viewed as places of healing, where lives are saved and hope is restored. But behind the sterile white walls and the constant hum of beeping machines lies a world that few outside the medical profession truly understand. Hospitals are also places where life hangs in the balance, and families come face-to-face with the fragility of health. These stories, drawn from real-life encounters, offer a glimpse into the emotional, financial, and psychological realities of life inside a hospital — experiences that remain hidden until someone is thrust into the middle of a medical crisis. Most people will encounter these moments at some point in their lives, but they rarely foresee them or fully grasp their weight until they are living through them.

Coming from a middle-class background myself, I could intimately relate to these stories—they touched my own life in ways I never expected. While at the same time, as the CEO of the hospital, it was profoundly

painful to witness these stories unfold, knowing that despite my position, I was often powerless to provide the relief I so desperately wanted to offer. The harsh realities of fate and finances had no easy solutions, and that helplessness had weighed heavily on me.

These stories are not just professional encounters—they are personal. They simmered in my heart, waiting to be shared, to find some release from the emotions they had stirred. Through these experiences, I grew. I was humbled by the fragility of life and forced to confront its true nature—a reality far different from what I once believed. These stories opened me to a deeper understanding of life, the kind that only comes when you stand at the crossroads of hope, despair, and the limits of human effort.

They are part of my journey, and I hope they can resonate with others, offering some comfort or understanding to those who may one day find themselves in a similar place. **MMJ**

Tale 1 to be published in the next issue!

Block your dates 9th & 10th November, NCRWA, Hyderabad

11th National Conference of Resident Welfare Associations

11th National Conference of Resident Welfare Associations (NCRWA)

at ENGINEERING STAFF COLLEGE OF INDIA
ESI Road, Gachibowli (Besides Care Hospital)
Old Bombay Road, HYDERABAD, TELANGANA
Tel: 040-66304100, E-mail: info@eschiyd.org

9th & 10th Nov 2024

Focal Theme Waste Disposal

Reduce Reuse Recycle

The 11th NCRWA is being held in Hyderabad on November 9 & 10.

The object is to bring together dynamic RWAs from major cities and project their identities and share their experiences and to seek solutions for building happy communities.

The thrust would be on promoting a new urban cosmopolitan culture in which RWAs would seek empowerment from the government and play an important role in improving the quality of life by building smart efficient and caring communities. **MMJ**

Focal Theme - Waste Mgmt.

Subsidiary Topics:

- Management of a RWA / AOA
- Real Estate Regulatory Act 2016
- Climate Change
- Women Empowerment
- Drugs Menace
- Encroachment of Footpaths **MMJ**

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Inter-Religious 'Peace Conference' At St Joseph's High School In Wadala Promotes Harmony Ahead Of Gandhi Jayanti

 Swarna Srikanth

A lamp was lit at the school hall by principal Rev. Fr. Solomon Rapol, supervisor Nagaprabha Billuru, senior teacher Seema D'Souza and the guest speakers. The programme themed on peace started with the reading and recitation of relevant verses from various scriptures, including Bhagavad Gita, The Holy Bible, Quran Kareem, and Agam (the sacred book of Jains).

A 'Peace Conference' was held at the St. Joseph's High School in Wadala West, Mumbai. The event was addressed by knowledgeable



speakers representing four religions - Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Jainism.

A lamp was lit at the school hall by principal Rev. Fr. Solomon Rapol, supervisor Nagaprabha Billuru, senior teacher Seema D'Souza and the guest speakers. The programme themed on peace started with the reading and recitation of relevant verses from various scriptures,



including Bhagavad Gita, The Holy Bible, Quran Kareem, and Agam (the sacred book of Jains).

Revered Father Solomon Rapol, Kirtankar Appa Saheb Kage, Islamic lecturer Prof. Mufti Bilal Khan, and ardent Jain follower Forum Devang Shah spoke about peace while referring to the holy scriptures and associating it with daily life examples.

Rev Fr Solomon Rapol principal of St Joseph's High school wadala mentioned that



peace begins with "me", while acknowledging "Every person as a messenger of peace." He mentioned inculcating virtues like love, kindness, forgiveness, and acceptance while remembering the lives and contributions of St. Don Bosco and Mother Teresa. Taking note of his message, students sang the hymn "Make me a channel of your peace."

Kage then addressed the gathering and put forth his opinion that "Hinduism isn't only a religion, but a way of life that promotes peace." Soon, students presented the lyrics of the "Jethe Prem Daya Shanti



Tethe Devachi Vasthi" Bhakti Geet.

The celebration was carried out ahead of Gandhi Jayanti and the International day of Non Violence. Sharing about the thought behind holding this peace conference for school students, the principal said, "The objective of this inter-religious conclave is to bring harmony in the thought process of children and promote religious tolerance and non violence." "Children

Wadala Residents to move Bombay High Court against Mumbai-Pune Taxi stand

The residents of Wadala (W) are planning to move the Bombay High Court against the proposed Mumbai-Pune taxi parking stand in Wadala. The residents have started a signature campaign highlighting the ill implications of the taxi parking in the green zone.

The state had informed the Bombay High Court about setting up a parking stand for Pune-Mumbai taxis behind the Institute of Chemical Technology in Wadala. Following this, the residents of Wadala met at the Indulal Buva Garden and expressed discontentment over the proposed taxi stand. The residents are planning to file a public interest litigation with the Bombay High Court against the taxi stand.

Following the meeting, the Wadala (W) Citizens Forum has written to chief minister Eknath Shinde demanding a revised plan shifting the parking stand. The demand is seeing an increased support from residents who have started a signature campaign. Through the letter written to the CM, the residents have claimed that the taxi parking will rob the local residents of much needed parking space and ease of movement for the local vehicles. It has also



raised concerns about the safety of women and children along with senior citizens who take morning walks in the area. It has also claimed that the taxi parking will endanger the lives of students studying at Institute of Chemical Technology, a school for specially-abled and a women's hostel.

"The taxi stand is located in an interior residential area known for peace, tranquillity and serenity. Wadala area, and particularly the subject area, is predominantly a green zone and any drastic traffic redesign will damage its delicate ecology as well as its demography. There can be better alternatives to the said location such as an open space like that of BEST bus depot nearby or any other open space without disturbing the local residents," the letter stated.

Locals have appealed to the CM to reconsider and review the proposed plan and submit a revised plan to the HC shifting the taxi stand to a different location suitable to the local residents. They alleged that the residents' opinion was not sought before preparing the plan and submitting to the High Court.

are our future. Change in children will lead to change in



the family and community and bring peace in the

world," he noted.

It was carried out for about two hours, where young students of the school were taught about the importance of peace and made to reflect on it. Some students were dressed up as renowned peace makers to promote the message of peace at the conference. The event concluded with students tying peace bands to each other and taking a peace pledge.

Each one forward this to all Mumbaikars on your email and whatsapp list

Mumbai Citizens' Group Unveil 'Pedestrian Manifesto

contd. from Page 1 infrastructure enhancements within its jurisdiction.

The manifesto also covers the issue of illegal hawking and demands implementation of a comprehensive hawking policy for regulating and organizing hawker distribution across the city. It also addresses the issue of excessive on-street parking citing it as an obstacle to widening of footpaths. It demands implementation of a comprehensive parking policy across Mumbai to assess the parking demand, rationalise the allocation of on-street parking, and demarcate legal parking spaces.

Through the manifesto, Walking Project has also demanded pedestrianising the surroundings of transit hubs like railway stations, metro stations and bus depots. It suggested that improving walkability within a 300-metre radius of these transit hubs through wider footpaths, channelized pick-up and drop-off zones, standardized signage, modern accessibility standards, and high-quality surfaces, can significantly elevate the pedestrians' quality of life. It also demands retrofitting of footpath kerbs

with modern accessibility standards to make the urban spaces more inclusive for people with mobility challenges.

The manifesto specially focuses on the need to develop the Swami Vivekanand (SV) Road in the western suburbs and Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) Road in the eastern suburbs, two of the longest continuous anterior roads in Mumbai. Underscoring the urgent need to develop them into world-class pedestrian-friendly corridors, the manifesto suggested improvements in footpath width, designated hawking area and high-quality signage among other guidelines listed by the Indian Roads Congress.

The manifesto also demands expansion of urban tree cover to reduce surface temperatures on footpaths and enhance pedestrian comfort. According to the suggestions stated in the manifesto, the local municipal body should identify and allocate suitable spaces for tree planting, which can be managed directly by the

municipality or through public private partnerships and should be monitored by a third-party organisation to ensure transparency and effective maintenance.

Vedant Mhatre, program coordinator at Walking Project, said, "We have invested heavily in capital expenditure on metro projects, but far less on improving and maintaining the walkability in the city. As we move into the future, with a changing climate and rising income levels, it is imperative to make the city safe, comfortable, and inviting to walk on as possible. Politicians need to recognise the importance of this human-centered agenda, and our pedestrian manifesto provides a clear vision for the future, with concrete points for the Vidhan Sabha election hopeful candidates to run on."

MMJ

Pradeep Gandhe

contd. from Page 1 aatya-paatyaa' (played between two teams of nine players).

It said eight 'divyang' players (persons with disabilities) have also been selected for the prestigious awards.

MMJ

US Consulate

Contd. from Page 1 2.5 lakh visa appointments for Indians, the Consulate installed these benches to "enhance and overall experience of visa applicants". The benches were inaugurated in the presence of US Consul General Mike Hankey, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) chief. As thousands of visa applicants and their family members wait outside the US Consulate in the BKC, the benches will provide comfort to the applicants, while also supporting sustainability.

Consul General (CG) Hankey said, "These benches are not just logistical upgrades. This project represents more than just an elevation of facilities. It's a collaboration that reflects our commitment to improving the visa application process while aligning with the US Mission's goals of urban waste management and sustainability."

The CG added that the initiative is part of the efforts to facilitate Indian applicants' timely travel to America, which is the backbone of the people-to-people ties that underpin the US-India relationship. "This partnership between the government, NGOs and the private sectors is a model of sustainable urban planning that benefits both the local community and the US-India relations." The US Consulate remains dedicated to working closely with local and national partners to locate innovative solutions that improve both the visa application process as well as the pedestrian movement in the broader BKC community, said CG Hankey.

Launched in March, the bench project is a result of a joint plan between the US Consulate, Indian Regional Passport Office and MMRDA. The benches, manufactured by Project Mumbai at no cost, feature artwork by underprivileged artists of Mumbai.

MMJ

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