

Mumbai Meri Jaan



Forward This To All - And All Forward - Together



Editorial

Mumbai - third rank in crimes in 2019: NCRB

The country's maximum city ranks third in the number of crimes committed, as per the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2019. In 2018 Mumbai ranked fourth.

The details of the city's ranking in various criminal categories in 2019 is listed below:-

- 1st in sexual harassment cases – 16 cases of sexual harassment (of women) in public transport.
- 1st in voluntarily causing hurt or force to deter public servant from performing his duties – 331 cases
- 1st in riot cases – 361 cases
- 1st in crimes against senior citizens – 1,231 cases
- 2nd in molestation – 2,069 cases (of assault or criminal force) on women with intent to outrage their modesty
- 2nd in cybercrimes – 2,527 cases
- 3rd in rapes – 394 cases
- 3rd in attempt to murder – 343 cases
- 3rd in kidnapping & abduction – 2,102 cases
- 4th in murders – 170 cases
- 4th in extortion and blackmailing - 343 cases
- 5th in road accidents – 425 accidental deaths on roads

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Reconstructing Juhu's Gandhi Gram Municipal School

Zahida Banatwala

In June 2019 I had informed all the AGNI coordinators present at our monthly meeting in Bandra that the Gandhi Gram Municipal school in Juhu was in a deplorable condition. Subsequently, various newspapers reported that 37 civic schools were crumbling. We, the members of



Old Building

the Juhu Citizens Welfare Group, have been visiting the Gandhi Gram municipal school for years and have in the past assisted in getting repairs done at the school.

When we noticed that the building was becoming dangerously dilapidated we requested our Councillor, Ms.

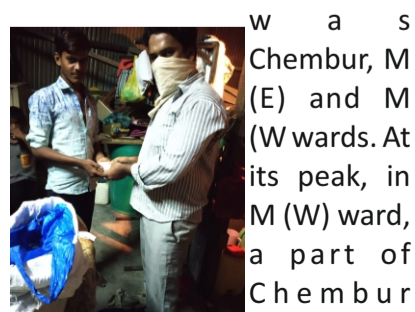
Renushansraj, to visit the school. The then Assistant Municipal Commissioner, Prashant Gaiwad, also arrived at the school to inspect the building. Certain classes were closed down and metal supports put up to support the structure. These were just temporary arrangements. We requested our MLA, Ameet Satam, to visit the school and he immediately asked for an audit by IIT Bombay or VJTI. These organizations advised that the structure be demolished as it was beyond repair.

I am happy to report that after following due processes like first relocating the school children to nearby schools, then with the Councillor's constant follow-up with the school about **contd. on Page 4**



Flattening the Curve in M-Ward

It is six months now since the start of the pandemic. During this time, we have seen many ups and downs in the various related figures— active cases, deaths, patients cured, new cases etc. Every day there is news about new areas being infected. One of the worst areas at one time with more than 100 new cases every day



was Chembur, M (E) and M (W) wards. At its peak, in M (W) ward, a part of Chembur building numbers 1-34, were sealed and declared a containment zone.

One of the reasons for this surge in cases was, according to M (W) ward Assistant Municipal Commissioner, Mr. Prithviraj Chauhan, the large number of foreign travellers who initially came to the ward. Even the first death, due to Coronavirus in Mumbai, was in Tilak Nagar. A mind-boggling 76% of

Chase The Virus Initiative - H (W) Ward

Joseph Cherian, JAAG H/W

In August Maharashtra reported 12,500 new Covid19 cases daily. That was when 7000-9000 tests were



being conducted every day. Free Covid19 test camps under the 'Chase the Virus' initiative commenced in mid-August. The first of these was held at Bandra Reclamation on August 17th. We were requested by



the Councillor of Ward 102, Mumtaz Rahebar Khan and Mr Rahebar Khan, **contd. on Page 4**

Rajkumar Sharma

Chembur's population lives in the slums. Initially Chembur was one of the five wards in the city that was the worst affected.

From that alarming situation to a comparatively much better position today is mainly because of Chembur's strategy of 'early detection and immediate isolation policy'. There was door-to-door every patient who tested positive, 15 people who had come in immediate contact, were also quarantined. Many mobile toilets with hand sanitizers and liquid soap were also erected in the slums. **Contd. on Page 3**

Can Mumbai's landfills be a thing of the past, asks NGO Praja

 Jennifer Spencer, project coordinator, Souradeep Roy, communications officer and Milind Mhaske, Director, Praja Foundation

Landfills have been the go-to answer for garbage disposal of cities in India. However, these can be source of diseases, cause frequent fires and overall an archaic way of disposal of solid waste. The pandemic has brought to forefront the importance of sanitation and hygiene as a key determinant of health. It is therefore an opportune time now, for the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to streamline its solid waste management (SWM) practices and change directions to look at alternatives.

Current status of SWM in Mumbai

In spite of a huge budget allocated to solid waste management over the years (₹2,906 crore in 2020-21), BMC has been lagging in the nationwide rankings under Swachh Sarvekshan. Mumbai's 2019 rank was 49 among 100 cities (with more than 1 lakh population) fallen from 18 in 2018. The fall can be attributed to the change in methodology, which added weightage for certifications such as Star Rating. Under the Star Rating for Garbage Free Cities, Mumbai had a two-star rating in 2019, and in response to its application for five-star rating for 2020, lost all its stars, after not meeting the criteria of 100% sweeping of public areas in the third-party survey.

In terms of meeting targets under the Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2016 (MSW rules) as well, Mumbai has been lagging behind. While the MSW rules provide for 100% segregation of waste at source it is noticed that only 83% segregation was done in 2018-19 (includes waste not

segregated at source). BMC claims that 100% door-to-door collection was done in 2018-19. However, data shows that in 2019, of 17,116 SWM complaints, 36% were related to garbage not being collected. Apart from that, waste recovery and timely solving of complaints also requires attention.

73% of solid waste is food biodegradable

BMC's Environment Status Reports show that 73% of solid waste composition in Mumbai is food biodegradable waste. What is evident from a four-year trend is reduction in this food biodegradable waste through various policies that incentivise composting, have reduced the overall waste generation of the city from around 9400MTD in 2016-17 to 7450MTD in 2018-19.

For example, the policy of not collecting biodegradable waste from bulk generators (units



generating more than 100kg per day) started in January 2018, saw almost half (49%) of such units compost their waste by March 2019.

BMC therefore needs to focus on further reducing biodegradable waste being collected and going to the landfill by incentivising and strictly implementing such measures for all waste generating units. BMC should set a 1-year target of reducing waste generation from around 7500MTD to 2000MTD by adopting a zero food biodegradable waste policy that mandates decentralised

Poor Solid Waste Management in G (N)

 Bulu Saldanha

Everyone is aware of the problems connected with climate change and its deleterious effects on the planet. One of the initiatives to limit the damage we are causing to the planet is the segregation of garbage which separates the biodegradable (wet) from the non-biodegradable (dry) waste. The reason is the biodegradable waste can be converted into manure while the non-biodegradable waste can be used for recycling. If the two are mixed, then toxic compounds can form thus increasing pollution.

This initiative has been implemented in various pockets of my ward G North like St. Michael's Church, Canossa Convent and others. One is now trying to get the various schools to replicate the same. Also, Siddhivinayak temple was segregating its garbage, but for some technical reason it was discontinued. We intend to ensure that not only does Siddhivinayak temple restart its segregation of garbage, but

composting.

This will not only enable the city government to meet its MSW rules' target of 80% recovery of waste, but also increase the waste to compost tonnage under Swachh Bharat Mission.

First, it needs to involve people in the waste management process through a mix of awareness, incentives as well as punitive measures. The need for segregation of waste, not just into food waste and dry non-biodegradable waste, but the latter into toxic waste, medical waste and recyclable waste is important, even more now with households generating medical waste due to the pandemic.

Second, it needs to set up the required infrastructure and networks within six months for

also that Sitladevi temple and the Dargah participate in this effort of segregation of garbage.

To implement segregation of garbage the ALMs were a significant tool. However, after they were dismantled segregation took a back seat. Now that ALMs have been reinstated we are once again trying to revamp the ALMs and get them to focus on segregation of garbage. However, this needs support from the BMC. Presently, the BMC garbage van just collects the wet and dry waste and mixes them together. There is absolutely no segregation of waste.

Also, the BMC does not collect waste regularly. This is in stark contrast with the situation in H (W) ward where there are separate days for the collection of wet, dry and garden waste. We are working on streamlining our garbage collection and segregation in G North Ward.

Bulu Saldanha is AGNI's Coordinator in G (N) Ward.

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enabling decentralised composting. Ward 189 in F/South, Mumbai is a successful example of decentralised composting within the ward, with door-to-door collection and segregation through community involvement. BMC can look to develop constituency-wise SWM plans spearheaded by the local elected representatives and prepared with public involvement taking into consideration the demography, land-use and other constituency specific issues.

Third, BMC should stop collecting food biodegradable waste from residential and commercial units in a phased manner from the eighth month, while promoting recovery of **Contd. on Page 4**

A song on urging people to stay safe in Covid times

David & Goliath Films released their latest music video SAMJHO BHARATWASI, an up-beat music video encouraging people to take measures to prevent the transmission of Covid-19. The

music video is supported by the Ministry of AYUSH, government of India.

Samjho Bharatwasi offers a narrative for protocols to be followed at a market place, in an office, in a bus, at a party and at a dhaba. **Contd. on Page 4**

Flattening the Curve in M-Ward

Contd. from Page 1 Vehicles also went round the slums with 200ft-250ft long pipes to sanitize the narrow congested slum areas. Even people with flu-like symptoms or breathing problems were quarantined. Special check-ups of senior citizens were also done. The Assistant Municipal commissioner, Prithviraj Chauhan, was asked to add 100 extra beds for patients, but succeeded in creating 300 extra beds for infected patients. As a result, Chembur has become one of the top wards with respect to the number of patients' quarantined.

Even the congested Chembur



station fruit and vegetable market has been shifted to Gandhi Maidan, where social distancing is easier to manage. Due to this the number of cases and also the number of deaths in Chembur have reduced drastically. As a result, M (W) ward, which was among the worst five wards in the city, is now ranked at 20 out of the 24 wards in Mumbai.

Similarly, in M (E) ward, according to the Assistant Municipal Commissioner, Mr. Sudhanshu Dwivedi, the situation has changed drastically due to repeated door-to-door testing in the slums. Mobile toilets were cleaned and sanitized six-eight times in a day by Dattak Vasti people who were deputed for

every toilet in the slums. This was followed by vigorous testing and quarantine. Home quarantine was enforced wherever possible in buildings, with institutional quarantine in slums. Many new places were identified to increase the number of beds. As many as 144 additional volunteers, including Anganwadi workers, were hired and more are being added. Rapid



Antigen tests are being carried out daily in many areas of the ward. In April-May the death toll in the ward had risen to around 127 people in a month. It has now dropped drastically to around 20-25 people in a month.

Ultimately, the main responsibility lies on us citizens. The best and simplest way to defeat the virus and to flatten the curve is, social distancing, avoiding places where it is possible to come into direct contact with infected people, home remedies, washing hands regularly with soap, increasing your immunity as much as possible, and above all, following the instructions of your doctor as well as the guidelines of the authorities. In this manner Chembur, M(E) and M (W) have managed to flatten the curve to a great extent.

Rajkumar Sharma is AGNI's coordinator in Chembur M(E) and (W) Wards.

Keeping things in check during the pandemic - Sarkar Residency, Mazagaon

It is all about taking adequate measures and Sarkar Residency in Mazagaon, has done just that during this lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in their society. Speaking about the measures taken Huseni Hatim Topiwala, secretary, Sarkar Residency B & C Co-operative Housing Society Mazagaon, says, "Just during the initial stages of the pandemic, there was not much awareness, so the first thing we did was to cover all lift doors, handles, panels, buttons, both indoor and outdoor, with a thick plastic sheet so that there was no risk attached to finger touch. We also closed our community hall for any sort of gathering, even though it meant a loss of income for the society."

He adds: "Thereafter, we placed hand sanitizers at the main gate and in all the wings for everyone entering the

society. Housemaids and all outsiders, like newspaper vendors, delivery boys, drivers were allowed entry only up to the main gate. We purchased a sanitizing pump and all floors are being sanitized everyday". As for essentials the society arranged for a vegetable and fruit vendor outside the building premises to restrict the movement of residents.

Besides the society also provided masks to their security and housekeeping staff. "Due to lack of transport, we arranged for the stay of our security staff in our community hall", says Topiwala.

About maintaining hygiene and cleanliness, he says, "For door-to-door collection of garbage, we instructed housekeeping staff not to ring the bell, but ask members to keep their garbage outside before the housekeeping staff came to collect the waste". **MMJ**

An appeal for donations

AAGNI 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, SBA/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.

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

A VERY BIG THANK YOU

for Donations received

in the month of September 2020:

Austin Nazaret Rs. 500/=

Reconstructing Juhu's Gandhi Gram Municipal School

Contd. from Page 1 the demolition of the existing structure and the floating of tenders for the construction of a new building, the demolition work began despite the pandemic. Once the contract was awarded, the Councillor along with a few citizens visited schools that were under construction by the same contractor to assess the quality of work done. She regularly asked for the drawings of the new structure and tweaked them to suit the needs of the school.

At present the old structure has been razed to the ground and construction is set to begin. The old school building had four storeys and if the BMC can get the requisite permission after checking with the Coastal Regulation Zone rules, the redeveloped structure could have six storeys which would mean a bigger and more spacious school.

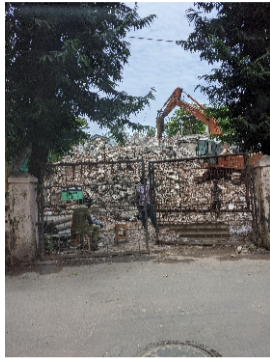
What is to be noted is that only when the residents of the ward have the support of the

elected representatives are such success stories manifest. The pandemic has been a set back and the project has been delayed by at least four months. A WhatsApp group has been created by the Councillor and all stakeholders are a part of the group, hence regular updates are posted by the school as also the contractor.

Looking forward to the day when we have the new school in the vicinity.

Zahida Banatwala is AGNI's coordinator in K/West Ward

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Chase The Virus Initiative - H (W) Ward

Contd. from Page 1 to inform and motivate residents to avail of this testing facility.

In this first camp 42 people were tested. Of these, 19 tested Covid positive. Four out of the 19 were from the police force, justifying the need for more such camps. Mr Asif Zakaria, Councillor, Ward 101, coordinated another camp which was held at St Peter's on August 27. In all 92 people were tested and 16 were found positive. This was followed by another camp at St Andrew's

on September 12 where 82 people were tested and 12 found positive.

It is pleasing to note that more such initiatives are coming to the fore and camps are being held at different locations regularly in H(W) ward. According to various figures, 20,000-15,000 tests are now being done all over Mumbai, and over 1000 cases are being detected every day.

More testing and contact tracing is truly the only way to 'Chase the Virus'.

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Can Mumbai's landfills be a thing of the past

Contd. from Page 2 food waste.

Fourth, strict monitoring of its implementation and regular reviews of the performance of individual units, non-government partners and of the constituency plans.

What remains to be seen is whether BMC is able to implement radical changes in the coming years that send landfills the way of the tram – for people to remember of it as a thing of the past.

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A song on urging people to stay safe in Covid times

Contd. from Page 3 The video features Tridha Chowdhury and Anusha Vishwanathan. It is conceptualized and produced by Lal Bhatia and Imran Zaki of David & Goliath Films. The music is

composed by Bickram Ghosh and sung by him, Iman Chakraborty, Ujjaini Mukherjee and Sovan Ganguly. The song is written by M. K. Singh and the direction of the video is by Joydeep Sen.



The url for the music video of Ayush Ministry is

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li20BVyGJfY&list=RDii20BVyGJfY&start_radio=1

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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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