

MUMBAI MERI JAAN

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI



Editorial

ISRO's Nari Shakti – Womens' empowerment

The Prime Minister in his independence Day speech said that women-led development should be established as a characteristic of the nation and ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 is a prime example of that.

Speaking on the role of women scientists, Modi said "India's Chandrayaan-3 mission is a classic illustration of our women power.... They handled vital responsibilities such as those of project director and project manager, apart from others".

Modi also said that the mission had several women scientists and engineers directly linked to it and that India's daughters are not only shattering glass ceilings but also challenging Space which is considered "infinite".



If it was the young guns who led the way, "Isro's women were the vital cog in Aditya L1s launch. Hailing from Tamil Nadu's Sengottai, 59-year-old Nigar Shaji is the project director of the sun mission. Shaji, who is surrounded by science at work and home, is on top of the list of illustrious women who have been a key part of India's recent space missions. Apart from Nigar, Kalpana K. served as dy. project director of Chandrayaan-3 mission, Muthayya Vanitha has led projects on satellites, Ritu Karidhal Srivastava was deputy operations director to Mangalyaan.



More girls in science: "Visuals of women project directors taking the stage encourage girls and young women to pursue a career in science," said Annapurni Subramaniam, director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA). "With more women representation, and women scientists being spoken to and spoken about, more get inspired." CONGRATS TO THEM!

MMJ

NPCCA's long fight to reclaim a garden succeeds

Linah Baliga

Nariman Point Churchgate Citizens' Association's campaign was to restore the Jawaharlal Nehru Garden to a recreational ground, which had been taken over by several government offices and agencies.

1992-2013 The Pursuit

In October 1992 NPCCA wrote to the secretary, urban development department pointing out that there were many supposedly temporary structures in the designated garden space like the MTDC office, Janata Dal office, BJP



offices and food stalls and requested that they be removed. From 1999 to 2013, the citizens' group raised repeated concerns with various authorities, including the home minister and chief minister, requesting their intervention in the matter.

2013-2016 Legal Recourse
August 2013: contd. on Page 3

BMC mulls adoption policy for open public spaces

Kalpesh

The BMC has invited suggestions and objections from citizens and NGOs regarding provision of playgrounds and recreational grounds on an adoption-basis. The policy draft has been posted on the BMC website and interested parties have 30 days to submit their suggestions.

To facilitate the development and maintenance of public grounds, the civic body has sought assistance from local organisations and companies under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

According to the policy draft, local school associations and local Advanced Locality Management (ALM) groups will be given top priority when selecting adopters for the grounds. A reasonable fee may be imposed on commoners for the use of sports and recreational facilities created with capital expenditure as agreed upon by the BMC. Following school associations and ALMs, registered unions or



federations of local residents' associations, trader's associations, shopkeeper's associations, and non-governmental organisations will receive priority for ground adoption. Public enterprises, government institutions, banks under CSR, as well as organisations and educational institutions involved in sponsoring and implementing sports activities within the civic ward will also be considered. However, the civic body clarified that individual adoption of recreational grounds or playgrounds will not be permitted. BMC will grant plots for adoption ranging from 11 months to five years, that can also be extended up to ten years, depending on the maintenance costs of the grounds.

MMJ

Chandivali Citizens Welfare Association

Nutan Bhalla, AGNI's L Ward Coordinator

Why does it take a common man to go on a hunger strike for the administration to hear us, is the question which looms large from A YES SOME ONE IS HEARING?

A peaceful protest on 12th February, six months ago, and an assurance in place by Additional Municipal commissioner (projects) Velrasu, had given that tender processing would be done within a month, but six months over and the situation remains as grim as ever.

The stark frankness with which the CCWA (Chandivali Citizens Welfare Association) operates is indeed praiseworthy and making

the administration aware of their proposed hunger strike did ensure a call and meeting with the deputy chief engineer (ES) Mr Sanjay Sonawane and Executive Engineer Mr Sunil Modi who did, in all fairness, promised to fast track the process, but no visible action came around, so the inevitable happened on 20th August Sunday 10 am, and residents sat on (Anshan) on Nahaar Amrit Shakti Road and later shifted. to a location within Synchronicity (taking care not to add to the traffic woes of the general public).

Desired result followed and Tenders have **contd. on Page 2**

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Powai residents cry foul as new building to replace Citipark S Balakrishnan

Residents of the Rump market Hiranandani Gardens housing complex in Powai are up in arms against the proposal to demolish an existing commercial complex, Citipark, in their area and build a massive building in its place. The protestors include prominent RSS member Ratan Sarada and noted environmentalist Debi Goenka, both local residents.



According to Sarada, three buildings on CTS plot no. 15A in Powai village were constructed around 2002 and houses, banks, supermarkets, offices, restaurants and shops. Now there is a proposal by real estate major Brookfields to demolish these structures and build a massive commercial complex by availing a floor space index (FSI) of 5.

In his complaint to civic chief I S Chahal, Sarada said Citipark is located in a residential zone and offices catering to the information technology (IT) were permitted. However, other offices and shops have come up there.

Sarada Speaks On Significance Of Citipark

Sarada said Citipark is located at one of the most congested intersections within the Hiranandani Gardens complex and there are regular traffic snarls here. One of the roads on this

crossing has a large marketing area commonly called Eden market. All types of buses come all through the day from the commercial buildings on South Avenue. "Roads are already full with parked cars from this commercial area and other visitors. There is an acute problem of parking and BEST buses have a difficult time turning at this intersection," he said.

Sarada said the builder planning to redevelop Citipark has applied for environmental clearance. The proposed building would use the new FSI norms for commercial buildings (5) and would have a tower that will have offices, shops, restaurants and a multiplex, which is not permitted as per the latest Development Control Regulations of 2034. Provision is apparently being made for parking of nearly 1,000 four-wheelers and the plan does not mention about parking of two-wheelers.

According to Goenka, the proposal to construct a new building has been made by Vrihis Properties Pvt Ltd (VPPL), which is a subsidiary of Brookfields Asset Management. MMJ

Chandivali Citizens Welfare Association

contd. from Page 1 been invited for Rs. 28 crore of work for a cement concrete DP road from Chandivali to JVLR (proposed alignment on map attached), JVLR being a major East West connect Road.

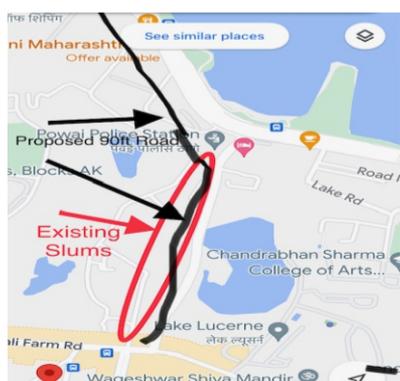
This shall be completed in two phases, first completion of road works at Nahaar site and second phase road work would be done on site owned by Shipping

Corporation India.

Road block to this work is eviction of the slum dwellers, where a total of 815 eviction notices have been ordered by BMC.

This is not the first time that such notices have been issued to the slum dwellers. They have been issued similar eviction notices thrice over. Moving to courts and bringing an injunction has helped them tide over in the past. However, this time around despite having Electricity bill and Aadhaar in place, their saddened faces reflect an uncertainty in the light of a new situation unfolding.

Encroachment is not on BMC land, but on the land of a private builder, so they cannot be part of a BMC slum rehabilitation scheme. So uncertainty contd. on Page 3



Stories of Good Governance

Hospital Healthcare Delivery - Walk-in Patients Kitty Sharing - Part 1 Shrikant Soman, AGNI Trustee

Every Hospital, have 3 major sources of 'business' (i.e. Patients) generation
1 Doctors Referral
2 Corporate Tie-up
3 Walk in Patient

This is an oversimplified view. In reality, there are overlapping areas (particularly in item 2 and 3) and source of disputes about under whose doctor the patient is treated.

In this article, I am covering the third source of business (pardon the word 'Business' in the noble institutes of health care) - that is Walk-in Patients.

Walk-in Patients are the most sought after source of business for every Doctor. When a patient just walks in the hospital for treatment without any referral 'chit' from his Family Physician or Specialist Doctor, he is 'allotted' to doctors in rotation as per the standard rota list. There are considerable pulls and pressures on the medical administration by some doctors to get included in this rota system because it is a guarantee of assured source of business for that doctor. There is also some dirty side to this process.

On many occasions, there is a 'network' of informants and hospital staff plotted by a doctor at the casualty department where the walk-in patient is first checked and allotted to the doctor in rota. I used to receive complaints from affected doctors that a genuine walk in patient who was to be allotted to him on rota basis, is being 'hijacked' by other doctor by 'arranging; a false referral slip (giving the specific name of another doctor who should treat that patient) by an outside physician for that patient.

After receiving such a complaint, I used to conduct an enquiry. To my dismay, in many

cases, the patient will himself vouch that indeed he had a genuine referral slip and he just 'forgot' to show it at the counter. He did this as he was brainwashed by some other staff at the casualty department that this specific referral doctor is a very good doctor and the doctor in the rota system is not a good doctor.

I was also shocked to learn that some doctors have kept their own floating hunters to spot such patients and convert them into the patients of that doctor. You may think this was mostly done by doctors who do not have many patients. But it is not so. Quite a few celebrity doctors had adopted this practice. This used to create an explosive situation as the doctor whose business was lost will very bitterly and aggressively complain to me about this happening. The problem was that it was extremely difficult to find out the truth because the patient himself will side with the new referred doctor (because he believed that he would be in good hands that way).

My own private source of information from the ground staff very clearly established beyond any doubt that such a malpractice had indeed happened. The real tricky part was how to ask the patient about the real story. Adopting direct questioning of the patient would damage the hospital reputation and it will also make the patient panicky. So we have to try to get the information in a tactful and round about way.

Such malpractices resulted in some 'heavyweights' in the medical fraternity who would tweak the system to their advantage. Interesting thing to note is that these doctors would contd. on Page 4

Bandra citizens combine technology and collective action to clear garbage dump

CIVIC ACTION FOR CHANGE

Sonal Alvares

Long-time locals of Bandra west tell stories of a peaceful, sleepy suburb it once was.

However, over the last couple of decades, they have seen a real estate boom transform the skyline into towering buildings, where once beautiful cottages stood. The same narrow roads accommodate thrice as many apartment blocks, causing a spike in population density, without any upgrade to the infrastructure.

At the end of what used to be called Cemetery Lane, now Khadeshwari Marg, are two cemeteries facing each other. The lane is just off Hill Road, famous for shopping and eateries.

Decades ago, this lane ended at the Arabian sea but overtime a large, congested informal settlement came up on the side of the hill



bordering the sea. The narrow lanes between the houses are just enough for people to walk through to access their houses.

As door-to-door waste collection is not possible in this congested settlement, people dumped their daily household waste outside the lane. This place, like many other spots in



crowded areas, is a Garbage Vulnerable Point (GVP). GVP is a common, accessible public space used to dump the waste, from where the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) collects the garbage.

Few months ago, the garbage dump got pushed right in front of the main gate of the Bandra Jewish Cemetery.

Garbage piles up

In spite of this being a functional cemetery, it made no difference to anyone except for when a burial was to take place. The Jewish community used the other smaller side gate and bore the inconvenience of garbage at the main gate.

"It was a sorry sight. A garbage dump outside the main gate with the menace of



rodents created an unhygienic situation. Since it is a narrow road, there was no place to walk without stepping on to the overflowing pile of kachhra," says Joe Rego, who lives next door.

Things **contd. on Page 4**

AGNI & MMJ Congrats ISRO for putting India on the south pole of the moon!



Khoya Khoya Chand aur Khula Aasman

India is on the moon, with those five words, ISRO chairman Dr. S Somanath summed up the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission, a long-drawn journey scripted by its dedicated scientists.

Congratulations to the Chairman, ISRO Dr. Somanath and his team of scientists and engineers for the successful soft landing of the Lander in the

Chanrayaan-3 mission. In fact, the whole world was watching on the television with bated breath on this historic success.

The scientists broke into a huge applause hugging each other, crying in joy as the world cheered India's achievement in taking within its embrace the 'khoya khoya chand and the khula aasman.'

MMJ

NPCCA's long fight to reclaim a garden succeeds

contd. from Page 1 NPCCA finally filed a writ petition in the Bombay high court.

2015: The Draft Revised DP showed a change in designation/use of Nehru Garden from 'RG' to 'commercial-residential', permanently compromising the public space. NPCCA raised repeated objections before the BMC and ensured that the 'RG' provision was retained in the new Development Plan.

2016: An order dated March 2, 2016 was passed by the Bombay high court. It stressed the importance of open spaces and stated that the land reserved for an RG had to be for recreational purposes only. The order directed the state government to consider removing all the existing structures on the land and take an appropriate decision within six months.

2016-2023 The post-court battle

From July 2016 to January 2020, NPCCA wrote several letters citing the court order and asking the illegal structures

to be removed. MTDC and certain other illegal structures (who were respondents in the petition) demolished their structures in the garden and vacated the premises.

2022: After long arduous journey, in July 2022 it was indicated that the BMC had issued tenders and was implementing a new garden plan.

Finally on 27th August 2023, Devendra Fadnavis, Dy CM, was invited to inaugurate the Jawaharlal Nehru Garden on Madam Cama Road in Churchgate. The deputy CM had been instrumental in ordering the removal of government offices and agencies that had encroached on the land and helped residents reclaim their open space during his tenure as chief minister in 2018

MMJ

Chandivali Citizens

contd. from Page 2 looms.

With a two-year time, duration for completion of the proposed 90 feet DP road, the pressure to act, to align not only the road, but what emerges at large is THE HUMANE FACTOR.

MMJ

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Bandra citizens combine technology and collective action to clear garbage dump

contd. from Page 3 would be very different, if it was a housing complex, since residents would have objected and physically moved the dump. But it was at the cemetery wall, and no one objected.

Over time waste was also indiscriminately thrown over the cemetery wall into the compound creating a scaled down version of a landfill.

Stakeholders drive the transformation

In January 2023, the recently appointed chairman of the caretaker committee at the Bandra Jewish Cemetery decided to



take matters into their hands and reach out for help.

In subsequent months, individual volunteer groups conducted three separate clean up drives within the cemetery compound, manually pulling out almost four truckloads of legacy waste from the compound.

The clean ups unearthed two graves of children near

the wall previously lying unnoticed under the mounds of filth.

Meanwhile, a handful of local active citizens came together with neighbours to see what could be done to remedy the situation. The caretaker committee planned to restore dignity and grace to the holy ground through a new landscape design.

BMC gets into action

The problem of rodents needed urgent attention, before a garden could be planned. The rats were there for the garbage; they would not spare young plants. A few members approached the BMC to help, who were able to tackle the menace with successive rounds of pest control.

Simultaneously, the group held meetings with the officers from the Solid Waste Management (SWM) department of the H-West ward, which were followed up with installation of CCTV cameras on either side of the cemetery wall.

Joe offered to physically monitor the site on a daily basis, providing the background knowledge of the area. Thanks to the CCTV, persons who threw

garbage at any time of the day or night, were clearly captured on camera. The real time footage, accessible through remote access, was downloaded and shared



on a common WhatsApp group comprising of the committee members, activists and BMC officers.

The BMC appointed personnel called a



Nuisance Detector (ND) (or Swachhtadoot). They

spoke to the identified community members and convinced them to avoid throwing the garbage and to instead give the waste to the BMC collectors.

Lillian Pais, who coordinated closely with the BMC officers, strongly advocates the use of technology in resolving difficult yet sensitive issues.

“BMC officers worked with us to understand the situation and chalk out the plan of action. They provided us with an ND who was physically present at the site and monitored the situation on a daily basis. That made a huge difference as people became aware of the seriousness of the issue and started cooperating,” says Lillian. “Another challenge was identifying the offending citizens. This was effectively solved by the CCTV cameras. Screen grabs of the litterers helped identify and stem the flow of garbage being dumped.”

Gradually, the amount of garbage being dumped started reducing. And as of end of July, there have been several zero garbage days.

NOTE: The horrific past of Jewish Cemetery...we are still monitoring with Wi-Fi CCTV from our homes... Thanks to Mario we have digitally been able to educate the slum population at Khadeswari not to dump outside Jewish Cemetery – Lillian Paes MMJ

Hospital Health-care Delivery

contd. from Page 2 anyway have good business from direct (genuine) referral systems. But greed has no limits. They would still want more patients. It is an open secret in any hospital that the doctor who brings in more business would be given a preferred treatment. Therefore, these doctors will continue to thrive with the help of such unethical practices.

In the part 2 of this article, we will dive deeper into this dark territory and see how this was streamlined. It is to be noted that this article does NOT refer to any particular hospital. These practices are followed in many hospitals. MMJ

To volunteer in AGNI or to form Advanced Locality Management (ALM) contact your respective Ward Coordinators below:-

AGNI WARD COORDINATORS				
WARD NAME	AREAS	AGNI COORDINATOR	PHONE	EMAIL
A	Churchgate, Colaba, Cuffe Parade, Fort, SCT	Jennifer Shetty	9867752771	jenniferagni@gmail.com
D	Malabar Hill, Mahalaxmi, Opera House, Girgaum	Theo D'Souza	9820303940	theomdsouza@gmail.com
F/North	Sion, Wadala, Matunga(E), Dadar(E), Antop Hill	Nikhil Desai	9819930405	n.c.desai2022@gmail.com
G/North	Mahim, Dadar(W), Matunga(W), Dharavi	Bulu Saldanha	9920323831	Bulu_saldanha@yahoo.com
H/East	Bandra(E), Khar(E), Santa Cruz(E), Kalina	Reuben Dias	9930569225	Reuben6947@gmail.com
K/East	Vile Parle(E), Andheri(E), Jogeshwari(E)	James John	9324086140	K_james_john@hotmail.com
K/West	Vile Parle(W), Andheri(W), Versova, Jogeshwari (W)	Sandra Alex	9820602521	sandraalex2357@gmail.com
L	Kurla, Nehru Nagar, Chandivli	Nutan Bhalla	9819171015	Nutsie59@gmail.com
N	Ghatkopar, Vikhroli	Kishor K. Chudasama	9821051346	Kishorkc_shantu@rediffmail.com
P/South	Goregaon(W)	Anthony Dias	9821291660	diasapvoice@gmail.com
R/South	Kandivli (East & West), Charkop	S.K. Nangia	9322258038	Sknangia2004@yahoo.com
R/North	Borivli, Dahisar (East & West), IC Colony	Willie Sirsat, Shrikant Soman, Glenda Almeida	9820213392 9324228946 9820291563	Shirshatwillie382@hotmail.com Shrikant.soman@gmail.com.com glenda301@gmail.com
M/West	Chembur	Krantikumar Sherkhane	7039030255	Krantikumars@gmail.com
S	Bhandul, Kanjurmarg, Powai	Pamela Cheema	9820150748	pamelacheema@gmail.com
T	Mulund	Laxmidas Thakkar	8080011966	l.thakkar@yahoo.co.in

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