March 2021 > A MonthlyNewsletter > For private circulation only

Mumbai Meri Jaan

Forward This To All - And All Forward - Together

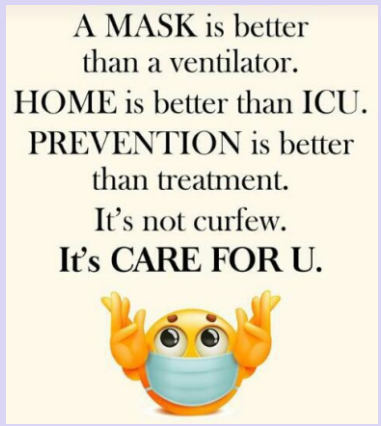
Action for good Governance & Networking in India
AGNI

Editorial

With Mumbaikars flouting norms, Covid-19 cases surge

There has been an uptick of cases in Maharashtra mainly because, citizens violate the Covid-19 norms as declared by the Centre and state governments. People are moving in public places without masks, no social distancing is maintained and there are crowded gatherings in hotels, halls, trains etc.

The Chief Minister was candid taking the errant citizens to task for rampant violations of Covid-19 norms. In fact, he questioned the citizens whether they want a lockdown again. He added it is up to citizens to decide.



The Chief Minister announced the "Mi Jababdar (I am responsible) campaign, where everyone will take upon themselves the responsibility to mask up in public, sanitise and maintain social distancing". The mask is the armour against Covid-19 infection. So it is crystal clear that it is up to us Mumbaikars to follow strictly Covid-19 protocols and thus be safe to ourselves, our families and our friends. Meanwhile Chief Minister has banned social, religious and political gatherings.

The Centre meanwhile has announced the third phase of vaccinations for 60+ senior citizens and 45+ with comorbidities from 1st March 2021. They can register on the CoWIN 2.0 app from 1st March 2021.

Let us all vow to follow the Covid-19 protocols strictly! MMJ

Upgradation of joggers park

✍ Shyama Kulkarni, AGNI Trustee

A plot of land on the Bandra seafront between Otters Club and the Chimbai rocks was being used as a dumping ground 30 years ago. The then Municipal Councillor, Sir Oliver Andrade, who was a sports master in a local school, took a bold decision to convert it into a park. With the help of local citizens and the BMC, work started and on May 27th, 1990, Joggers Park was officially

Children's Park

opened. It was maintained by Lokhandwalla Builders with an entrance fee of Rs. 2/=, but in 2016, the BMC took over all open spaces, which meant Joggers Park started deteriorating fast as there were no restrictions about the kind of people who entered the park.

A decision was taken by the regular walkers, under the guidance of our Councillor, Mr. Asif Zakaria to upgrade the park. Mr. Majeed Memon, Rajya Sabha Member, gave 15 lakhs from his MPLAD Funds to renovate the toilets. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus pandemic started and work proceeded at a slow pace. But the refurbishment of the park is almost complete now. New high steel railings with spikes have been installed to prevent unauthorized people from entering the park.

Jogger's Park which comprises three acres of land has not only garden space, but also three contd. on Page 4

Voter registration and correction 1st March 2021 to 30th April 2021

Election commission of India announced revision of the Voters' list based on the eligibility date of January 2021.

Appeal to all whose names are not in the electoral roll to fill up *Form 6* and get enrolled at www.nsvp.in

Kindly fill *Form 8* - Application for correction to particulars entered in Electoral Roll.

Objections and claims will be accepted from 1st March 2021 upto 30th April 2021.

For more information call on toll-free number 1950
https://verpotortal.eci.gov.in/
https://www.nvsp.in/Account/Login MMJ

How citizens can redress their grievances in law

✍ Jennifer Shetty

This article is the result of a personal experience. Due to a personal issue I had to visit the police station frequently. As a corollary of the issue, I ended up being a victim in a situation which instead warranted swift action and an FIR by the police.

When the situation occurred I rang up the police number 100. Since the duty officer did not file the FIR, I met a senior police officer. He advised me to write an application about the issue. I did it on the same day. He then told me that he would organise a meeting with the ACP and Senior Police Inspector after two days.

When I met him after two days, I was told a warning notice was issued to the person concerned. I believed him. The situation was quiet for a week, but then the ugly issue reared its head once again. After two weeks I sent a reminder in writing asking what action was taken, but no reply! Four emails—but no reply! I followed up with an RTI asking for a copy of the FIR. I got a reply saying that the complaint was not worthy of an FIR. I was alarmed, as the reply was filed by an officer who had not even seen or read my application. I met the ACP, the application was sent to the concerned duty officer. My statement was then recorded.

I did not give up because I saw that my matter was being trivialized for obvious reasons. I met the Additional CP, he spoke to both the DCP and ACP. He told me to meet the ACP, she assured me that she would look into the matter but I was disappointed again. I wondered what else I could do and how I could address this apathy. However, I kept telling myself, "I'm not giving up and I must get justice as such incidents must be solved according to the due process of law."

Without batting an eyelid, I proceeded to the Home Minister's office. contd. on Page 4

Hawker menace in Juhu

✍Zahida Banatwala

The pandemic has its ups and downs. The lockdown brought all hawking activities to a complete standstill. Migrants left the city in large numbers and all hawking areas had a deserted look. However,

this situation was not to last for a long period, soon life started getting back to normal and hawking activities started with a vengeance. Juhu beach witnessed unprecedented footfalls and citizens' behaviour was as if Covid-19 was done and dusted and everyone had been vaccinated.

Hawkers found new ways to store their wares. Housing Societies were alert and vigilant about the situation and started posting videos on whatsapp groups. Hawkers dug trenches deep enough to create

bunkers on the beach and deep in the sand built boxes of marine plywood with a lid to lock the goods and then camouflage the same with sand. Such ingenuity, shocking and scary. Today it is a hawker's wares, tomorrow something more dangerous.

All this happening with a

Police chowki just 200 meters away.

Thanks to dutiful citizens, matters were soon taken into control by elected representatives, BMC officials and the police. A demolition squad came and destroyed or confiscated the goods. A regular monitoring of the area is keeping things under check.

On the flip side a Senior PI was appointed to Juhu Police Station, Shri Shashi Kant Mane. Soon after his appointment he started connecting with the residents of the area and

getting to know them. It was a very pleasant surprise when he requested me to arrange a meeting with citizens in Gandhi Gram garden by the beach so that he could meet up with a large group of citizens. It was a wonderful experience chatting with police officials where they interacted with citizens and inquired if they had any problems and said that the police would try to solve the same. Times are changing in Mumbai and certainly in Juhu!

Zahida Banatwalla is AGNI's Coordinator in K(W) ward. MMJ

COVID-19 to Vaccinations 2021

✍Kala Suresh, M ward AGNI member

Impact of COVID 19

The year 2019 will be remembered as the dreadful year of the pandemic from December 2019 to the surge in infections continuing in 2020, pushing the world into the throes of misery. Many lost their lives, yet others lost jobs and economies crashed. The poor perished due to hunger.

Action taken

What did Governments across the world do? They put their citizens under a lockdown with strict instructions for hand washing, masking and social distancing, in an effort to stem the rising tide of Coronavirus.

Vaccination as solution

New mutants are also emerging with cases of the UK strain and South Africa strain spreading rapidly. To combat the grave situation, scientists have come up with vaccines raising hopes that normality will soon return.

Our own country has been engaged in vaccine production. The drug regulatory authority of India has authorised the use of 2 vaccines - Covishield and Covaxin for emergency use. There are a lot of other vaccines which are in the early stages of trial. India has started the world's largest vaccination drive by vaccinating its healthcare workers and frontline workers in phase 1, followed by the rest of the population in phase 2 and 3, but excluding children, those with allergies, pregnant women and lactating mothers

Hurdles in Vaccination

Yet there is much discussion that the vaccines have been released in a hurry and so they may have side effects. This has scared the common man and with the half-baked knowledge he/she has, they are busy spreading such misformation.

Vaccines have been launched only after detailed research and trials. India is not new to vaccinations. It's common knowledge using past experience that any vaccine may have minor side effects like fever, pain at the site administered and weakness. Healthy individuals get over this easily and go on to develop immunity. This is what will happen with COVID 19 vaccines also.

Reputed doctors in Mumbai like Dr. Nitin Narvekar and Dr. Ajanta Narvekar from the famous Narvekar Infertility and Endoscopy Clinic have already taken the vaccine. The doctor and his wife who took the vaccine are senior citizens themselves. They too advocate that the vaccines are safe and must be taken by everybody when their turn comes. They even told me that they felt little weakness and pain in the injection site, which was expected. They will be taking their second dose soon. They even mentioned that the entire vaccine drive was very well managed by the authorities.

Another reputed Neurologist from Jaslok hospital has also taken the vaccine at the BKC centre,

What now?

Health is wealth and so it is the duty of citizens to see that they register themselves for the vaccination.

The following links will answer all your questions and dispel all your doubts about vaccination and the entire procedure.

https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsonCOVID19vaccineFLWEnglish.pdf

Those of you who seek more detailed technical information, like the kind of vaccines being launched, please visit the site - https://www.mohfw.gov.in/covid_vaccination/vaccination/dist/images/documents/COVID19VaccineOG111Chapter16.pdf MMJ

Expert's view on fears of Covid 19 vaccine

Dr. Randeep Guleria chief of the country's premier medical institute AIIMS, Delhi and a member of the task force to combat Corona virus (Covid-19), after taking the second dose, said *"I haven't found any side effect from the first dose. I didn't face any difficulty. I would urge people not to fear the vaccine and it is totally safe. People should come out and take the vaccine. This is essential if we want to come out of the pandemic."* Like Dr. Guleria, there are other experts also have expressed similar views. It is therefore necessary to go ahead with the vaccination without fear.

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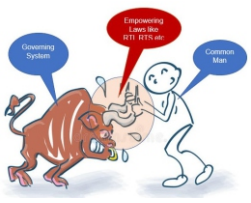

Take the Bull by the Horns How to make the Governing System work for Citizens - 5

Shrikant Soman

Maharashtra Right to Public Service Act, 2015 (RTS)

In our previous article we have learned about the preliminary aspects of the RTS.

We have a mobile app and WEB Portal 'Aaple Sarkar' in both English and Marathi for availing the services under the RTS. The RTS commission has published two annual reports, the latest being for the year 2018-19.

One of the most important aspects of RTS is making all government departments accountable to citizens by committing for a time bound service under various heads. There is a radical change in the perspective of being a 'bureaucracy' to a 'service provider' in the same way as any private enterprise does. The position of the citizens seeking any service from the government department is elevated from being at the mercy of government officials to 'demanding' the service within the prescribed time frame.

Section 3 of the RTS Act makes it mandatory for all departments to notify their Public Services and the Designated Officers along with First and Second Appellate Authority. They also have to set a specific time limit for each notified service within three months from the enactment of the Act and thereafter from time to time. Accordingly, out of 31 departments 26 departments have notified 486 services under this Act until 31 March 2019 for which data is available.

A landmark feature of the RTS is the 'Citizens Charter' (CC). It is nothing short of being a 'Statement of Commitment from the Government Department to the Citizens to give various services in a time bound manner'.

There is a dedicated website site for the Maharashtra Government at https://aaplesarkar.mahaonline.gov.in/ This is a very comprehensive site giving full information about the Department notified services and the details of the Government's thrust area of the 'Ease of Doing Business'.

A sample of the service commitment of the Building and Factory Department is given below:

Action against ongoing unauthorized construction.

1. Detection of ongoing unauthorized work during the usual round of inspection or on receipt of complaints from citizens.
2. Taking photographs of ongoing unauthorized work showing the date and set up of the work.
3. Preparation of inspection report and panchnama of ongoing work.
4. Taking entry in detection register and preparing notice U/Sec. 354 (A) of the MMC Act.

Time limit for the action to be taken for all the above 4 steps: 24 hours Concerned Authority responsible: Junior Engineer / Sub Engineer

5. Approving and Signing the notice prepared by JE/ SE.: 24 hours, AE (B&F)
6. Serving of notice on the person / owner carrying out unauthorized construction: 24 hours, Building Mukadam
7. Sending notice to the local police station for registering the complaint, 24 hrs, Building Mukadam.
8. Passing an appropriate speaking order for demolition if the unauthorized construction is not stopped or documents proving authorization of structures are not produced within 24 hours

After the expiry of 24 Hours from the notice, A.E. (B & F)

9. Demolition of unauthorized construction on expiry of notice period.: After expiry 24 Hours from the order, Junior Engineer / Sub Engineer
10. Taking entry of demolition in demolition / detection/notice register. After demolition., Junior Engineer / Sub Engineer
11. Filing of W.S/A.I.R. in court, in case of stay granted by court restraining MCGM from taking further action and noting the same in the court injunction register. As directed by legal dept., Junior Engineer / Sub Engineer
12. Further action as per final judgment of Hon'ble Court.: As directed by legal dept., Junior Engineer / Sub Engineer

There is also a mechanism for ENFORCING these service commitments. Citizens can file complaints for non-performance of the guidelines.

Shrikant Soman is AGNI's Coordinator in R (N) Ward

MMJ

Feedback

I must say that the articles- success stories etc.- and pictures printed in this MMJ are, even during the present otherwise depressing pandemic times, quite inspiring! I fail to understand why such articles and stories are never published-- never find a place-- in the daily newspapers that we read in the morning every day. After all, is cut-throat politics and sensational news the be-all and end-all of everything?

Just a stray thought, a mere brain wave, -- is it a good idea, and is it worthwhile and possible to do our bit through the next issue(s) of MMJ -- to overcome the misguided fear and nervousness about vaccination against corona (despite the prescribed precautions and safeguards) among some people, their number, as I guess, being, unfortunately, rather sizeable?

D.M.Sukthankar, Patron, AGNI

See Page 2 for article on Covid - Vaccination & Experts view on fears on Covid vaccination.- Ed

Sharad and Pamela have done once again a great job in bringing out the MMJ for the month of February 2021. Their determination needs our support and effort to extend the MMJ's reach to friends, associates, clubs, societies and neighbours. **Gerson daCunha, Convenor, AGNI** Contd. on Page 4

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.

MMJ

A VERY BIG THANK YOU for Donations received

in the month of February 2021:

Mr. Keith A. J. Rs.5,000/=

Mr. Rajnikant Parmar Rs.500/=

Upgradation of joggers park

contd. from Page 1 major tracks. The mud track has been upgraded with fresh layers of mud for comfortable walking. The second track has been upgraded with synthetic material and while hard and rugged basalt stone has been used for the third track. The entrance pathway along with the jogging tracks, has Ferrari roofs to create a permanent covering during the monsoons.

The new children's playground has soft EPDM flooring, to ensure that the children do not get hurt while playing. There is a covered amphitheatre area for parents who can sit and supervise their children.

Ferrari Roof

The old duck pond area now has a flooring of basalt stone which enables better retention of water for ducks and fish. We are also hoping to acquire a filtration plant. Bollard lights and Bougainville flower fences add to the beauty of the park. 3M-Aqua Green has provided free drinking water.

This commendable development work has been done by the Garden Infrastructure Cell, MCGM, and the team of H-West Ward 101, with inputs from our Municipal Councilor, Asif Zakaria, and Architect Rinka D'Monte. The Park is sponsored by Lokhandwala & Rizvi Builders.

MMJ

Feedback

I have seen the editorial, I am trying to trace the origin of this different treatment to urban and rural local bodies with regard to political party symbols. Will need to examine the legal position also. So will get back after I have clarity on these issues. **U. P. S. Madan, State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra**

We, at the SEC Maharashtra will examine your suggestion and get back to you as soon as possible. **Kiran Kurundkar, Secretary, State Election Commission, Maharashtra**

Very impressive. **Peter Greaves, UNICEF Programme Division at UN headquarters**

I'm very impressed to see that India has a Digital Voters Card! The UK hasn't got anything like this, even in the pipeline, so far as I know. **Rashne Gittins**

How citizens can redress their grievances in law

contd. from Page 1 I was told that he has a weekly darbar and meets citizens to redress their grievances. I met the Home Minister, Mr. Anil Deshmukh, with my application—I highlighted the important points as politicians don't have the time to read detailed petitions. The Home Minister personally spoke to the DCP and told him to look into the matter immediately. However, despite this meeting my matter was still not resolved. But I did not give up!

In the meantime, the DCP got transferred, my matter was referred to the legal cell for advice and unfortunately, delayed. I met the Home Minister again for the second time. He spoke to the new DCP. I met the new DCP and within a week, I received a message from the ACP to contact the concerned police station. The next day I received a call to say the FIR was lodged and that I should collect a copy of the same. Important points that citizens must know:

- Know the rules and regulations thoroughly
- Plug loopholes from day one
- Always complain on 100 first as the call is recorded.
- After reaching the police station, if your complaint is trivialized and not written down, you must call 100 again and report that your complaint is not being recorded.
- Be aware of 'influence' that may be used.
- Make sure the case is not changed subtly to suit the opposite party.

Imagine the plight of the uneducated who do not know how to negotiate these situations. I have often wondered what we as citizens can do to change this system as not everyone has the time to follow up a tortuous redressal of grievances or the means to go about it.

Jennifer Shetty is AGNI's Coordinator in A ward.

MMJ

Sent a small donation of 5k in appreciation of the work being done. **Keith A. J.**

Great boss. Congrats to you and your team. **Major Suresh Goel**

Good articles, as always! **Shrinidhi**

Patron

D. M. Sukthankar

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