

PRESENTATION AT FEED

An aerial photograph of a crowded beach, likely in Mumbai, India. The beach is filled with people, some walking, some standing, and some sitting. In the foreground, there is a large, decorated float or cart with colorful fabrics and people on it. A camel is also visible in the middle ground. The ocean is visible in the background with waves breaking on the shore.

DEMOCRACY ARCHITECTURE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

A CASE OF MUMBAI'S WATERFRONTS

P K Das Architect Activist

Citizens inspire Bandra face-lift

Nasser Lalljee

Bandra

ON this waterfront, there is certainly no Marlon Brando, but the people of Bandra Bandstand certainly have their own heroes.

It is to the credit of these heroes who set about saving a coastline that had been endangered by indiscriminate dumping. The movement took off with the Mohalla committee, which was formed in 1993, when a group of people started taking an interest in civic problems. They formed the Bandra Bandstand Residents Association in 1996, which was later converted to a trust in 2000.

The blatant dumping of rubbish along their precious coastline outraged the sensibilities of the local residents who had earlier fought it out in the court and got 1,500 trucks of debris removed from the area facing the Bandstand Fort. Once this was done the group moved ahead to try and reclaim whatever was left of the coastline. The idea was to prevent it from encroachments, particularly those that had come up in the area around the Searock hotel.

The citizens had already conceived of a promenade, prepared a plan and worked with architect PK Das, who designed and implemented it. Plans were approved by the BMC, MSRDC, collector, and other concerned bodies. The funds were provided by Shabana Azmi, MP, Rajya Sabha, under the MPLAD scheme for the infrastructure. But seeing the manner in which the work was proceeding, and the effort being poured by the locals, more money was

invested into the project.

The construction started in May 1999. Exactly one year later May 2000 saw the Naval Police Band inaugurate the promenade at bandstand. Then came the Art fair on November 27, 2000. This was followed by a party for the under-privileged children in December 2000. An interactive play to highlight the problems of the common man was held next on the May 6, 2001.



The variety of events held at the promenade has brought the citizens closer to each other and there is a growing sense of camaraderie among all those who come here. They voluntarily stop people from creating nuisance, throwing rubbish as they have developed a sense of ownership.

The promenade is now almost complete, and a 1.6 km stretch of reclaimed land, from Bandstand to St. Andrews Church corner, has been saved from certain disaster. Encroachment and other such nuisances would have certainly destroyed the entire already endangered coastline.

"The people have developed a good trust and funds are slowly trickling in." The association and

locals are appealing to every flat-owner in Bandstand to pay Rs 20 per month. Apart from this certain sponsors have taken a keen interest and have contributed towards the development of gardens and other features.

If this example is emulated, a number of public spaces will be reclaimed by the people, for the people.

M U M B A I

Winds of change sweep across Mumbai's vandalised waterfronts

By Gunwanthi Balaram

MUMBAI: "In a city gasping for breath, it is quite dreadful," observes British architect and 'Bombay boy' Pierre d'Avoine, "that Mumbai's greatest open spaces, its waterfronts, are being so vandalised that its people can derive little benefit from them." Treated as dumping grounds for debris, garbage and sewage, or as free sites for encroachment, several of Mumbai's waterfronts are actually shunned by its residents. So, it is heartening to find some citizens' groups and architects launching joint initiatives to nurse their bit of waterfront back to life—as in Bandra, for instance.

Walk along the Bandra waterfront now, and you will find that the dramatic black rocks along the old Band Stand are rising from the debris, as it were, as are the mangroves off Carter Road. What's more, a new promenade is being constructed along these contours of seafront so people can take a brisk walk and get a breath of fresh air.

The Bandra project, on which work started a couple of months ago, is part of architect and housing activist P.K. Das' masterplan for the restoration of the city's waterfront. Drawn up over two years ago, the masterplan looks at the phased rejuvenation of three types of waterfront areas—public spaces like beaches and waterfront promenades; native settlements like fishing villages; and seaside heritage precincts like the Worli, Mahim, Bandra and Vasai forts.



CITIZENS' WALK: The landscaped promenade at Bandra Band Stand, master-planned by a local architect, will involve citizens' participation in its execution and maintenance

To begin with, he is sensibly tackling public spaces. These include 14 independent schemes estimated to cost about Rs 1 crore each to execute. Committed to the rules of the coastal regulation zone, the architect is anti-reclamation and believes instead that "it is important to stop the abuse of our existing waterfronts and work within the existing realities to progressively restore and preserve their natural beauty".

His restoration projects envisage the creation of landscaped walkway, pedestrianisation, seating, lighting, security, drainage, planting of suitable trees and shrubs and the installation of plaques on the history of the waterfront/neighbourhood. "Above all, they involve citizens' participation in execution and maintenance."

The Bandra scheme is being executed under the supervision of a team of local residents' associations with an initial grant from Rajya Sabha MP and actress Shabana Azmi. She has donated Rs one crore from her MP's constituency development fund to the Bandra-Juhu waterfront development programme—Rs 30 lakhs each for Carter Road and Band Stand and Rs 40 lakhs for Juhu.

"We will mobilise donations to carry on the upgradation work, and collect a small monthly maintenance fee from our 1,200 members to maintain the promenade. There will be no entry fee and everybody is welcome to use the promenade," say Arup Sarbhadikary and Ka-

mala Soni of the Bandra Band Stand Residents' Association. "Impressed by the work so far, new sponsors are coming forward," adds a Carter Road resident.

"I'm thrilled, my faith in the abilities of the local citizens' groups and the architect of the scheme has been vindicated," says Shabana Azmi. "Such localised initiatives are the best alternative to large grandiose plans which move away from citizens rather than draw them in. They also cut across class barriers," maintains the MP, adding that she intends to continue to support them in every way she can.

Work on the Juhu project will commence next month, according to Ms Azmi. It envisages sprucing up the beach as well as the 'influence areas', i.e. the Juhu-Tara Road and the seven axis roads leading to the beach, and creating a plaza around the Shivaji statue with proper sanitation facilities for both hawkers and visitors.

Several agencies, including the traffic police, the taximen's and hawkers' unions, residents' groups and the National Airport Authority have been consulted on the issue and have agreed to cooperate in the Rs 2.4 crore project, adds Mr Das. The plans for the Dadar-Prabhadevi waterfront have also been cleared by the BMC, and the architect and local citizens' groups are discussing how best to implement the programme. "Hopefully, it will all come together. It's hard work, but very rewarding," he says.

















AREA - 437 SQ KM
POPULATION - 1.5 MILION











Rise of the citizen activist

The urban middle class has been largely indifferent to the majority of social and political issues. But the tide's turning. We should now go beyond single-issue activism and look to empower the weak and voiceless

Looking for a cause?

Wada Na Todo Abhiyan

A national campaign focusing on developing a 10-point charter across 300 constituencies in 20 states with demands of socially-excluded groups on issues like housing, livelihood, environment and social justice. It will be submitted to the sitting member of Parliament and all candidates before 2009 elections.

CONTACT: www.wadanatodo.net

Think Bombay

Started by a Mumbai-based think tank and students of Nirmala Niketan, it aims to provide medical and financial aid, counselling and jobs to 26/11 victims. Volunteers are visiting families, whose primary wage-earners were killed or injured.

CONTACT: Sunaina Bhatnagar at sunaina_bh@yahoo.co.in

Jagrut Nagrik Manch

A group of 20 organisations that aims to bring about political change through public intervention. They will take up two issues every month — address an illegal activity and put governance

Shivani Singh
New Delhi, January 8

THE POWER of one is to seek change that the power of many can achieve. The public is powerful only when individuals are not self-contained.

As the India growth story bloomed through the past one-and-a-half decades, its biggest benefactor — the country's vocal and opinion-shaping middle class — increasingly drifted toward political apathy. Its growing indifference to larger social issues and a *chalta hai* attitude had begun to undo much of the gains we made as a democracy. Lately though, the tide is turning.

Most recently, we have seen people like us — the city-bred middle class — walking the rallies and holding candlelight vigils. Such efforts worked wonders in cases like Jessica Lall's or Priyadarshini Mattoo's. Now we have even the rich and famous in the activism mode after the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai.

As a people, we always had it in us. Our freedom struggle was a sterling ex-

ample of public activism. A couple of decades after Independence, we saw people power during the Chipko movement. States like Kerala and West Bengal have traditionally been hotbeds of mass activism. Elsewhere, we had Dalit families coming together to claim their human and social dignity, or even uneducated women joining hands to ban liquor in their villages to rein in the wayward men.

Then the Right to Information revolution took place.

But we seem to come out of our stupor only when we feel directly threatened.

The middle class in Delhi assembled at India Gate because it could no longer disassociate itself from the victims of rape and murder. The Mumbai rich walked to the Gateway only when the five-star hotels were attacked.

"This is a good trend but it has to lead somewhere," said Arvind Kejriwal, RTI activist who won the Magsaysay Award. "People's campaigns have to be focused on lasting solutions and systematic changes than just jumping from one event to another. But nobody, including the media wants to talk about it because systematic changes sound dry and boring," he said. "In Jessica Lall's case, focus was on getting justice for her family. It should have been used as a lead to campaign for changes in the criminal justice system. But we didn't see it happen."

Activism by the middle class, the rich and famous, draws media attention and moves authorities; more frequent protests by the poor and weak often go unnoticed.

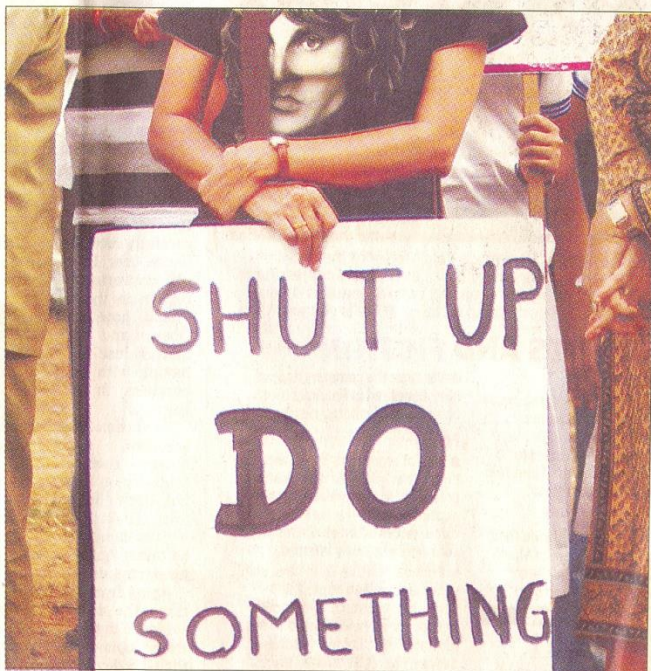
Last month, police de-

tained more than 100 Dalits in Tamil Nadu because they tried to enter a village temple. It didn't help that they had a court order allowing them entry. The spurt in public activism in our cities is a welcome change, but it will achieve its true meaning when the educated and empowered lend their support to the weak and voiceless.

Dipankar Gupta, sociologist at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, wants the media to play a greater role.

"Newspapers and TV channels through intimate and in-your-face reporting were able to provoke people to speak up in case of Jessica and Mumbai attacks," Gupta said. "But we don't see such intimate reporting of farmers' suicides. To stoke sympathy for such a cause, the media has to show greater commitment."

We have stepped into the new era of almost institutionalised public activism through the Right to Information Act. One hopes a day will come when our cities will step out into the streets demanding safe drinking water for our villages.



PUNEET CHANDHOK/HT FILE PHOTO

The educated and the empowered must lend their support to the weak and the voiceless.

The *chalta hai* attitude of the vocal opinion-shaping middle class had begun to undo much of the gains we made as a democracy.

channa@hindustantimes.com

New face of protest: Cyberspace

Kamayani Singh
New Delhi, January 8

THE MARCHES are on, thousands of feet are pounding in protest, and slogans are reverberating — all in the virtual world.

The role of social networking sites has moved beyond staying in touch with old classmates and sharing photographs. They are swiftly becoming platforms to discuss serious issues, opening up a new and effective theatre of protest.

Before the Mumbai siege came to an end, a community called 'In memory of all those who died in the 26th-27th November Mumbai massacre' was created on Facebook.

In 24 hours, it found over 15,000 members, and a month later it has over 85,000 members from over 25 countries.

And it was started by a 14-year-old.

Anyone can lead protests on the Internet. "I didn't expect so many to join," said Shubham Kanodia, a Class 9 student from Santacruz, Mumbai, who started the protest page.

"Many from Pakistan on the community have condemned the attacks and there are comments on apathy of politicians," he said.

A similar community on Facebook is called 'I'm a fan of the great hero who hit Bush with his shoes in Baghdad'. It has 1,04,000 members already. Sura Alani from Iraq, who created the community, said she had not originally started it as a serious endeavour. "We have Arab and American youth not only discussing Iraq but also making an effort to understand each other," said Alani. "Social networking websites are the place where questions can be raised without any fear

Social networking sites are swiftly becoming a platform to discuss serious issues, opening up a new and effective theatre of protest

of consequences."

Comments made on both the communities are representative of how these websites are helping people reach out to each other. "America is still full of amazing people. Please don't see us as our President [Bush]. The only way we'll ever eternally love each other is if we learn more about each other," wrote Marcus Acosta from the United States.

Another user, Claire Singleton from Sheffield, wrote:

"I live in the UK and my boyfriend is from Baghdad. What we see on TV in UK is totally different from the reality of what Bush and Blair have done to Iraq."

The fact that people on these Internet sites don't know each other helps them be more open.

"Social network sites may be more appropriate than newsgroups, listservs, blogs and chat rooms for some political discussions as social network profiles give you plenty of information on the user you are communicating with..." said Nicole Ellison, a media and information studies expert at Michigan State University in the US.

There are some who feel that the Net is the most appropriate space for future activism since it is convenient and peaceful.

"It's not time-consuming and can't lead to violence. It helps in citizen empowerment," said Anand Kumar, a professor of sociology at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University. "It can be the future of activism, provided it leads to some tangible results and the political establishment starts taking it seriously."

change@hindustantimes.com

WANT TO BE AN ONLINE ACTIVIST?

CREATE A profile on a social networking website.

JOIN OR start your own community there. You can also send invites to your friends, urging them to join.

BLOGS AND social network websites have discussion boards where you can interact with other users.

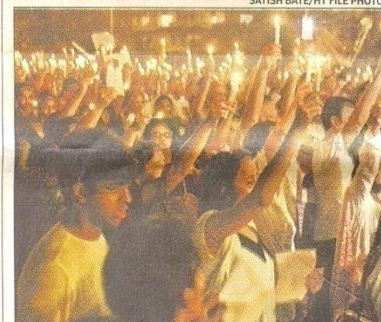
ONLINE PETITIONS can be posted on discussion boards.

SOCIAL NETWORKING web-

sites can help you search for old classmates, colleagues and other people who might be interested in a common cause.

YOU CAN use the 'events calendar' to notify group members about meetings, marches, fund-raisers and talks on issues related to the cause.

ONLINE ARCHIVE of articles and papers related to the cause can be built.



Mumbai residents at a peace rally at the Gateway of India, in memory of those killed in the terror attacks.

Mumbai's citizens step out to make a difference

Ketaki Ghogre
Mumbai, January 8

AGENT OF CHANGE

TRUPTI PANCHAL (25) has a degree in business management and a job with an insurance company. Her ambitions however lie elsewhere; the 25-year-old resident of Juhu in Mumbai wants to join politics — perhaps contest municipal elections as a start.

Family and friends hope she will outgrow this fad, but Panchal is among a small but growing number of youth who are convinced that if they want change, they must enter public life.

If you want to change anything about the way we are being governed, you have to enter politics.

TRUPTI PANCHAL (25), plans to be a political leader

"How much can you shout from the outside? If you want to change anything about the way we are being governed, you have to enter politics," said Panchal. "Youngsters can't afford political apathy anymore."

After the terror attacks, Panchal and a group of 30-odd friends — they met on the anti-terror circuit — have joined hands with Jagrut Nagrik Manch. JaNaM, as it is known, is a group of 20-odd Mumbai-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the city.

The group wants to have a say in electoral politics and plans to introduce consensus candidates in Mum-

THE MUMBAIKAR
After 26/11, the Mumbai resident is asking questions and campaigning for change

bai for the Assembly polls.

"We have shown that citizens can enter politics, when we made Adolf D'Souza's election possible in the last Mumbai civic elections. This time we are looking at a pan-Mumbai scenario," said Praful Vora, a member of JaNaM.

It's also running drives to remove illegal hoardings and get an elected officer to run Mumbai's affairs.

Like JaNaM, many groups that got together to help 26/11 victims or express solidarity are doing more.

Maharashtra's public health department, which launched a civic interface through Nirmala Niketan College to rehabilitate 26/11 victims, is looking to set up Peace Corps in the city. "Peace Corps is aimed as a citizen vigil group in localities. We are also seeking government interface, so some defence training is given to civilians," said Farida Lambay, vice-principal of Nirmala Niketan.

Whether it is helping victims or questioning governance and politics, Mumbai's middle-class is asking questions, for the first time in decades. It is also ready to get out and protest as well as campaign for its leaders.

change@hindustantimes.com

INDIAN EXPRESS, 21.11.2002, MUMBAI NEWS

A community effort scripts a success story

THE development of the seafront at Carter Road and Bandra Bandstand has won international recognition, with the receipt of this year's award instituted by the Washington-based Waterfront Centre for Waterfront Development Projects. Selected among entries from all over the world, the award recognises the efforts of an entire community to 'retrieve its waterfront for the public'.

A few years ago, the 4.5-km stretch of the Bandra seafront was little more than a dumping ground, sewage disposal area and thickly peopled by encroachers. It was P K Das, an architect by profession and also among the architects of the save-the-waterfront scheme, who took up the cause of the depleting open spaces in Mumbai and conducted an extensive study of Mumbai's waterfronts. Soon, the Bandra West Residents' Association (BWRA), the Bandra Bandstand Residents Trust (BBRT), P K Das & Associates and Member of Parliament Shabana Azmi came together to save the Bandra seafront. What



Bandra Bandstand after the redevelopment work

followed is a classic success story of citizens' civic efforts.

"We felt we needed to do something to protect our water-fronts," says Darryl D'Monte, president of BWRA and noted environmental activist. "So we got together and forged a partnership." Das handled the architectural inputs, Shabana

Azmi contributed nearly Rs 1 crore from her MP's (local area development) funds and the residents took up the cause as one they all held dear.

That was perhaps when the mission's success was assured — For the first time, different organisations pitched in together. The govern-

ment in the shape of the MHADA and the private citizens' forums worked in co-ordination to restore the picturesque coastline at Bandstand and Carter Road. The results of the redevelopment efforts are in plain sight — palm trees, amphitheatres, a children's park, an art court.

Having re-designed the facade, there was still the question of maintenance. That's where Harsh Mariwalla of Marico Industries contributed his bit. Marico Industries has so far spent almost Rs 25 lakh towards the beautification drive and planted more than 30 species of palm trees. That's where the name Palm Promenade at Carter Road comes from. Another corporate, US Vitamins, contributes to the maintenance of Bandstand.

The seafront has gradually grown into a buzzing cultural centre, where concerts, yoga and tai-chi sessions and plays are held. "There's a play every Friday, and in January 2003 we will be organising a major concert and a carnival too," says D'Monte.

— UJJAYINI DAS













PREAMBLE

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JUSTICE, social, economic and political
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity
and to promote among them all.
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY the twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do, **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION**



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Govt revises growth rate to 9.6%

1 Feb 2008, 0049 hrs IST,TNN

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NEW DELHI: The government on Thursday revised upwards the GDP growth rate for 2006-07 to 9.6% — the highest in 18 years — from 9.4% according to its previous estimate.

Though inflation combating has induced an element of moderation, [finance](#) minister P Chidambaram appeared confident of the economy achieving a 9% growth hat-trick.

A higher growth meant that economic activity in India was estimated at Rs 28.64 lakh crore, while per capita [income](#) rose to Rs 22,553, as against Rs 20,858 in 2005-06.

However, the revision did not alter the sweepstakes as even the 9.4% GDP growth was second highest ever. And, despite the higher growth rate in 2005-06, China retained the top slot.

The revisions put average growth over the past four years at 8.8%. But what was lost in the celebration of an improved performance was the fact that the growth in the last fiscal was achieved over a higher base in 2004-05 for which the estimates were revised from 9% to 9.4%.

The higher growth achieved in 2006-07 was on account of an upward revision in agricultural output estimates — and, growth rate which rose from previously estimated 2.7% to 3.8%, which was closer to the official target of 4%.

Similarly, in the latest estimates released by Central Statistical Organisation on Thursday, the growth rate for mining sector was lifted to 6.7% from 5.4% and for

INFLATION AT 11.05% Double-digit nightmare

Prices have not risen this fast in 13 years. Home loans may get costlier. More bad news may follow

Gaurav Choudhury
New Delhi, June 20

AS FEARED, inflation has surged to double digits, and a reversal is unlikely soon.

Interest rates are set to rise again and a further slowing of the economy looks imminent, as do some tough measures from the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

According to data released on Friday, the wholesale price-based inflation rate touched a 13-year high of 11.05 per cent in the week ended June 7, driven by a steep hike in oil prices ordered by the government earlier this month.

Experts said the inflation rate could remain double-digit for several months, as higher oil prices cascade through other sectors like transportation.

"These are indeed very difficult times," Finance Minister P.Chidambaram said. "The government is aware of the difficulties... we need to look at measures on both demand and supply sides."



These are indeed very difficult times... The government is aware of the difficulties... P.CHIDAMBARAM
Finance minister

Shortly thereafter, the government announced subsidised sale of edible oil through ration stores across at least 15 states.

Still, household budgets will be under pressure, and for millions of home loan borrowers, the pinch will only get worse as their loans get costlier to service.

Most bankers expect the RBI to increase its key lending rate ahead of the July 29 review of the credit policy, and some said the hike would be more than expected.

Earlier this month, the RBI announced a surprise hike, from 7.75 per cent to 8 per cent, in the rate at which it lends to commercial banks in the short term.

"We are not looking at another 25 basis point (0.25 per cent) hike (in the repo rate). We are looking at more," said A. Prasanna, of ICICI Bank.

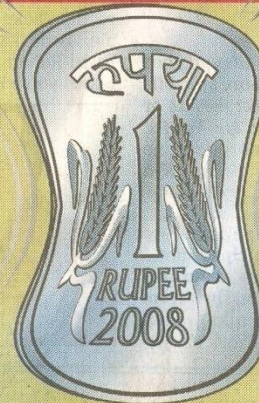
If that happens, banks will be forced to increase interest rates on home loans and other finances, which, in turn, could hurt the broader economy by slowing new investments.

gaurav.choudhury@hindustantimes.com

THE SQUEEZE IS ON

What's next?

- Experts say inflation will remain in double digits through the next quarter at least.
- RBI may further tighten credit policy, forcing banks to increase lending rates again.
- Home loan borrowers could be the worst hit. Monthly installments may rise, loan tenures may get longer.
- Government might adopt more measures to boost supply of commodities, although options are limited.



Remember this

- Investors should stay away from equities till inflation cools, say analysts.
- Fall in property prices expected as developers sell realty at lower rates to tide over cash crunch.
- Gold, say analysts, could be the safest investment.

➔ DETAILED COVERAGE, P25, 27

IMAGE: RAMESH PALAN

516 Number of points by which the Sensex fell after the inflation rate was announced. Investors were further spooked by indications of interest rates rising.















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Mhada's Rs 4L hsg scheme gets mega response

Sanjay Hadkar



FLAT FRENZY: Applicants waited for their turn in serpentine queues

Yogesh Naik | TNN

Mumbai: The low-cost housing scheme initiated by the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (Mhada) has received an overwhelming response with the sale of over 48,000 forms in the first two days.

The authority is selling 870 flats of 180 sq ft each at Malvani, Malad, as part of its pilot project. The houses will be sold at Rs 4 lakh each and those earning less than Rs 8,000 are eligible for the scheme.

Mhada registered the sale of over 48,000 forms in the first couple of days

Mhada had realised that there would be a mad rush for the scheme and had given the contract of selling and accepting forms to HDFC Bank.

There were serpentine queues outside HDFC Bank branches on Tuesday and Wednesday. The police had to be called in at some places as there were law and order problems. In Borivli, the applicants pushed each other and also quarrelled with the police, who had been summoned by the branch manager.

L S Panchal (64), who stood

in a queue for a long time, said, "I always dreamt of owning a flat but could not afford one. At present, I live in one room in a chawl with my wife, son and his family. If I get the Malvani flat, then some of us can move out."

Ameena Bi, a 45-year-old domestic help, patiently waited for her turn. She stays in a slum at Kandivli with seven members of her family. "My sons and I can afford to buy a flat. But we do not know about the procedures involved."

Senior IAS officer Swadheen Kshatriya, who promoted the concept of low-cost houses while drafting the housing policy, said, "This illustrates the need for it. We require more such schemes. The government is planning to build 26,000 such houses in Malvani; 16,000 houses will be reserved for mill workers."

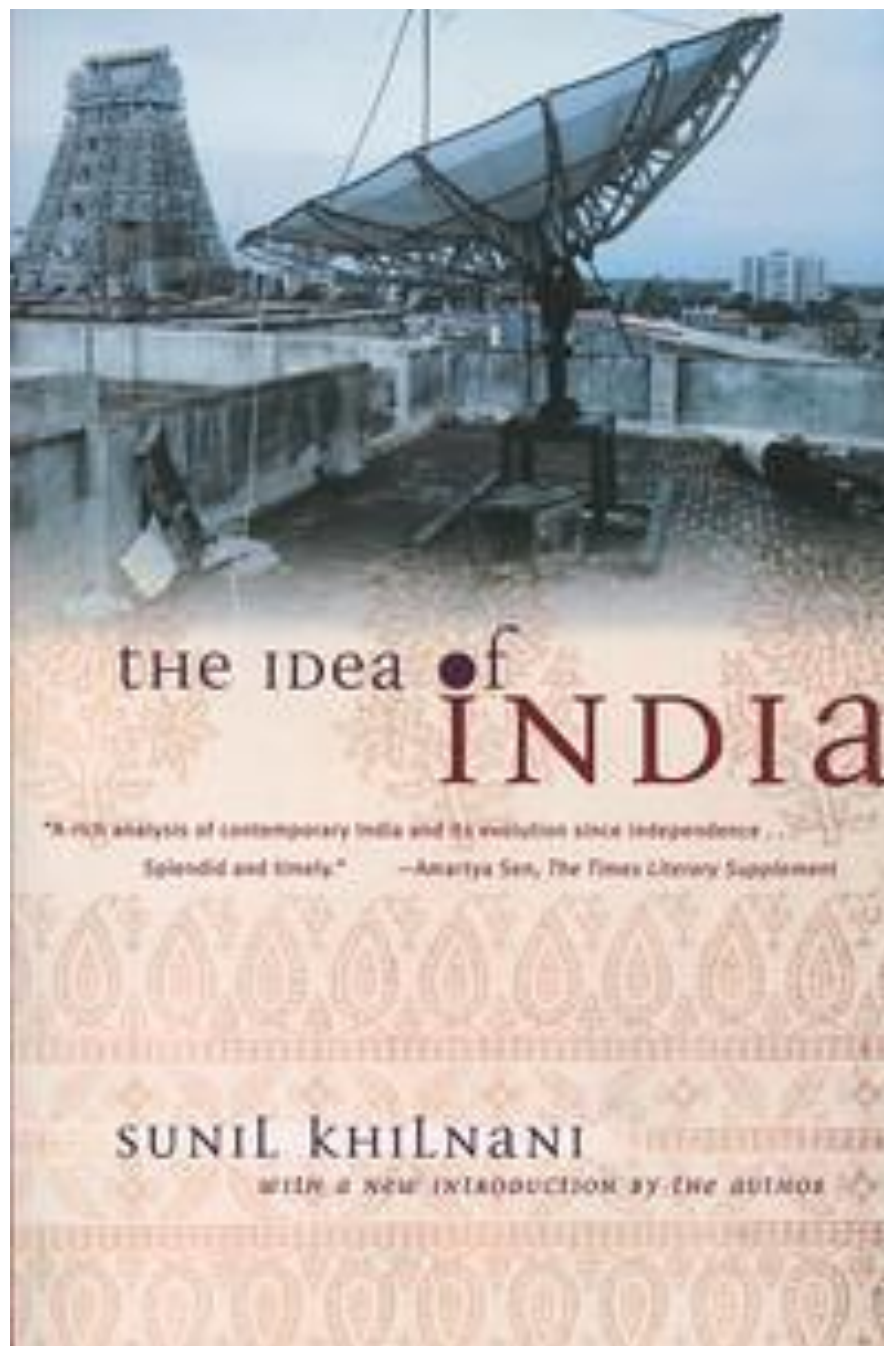
The Mumbai board's chief executive officer of Mhada, H K Jawale, said the bank would sell forms, priced at Rs 100 each, till July 18.

"One of the biggest reasons for the rush is the low price of the flats. Besides, Malad is still considered closer to the city. Instead of going to faraway Virar or Kalyan, commuting from Malad is relatively easier," he said.

yogesh.naik@timesgroup.com













Adventures of an RTI explorer

You have the right to obtain information. Getting your hands on it is quite another story

For several years I have been planning to use the Right To Information (RTI) to get information and facts on things that bother me in the city. I read up on the subject, talked with friends, blogged about it, but never managed to take the most important step, that of using the right and asking for information. I even explored every possibility in which I could get information without having to visit the Pune Corporation office. Unfortunately that's not possible. You have to work hard for your information.

So I picked a Saturday when I did not have much else planned. Picked some RTI form samples from the net and filled up three forms asking for information from the PMC. The first form asked information about footpaths/pavements in Pune. The second about parking provisions that commercial buildings need to make as per corporation rules and the third asking for information about the PMC's e-governance initiatives. I will write details of the information I sought and the response I got, when I do get the information. For the time being I will stick to the submitting the form part. A friend of mine, who has been complaining for years about the stray pig menace in Shivteerth Nagar, Kothrud, accompanied me hoping to submit his complaint to the relevant department and to finally rid his locality of the pigs. Considering that there is so much talk about RTI lately, I was under this impression that RTI mechanisms in the PMC would be in place. I expected to just have to hand over my request forms to a central RTI officer and he/she would take care of forwarding them to appropriate departments and getting me the information I sought.

On hindsight I find it funny that I actually expected it to be so. Any-

way, we entered the PMC building at about 2.30 pm. The first thing we noted was that the PMC does not believe in signages. So, unless you ask for a place and then double and triple check the information, you won't find anything. As for RTI, there was a board that listed the departments and the designation of the person who would look at RTI matters. But whom that person was and how one was supposed to find him was left up to the tracking skills of the visitor. Also everything in the building was written only in Marathi. Marathi that even Maharashtrians won't understand. Most English educated Maharashtrians like me would not know that *Kanishtha abhiyanta* means Junior Engineer and *Sankhyeki* means Statistics. Marathi boards should certainly be present, but why not also have boards in Hindi and English.

However there was an enquiry desk present. The lady there told us that there was no centralised right to information section and I would have to go to the respective departments. So for footpaths, I was told 1st floor *Paatha* (Roads) and for parking rules 1st floor *Bandhkam* (Building). The tricky one was the websites. No one had any idea which department looked at the PMC websites. We kept being pointed to people whose apt description would be 'they sit with computers so they might know'. Many enquiries later we were told that *Sankhyeki* might be the department to visit.

However this department was hidden away on the 5th floor and could be reached by only one particular lift. There are numerous sections and many stairs and lifts all over the building, so we kept getting lost every two minutes, found our way back to the main lobby and then made a fresh attempt. We got to the roads department at about 3 pm and were told



GUEST COLUMN
HARSHAD OAK

that the lady who looked at RTI was out for lunch and no one else could help us. So we visited the building department. We could not locate any boards here as well and we kept being sent to a particular engineer's PA for directions. He told us to go to the ward office and said that nothing will get done here. When we said that this did not make sense and we wanted to meet a senior official, he threw a few *saheb* names and asked us to wait. We waited and waited and waited for the *sahebs* to turn up, but they did not.

We now had spent over an hour, had met 20 people and got nothing done. We were irritated and we decided to meet the commissioner. We stormed to the top floor expecting the commissioner to listen to us and get things sorted out. As we climbed up to the fourth floor, I noticed that as you start getting nearer the commissioner's office the building starts getting a lot cleaner. We reached the commissioner's door. I expected the guards to drive us away and so explained our problem. The guards were relaxed and heard us out. They then told us that the commissioner was last seen in office three days back, so we weren't getting any help here. By now we were crestfallen and disheartened. It was obvious to us why touts have a field day

in government offices. A common man can never get any work done unless he puts in extraordinary effort. Like Dementors in the Harry Potter series, these offices had sapped us of all our zeal to do any good for society. Dejected, we sat at one of the rare visitor benches and talked about the evils of India and why our friends who had migrated seemed justified when you face such situations.

After a few minutes we partly recovered and decided to get at least one thing done. So we headed back to the roads department. Fortunately, the lady had got back from lunch. So finally at about 4 pm a PMC staffer read my first form. Despite reading up quite a bit about how to use RTI, I wasn't clear about how the payment was to be made. Was I supposed to affix a court fee stamp for an amount that covered expenses like photocopying or was I supposed to affix a ten rupee stamp and later pay separately for other expenses? I was now told that while submitting the form you only need to fix the ten rupee stamp and other expenses are to be paid later. However the stamp was not available in the PMC office and had to be bought from a vendor across the road. A rickety wooden stair took me to the stamp vendor. After a short wait I managed to buy the stamps I required. The lady in the roads department now accepted my form. By this time, it was 4.30 pm on Sat afternoon and we had just one hour left till closing time. We rushed to the building department; here the section where the missing *sahebs* were supposed to be sitting had now been closed for the public. The person at this entrance however saved our day as he pointed us to a window where, a lady, displeased for reasons unknown to us, accepted our form.

We then found the Statistics department. Like in all other

departments, here too, the staff had no idea who was responsible for RTI work. They asked me to visit another department and if that didn't work, to meet the people from the IT company working for the PMC. I told them that PMC officials and not contractors should be giving info, but to no avail. So I went to second floor and now presented my form to a person from this department. He asked us to wait and took our forms to the contractor company people. He returned after quite some time and promptly sent me back to Statistics. As they now had no option, the Statistics department accepted my form. I was instructed to write on it why I wanted the info. I said that RTI does not compel me to give reasons. So he suggested that I write 'For public welfare'. I thought it better to comply.

The only matter now left was that of the pigs. We came across the office of the *ChakaChak* Pune team. My friend told them about how garbage was everywhere except the bin and how pigs fearlessly roamed the streets. Our complaint was noted down in the proper department and we were assured that the pigs would be taken care of when their team next visits the area. So we wound up our historic visit to the PMC. Although we struggled to get things done, the PMC staff was polite and interested, though completely ignorant about RTI.

The current status is that the information I have asked for is still hidden away in a file somewhere. However as there's a limit of 30 days for RTI, I am still hopeful. The pigs, however, are hail and hearty in Kothrud. It now looks like unless the pigs themselves decide to migrate from Pune due to the traffic and commotion, they are here to stay.

(The author can be reached at
harshad@rightrix.com)

IS RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT EFFECTIVE?

THE Karnataka Right to Information Act (KRIA) was enacted in 2000 and implemented in July 2002 after the relevant rules were notified. KRIA is one of the better-drafted laws when compared to other States. It fulfills most of the essentials for an ideal freedom of information law.

For instance, KRIA imposes a duty on the public authority to disclose information suo moto and prescribes a simple procedure for accessing information. The penalty on officials for failing to provide information and recovery of the penalty from their salaries is something unique in India. Besides, a limited number of exclusions have widened the KRIA net. Yet the usage of KRIA over the past two years has brought to focus some of its loopholes as well as the reluctance of the administration to implement the law. First let's look at the legal defects. KRIA is applicable to all State Government offices, authorities created by an Act of the State legislature and organisations funded by the State Government.

But what about private institutions like colleges and schools, which receive government land and tax concessions? Should not citizens have access to information from these institutions? A peculiar situation may arise shortly when the electricity supply companies in Karnataka will be privatised. The present government companies will automatically go out of KRIA. This is what has happened in Delhi. It is essential that KRIA be amended to this extent.

It is the responsibility of the 'competent authority' to furnish information under KRIA. Section 2(a) defines competent authority as "the head of the office or any officer or person as may be notified by the State Government for the pur-

pose of this Act". Thanks to the Government, a large number of competent authorities have been notified. But in many cases these authorities are not the Heads of Offices or Sections, but subordinate officers controlled by officers whose permission and leadership influences the furnishing of information. The subordinate official may not have the requisite competence and knowledge to decide whether the information sought is privileged or not.

It is unfortunate that the word 'information' used in KRIA and the word 'document' used in the application (Form-A) has caused some confusion. The Nagarika Seva Trust, a Bangalore-based environment group, which has filed over 106 applications, has been denied information because of this misinterpretation. KRIA defines information as "any matter in respect of the affairs of the administration or decision of a public authority". Whereas Form A has a question 'Details of the document required.'

Competent Authorities are of the view that if the required 'document' is not available, the same can be denied under KRIA. In their view information should be confined to such documentary material produced by an office for its reference and readily available. If this narrow view is taken, perhaps no worthwhile information will be available. It is true that no one department or office can be a depository of all governmental information. While some is generated in-house, a lot more is received from other departments. Secondly all information may not be in a presentable form. It needs to be fine-tuned. If a citizen wants to have information, which involves several departments, a larger time frame may be fixed to furnish the infor-

CONSUMER Notes

mation. Right to information presupposes a system of scientific Record Management.

What the Law intends cannot be frustrated by an enabling Rule. The Rules framed under the KRIA intends to do exactly this. Rule 4 (6) (ii) says than application can be returned if it is incomplete, defective or the purpose is not clearly mentioned. KRIA needs to be amended suitably, also because it suffers from serious lacunae relating to Appeals.

It is time an independent body is constituted to review the working of KRIA and its implementation. In developed countries we have Public Information Commissioners who regulate the operation of freedom of information law. They also identify problem areas and suggest improvements. In India the Delhi Right to Information Act provides for a council for information consisting of ministers, bureaucrats, journalists, lawyers and representatives of the civil society. The council monitors the implementation of the RTI and submits reports to the State Government. Similarly the Maharashtra Right to Information Act provides for creation of a Council at the State and Revenue Division level.

Non-response from public authorities needs to be taken seriously. The Nagarika Seva Trust, which has filed 101 applications under KRIA, has received information in only one case within the prescribed time and 19 responses after 15 days. Similar is the experience of Public Affairs Center (PAC) and other civil society groups.

Y.G. Muralidharam

(The writer is a consumer activist and may be reached by e-mail at creator@sisify.com or on phone at: 23403170, 2340220)

FREE WAY

**Divestment Ministry
has favoured allowing
PSUs to bid for EIL.**



**ONGC has formed jt venture
with BHEL and GAIL has
tied up with L&T for bidding.**

**Govt is selling 51% of its
holding of 90.40%
through strategic sale.**











Parentless Waterfronts

Several associations have come forward to save the city's waterfronts and fight the apathy and greed of politicians and builders. **Gurbir Singh reports**

Mumbai's 34-km Western waterfront is a unique asset of the city that can provide its people with unbounded possibilities. About 15 km of this coastline is also probably the only open space available for the city's masses to escape from their drudgery and claustrophobia. Witness the number of people who descend on Marine Drive, Girgaum Chowpatty or Worli Seaface on a Sunday evening for a breather. Yet today, most of these beaches and waterfronts are a mess of garbage and encroachments.

Slums occupy large parts of the city's coastline. On the island city there is no more room for these habitations to expand, but slumlords continue encroaching on open spaces

by the marooned vessel 'Zhen Don' off Carter Road has now been revoked by the suburban collector after sustained pressure from the Bandra West Residents Association. The local residents suspect that Rashmi Builders, the developer which has purchased the shipwreck, were basically interested in setting up a floating hotel project, and were constructing the

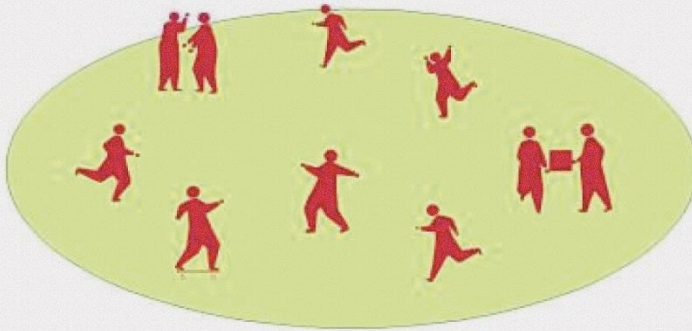


Property Line

road for the project under the guise of clearing the sludge. "We are against this crass commercialism. We want Carter Road to keep its original character

maintain their fishing harbours. Cuffe Parade that helped former chief minister A R Antyambitious plans to reclaim the waterfront of south Mumbai's Back Bay. Spurred by the high real estate values in Nariman Point, the Back Bay Reclamation plans were a sure recipe for environmental disaster in crowded south Mumbai.

Pushing for an integrated preservation and development of the city's waterfronts, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and the Mumbai Vikas Manch



LONDON: 7.2 A/1000 PEOPLE



NEW YORK: 6 A/1000 PEOPLE



CHICAGO: 4 A/1000 PEOPLE

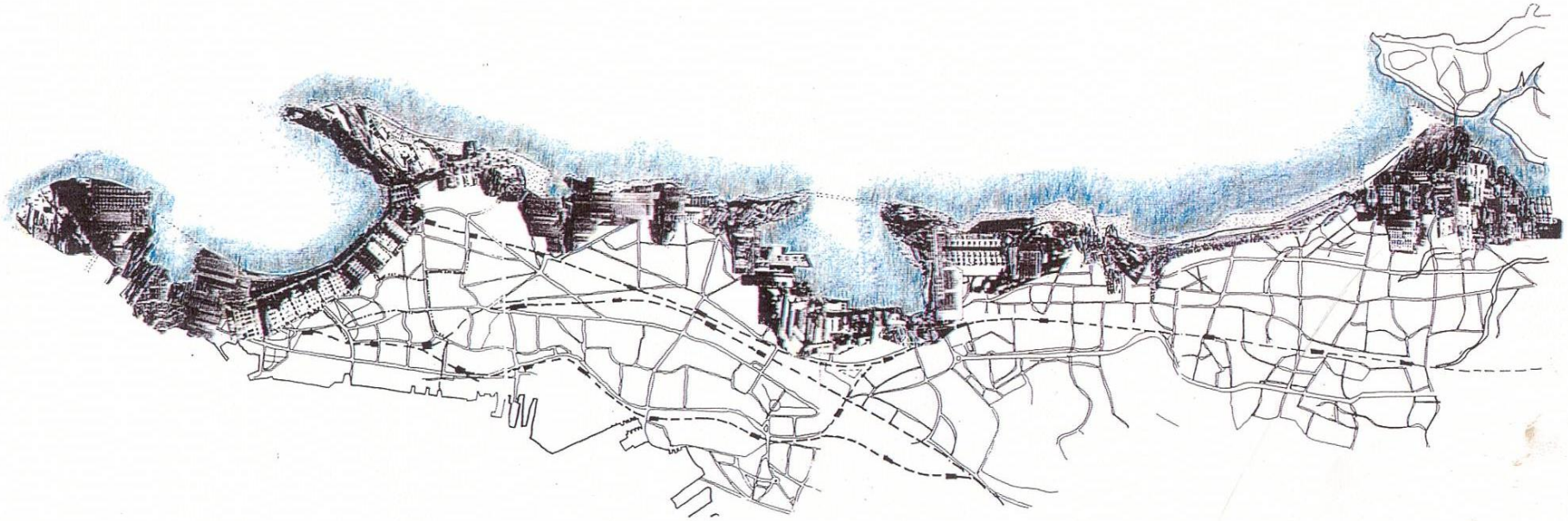


TOKYO: 0.9 A/1000 PEOPLE



MUMBAI: 0.25 A/1000 PEOPLE





Restoration of Mumbai's Waterfronts

A Preliminary Survey and A Comprehensive Plan







february
22 - 28, 2002

8

MID-DAY-METRO-

Putting the fort back in Bandra

HEPZI MUTHIAH

AFTER transforming the Bandra coastline, Bandraites are now getting down to restoring the glory of the Bandra Hill or Bandora, from where Bandra gets its name. We are talking about that ravaged piece of land on which stands the once-majestic Bandra Fort.

A proposal to restore and re-green the hill has been sent to the state's Heritage Committee for its approval and work is expected to start soon. A year after work begins, you will be able to enjoy a stroll, sit on the benches and even hold small programmes on the hill - exactly like the Carter Road Palm Promenade - not to mention enjoy the grand view of the two other points of Mumbai - Worli and Nariman Point - from the hill.

Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Shabana Azmi is directing her MP's fund at this project too, after having funded the promenades at Bandstand and Carter Road.

"The project cost is Rs 1 crore, of which Rs 20 lakh has been sanctioned by Shabana Azmi's MP fund," says architect P K Das. "More may follow if needed. Legislator Baba Siddiqui has sanctioned Rs 10 lakh from his MLA fund. We are tying up with sponsors for the rest of the money."

Das conceptualised the project and is working with the Bandra Bandstand Residents Trust on it. Azmi herself was not available for comment.

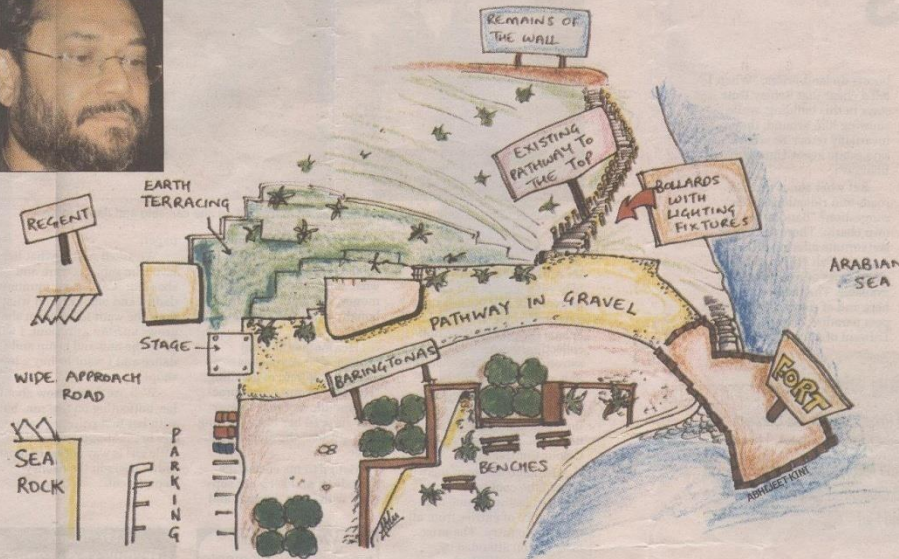
The BBRT intends to restore the greenery of the much-ravaged hill and redevelop the fort area. "The hill used to have

developing the ruins of the Byranjee Jeejabhoy Villa atop the hill, putting steps and benches on the hill, make pathways of sand and gravel, and restoring the ruined contours of the hill by earth terracing.

Lighting and security cabins along with seaside wall construction will also be taken up to prevent accidents on the hill. There is no provision for any gate but entry points are planned in such a way as to be defined by shrubs and other plantation. Though no entry fee will be charge, entry timings for the fort area will be restricted.

Permission for the development of this land has already been received from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and the suburban collector.

The plan has received in-principle approval from the Heritage Committee, since the Bandra Fort or the Castella de Aguada, is a Grade III structure, says Arup Sarbadhikary.



DREAM & REALITY:
The improvements to the Bandra Fort area (left) that architect P K Das (inset) has proposed, which will benefit the people who come to Bandra Fort to watch the sunset (right)



"Couples are a big put off"

YASMIN D'Costa, a resident of Pali Hill, says she does not like to come to the fort because she gets put off by the presence of many couples. "I wish they had done this place better." She recalls how during her school days it used to be rocky. Today, the rocks seem to be disappearing and so do the walls, she says.

Brothers Adi and Khushru Irani, who once lived in Bandra and are now based in the US, visited the fort during their visit to India to relive their childhood memories.

Khushru feels the fort could be developed into a good tourist attraction leveraging its scenic location and its beautiful view of the sea.

Brother Adi feels the government could put up a sign explaining the significance of the place. "We would often visit this place during our school days. The government should also tidy up the place," he says.



The brothers Irani

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ARENA

Citizens inspire Bandra face-lift

Nasser Lalljee

Bandra

ON this waterfront, there is certainly no Marlon Brando, but the people of Bandra Bandstand certainly have their own heroes.

It is to the credit of these heroes who set about saving a coastline that had been endangered by indiscriminate dumping. The movement took off with the Mohalla committee, which was formed in 1993, when a group of people started taking an interest in civic problems. They formed the Bandra Bandstand Residents Association in 1996, which was later converted to a trust in 2000.

The blatant dumping of rubbish along their precious coastline outraged the sensibilities of the local residents who had earlier fought it out in the court and got 1,500 trucks of debris removed from the area facing the Bandstand Fort. Once this was done the group moved ahead to try and reclaim whatever was left of the coastline. The idea was to prevent it from encroachments, particularly those that had come up in the area around the Searock hotel.

The citizens had already conceived of a promenade, prepared a plan and worked with architect PK Das, who designed and implemented it. Plans were approved by the BMC, MSRDC, collector, and other concerned bodies. The funds were provided by Shabana Azmi, MP, Rajya Sabha, under the MPLAD scheme for the infrastructure. But seeing the manner in which the work was proceeding, and the effort being poured by the locals, more money was

invested into the project.

The construction started in May 1999. Exactly one year later May 2000 saw the Naval Police Band inaugurate the promenade at bandstand. Then came the Art fair on November 27, 2000. This was followed by a party for the under-privileged children in December 2000. An interactive play to highlight the problems of the common man was held next on the May 6, 2001.



The variety of events held at the promenade has brought the citizens closer to each other and there is a growing sense of camaraderie among all those who come here. They voluntarily stop people from creating nuisance, throwing rubbish as they have developed a sense of ownership.

The promenade is now almost complete, and a 1.6 km stretch of reclaimed land, from Bandstand to St. Andrews Church corner, has been saved from certain disaster. Encroachment and other such nuisances would have certainly destroyed the entire already endangered coastline.

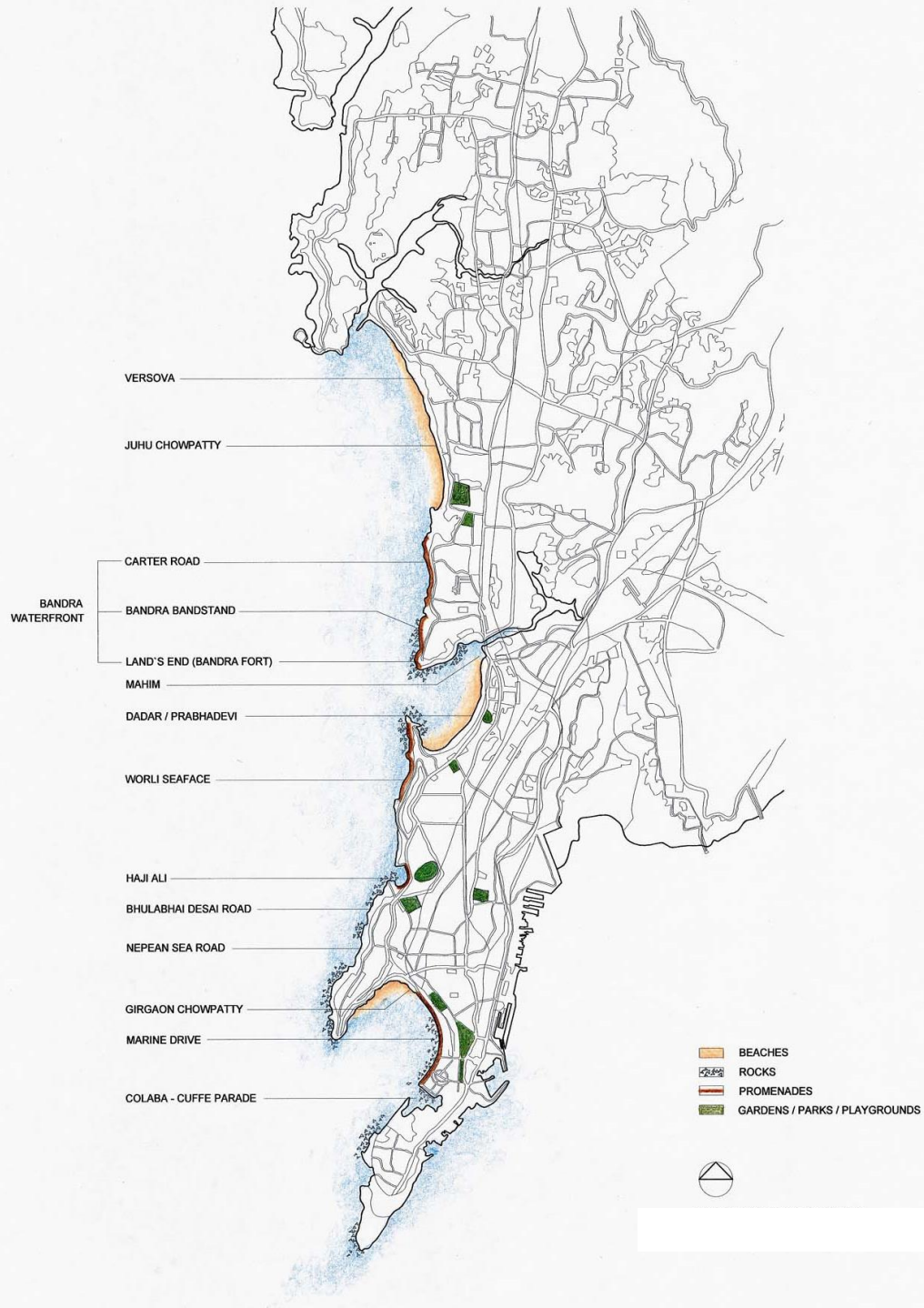
"The people have developed a good trust and funds are slowly trickling in." The association and

locals are appealing to every flat-owner in Bandstand to pay Rs 20 per month. Apart from this certain sponsors have taken a keen interest and have contributed towards the development of gardens and other features.

If this example is emulated, a number of public spaces will be reclaimed by the people, for the people.

THE TIMES OF INDIA - 'WESTSIDE PLUS'
MAY 29, 2001





The Bandra Waterfronts - Bandstand













The Bandra Waterfronts – Carter Road















The Bandra Waterfronts – Land's End







Plans Are Ready For The Dadar-Mahim Seafront Makeover. But Can They Plug Illegal Drains, Resettle Slums Quickly?

SLUMBAY WATCH



A walk on the beach at Dadar can be compared with a stroll through a garbage dump, say some residents

Clara Lewis | TNN

Faced with a barrage of criticism regarding the poor upkeep of Mumbai's western waterfront, the civic administration is now planning a beach nourishment plan along 4.5 kms of the Dadar-Prabhadevi seaface. The project, which includes building promenades and restoring gardens along the seaface, is aimed at restoring a beach that has been washed away under waves of sewage, flotsam and debris.

The stretch to be covered is from the Hinduja hospital end at Mahim to Worli village and will take around two years to complete from the day work commences. "We are planning to appoint a consultant to revive this beach which, at present, is bereft of sand," said R A Rajeev, additional municipal commissioner.

The project is estimated to cost around Rs 12-15 crore and will require sand to be imported from other beaches (and even the desert) to make the stretch more hospitable to residents and holidaying crowds.

Work is likely to start in six months to a year, and would be a daunting task considering that it would require diverting sewage lines which spew out waste on to the beach, resettling slum dwellers living nearby, and coordination between agencies because land comes under the

The BMC's beach nourishment plan would require tonnes of sand to be imported and spread out along the 4.5-km-long stretch between Mahim and Worli

collector's jurisdiction and the revamp is being planned by the civic corporation.

The blueprint is based on an idea put forward by architect P K Das who has also been involved in the beautification and restoration of Carter Road, Bandra Bandstand and Juhu beach. "Das will be appointed as a con-

sultant since he already has a plan ready," said Rajeev.

Of late, BMC has been repeatedly censured by activists and citizen groups regarding the plight of Mumbai's beaches including those at Versova, Dadar and Marine. Mahim resident Ravi Thatte, who is also on a civic supervisory panel, says, "The beach is polluted by untreated sewage from illegal drains. BMC had appointed a contractor to clean up the beach, but he's not doing a very good job. There are also two slums in the area. Restoring the beach is a grandiose plan and will take a lot of doing."

It was former Lok Sabha speaker and Dadar resident Manohar Joshi who set the ball rolling for the Dadar revival plan after a visit to Bandra where the waterfront had been restored. Joshi proposed that a wall be constructed to prevent the beach from further erosion. Eventually, the idea of a wall was shot down when environmentalists pointed out potentially adverse effects. "Sea-wall construction

is now banned in the US as well as central Europe. It is believed that it damages the environment by restricting the natural cycle of in and outflow of water. Also the impact of construction of a sea-wall is felt at other beaches where the displaced water reclaims its space," said Das.

Joshi's suggestions, however, spurred a group to work on an alternate plan. To start with, a coastal and hydraulic study was carried out by DHI (India) Water and Environment Pvt Ltd at the site. This included drawing up a description of the area's coastline, an assessment of the wave climate and hydrodynamic conditions in the bay, and compiling recommendations on how to implement the project.

The study found the Dadar-Prabhadevi stretch to be a shallow tidal beach, narrow and sloping. Government's efforts to protect the coast had resulted in rubble encroaching upon it. Besides drains open onto it and unplanned constructions have contributed to the debris and pollution.

BEACH REVIVAL

Phase I

This includes a proposal to increase the width of the beach from 5 metres to 50 metres across a stretch of 1.5 km from S K Bole Marg to Suryavanshi Kshatriya Sabhagriha Marg.

Phase II

This includes redevelopment of the beach at Hinduja Hospital, Keluskar Marg (North & South), Mayor's Bungalow, development of two gardens — Baji Prabhu Udyan and Sant Dnyaneshwar Udyan — apart from creation of access roads and promenades

Total cost: Rs 12-15 crore



IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

- Beach nourishment by bringing in sand from other places: 9 months
- Redevelopment of two gardens along the waterfront: 4 months
- Promenades to be built at two locations: 6 months
- Extension of drains to divert the sewage: 4 months
- Building access roads: 6 months

SHIFTING THE SAND

- Since the bay at Dadar-Mahim has very little sand, it has been decided to bring it in from outside.
- "Roughly around 300 trucks per day for 6 months or six barges a day for four months will be sufficient to create the beach. While the sea will continue to wash away sand it will also bring it back and the loss will be minimal," said P K Das, architect in charge of the project.
- Sand will be brought in from other beaches, and may be even the desert. Some replenishment of sand may also be required every 5-10 years.

Citizen activism hits Mumbai's waterfront

TIMES NEW NETWORK

Mumbai: Increased awareness and activism on the part of citizens has over the last decade helped spruce up some stretches of the western waterfront. It started with Girgaum Chowpatty in 1999 when Shiv Sena leader Pramod Navalkar, a minister in the then ruling Sena-BJP government, took the lead in cleaning the beach.

"Girgaum is a typically middle-class dominated locality and there are few places where these people can go for fresh air or relaxation. At that time Chowpatty was infested with beggars, vagrants, malishwallas, hawkers and it was rather unsafe for a family to spend a late evening, so I decided to restore it to these people," says Navalkar.

Navalkar being in the ruling party certainly helped as he received co-operation from the collector's office and the police. BMC now ensures the beach is clean at all times with the help of private contractors, a police watch tower and eight policemen who guard it at all times. What's more, a food court has ensured that stalls have been herded at one end and are not scattered all over like earlier.

A similar initiative worked at Bandra Bandstand and Carter Road too following an incident in 1997-98 when a ship named Zendong ran aground off the Bandra coast. With the authorities unwilling to clear the wreck, there were reports that it would be converted into a floatel. "It was then that we went to court against the proposal and won. Architect P K Das had a plan for the beautification of the beach and it served as a main catalyst to restore the beach," said Roshan Daboiwala, a longtime resident and member of the Carter Road Residents' Association.

Das, she said, also helped obtain funds from then MP Shabana Azmi to implement it. Azmi gave Rs 1 crore each to the Carter Road and Bandstand beaches. Today, not only do residents and visitors enjoy an unrestricted view of the sea, but the promenades have ensured that the beach is not encroached upon.



▲ Juhu too benefitted from a residents' initiative when local groups approached the Bombay high court in 2002 seeking the cleaning up of the city's largest beach.

▼ The Bandstand makeover was aided by funding from the local Member of Parliament Shabana Azmi who used part of her constituency funds to spruce up the area



▼ The Girgaum Chowpatty stretch, once infested with vagrants, beggars and hawkers, has been cleaned up and a food court built at one end to decongest the beach



Chimbai beach to get facelift

Residents' efforts to save seafront forces a reluctant BMC to take charge

Sayli Udas Mankikar
Mumbai, June 26

BANDRA MAY soon have another waterfront to be proud of. If everything works well, the little known and disappearing Chimbai Beach will get a makeover with features like promenades and fish-food courts.

The Chimbai beach is a one-km stretch between Joggers' Park and Bandra Bandstand.

Credit goes to the local residents, who have been fighting to save the beach for two years. Impressed by their efforts, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has now taken over to develop the seafront. The BMC has appointed architect P.K. Das as a consultant.

"We will spend Rs 4 crore for this public-private project. We will meet the architect and then discuss the plans with the stakeholders around the area," said Anil Diggikar, additional municipal commissioner (Projects). The plan also includes a drying area for local fishermen.

The beach — an extension of Chimbai fishing village — is a sorry picture. A number of illegal structures line the narrow lanes leading to the waters, while rocks bordering the sea

have been dumped with debris.

"We will replace this with sand-terraces, promenades and resting areas. There will also be a food court on weekends where locals will make fish delicacies," said Das.

"This would not have been possible without the persistent effort of citizens."

It all began after the fisher folk of Chimbai approached the H-West Ward Residents' Trust to stop the Maritime Board from constructing a 'tsunami wall' along the coastline after the 2005 deluge. "The flooding was actually because of the debris," said Shyama Kulkarni, chairman of the trust.

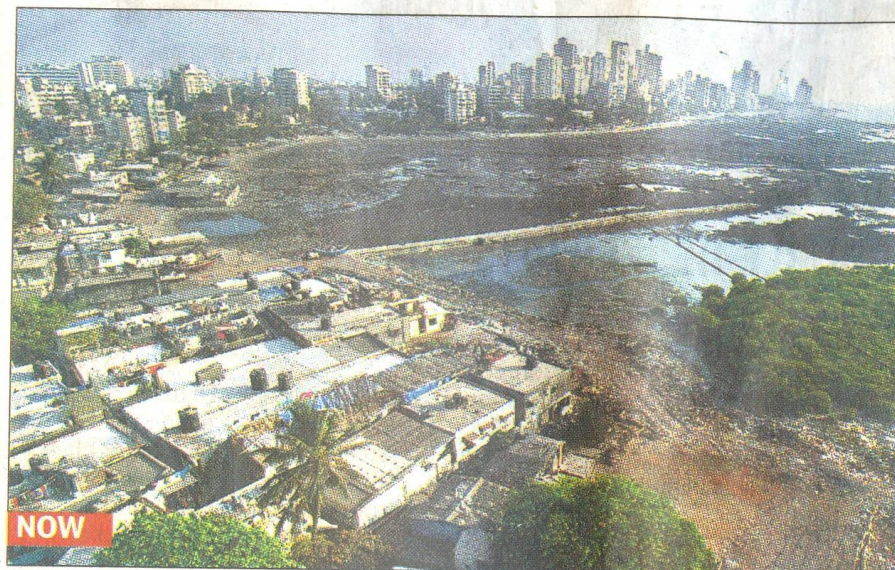
The BMC had then expressed its inability to clear the debris saying JCBs could not reach the beach. But Bandra resident Vickram Rao, using personal funds, cleared 40 truckloads of debris from the site. A surprised BMC then took over.

"We are glad the plan has moved ahead, while the BMC and collector have promised to clear the encroachments," Kulkarni said, adding that there were still about 100 truckloads of debris on the site.

sayli.mankikar@
hindustantimes.com



**PEOPLE
POWER**



NOW

ANAND SHINDE/HT FILE PHOTO

Bandra's Chimbai beach stretches from Joggers' Park to Bandstand.



**Promenade
along
the 1-km
beachfront**

**Resting
areas for
senior
citizens**

**A fish
court on
weekends**

**A drying
area for
fish**

**The rocks,
beachfront
will be
cleared of
debris, shanties**

THE PLAN

Gateway revamp plan gets civic panel nod

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The Gateway of India precinct makeover plan got its initial boost on Wednesday with the civic standing committee clearing the Rs 4.5 crore phase 1 of the project.

While the Grade 1 heritage monument itself would remain untouched, phase 1 would include expanding the pedestrian space in the precinct as well as relocating all the public amenities at a facility centre.

The facility centre to be located behind the Shivaji statue will house all the existing ticket counters that currently clutter the pathway to the precinct. It will also have public toilets, a police chowky, a BMC conservancy chowky, an MTDC stall and the existing Aarey stalls.

"The plan is to create more area for public movement. For this, we will have to remove the barricade around the garden at Gateway and include some of it in the paved portion. In a nutshell, the phase 1 of the plan will look at enhancing pedestrian movement over vehicular movement and at augmenting the public facilities," said P K Das, ar-



MAKEOVER: An artist's impression of the proposed revamp of the Gateway of India

chitect for the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (Intach), which has been awarded the contract for draw-

ing up Gateway revamp plan.

Even though the work of executing the plan was awarded to Prime Engi-

neers on Wednesday, standing committee member Ravindra Pawar opposed the idea. "The plan makes no provision for parking based on the argument that most people who come to Gateway use public transport or tourist vehicles. The cars belong to those who visit the nearby Taj hotel. How can they go ahead with the plan without permission from the traffic department?" asked Pawar. Satish Mathur, joint commissioner of police (traffic), said he was yet to get a copy of the plan.

According to Das, the precinct would be made into a no-parking zone. "The world over, no monument allows parking in its precinct. The Taj hotel has provisions for underground parking which it has closed down for some reason and many of its cars are parked outside. All this would be cleared up soon. Parking space for tourist buses and cars will be taken care of in phase 2," said Das. He added that phase 2 would look at whether the area from the museum to Regal theatre can be converted into a BMC parking zone.

"Also the BMC is proposing to build an underground parking lot near Regal theatre," said Das.

Get ready for a clean Juhu beach

In 12 weeks, relocate food stalls and build car park, orders high court

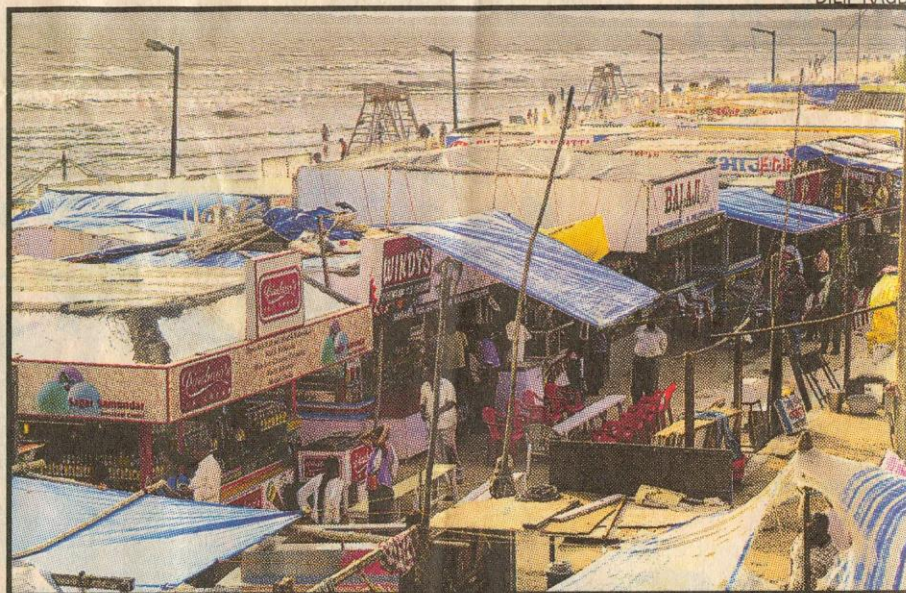
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

JUNE 28

ONE of Mumbai's busiest beachfronts will soon bid adieu to the chaos created by more than 100 hawkers. It will also sport a gateway to the beach and several public conveniences.

Thanks to an order delivered by the Bombay High Court on Monday, the three-year-old Juhu beach restoration and redevelopment plan spearheaded by residents has now received a major impetus.

A division bench of acting Chief Justice A P Shah



Nearly 125 bustling food stalls selling piping-hot *vada pav*, *masala dosa* and *pav bhajis* will be relocated to a yet-to-be built food court at the northern end of the central chowpatty

and Justice S U Kamdar directed the relocation of 125 food stalls at the central chowpatty along the Juhu Tara Road within 12 weeks.

The petition was filed by 120 local residents' associations, Rotary Clubs and hotels.

Accordingly, the central chowpatty will get a podium that will act as the gateway to the beach.

Before it is built, 125

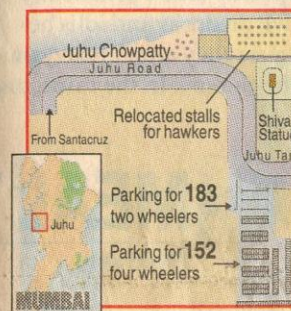
bustling food stalls selling piping-hot *vada pav*, *masala dosa* and *pav bhajis* will be relocated to a yet-to-be built food court at the northern end of the central chowpatty.

The facility, says the order, should have hygienic surroundings, water connections and a garbage disposal and drainage network.

Each stall owner will have to deposit Rs 40,000

with the suburban district collector that would entitle him to a 2 m x 1m built-up space to be built by the Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority.

The food court, the high court said while considering objections raised by the Chhatrapati Shivaji Smarak Samiti, will be located 60 feet from a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji standing at the elbow of Juhu Tara



Road.

A concrete ramp will scythe through the food court and take beach-goers to the shore.

According to the plan, a ramp has been built at the northern section of the central chowpatty to facilitate Ganapati immersions. Public convenience centres will also be built at the central chowpatty.

The high court has also ordered the civic authorities to return land being used as a parking lot to the Airports Authority of India, which had leased it to the civic body.

It will be revamped to accommodate more vehicles — 185 two-wheelers and 152 four-wheelers.

The Rs 1.5-crore plan also includes clearing eight access lanes, creating a small park and removing encroachments including private bungalow extensions.

Counsels Shiraz Rustumjee and Jamshed Mistry represented the petitioners.

THE PLAN

- 125 food stalls to be relocated to proposed food court
- Podium to be built as gateway to the beach
- Parking lot to be revamped to accommodate more vehicles
- Ramp to facilitate Ganapati immersions
- Encroachments including bungalow extensions to be cleared

GIVING MUMBAI A SEA-FRONT CHANGE

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: When a lackadaisical city government allowed one of its biggest assets—the waterfronts—to deteriorate into dumpyards and be used as open-air toilets, a determined group of citizens thought it was time to take charge. Over the last six years, thanks largely to a citizens' initiative, about seven kilometres of Mumbai's western waterfronts have been reclaimed and turned into what architect P K Das calls the city's "cultural forecourts".

On Thursday, this perseverance finally paid off when the Mumbai Waterfront Improvement Centre (MWIC), a recently registered trust, shared the \$100,000 Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award with another organisation for helping "transform the lives of Mumbai's citizens".

Das, one of the four trustees who received the award on behalf of the MWIC, has been largely credited with transforming Bandra Land's End and the Bandstand and Carter Road promenades, as well as the 4-km stretch of Juhu beach. He has done all this with the active support of resident associations and funds from local MPs.

A maverick housing activist, Das said he faced threats of physical violence when food stalls that had encroached on Juhu beach were sought to be relocated. "Our waterfronts are now unbarricaded public spaces, which are truly open and democratic in nature," he told TOI after receiving a Rs 20 lakh cheque, the MWIC's share of the award.

Civic activist and co-trustee of the MWIC, Darryl D'Monte, has been in the forefront maintaining the two Bandra promenades, said. "It has been sometimes a long and painful struggle to get these projects going."



PUTTING A SHINE ON OUR SHORES: The Bandstand promenade is a popular evening haunt for people from across Mumbai. (Above left) At the Khar end, the Carter Road promenade is designed to project into the rocks. (Above right) Strollers at Carter Road. (Below, from left) Actress and MP Shabana Azmi, Deutsche Bank chairman Josef Ackerman, architect P K Das and his MWIC colleague with their Rs 20 lakh cheque

Very often we have to do so in spite of the authorities. Six years after the inception of the two promenades in Bandra, we are facing opposition from the Maharashtra Maritime Board, which thinks it owns these public properties."

D'Monte accused the board of refusing the citizens' association permission to repair the sea walls, repave the structures and remove unauthorised encroachments.

The MWIC plans to utilise the prize money to push its plan for the Dadar-Prabhadevi beach, which is about

4km long and suffers from erosion. "The nourishment plan aims to check the erosion and to regain the beach for public use in one of the most congested areas of the island city," said the MWIC.

The Versova waterfront is the other project that Das plans to take up. The centre also proposes to survey and map water bodies, rivers, creeks and seafronts so it can plan public spaces.

THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Helped build the Carter Road promenade at Bandra, transforming what was a neglected and encroached seafront into a lively place for the public
- Similarly helped transform the Bandstand promenade
- Spruced up Land's End, where Bandra fort stood, and built an amphitheatre there
- Helped spruce up Juhu beach, especially by relocating ugly and intrusive food stalls to a proper food court

ON THE ANVIL

- A plan to reinvigorate the Dadar-Prabhadevi beach, which is 4km long and suffers from erosion. The MWIC wants the public to use the beach again
- Reviving and sprucing up the Versova waterfront
- Proposal to study, survey and map rivers, creeks, other water bodies and seafronts so more public spaces can be created
- Hold workshops, spread information

THE GOAL: TO OPEN UP OUR WORLD

The Mumbai Waterfront Improvement Committee (MWIC) was registered as a trust only a couple of months ago, but it has been involved in transforming the city for several years now. Its main aim is to create places along waterfronts, and maybe even other water bodies, for the public to relax and snatch much-needed moments of leisure.

"The 44 kilometres of the western coast have never been considered in the planning and development process as an integral part of the city's land. On the contrary, the waterfronts have been constantly abused by reclamation, sewage disposal and encroachment. Yet, for the millions who live in our crowded city, the waterfronts are the only major open spaces—whether it is Marine Drive or Chowpatty, Haji Ali or Worli Seaface, Dadar beach or Bandra Bandstand, Carter Road or Juhu beach, or Versova," states the project description of the MWIC.

The Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award



Mumbai 2007

This is to certify that

MUMBAI WATERFRONTS CENTRE

is a winner of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award: Mumbai 2007
and will receive

Rs. 20 LAKHS.

A Passion to Perform.

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Excellence on the Waterfront



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“Clearwater Citizens Award”

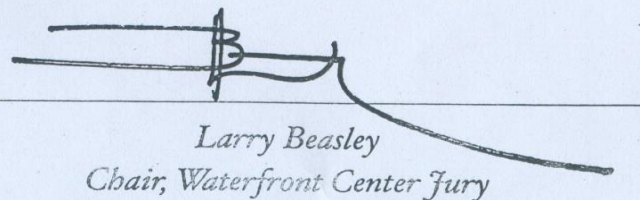
*Bandra Band-stand & Carter Road
Waterfront Development*

Bandra West Residents Association

Mumbai, India

*for a quality waterfront project selected in a
juried competition*

November 15, 2002



*Larry Beasley
Chair, Waterfront Center Jury*



Juhugiri. Pyar se.

Double open space: add almost 3 Oval maidans
 Create 10 km tree-lined, flood-free walkway along Irla nala
 Inter-connect open spaces with institutions & amenities
 Re-align & integrate Metro rail network with public spaces
 Protect beach, improve access, enhance facilities
 Provide civic amenities for gaothans, re-develop slums
 Form a model for neighbourhood planning,
 participation & governance

Vision Juhu *Expanding public space*

Kamala Raheja Vidyavidyalaya Institute for Architecture • PK Das & Associates, Architects • Mumbai Waterfronts Centre

Supported by: Juhu Citizen's Welfare Group (JCWG) • Gulmohar Area Society's Welfare Group
 Juhu Scheme Residents Association • JVPD Housing Association Limited • Gaothan Area Residents Association of Juhu (GARAJ)
 Juhu Residents Association • Irla Residents Association • Rotary Club of Juhu • Research Sponsor: ICICI Prudential
 Contacts: anirudh.paul@gmail.com • pkdas.arch@gmail.com • daryldmonte@gmail.com



REVISIONING MUMBAI

Democratising Public Spaces and Waterfronts

Indira Munshi & P.K. Das