

Mumbai: Slum dwellers, occupants of CRZ land to get connections through common taps



The announcement on Monday was made by state environment minister and guardian minister Aaditya Thackeray. He said Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will himself announce the mega policy on May 1.

The BMC has decided to implement a 'Water for all policy' in the city, including slum tenements, from May 1 – which is observed as Maharashtra Day and Labour Day. The Free Press Journal had first reported it when the civic body had announced it in its Budget in February this year. The BMC had, in 2018, put out a report, Equitable and 24X7 Water Supply for Greater Mumbai, which it has now implemented.

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Civic officials said the policy is being implemented on humanitarian grounds and will be beneficial to non-occupational certificate buildings, illegal slum dwellers, slum dwellers of private and government lands, and slum dwellers who reside in the coastal regulation zone areas.

At the meeting on Monday, besides Aaditya Thackeray, also present were BMC commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal, additional municipal commissioner (projects) P Velarasu, additional municipal commissioner (city) Sanjiv Kumar, additional municipal commissioner (western suburbs) Suresh Kakani, along with other officials.

A senior BMC officer said this will reduce the number of illegal water connections and cases of water leakage and contamination. He said, "Many citizens will come forward to take legal water connections and will increase the BMC revenue." Other officials said written guarantees will be taken from applicants that this water connection will not be used as residential proof.

According to the BMC, it provides 3,800 million litres of water on a daily basis and around 25-30 per cent (900 million litres) is wasted in leakage and thefts.

Sitaram Shelar, the convenor of NGO Water Rights Committee said, "This is not the first time the BMC has drafted such a policy. In 2016, it implemented a similar policy but that couldn't succeed because stringent conditions were added in the application. As per our records, out of 2,000 people, only 1,000 got water connections at that time."

Welcoming the move, Shelar alleged that this policy will stop illegal income of BMC officers and workers might try for it to not succeed.

Yogesh Mishra of Praja Foundation said, "The policy is good but metering and should be implemented so that the BMC can keep a watch on water supply and leakage. Metering will also get revenue.

Link: <https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-slum-dwellers-occupants-of-crz-land-to-get-connections-through-common-taps>