

## Mumbai: BMC polls ahead, netas get to work with unusual gusto

Mumbai: Sleeves all rolled up, the alacrity with which the city's corporators are getting down to work these days is exemplary. With elections to the BMC slated to be held in February, netas are bending backwards to take up works in their civic constituencies with unusual gusto.

Electoral wards across the city are already reverberating with the sound of the auspicious coconut being cracked ahead amid the customary fanfare. Most corporators have sensed the power of social media and are using it to the hilt to pass on the word to those who aren't able to attend in person.

Cuffe Parade's Harshita Narwekar, a first-time corporator, held a ground-breaking ceremony for the upgrade of Colaba woods garden about a week ago in the presence of local MLA Rahul Narwekar from the BJP. "The ongoing Metro 3 work near the garden affected the entry gate to the garden. So, we're looking at taking up holistic garden improvement work where the gazebo, boundary wall, walking track would be improved. We also want to try to construct a cycle track connecting gardens across Colaba woods," said Harshita who uses Twitter to reach out to locals.

In Juhu, BJP's Renu Hansraj is looking at completing works on machines being installed at Irla pumping station. "The machines will ensure that marine litter does not come onto the beach," said Hansraj, also a first-time corporator. Another project she is pushing for is reconstruction of Gandhigram Municipal School which awaits a nod.

In Wadala Shiv Sena's Amey Ghole had state minister Aaditya Thackeray inaugurate work to improve footpath around Wadala-Matunga earlier this week Ghole said BMC would re-engineer footpaths and bus shelters in the locality by using standardised street furniture like litter bins, benches and refuge islands to make the city more pedestrian-friendly. "Another project I'm pushing for is a bird park on a land along the lines of Singapore's Jurong Bird Park. The plan is still in the nascent stage," said Ghole.

Recently, Santacruz corporator Hetal Gala who had been pushing for the Santacruz mini fire station succeeded in getting it started.

NGO Praja Foundation's director, Milind Mhaske, welcomed such development work, but added that some of them have come in too late in the day. "Currently, there is no mechanism to access works of corporators' throughout their term. Also, at times citizens need to take responsibility and hold their corporator accountable for works they should have done. Now, with elections around the corner, a lot of works being initiated shouldn't come as a surprise," said Mhaske.

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