

Bandra MLA says leptospirosis cases on rise, but doctors deny it

INFECTION Doctors said no unusual spike in cases; while 2016 saw 8 deaths, 3 have died till July 2017

Yesha Kotak
yesha.kotak@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: After Ashish Shelar, a Member of Legislative Assembly from Bandra, took to Twitter last week to say that seasonal diseases like leptospirosis were on the rise in suburbs, doctors in the city said quite the opposite.

While warning the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on July 18, Shelar tweeted, "H1N1, leptospirosis, dengue on the rise. Requested @MCGM_BMC and all relevant agencies to actively tackle and spread awareness."

But doctors in Bandra said there is no unusual spike in leptospirosis. Dr Pradip Shah, head of the department of medicine at Fortis Hospital, said he has not come across any patient who has been tested positive with leptospirosis this monsoon.

"This year, more people are getting infected by H1N1 virus and not leptospirosis. Last year, out of all the reported cases of fever, around 50%-60% were tested positive for dengue, 20% for malaria and 2.5% for typhoid, leptospirosis and hepatitis," said Shah.

Dr Prahlad Prabhudesai, consultant chest physician at Lilavati Hospital, said they had come across one person who had leptospirosis around three weeks ago and the patient recovered from the illness. "The reason why not too many incidents of the infection have been detected this year could be that the city hasn't expe-

CONTAMINATED WATER TRANSMITS DISEASE

Leptospirosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria of the genus *Leptospira* and affects both humans as well as animals.

It is one of the world's most widespread diseases transmitted by animals to humans.

The infection is generally transmitted to humans through contaminated water by animal urine which comes in contact with unhealed breaks in the skin, the eyes, or with the mucous membrane.

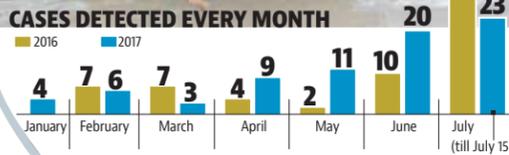
ACTION TAKEN

Under the house-to-house survey conducted to identify more cases, 860 houses were visited and 4,850 people were screened this year

Health camps organised in areas where people died of the disease.

24 patients with general ailments were tested

IN NUMBERS



HOW TO PREVENT DISEASE

- Wearing protective clothing like boots, gloves, spectacles, aprons and mask
- Covering skin lesions with waterproof dressing
- Preventing access to, or giving adequate warning about water bodies known or suspected to be contaminated (pools, ponds, rivers). Try to avoid wading or swimming in potentially contaminated water.
- Washing or showering after exposure to contaminated soil or water. Washing and cleaning wounds
- Avoiding touching ill or dead animals or assisting animals in giving birth.
- Strictly maintaining hygienic measures during care or handling all animals
- Where feasible, disinfecting contaminated areas (scrubbing floors in stables, butcheries, abattoirs, etc)
- Consuming clean drinking water

rienced severe water logging yet," said Prabhudesai.

Leptospirosis spreads when a person with a wound comes in contact with water or soil contaminated by the leptospirosis bacteria, which is found in the urine of infected animals (which includes cattle, dogs, goats and

rats).

While eight people died of the disease last year, the BMC said this year has seen three leptospirosis deaths and no specific trend has been observed as the incidents have been sporadic. However, in 2015, the worst affected wards were P South and

North (Goregaon/Malad) and R South and North (Borivli/Dahisar). In 2016, total 267 cases of the disease were detected but till July 15 this year, 76 such cases have been found in the city.

Rajan Naringrekar, insecticide officer, BMC, said they have poisoned around 1,29,764 rat bur-

rows in the city from January 1 to July 15 to ensure that infection of leptospirosis through rats is reduced. "People need to follow a 4D model when it comes to rats to stay safe this season - deny entry, deny shelter, deny food and destruction of burrows," said Naringrekar.

Lost papers on Aarey-SGNP land transfer in fire, says state

Badri Chatterjee
badri.chatterjee@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: The papers which showed the transfer of forest land from Aarey Milk Colony to Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) were lost during the Mantralaya fire in June 2012, the state government has said in its response to a query under the Right To Information Act.

The reply has a mistake in the date - June 21, 2016.

In June, environment group Vanashakti had released documents that showed that the forest department had demarcated 20.76sqkm of Aarey Milk Colony as 'unclassified forests' of the SGNP. HT had reported this on June 11. Aarey, one of the last remaining green lungs in the city, is under threat from development activities. There is a proposal to build a car-shed for Metro 3 over 33 hectares of Aarey. Work on this was stalled after the National Green Tribunal stayed it, following a petition from Vanashakti and Aarey Conservation Group, a citizens forum.

Vanashakti, in an RTI query to the state's revenue department in May, asked for a copy of the letter and other documents that show the transfer of land from Bombay Milk Scheme (now Aarey) to the national park in 1969.

The government's reply to the application said: "According to

A HISTORY OF AAREY

- 1942:** The Bombay Municipal Corporation acquires Tuli and Vihar lakes in Borivli and Powai; it also adds land from Aarey
- 1950:** The 20-sqkm Krishnagiri National Park is set up
- 1969:** 2,076 hectares of land from the Aarey Milk Scheme (as it was called then) is transferred to the forest department.
- 1976:** 68.27 sqkm of the area is formally declared as the Borivli National Park
- 1980:** An official communica-

tion from the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Limited, Nagpur states 2,076.073 hectares of land transferred from Aarey Milk Scheme should be included in the Borivli National Park.

1981: Borivli National Park is further expanded to an area of 82.25 sqkm.

(Source: Affidavit submitted at the NGT, western bench, by NGOs Vanashakti and Aarey Conservation Group)

your query, we want to inform you that all the documents in this office were destroyed during the fire that broke out in Mantralaya on June 21, 2016. However, since the area in question is on government land, the district collector has been notified of the state's decision. Hence, to ensure that you get your response, we have forwarded the query to the Mumbai suburban collector's office."

Vanashakti, which had obtained documents about the land transfer from the state forest department, had submitted an affidavit to NGT on February 17, saying that tracts of Aarey were transferred to SGNP when the park was expanded. This meant that the land in Aarey, a forest land, could not be diverted for

projects. The document from July 1980 that states 2,076.073 hectares of land was transferred to SGNP.

"Despite submitting RTIs to a number of departments, it is mysterious that not only the revenue department, but all others that are supposed to have a copy of this correspondence are not revealing the details," said Stalin D, director, Vanashakti, adding that it was a big cover-up and indicates a possible land scam.

Meanwhile, when HT contacted the Mumbai suburban collector regarding the issue being forwarded to him by the revenue department, he refused to comment.

The next hearing is listed for July 24 at NGT, Pune.

Now, students will get learner's driving licences in colleges

Kaillash Korde
kaillash.korde@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: College students will soon be able to get learner's licences to drive two and four-wheeler vehicles at their institutions without visiting Regional Transport Offices (RTO) or hiring agents.

The RTOs will conduct online tests in colleges on knowledge of traffic rules, signs, etc, and if the students answer 60% questions correctly, they will receive the learner's licences. Last week, the Maharashtra Motor Vehicle Department (MMVD) issued a circular with policy guidelines to all the RTOs. The circular, a copy of which is with HT, has guidelines like the RTOs must conduct driving licence camps only at government recognised colleges.

For these camps, the colleges will need computer labs with at least 10 inter-connected computers, 2mbps internet data and printers. The colleges must prepare a list of students appearing for the test, verify and upload their documents on SARATHI 4.0 system and pay online fees, added

THE CIRCULAR SAID COLLEGES SHOULD CONDUCT THESE TESTS WITHOUT CHARGING STUDENTS ANY AMOUNT, BUT STUDENTS HAVE TO PAY RS200 PLUS TAXES FOR THE LICENCE

the circular.

The RTOs have been asked to conduct one camp a college every year and to depute motor vehicle inspectors, cashiers and other necessary staff members in colleges. The guidelines also suggest that the RTOs spread awareness about road safety among students.

As a pilot project, the MMVD had conducted such a camp in Kirti College. RTO officials, welcomed the new guidelines, but are sceptical about its success owing to shortage of staff and response from colleges. "The polytechnics and ITIs should also need to be covered, besides colleges," said the official.

'Must move SC to resolve medical admission issue'

Press Trust of India
hmetro@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Dhananjay Munde demanded that the government stop the medical admissions procedure until the issue of allowing non-domicile students to apply for seats in the state is resolved.

"The medical education department should approach the Supreme Court against the Bombay high court's decision to allow non-domicile students (those who are not residents of Maharashtra) to apply for medical seats in the state," Munde said.

The NCP leader added, "Until the Supreme Court gives its decision, the government should stop the process."

On July 7, the Aurangabad bench of Bombay high court relaxed domicile norms for medical and dental courses in Maharashtra.

Parents of some students from the state moved the SC against the decision last week, but the apex court asked them to file a review petition before the high court itself.

FARMERS TO STAGE 'RASTA ROKO' ON AUGUST 14

HT Correspondent
hmetro@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Farmers' outfits in Maharashtra will restart their protest to demand a blanket loan waiver and implementation of the Swaminathan commission's recommendations across the state by staging 'rasta roko' on August 14.

The commission has suggested 50% minimum support price (MSP) to be given to farmers for crops over and above the input cost. They have also appealed to Maratha outfits for their support.

The decision was taken in a meeting of the steering committee, apex body of all the farmers organisations, held on Sunday after conclusion of an awareness march at Pune.

The awareness march (Janjagruti Yatra) was started from July 10 to tell people about the alleged injustice being done to farmers.

"We have decided to take our agitation forward by holding rasta roko on August 14. This agitation will be held across the state with full vigour," said Ajit Nawale, coordinator of the steering committee.

Nawale added that they have also asked Maratha outfits to raise the farmers' issue during their silent march, which will be held in Mumbai on August 9.

He said legislators Bachchu Kadu, Jiva Pandu Gavit and Jayant Patil, who support their agitation, will raise the issue of blanket loan waiver during the monsoon session of the state legislature starting on Monday. Raju Shetti, farmers' leader and Swabhimani Paksha chief, said they will intensify the agitation if the government won't accept their demands after August 14.

The awareness march was carried out through 26 districts and 14 big rallies were held.

Reacting to this, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said some people want to prolong an issue and that's why they use such means.

"The farmers of the state will show them their place," Fadnavis said.

CHEERING OUR GIRLS



People gather outside cricketer Poonam Raut's house to watch Women's World Cup final between India and England on Sunday. (Inset) Raut's parents. SHASHI S KASHYAP

After budget session, loan waiver to be at the centre of state's monsoon session too

Swapnil Rawal
swapnil.rawal@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: If the budget session was dominated by demands of loan waiver by the opposition and Shiv Sena, the monsoon session that will commence on Monday is likely to be no different. Though the Maharashtra government has announced Rs 34,000-crore farm loan waiver for farmers in the state, the opposition plans to corner the government over the confusion on the its roll-out.

To counter the opposition, CM Devendra Fadnavis said his government would start the procedure to collect the online application forms from 89 lakh farmers from Monday. "The process to collect the forms will start from Monday. We have prepared simple forms, which will be available at 25,000 centres. Every gram panchayat will have at least one centre to collect the forms. Since it is an online process, the scru-



CM Devendra Fadnavis at the customary tea party at Sahyadri Guest House at Malabar Hill on Sunday. PRATIK CHORGE/HT

tiny will be faster and accurate," Fadnavis said on Sunday.

Headed that the farmers will have to put down their Aadhaar numbers in the forms. "These forms are to avoid ghost accounts, which we have experienced in the past. We will link the loan waiver form with farmers' Aadhaar," Fadnavis added.

The opposition—the Congress party and the NCP—is unlikely to be convinced with the government's process and took a unanimous decision that the confusion over loan waiver would be their first priority in the upcoming session. The opposition will however be dodged by an internal rift that threatens to dilute their attack against the government. The Fadnavis-led government

BILLS TO BE TABLED

- The state plans to table 21 bills — 14 new and 7 pending — in the monsoon session. Here are a few:
- Maharashtra Witness Protection Bill, which states that protection will only be provided to witnesses who depose in a trial for serious offences
- A bill to amend Maharashtra Motor Vehicle Tax Act 1958 to hike one-time tax for vehicle registration

also faces trouble from within as Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, in an interview for party mouthpiece 'Saamana', said Sena would not desist from "exposing" the BJP-led government, should it fail to implement the loan waiver scheme properly.

A divided opposition likely to benefit Maharashtra govt

HT Correspondent
hmetro@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: On the eve of the state legislature's monsoon session, the opposition parties have presented a disunited front with both the Congress and NCP planning to adopt different strategies to corner the state government.

For the first time since 2014, both the parties took separate press conferences before the monsoon session, which starts on Monday. This split in the main opposition parties is likely to benefit the Devendra Fadnavis-led government.

MALISHKA'S RAP A HIT WITH THE OPPOSITION



Malishka Mendonsa

Malishka's rap against BMC seems to have caught on with the politics. Dhananjay Munde said 'Sarkarcha karbhar Gol Gol...Tyaat Motha Zhol Zhol' (The government is suspicious and marked with scams).

Congress' Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil asked NCP 'Rashtravadi Amchyavar Bharosa nahi ka?' (Doesn't the NCP trust us). He also took on Shiv Sena saying 'Shiv Sena Chya Mendut Zhol Zhol' (There is lot of confusion in the Sena).

The NCP was upset with the Congress' move as they view it as breaking the unity of the Opposition. "The Congress' leader of Opposition wrote to the speaker of the House on various issues

they will take up in the House without consulting us. This gives an impression that they don't need us," said NCP legislator Sunil Tatkare. The NCP will counter the state government

with the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP).

On the other hand, the Congress said the NCP wanted to pursue its own agenda. "The NCP wanted to talk about some issues

on their own," said Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, opposition leader of the assembly. "However, we support each other in the assembly," he added.

However, both parties are planning to target the state on similar issues. "The loan waiver is a sham. Farmers have not got anything till now," said both the parties. They also demanded an investigation in the Slum Rehabilitation Authority scam.

"A united opposition is always a headache and now since they have split, it is an advantage for us," said a senior minister from the state assembly.

QUALIFY AS A MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

ADMISSIONS OPEN for eMBA

Advanced PG level campus based autonomous programmes in e-empowered Management and Business Administration (eMBA)

SPECIALISATIONS
Marketing
Finance
Digital
HR
BFSI
Global Business

eMBA Finance is now empowered with Credit Risk Management (CCRA certification) by the Association of International Wealth Management of India (AIWMI)*

- B-School ranked in the Platinum category - AICTE-CII IndPact Survey '15
- Delivering latest e-commerce tools based on SMAC (Social Networks, Mobile Applications, Analytics and Cloud)
- Placements and internships world over • Laptop included

APPLY NOW - www.met.edu

Bhujbal Knowledge Centre

Bandra (West), Mumbai 50 • Toll free: 1800 22 0234

Missed Call Alert: 777021818 • Tel: 022 - 26440096

communications@met.edu

THE MET LEAGUE OF COLLEGES

MET

AS SHARP AS YOU CAN GET

ISO 9001:2008 certified, MET is NGO in Special Consultative Status with UN (ECOSOC). Specific programmes do not come under the purview of AICTE. * Conditions apply.