

Pune passes clean colour-coding test

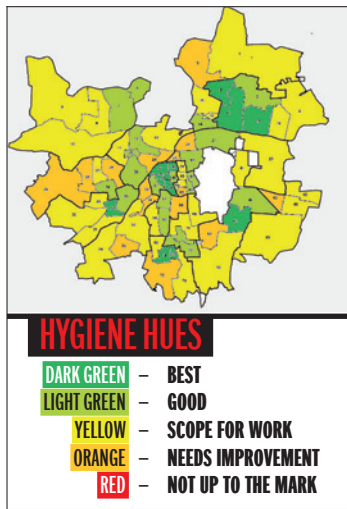
Green light for Nagar Road, Vishrambaug Wada ward offices and ten wards, but none gets red; some feel survey not enough for cleanliness

Siddharth.Gadkari@timesgroup.com
TWEET @ThePuneMirror

If a ward is the cleanest, its colour is dark green. Light green means good job; yellow leaves more scope of work, orange means the ward needs improvement and red is a clear sign of danger. The results of the Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) colour-coding survey are out and it's a mix of colours. Out of the 15 ward offices, Nagar Road and Vishrambaug Wada have got light green, nine have got yellow and the rest orange. But, none has got red.

Arun Khilari, assistant municipal commissioner of the Kasba-Vishrambaug ward, said, "Most of our area belongs to the peths, where there is no space for open defecation. Besides, the local residents are educated and more aware about cleanliness. It helps us boost our ranking to green. We are confident of keeping this ranking throughout the year."

As for individual wards, Maharashtra housing board-Nagpur chawl (ward 4) was adjudged the best ward of the month under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, scoring the most among the 10 wards that have been colour-coded dark green. There are a total of 76 panels (each consists of two wards) in the city. PMC's solid waste management department gathers a report from every ward office about its cleanliness status and initiatives. However, the civic body found that it would be difficult for the department to carry out the survey on its own. So, for the last two months, PMC has roped in private agencies to help out, with them grad-



ing each ward according to the colour-coding system.

"We have begun third-party inspection to cross-check the facts of ground-level work and find out loopholes in the system. It has helped improve the system, make it more sustainable and identify new scope for work. The inspection has put pressure on the wards as well and their rankings have stepped up, compared to April's survey. The May survey saw improvement in most of the wards as they had made additional efforts," said Suresh Jagtap, who heads PMC's solid waste management department.

The private players conducted the survey on the basis of nine different parameters. They spoke to people, NGOs and the administration to know their views, suggestions and so on. The major criteria included chron-

ic unhygienic spots, public cleanliness, house-to-house waste collection percentage, wet and dry garbage segregation level, collection and transportation of garbage, collection and processing of garbage within the ward area, active participation of people in slums and other areas and so on. There are 30 wards that have fallen in the yellow category as they have scope for improvement. There are 20 wards in the good (light green) category, and 15 wards (orange) need improvement.

Some feel this survey has begun with promise. But the initial enthusiasm will fizzle out soon, and it will be PMC's fault. Ashish Mane, founder of Wadgaonsheri Nagrik Manch who lives near the Nagar Road ward office, said, "Public hygiene is the PMC's responsibility, which charges the citizens to maintain cleanliness. This system is good, but not sustainable. Though Nagar Road has got a good ranking, Wadgaonsheri has piling garbage as there is no proper system of collection. Contract-basis employees who collect garbage door-to-door haven't got their salaries since the last three months. How can PMC expect good work from these employees? I don't think grading will serve the purpose."

Jayant Bhosekar, assistant municipal commissioner of Kothrud ward office that was colour-coded yellow, added, "In our ward, there are three major slum areas where open defecation is a big problem. Besides that, Sutardara is on the fringes, where there is no proper sanitation system. We have to work more to go up to the green category and we are trying our best."

DHANANJAY HELWADE



DIYAS LIGHT UP TILAK'S SPLENDID MESSAGE

A hundred years on, a thousand diyas writ large Bal Gangadhar Tilak's famous words, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it" at the New English School Ramanbaug grounds on Wednesday evening, a fitting tribute by the Deccan Education Society and Itihas Premi Mandal. These very words had been spoken by Lokmanya Tilak on June 1, 1916. "When Lokmanya Tilak was released from Mandalay prison in 1914, the British thought his voice would be subdued. But, on June 1, 1916, he made this statement at a lecture in Ahmednagar, which inspired many common people. The British had even dragged him to court for this," shared Mohan Shete from Itihas Premi Mandal.

DRAFT WETLANDS RULES 2016

'Watered-down draft dilutes bid for conservation'

Allege environmentalists, writing to MoEF for revising the rules and implementing 2010 guidelines instead till then



Mayuri.Phadnis@timesgroup.com
TWEET @ThePuneMirror

A new, watered-down Draft Wetlands Rules 2016 has put the Central Wetlands Regulatory Authority (CWRA) at the mercy of the states, claimed concerned environmentalists, with the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP) writing to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) to revoke the dilution and put in place The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2010, which had never been implemented.

"Wetlands are one of the most productive ecosystems globally. They store water, recharge groundwater, purify it, protect against moderate floods as well as help fight drought. These are only few examples of their usefulness; there are many more. The 2016 Draft Wetlands Rules have disregarded an entire consultative process that started way back in 2008 — when the First Draft Regulatory Framework for Wetlands Conservation of India was put out by the MoEF — and have severely jeopardised wetlands conservation in the country. The 2016 rules are so diluted that there is no scope for modification. The ministry needs to constitute new rules through a consultative and participatory process. Till then, the 2010 rules need to be implemented immediately," stressed Parineeta Dandekar, associate co-ordinator of SANDRP.

In its letter, SANDRP has said the new rules have given the states more power over CWRA, which could be detrimental for conservation since, even after six years of the previous rules being notified, the states have not shown any initiative to prepare documents for protecting the wetlands in their territories. The new draft rules state no criterion for which wetlands should be notified

by the state. What's worse, there are no guidelines about activities that should be prohibited or even regulated in the wetlands by states.

Dandekar maintained that a study on the Bhitarkanika mangrove ecosystem in Odisha (second largest mangrove forest of mainland India) estimated that a village protected by mangrove forests could avoid cyclone damage the most. The loss incurred per household was greatest in a village that was not sheltered by mangroves and lowest in the village that was.

Shailaja Deshpande, a member of Jeevitnadi — a citizens' group working for the revival of rivers — said, "Creating and saving wetlands is one of the best ways of rejuvenating the dying rivers. We have innumerable quarries in the city and these have a great potential of being converted into wetlands if left undisturbed. The government should seriously look into saving these, considering that they have enormous potential for helping with groundwater recharge. Even the United Nations report suggests that India is bad at managing its surface water."

Stalin Dayanand, environmentalist and director (projects) in Vanashakti NGO, added, "At present, the district administration is looking after these and its officials do not understand much. The 2016 rules don't even hand over the wetlands' charge to the forest department, which is more enlightened about conservation. Moreover, the rules have not said anything about prohibition of reclamation, which is a cause for concern. They have kept the rules loosely formatted, with several loopholes so that it will be easier to give clearances."

When contacted, a senior official from MoEF said the rules are currently in the draft phase and the time limit to raise suggestions and objections is till June 6. The final notification will take into consideration these objections and suggestions, the official assured.