



To make the city a better place
to live, work and invest in

APRIL
2023



RESILIENCE FIRST
SURVIVE & THRIVE



First & Foremost

Dear Mumbai First family,

It gives us great pleasure to introduce the digital avatar of our quarterly newsletter, First & Foremost. As you all know, this newsletter is the window to Mumbai First, where we share about our various initiatives and programs to engage with the citizens of Mumbai. Starting with this edition, we are excited to switch to a digital version of the newsletter. This is our effort to connect with the passionate citizens of Mumbai and keep them in the loop of the progress towards making Mumbai a better city to live, work & invest in.

In this digital avatar, we are introducing a new column in the newsletter titled "Mumbai Speaks." Through this column, we aim to provide a platform for the citizens of Mumbai to share their experiences and write about the various initiatives they are undertaking to bring about change and positively impacting lives in and around Mumbai and Mumbai's environment. We invite all Mumbaikars across all walks of life to contribute to this column and share their stories with us.

We take this opportunity to thank all our esteemed supporters and associates for their continued support and encouragement. Your good cooperation and wishes have been instrumental in helping us to forward our goals and make a positive impact on the city. We hope you will enjoy the new digital version of the newsletter and find it informative and engaging. We welcome your support, feedback and suggestions, and look forward to continuing our journey of making Mumbai a better place to live, work and invest in for all its citizens.

- Mumbai First team



EVENTS



Clearing the Air: Improving Air Quality in Mumbai January, 2023

Due to the severity of the issue and rising concerns, Mumbai First hosted a closed-door expert consultation on the issue of degrading Air Quality Index (AQI) in Mumbai themed “**Clearing the Air: Improving Air Quality in Mumbai**”, where the focus was laid on the actionable solutions for better assessment and improvement of Mumbai’s current air quality. The consultation brought together a diverse group of experts from various fields such as air pollution, health, urban planning, and sustainability, to collaborate on finding practical and effective solutions to improve air quality in Mumbai. A letter with key recommendations from this session has been summarised and addressed to the Chief Minister for further action

Sakinaka Cleaning Project - February 2023

Currently, Mumbai produces more than 6000 tonnes of waste daily. The city has an area of 480 sq km and is divided into 7 zones with further dispersed into 24 administrative wards. Mumbai First, in a joint collaboration with the ERAF Foundation (Environment and Research Foundation) and MCGM, has undertaken a Solid waste management mobilization project in the Sakinaka area in the form of pilot study. The study aims to work closely with the municipal authority to develop an efficient method for dealing with the solid waste generated in L-ward. The pilot study was conducted on 20th and 21st March 2023 by Mumbai First and ERAF.



The objectives of the study were to:

- To identify the gaps and causes of garbage consolidation & waste management at the ward level.
- To develop a framework for mobilising a clean and garbage-free area in ward no 156 & 157 in Sakinaka (L ward).
- To develop long-term solutions for the said problems.

3rd India - EU Urban Forum



Mumbai First Program Director Ashhi L Thakar was invited to speak about the importance of Public Private Partnerships in building sustainable cities for the future. The Forum is dedicated to smart & sustainable urbanization to shape the future agenda for the nation. The 3rd India-EU Urban Forum was held on February 13th, 2023 in New Delhi to discuss implementation and financing strategies in various sectors of urban development. The forum was jointly organized by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the Government of India, and the Delegation of the European Union in India. Panel discussions were held on smart cities, water and waste management, and urban mobility with interventions by panellists from India and the EU. The forum concluded with remarks by the Delegation of the European Union to India and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.



U20 City Sherpa Meeting in Ahmedabad 9th & 10th February 2023

The U20 brought together mayors from G20 cities under a common framework and coordinated a joint position to inform the discussions of national leaders. The engagement group is under the larger intergovernmental forum of G20 and plays a vital role in contributing perspectives, concerns, and ideas from cities to inform and enrich the overall G20 negotiations. The City Sherpa of Ahmedabad, Shri. Praveen Chaudhary presented six priority areas proposed by the Chair city as part of the zero-draft communique. He acknowledged the work done under previous U20 cycles and stressed the need to move from 'intention to action' during the 6th cycle.

Mumbai First was privileged to attend the 'Sherpa Meeting' in Ahmedabad to deliberate the challenges and urges of urban areas. Before this meeting in Ahmedabad, NIUA, the Technical Secretariat for Urban 20 (U20), had organized a pre-session in Delhi in January 2023.

Mumbai First had curated a 3 part discussion series inviting eminent speakers to recall the journey of the city of Mumbai over the past 75 years. The theme was 'Mumbai @75' Years and looked at what the city has achieved for the nation and what remains to be explored, built upon, and improved in our city.

Mumbai @75



I. The Governance Chronicles -
Tracing the journey of Governance in Mumbai with one of the oldest municipal corporations.



II. Is Mumbai still the Economic Powerhouse of India?
The discussion revolved around Mumbai's journey from 7 islands to becoming an economic powerhouse of MMR.



III. Making of a Cultural Metropolis -
Focus was laid on the city's tryst with art, heritage, films, and culture.



Mumbai Speaks

The Need for Hyperlocal Data in Regulatory and Evidence-based Decision Making



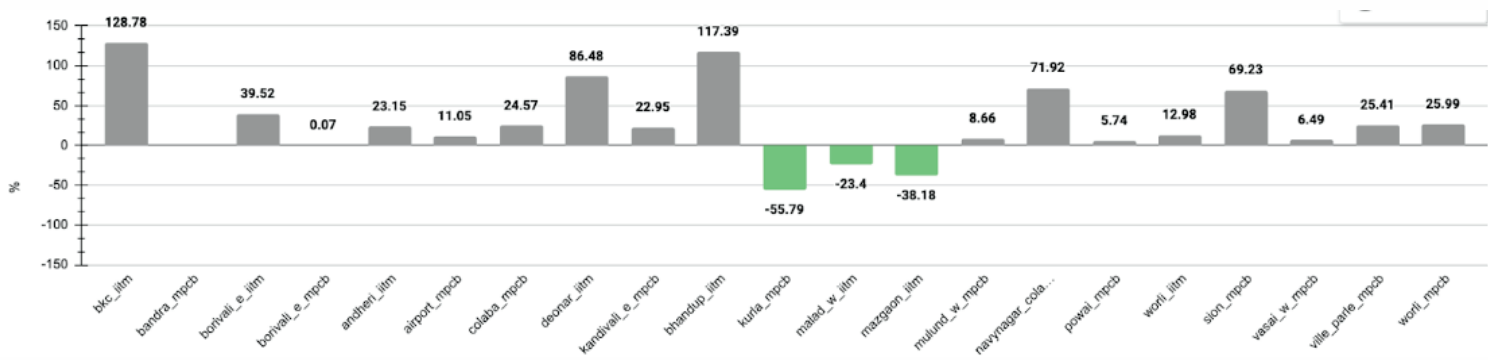
Ronak Sutaria

Founder,
Respirer Living Services

Air Quality in Mumbai has been making headline news since November last year. The Air Quality Index (AQI) which is a composite index number made essentially from the levels of the toxic PM2.5 concentration levels rose to dangerously high levels this winter. The city recorded 16 days for the month of Jan 2023 and 11 days in Feb 2023 in the poor category (PM2.5 in the 90 to 120 range) - an increase from 3 poor days for the same months in 2022 (an increase of 430% and 266% respectively). It is important to note that the city recorded ZERO good days (PM2.5 less than 30) for any of the days in the first 2 months of 2023.

Another devastating tragic-comic part of the air quality debate in the maximum city is around blaming the locations of the air quality monitoring stations being the reason for the high levels of air pollution being reported in the city. This strategy to improve the air quality of a city by moving the monitoring sites to 'cleaner parts of the city', while can be enacted by the regulatory agencies, does not follow the global scientific and technical advances in this space nor meet the citizen-focused purposes that these monitoring sites have been set up for in the first place.

As of March 2023, the city of Mumbai has a total of 21 monitoring sites with 12 sites being operated by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and another 9 sites by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM - part of the Ministry of Earth Sciences). Navi Mumbai has an additional 3 sites from MPCB and 1 site from IITM. The findings from these locations over the past two years paint quite a striking picture of the city of Mumbai. A quick analysis as seen below shows a rather grim picture of Mumbai City, particularly when seen as a month-on-month evaluation. Of the 21 locations, 17 locations have reported worse air in Feb 2023 than in Feb 2022, and 3 locations have improved - of which the improvement of 1 location (Kurla) seems to have come at the cost of reduced monitoring.



What is equally alarming along with the increase in air pollution levels is the response from both the pollution regulatory board and the municipal corporation of the city to the situation. The governance of air pollution depends on the close collaboration of multiple agencies of the city including but not limited to MPCB and the SAFAR project from IITM, CPCB, Municipal Corporation of Mumbai (MCGM), air quality research agencies like CSIR-NEERI and IIT Bombay. Each agency and organisation has a critical and timely role to play unfortunately, though a lackadaisical response from many of these agencies has resulted in the 15 million people of the city having to struggle through with 'very poor' or 'severe' air quality conditions during this winter.

Globally, cities like London, Los Angeles, and Beijing have dealt with similar or worse conditions. And all of these cities have come out on the other side of significantly improved air quality conditions - the results have been a combination of having strong regulations, using advanced science and technologies, timely and supportive funding agencies, a vibrant and democratic civil society, and socially and environmentally responsible industry leadership. At the heart of all of these agencies is a single-point agenda - keeping every single person, particularly infants, children, and vulnerable elderly populations safe from exposure to unsafe levels of air pollution. The problem of air pollution is multi-sectoral and hence it needs multifaceted solutions. As the maxim goes - we cannot improve what we do not measure. Hence, the solution has to begin with scientifically valid hyperlocal monitoring done at the one to two sq km resolution. Surprisingly, for the wealthiest city in India, this kind of high-resolution monitoring is not going to break the bank. It is going to be as little as the cost of one apartment home in Bandra. The municipal corporation of the city can most certainly afford it. What it lacks is the intent and will to truly improve the air quality conditions for its citizens.

“Where there is a will, there is a way, if there is no will, there is only a survey, discussion, seminar, committee, subcommittee and research group

Mr Nitin Gadkari,
Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India

Once the monitoring is put in place, the next steps of decision-making become relatively easier to evaluate and implement. There are some obvious sources of air pollution in Mumbai, 71% of which as per a report from NEERI and IIT Bombay, is said to be made up of road dust and construction dust. This source of pollution needs to be regulated and controlled. Implementing policies to mitigate such anthropogenic (human-induced) dust sources needs equitability when implementing policies which may end up levying fines to those breaking the regulations. And therein lies the hardest part of controlling air pollution -- it is usually going to come at the cost of controlling some of our critical economic activities - which include transport, construction, industrial emissions, etc.

Mumbai can improve its air quality in a matter of 2 to 3 years. But for that it needs to show strong leadership combined with a willingness to all forms of science and technology solutions. As the Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari recently aptly said - “Where there is a will, there is a way, if there is no will, there is only survey, discussion, seminar, committee, sub committee and research group”. Just a few days after the above was said in a speech - the Mumbai Municipal Commissioner has set up a committee of Deputy Municipal Commissioners to address the issue of air quality in Mumbai.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Annual International Conference

“Climate Action” is one of our core themes Mumbai First identified during the Silver Jubilee Year of Mumbai First. The Metropolis of Mumbai will be the most vulnerable 28.6 million people and assets worth \$4 trillion could be exposed to coastal flooding.



Under the G20 umbrella, Mumbai First will be organising a Global Coastal Cities Summit in May 2023,

“A global conversation on Climate solutions for Coastal Cities”.

Mumbai First with the support of the Government of Maharashtra, the Government of India & the European Union.

Mumbai First is delighted to have **Resilience First**, the world's largest business network, providing the ways and means to drive resilience at scale in a world faced with deep uncertainties and complex interdependencies as an associate partner. Together with Resilience First, Mumbai First will explore and co-create solutions, share lessons & best practices that can enhance Mumbai's resilience and serve as a model for other cities.

Welcoming our new partners

