

The Times of India, Mumbai, 12 Nov 2007

## Pet projects: Citizens join race for funds

### Rs 10L From JNNURM Kitty Is Up For Grabs

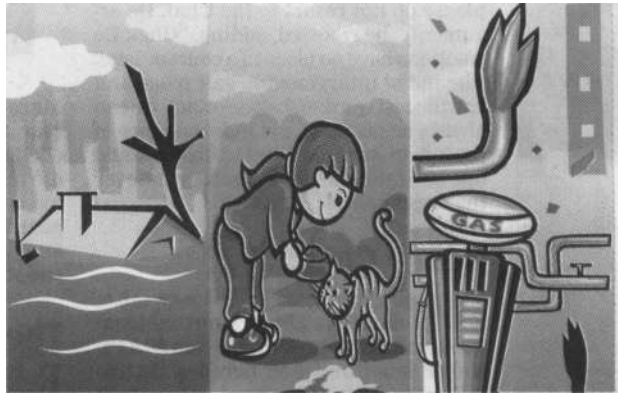
Shalini Nair

Mumbai: Eager to get their share of the pie under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, residents' associations are chalking out plans for projects that will make a difference to their area. From roads and gardens to waste management and flood prevention, residents are making the best of the opportunity to decide what new project their neighbourhood needs the most.

More than a month ago, the BMC had announced that registered ALM groups, youth clubs, community-based organisation or any other neighbourhood groups can apply for up to Rs 10 lakh from the community development fund of the JNNURM. Under this scheme, residents from a single polling booth area can put forward a project provided they have the consent of more than half the people and that of their corporator. If approved, residents will have to bear only 10% of the cost of the project.

The scheme has found several takers with each planning tailor-made solutions for their local problems. For instance, residents of the flood-afflicted Guzderband in Santa Cruz want to take up the daunting task of preparing a contour map for Mumbai. The charting of the contour map has been recommended as a flood prevention measure by expert committees but ignored time and again by civic agencies. Joining Guzderband residents in their venture are associations from nearby areas such as Juhu Citizens' Welfare Group and low-west Citizens' Trust.

"The BMC goes about functioning in an ad hoc manner when it comes to constructing drains to avoid flooding. We have faced the problem often; now we want to look at an integrated solution since only a local level study doesn't help," said P K Mukherjee of the Guzderband Scheme Residents' Trust. Guzderband residents, who have been fighting a losing battle for several years now to remove slums put up along the drains, are holding talks with professional organisations that are into contour mapping and Global Positioning System.



**The moolah** Up to Rs 10 lakh from the JNNURM fund has been sanctioned for the community development project

**How to go about it** People from a locality can apply for the fund provided their project has the consent of more than half the population of the area and their corporator. If approved, residents will have to bear only 10% of the cost of the project

**Guzderband, Santa Cruz** Residents of the flood-afflicted neighbourhood plan to prepare a contour map for Mumbai. Expert committees have suggested the charting of the map as a step to prevent flooding

**Malabar Hill** Neighbours are looking for funds so that they can convert a barren plot of land at Little Gibbs Road into a garden for their children and pets

**Pestom Sagar, Chembur** The residents already have a detailed plan for a project that aims at deriving bio-gas out of leftovers from the 20-odd restaurants in the locality. They have the site and workforce in place, all they need is the money to buy a bio-gas plant

At tony Malabar Hill, residents plan to seek funds for adopting a barren plot of land from the BMC and converting it into a garden and a stretch for pet lovers. "There is this big plot of land at Little Gibbs Road, a part of which is currently used as a godown. We want to convert this into a garden with play area for children and pets," said Indrani Malkani from the Malabar Hill Residents' Association. While one set of residents wants to take up beautification projects, another bunch is all set to do the dirty work.

Residents of Chembur's Pestom Sagar have already made detailed plans for a project that aims to derive bio-gas out of leftovers from the 20-odd restaurants in the area. Currently, all this waste goes untreated to the ever-increasing pile of garbage at the city's dumping grounds. "Most of the infrastructure is already in place. We will use a corner in a garden that has been developed and maintained by us. The labourers would be people who stay in the nearby shanties. They will use hand-

carts to transport the waste. All we need is money to buy the bio-gas plant," said Dr Vijay Sangole from the Pestom Sagar Citizen's Forum. Residents hope to generate enough bio-gas from the four tonnes of waste collected daily and give the same to the hutment dwellers.

According to Ashraf Shaikh from the G-North ward citizens forum, the success of the seemingly good scheme will depend entirely upon what checks the government has in place to ensure that the money goes into the right hands.

"It is often seen that every time such projects are announced, overnight people get themselves registered, while genuine ALMs who have been working for their areas for years are ignored," Shaikh said. The G-North ward citizens forum—which includes about 24 ALM groups from the Dadar, Matunga Mahim belt—will meet soon to decide on what they should prioritise between their roads, open spaces and beaches for the taking up as a project under the scheme.

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