

The Times of India, Mumbai, 02 Jul 2008

It has rained PILs, but city keeps suffering



MONSOON MESS: It was the same old story on Tuesday

Shibu Thomas | TNN

Mumbai: Last year, the Bombay high court had ordered the civic administration to ensure that there would be no more flooding in the city. On Tuesday, when large parts of Mumbai were once again thrown out of gear by heavy rains, the BMC's assurances literally went down the drain.

The "rain PILs", which are filed by citizens against rain-related ills afflicting the city, have been knocking on the doors of the HC with increasing regularity. Immediately after the 26/7 deluge, a slew of petitions was filed by residents to make the state and civic authorities accountable.

Countless hearings later, it's questionable how far these petitions have helped ensure that the authorities get their act right. "Orders have been given from time to time by the courts. However, the ground reality has shown little change," said activist Bhagwanji Raiyani, who had filed a PIL on the condition of the roads.

TOI looks at some of the rain PILs

Rane and activists Kewal Semlani and Raiyani, the court appointed a road monitoring committee with former police chief R H Mendonca as its chairperson. "Besides the 90-page Merani committee report, the RMC submitted a document comprising recommendations to the civic chief," said Raiyani, adding that most of the recommendations have remained on paper.

Flooding

Ensure that there would be no more than six inches of water anywhere in the city from next year, ordered a division bench of Chief Justice Swatanter Kumar and Justice Ranjana Desai in July 2007 while hearing a PIL filed by a Kalyan-based NGO. The court asked the state and the BMC to draw up an action plan to prevent flooding and water-logging. The promised action plan is yet to be drawn up.

