

The Times of India 30.11.2009

Clean-up contractor dropped for poor show

Viju B , TNN 30 November 2009, 06:41am ISTMUMBAI: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has cancelled the contract of an agency allowed to employ clean-up marshals after Right to Information (RTI) replies revealed it had done poorly in the collection of fines. The BMC has now also decided to conduct monthly audits of the performances of the agencies hiring clean-up marshals for the city.

The BMC solid waste management department had come up with the idea of contracting independent agencies to deploy clean-up marshals across the city to monitor public cleanliness. The marshals were given the authority to fine people for various offences, including spitting, urinating or littering in public.

In January 2008, five private agencies were selected for clean-up contracts. TOI reported on September 22 that RTI replies showed that, as of July 31, 2009, they had collected fines totalling Rs 5.94 crore. Around 65% of the fines were for urinating in public. "The amount collected in 18 months must be a drop in the ocean as people still break laws with impunity," said RTI activist Milind Mulay.

The most fines collected (Rs 63 lakh) were from F North ward (Matunga to Dadar TT). This made up nearly 11% of the total fines. L Ward (Kurla) accounted for 7.34% of the total fines (Rs 44 lakh). R-Central (Borivli) and A wards (Colaba) ranked third and fourth respectively (Rs 42 lakh and Rs 38 lakh). "It was

surprising that comparatively dirtier wards, like Kurla and Chembur (Rs 37 lakh), collected only Rs 44 lakh and Rs 42 lakh respectively, while cleaner wards like Matunga collected Rs 63 lakh," Mulay said.

Senior BMC officials said they decided to sack the agency that performed the worst. "We terminated the contract of Trig Security, which has failed in its duty," a senior official said. Trig had collected Rs 1.4 crore in fines for the period concerned, even though it was in charge of one-third (eight) of the city's wards. Senior solid waste management officials said they had received the maximum number of complaints from the public about Trig's performance and the agency didn't keep proper audits.

The BMC standing committee had earlier also recommended the cancellation of the contracts given to the agencies for Kurla and Chembur, but this was not approved.

Seema Redkar, officer on special duty, solid waste, said the department is now encouraging citizens to interact more with clean-up marshals and the BMC. BMC officials said that the ward-wise performances of agencies would be reviewed every month. An official also said that the number of marshals would be increased to make the campaign more effective. "We will increase the number of marshals. There will be at least 20 to 25 marshals in every ward," he said.

When contacted, a senior Trig official confirmed that their contract had been cancelled, but he said he was not in a

position at the time to comment further.

Sweeping Change

Wards covered by Trig Security, whose contract for clean-up marshals has been terminated:

D (Tardeo, Girgaum, Walkeshwar, Mahalaxmi)

H-East (Bandra-E, Khar-E,

Santa Cruz-E)

H-West (Bandra-W, Khar-W,

Santa Cruz-W)

K-East (Parle-E, Andheri-E, Jogeshwari-E)

K-West (Parle-W, Andheri-W, Juhu, Versova, Jogeshwari-W)

N (Ghatkopar, Panjrapol, Vikhroli)

S (Vikhroli, Bhandup)

T (Mulund, Nahur, Vihar)