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City dumps 2,100mn litres of human waste in sea daily

[Nauzer Bharucha](#) | TNN | May 14, 2017, 02.02 AM IST

Mumbai: Where does Mumbai's waste go after you flush it down the toilet?

In a wooded patch close to the [Bandra sea link toll booth](#), [municipal engineers](#) and [maintenance staff](#) monitor a constant gush of light brown water as a dull stench permeates the air.

Sub-engineer Abhijit Desai and his team at the [waste water sewage treatment plant](#) at [Bandra Reclamation](#) are among a group of silent workers at seven locations across the city, handling Mumbai's human and kitchen waste.

Managing this daily nauseating torrent is no mean task. Mumbai's coastline is now considered among the most polluted in the world. And one of the reasons for this is that the sewage receives a basic preliminary treatment before it is pumped into the sea.

The BMC's seven sewage plants located between Colaba, Malad and Bhandup work round-the-clock throughout the year.

Around 2,100 million litres a day (MLD) of waste water sewage is released into the [Arabian Sea](#) and the creeks. The waste that arrives at the plants is pumped 3km into the sea.

The BMC's Malad sewage treatment plant, which handles the waste of 35 lakh people, is perhaps the worst. The facility is limited to just preliminary treatment before the effluent is discharged directly in the Malad creek, which is surrounded by a large mangrove forest. "The Malad creek does not have the required assimilative capacity due to nominal tidal flushing. The dissolved oxygen (DO) level in the Malad creek has reached zero, raising serious environmental concerns," states an internal note of the BMC's sewerage operation department. Officials said a DO level of 4 is considered safe for aquatic life. "Anything below that is dangerous," they said. Every day, around 240 MLD is released into the Malad creek. The Malad plant handles the waste of people living in Charkop, Gorai, Shimpoli, Goregaon and Dahisar.

Last month, a global study found the sea near the Mumbai coast to be among the world's most polluted. The database (Litterbase) compiled by Alfred Wegener Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research in Germany also found high quantity of plastic debris on the city's four beaches.

Civic engineers said around 25% of the city's waste, which comes from the slums, is not connected to the 1,915km sewer network and goes straight into nullahs and creeks.

Rakesh Kumar, director and Mumbai head of National

NEERI, said this is a more serious problem because waste generated from slums is dumped totally untreated.