

500 kg filth chokes Irla pumping station

Garbage Temporarily Breaks Down Cleaning Device That Fails To Pump Out Rainwater

Sukhada Tatke TNN

Mumbai: As you throw, so shall it heap. What happened at the Irla pumping station on Friday that led to flooding in the western suburbs is an instance that bears out this truth.

A day after heavy showers brought large parts of the city to a standstill on Friday, the civic body on Saturday cleared 500 kg garbage—from plastic, discarded tyres, clothes to pillow covers and branches of trees—that had choked the cleaning machine at the Irla pumping station.

The waste was stuck in the automatic silt clearing system, temporarily blocking the device; as a result, water accumulated between Santa Cruz and Andheri could not be pumped and the entire locality went under water.

The Irla pumping station is supposed to pump out water accumulated in areas such as clock to clear the filth so that another round of heavy showers did not lead to the same mess.

“On Friday, we kept the pumps running, but it was of no use because water couldn’t flow out. After working for several hours, the workers collected the garbage. One entire truck was filled with the waste,” said L S Vhatkar, chief engineer, stormwater drains department.

He claimed that it was definitely not an easy task, especially because the workers had to do with manually.

“As the trash was stuck in the screener of the system, there is hardly any space to maneuver. Two labourers had to stand, balanced on a rubber tyre, pick up the garbage and throw it into the truck.

The screener is about 100 ft long and 15 ft high, so the area that needs to be cleared is quite vast,” he said.

A similar scene had Milan Subway, Santa Cruz, LIC Colony, Juhu airport, Mithibai College, Irla, Gulmohur Road, JVPD Scheme and right up to Andheri.

The station, which is part of the Brimstowad project and commissioned by the civic body last year, promised to solve the waterlogging woes of the area, but it did not seem to be successful on Friday.

Municipal officials maintained that a team of 20 labourers worked round-the-clock when the city received the first heavy showers in the second week of June.

Officials said the only option to ensure that it did not repeat was to clean it regularly. “We always have people stationed there, but when it rains heavily, it is difficult to stop the flow of garbage.

As a result, the water flow gets obstructed as well,” said an official from the solid waste management department.

CR’s Pump Plan

Central Railway has decided to instal one more pump at Kurla after the overflowing of the stormwater drain crippled the services on the Harbour and Main lines on Friday. Senior CR officials, including general manager Kul Bhusan, inspected the Kurla Brahmanwadi nullah that overflowed. “We had earmarked five pumps for the Kurla-Sion area but now, we plan to set up one more pump,” an official said.

—**Manthan K Mehta**

Times View

Since the 2005 deluge, the BMC has supposedly been taking several steps to ensure that Mumbai does not go under water again. However, every time the city faces a heavy spell of downpour, the waterlogged roads and railway tracks sink the corporation’s claim of

having worked out a plan for a flood-free city. The civic body might be blamed for its half-hearted effort to control the flooding, but citizens must also not forget their responsibility to minimize their contribution to the mess adding up every day. While the BMC needs to pick up the filth regularly and dispose of or recycle it, Mumbaikars must develop an attitudinal shift and realize the hazards of throwing waste on roads.



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