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1 in 4 of 1.3 lakh hawker licence-seekers in city fails to submit relevant documents

Sujit Mahamulkar & Bhavika Jain | TNN

At least one in four of the 1.3 lakh people who collected forms to register as hawkers has failed to submit relevant documents within deadline exposing the extent of fraud during the BMC's exercise.

Only 77% or 99,280 applicants have submitted the forms with documents for verification so far, and officials say the number of people who qualify will further decrease as the forms are filtered.

It is clear that many forms went to bogus hawkers who couldn't prove that they had been operating in their areas for long enough to get a licence. Citizens, activists and corpora-



tors alike had raised several objections to the way the BMC ran its 10-day drive to register the city's hawkers till July 28 (see box).

The BMC will take another month to scrutinize all the forms. In this one month, the ward offices will also be surveying the hawking pitches that can be made available and then only will the licences be issued. There are 15,000-odd licen-

NUMBERS HIGHLIGHT FLAWS IN DRIVE



Licensed hawkers in Mumbai 15,159	Forms given for hawker registration drive 1,28,443
Applicants who gave documents 99,280	Applicants who failed to submit documents 29,163

“People who haven't submitted forms could have taken them without realizing they need to give relevant documents. Even those who have submitted the forms will not get a licence if they don't meet our criteria”

— S Bande | BMC LICENCE SUPERINTENDENT

NEWCOMERS ISSUED FORMS
Forms issued to new hawkers who popped up in the prime markets and commercial-residential zones without verifying how long they have been working in the spot, complain activists

FINE RECEIPTS SOLD WITH PROMISE OF HAWKER'S LICENCE | Corporators alleged licence department officials, who are custodians of receipt books, forged and issued backdated receipts to applicants for a bribe. MNS' Dilip Lande claimed the bogus receipts were sold for Rs 500

MEMBERS OF SAME FAMILY REGISTERED | Activist said members from the same family were given registration forms with basic verification of their addresses

MULTIPLE HAWKERS USING THE SAME SPOT | BMC registered multiple hawkers using the same spot — one giving up the slot to another just after registration — in busy areas, claimed a Dadar corporator. Some spots were also being sold

ACTIVIST FROM ONE WARD TAKEN TO ANOTHER WARD | ALM members accompanying civic officials on the drive to register genuine hawkers said activists from one ward were being asked to help in another locality which made little sense

ed hawkers in the city at present. But going by the new national hawker policy, the city can have up to 3.2 lakh hawkers provided hawking pitches are made available.

“People who haven't submitted the forms could have taken them just to enrol themselves in the process without realizing that they need to submit documents to be given a li-

cence. Even all those who have submitted the forms will not get a licence if they don't meet our criteria,” said Sharad Bande, licence superintendent of the BMC.

Another official from the licence department said those who are yet to submit the forms will have to give an application on why they missed the last date. These applications will be

sent to the town vending committee, which has been formed according to the directions of the Supreme Court to oversee the process of issuing new licences. If the committee decides that these forms can be accepted as there are more spots and fewer hawkers, then the BMC will accept the forms.

Vivek Bhatkar, working president of Bharatiya Maz-

TIMES VIEW : The number of “hawkers” who have not been able to support their claim should come as no surprise, given the process that has been followed during the registration drive. But it's a huge relief that a large number of frauds had been weeded out in the first stage of filtration itself. The city will benefit if what remains of the registration process is tightened. Mumbai needs maximum utilization of available space and that can only happen if development is planned.

door Sangh, said: “The BMC officials haven't guided the hawkers properly about submission date and the documents needed; they should extend the deadline for submissions. The other reason (for flimsy evidence) could be that few hawkers who have been fined in the past by the BMC or police could not give the fine receipts.”

Cluster redevtpt rule likely before poll code: CM

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Mumbai: In an exclusive interview to **TOI**, chief minister Prithviraj Chavan said cluster redevelopment with a floor space index of 4 “is a very tricky thing”.

Ruling out cluster redevelopment in the suburbs, he said there is an uncomfortable feeling about pushing through a project with the consent of 70% flat-owners in the suburbs where most individual flats are owned by different people. This needed brain-storming with experts.

Chavan said there were suggestions to issue letters of intent to allow a scheme if 70% of the owners gave consent and to get around the remaining 30% within a certain time-frame or the scheme would lapse.

“Sometimes the best can be the enemy of the good. We need to be cautious here,” he said.

On suggestions to allow FSI on open plots, he said: “I have said nothing doing. No FSI on open plots.”

Chavan said the final notification for cluster redevelopment is being delayed on account of a court case. “We are trying to get around the case,” he said, adding that it will be issued before the code of conduct for the assembly elections.

He said cluster redevelopment would be restricted to old and dilapidated buildings in the island city where the force of law can be used to vacate the buildings and people can be shifted elsewhere. There are around 19,000 old and dilapidated buildings in the island city.

In the island city, around 1,000 to 1,500 parcels of land have been identified for cluster redevelopment. Chavan said if there were slums in the cluster, they could be put in the scheme.

If non-dilapidated buildings wanted to be part of the scheme, that could be considered.

Planners have expressed apprehension about a uniform FSI of 4 across the city. “Has anyone in government tried to visualize what the city will look like if it is permitted?” asked P K Das, civic activist, architect and town planner. Das has been a strong opponent to the use of FSI, a planning tool, for monetization and also to the idea of allowing 4 FSI across the city.

Cluster redevelopment has been touted as a better method for reconstructing the city as

ONLY FOR ISLAND CITY

Cluster redevelopment meant for clutch of buildings spread over at least 4,000sq m or 1 acre in island city

In the suburbs, it was to apply to at least 10,000sq m or 2.5 acres

Cluster Projects

Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment underway. It is being done by the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust

Islam Mill Compound and Haji Qasim chawli projects suspended pending new policy

along with housing, it would allow creation of public amenities such as wider roads, storm water drains, parking lots, open spaces, schools, hospitals etc.

Das said cluster was a better way to redevelop Mumbai including the suburbs. “Cluster redevelopment enables planning over a larger area. It does not mean higher FSI. Better amenities and more housing can be created through the cluster scheme even with lower FSI,” he said.

HC orders CCTV cams at police stations

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Mumbai: Observing that the rising number of custodial deaths in Maharashtra was “alarming”, the Bombay high court has directed the state government to install CCTV cameras at police stations and ensure that FIRs are registered if accused die in custody. The cameras are to be installed in such a way that areas like corridors and lock-ups at a police station are covered 24x7.

“The number of custodial deaths in Maharashtra is alarming. Unfortunately, we do not know why the higher echelons of the police force are oblivious to the problem of custodial torture and death. May

DIRECTIVES AGAINST CUSTODIAL DEATH

- Some points in high court's order:
- CCTV cameras at police stations, lock-ups
 - FIR to be lodged immediately in case of a death in police custody
 - Efforts to be made to arrest police officers involved
 - Arresting officer, investigation officer and station in-charge to be responsible for the safety and wellbeing of a subject in-charge.

be they want to protect their officers,” said a division bench of Justices V M Kanade and P D Kode on Wednesday. The bench said that the “responsibility of the safety, health and wellbeing of a person who is arrested will be that of the officer who arrested him, the investigation officer and the station-

in-charge”. The court said CCTV data should be preserved for a year and the senior inspector of a police station would be responsible for ensuring that the cameras are operational. In Mumbai alone, there are 93 police stations. Legal experts believe that the installation of CCTV

cameras will ensure that the police are more careful about illegally detaining an accused or torturing him to force a confession. The direction to register an FIR assumes significance as in most cases the state orders a magisterial inquiry but no case is registered unless the court intervenes.

Advocate Yug Chaudhry, who was appointed amicus curiae (friend of the court), pointed to data by the National Crime Records Bureau, which revealed that between 1999 and 2013, there were 333 custodial deaths in Maharashtra—over 23% of all custodial deaths in India occurred in the state. There were 45 FIRs; only 19 charge-sheets were filed and nobody was convicted. Chaud-

hry said that despite the Supreme Court's orders about norms to be followed while arresting a person, the police were in violation.

The high court's guidelines include taking of photographs if an accused is injured in custody and taking him to the nearest hospital, monitoring of investigations by a magistrate and making efforts to arrest the officers involved.

The court has directed the state to file a compliance report within four weeks. It was hearing petitions filed by families of persons who had died in custody, including the April deaths of Agnelo Valdaris in the Wadala railway police station and Akash Kharade in the Samata Nagar police lock-up.

Oust over-age principals, edu dept reminds 5 SoBo schools

Mumbai: The education inspector has sent a reminder to five ICSE schools in south Mumbai to relieve their principals who are over the retirement age. The notice also directed the schools to discontinue the services of any over-age teachers.

The education department first issued a notice to Cathedral & John Connon School in Fort, Activity High School on Peddar Road, St Mary's (ICSE) School and Diamond Jubilee School in Mazgaon, and Bombay Scottish School in Mahim in 2013, following an RTI query by Nanasahab Kute Patil. A reminder was sent on August 4, after he raised the issue again.

“According to the Maharashtra Employees of Private Schools (Conditions of Service) Regulation Act, 1981, a private school employee must retire after 58 years of age...the principals are past the retirement age. Hence, please relieve them of service with immediate effect,” said the order by B B Chavan, education inspector, south zone.

Meera Isaac, ex-officio president, Cathedral and John Connon School, said, “We don't come under the education department as we are a minority institution. Our appointments are governed by the board and the school's trustees.” Nutan Iyer, principal, Diamond Jubilee School, said, “We had informed the department that the principal had retired last year...still we got letters thrice.” Officials of the other three schools were unavailable for comment.

CBI registers case in Jiah Khan's death

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday registered a case into the controversial death of actor Jiah Khan last year. Her family had claimed that it was not a suicide.

The case came to CBI following orders of the Bombay high court, which directed the agency to probe whether it was a suicide or a homicide. “The high court has directed the CBI to consider whether this is a case of suicidal or homicidal death. If it comes to a conclusion that it is a homicidal death, then further investigation be made to find out who is the perpetrator of the crime and accordingly action be taken,” said Kanchan Prasad, CBI spokesperson.

She added that the Mumbai police had filed a chargesheet on January 11, against a person under IPC Section 306 (abetment of suicide).

Explaining the reasons for transferring the case to

CBI, the HC had said that forensic opinion privately obtained by Jiah's mother Rabiya was at variance with that of the police, suggesting there was a “lacuna” in the investigation.

Besides, the special investigation team constituted by the police on the court's directive had several officers who were part of an earlier team of the city police which had conducted the probe and concluded it was a case of suicide.

Jiah (25) was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her Juhu home on June 3 last year. Jiah's relationship with Suraj Panchooli, son of actor couple Aditya Panchooli and Zareena Wahab, was said to be under strain and it was suspected that this had driven her to end her life.

Her mother Rabiya moved the Bombay high court seeking a CBI probe as she suspected her daughter was murdered, while the police have chargesheeted Suraj for abetment of suicide.

'Merul' new Harbour line station? Thank college kids

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Navi Mumbai: There is a good chance that while you intend to get off at Nerul station on the Harbour line, you may end up in 'Merul' instead. The train in which you arrive may have hosted a couple who've marked the coach's walls with their names conjoined with a bleeding heart, in bold red spray paint.

Railway police point to this “disturbing” trend of college students defacing trains and stations on the Harbour route.

A railway cop from Panvel division said he recently caught students of a famous fashion design college showcase their “creativity” on a station wall. “We let them go with



Graffiti on a train coach; Nerul 'renamed' 'Merul' with spray paint

astern warning as many in the group were minors aged between 16 and 17. They seem to be aping some Western phenomenon where rebellious youth create spray-paint graffiti. It is strictly illegal here, though.”

Nerul-based activist A Chavan said Navi Mumbai has

over 45 engineering, medical, creative arts and degree colleges. “Since many of these students have to use spray cans for their various projects, they are tempted to misuse these outside college premises.”

A social worker from Vashi had recently complained to

Cidco and railways about it. “Many citizens have approached me in recent past to complain about college students spoiling station premises in Navi Mumbai just for cheap fun,” said Nitin Kandhari, NCP youth wing district secretary. He complained to railway authorities.

“Stations such as Nerul, Juinagar, Belapur, Kharghar and Turbhe were once the pride of Navi Mumbai due to their modern architecture and clean environment. Now they have been badly hit,” he said.

At Kharghar, a certain ‘DJ Vicky’ has left his creative footprint on some walls. Authorities “took action” by simply blackening some of the graffiti—

leaving behind an ugly blotch. “We have asked railway cops to check the spray-painting nuisance. In fact, Cidco also regularly undertakes cleanliness drives at all station premises in its jurisdiction to erase illegal graffiti,” said a Cidco official.

Alok Bohra, senior divisional security commissioner of RPF (Central Railway), told **TOI**, “More than legal action, civic sense has to be inculcated among youngsters. We have noticed the trend of spray-painting trains and station walls on the Harbour line, and taken action against youngsters aged above 18 under sections 145 and 166 of the Railways Act for creating nuisance and defacing railway property.”

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Double-decker holiday special train to Goa starts from Aug 22

Manthan.K.Mehta @timesgroup.com

Mumbai: To cater to the additional rush of passengers ahead of the Ganapati festival, the railways will introduce double-decker AC services on the Mumbai-Goa route from August 22.

Tickets for this holiday special premium train can only be booked online. The date for commencement of bookings will be announced soon, said a Central Railway (CR) official.

“This is railways' special gift for Ganesh devotees from Mumbai and Konkarn,” said Narendra Patil, chief PRO, CR.

The fares for the holiday special will either be on a par with or higher than the tatkal fare due to dynamic pricing. Also, ticket prices will increase for the next day's travel as soon as previous bookings are exhausted, but it can't rise by more than 100%.

On August 11, **TOI** had reported that the commissioner of railway safety had approved the plan to run the double-decker train as a holiday special.

CR will run 20 services between Lokmanya Tilak Terminus and Karmali on alternate days from August 22 to September 10. It will depart from LTT at 5.30am and reach Karmali at 4.30pm, and leave from Karmali at 6am and arrive at LTT at 5.40pm. It will halt at Thane, Panvel, Chiplun, Ratnagiri and Kankavali.

As CR has only one double-decker train, it will run 20 more Shatabdi-like premium holiday specials from August 23 to September 11 from CST to Karmali. It will depart from CST at 5am and reach Karmali 4.30am, and leave from Karmali at 6am and reach CST at 5.50pm.

THE SERVICES

- LTT-Karmali double-decker services will comprise eight AC chair cars
- The train will make 20 trips each in Up and Down directions from Aug 22 to Sept 10 on alternate days
- CST-Karmali premium services will comprise one AC executive class coach and seven AC chair cars
- The Shatabdi-like premium train will make 20 trips each in Up and Down directions from Aug 23 to Sept 11 when double-decker services are not scheduled

Reservations can only be made through the railway e-ticketing website, www.irctc.co.in, but the date when booking starts is yet to be announced