

THE DEUTSCHE BANK URBAN AGE AWARD, 2008



The Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award

Mumbai 2007

This is to certify that
MUMBAI WATERFRONTS CENTRE
 is a winner of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award, Mumbai 2007
 and will receive
RS. 20 LAKHS.

A Passion to Perform. Deutsche Bank

A Slumdwellers' Initiative To Help The Poor & A Plan To Turn Waterfr

GIVING MUMBAI A SEA-FRONT CHANGE

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: When a lackadaisical city government allowed its biggest assets—the waterfronts—to deteriorate to dumpyards and be used as open-air toilets, a determined group of citizens sought it was time to take charge. Over the last six years, thanks largely to a citizens' initiative, about seven kilometres of Mumbai's western waterfronts have been re-imagined and turned into what architect P. K. Das calls the city's "cultural forecourts". On Thursday, this perseverance finally paid off when the Mumbai Waterfront Improvement Centre (MWIC), a recently registered trust, awarded the \$100,000 Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award with other organisations for help to "transform the lives of Mumbai's citizens".

Das, one of the four trustees who received the award on behalf of the MWIC, has been largely credited with reforming Bandra Land's end and the Bandstand and Carter Road promenades, as well as the 4 km stretch of Juhu beach. He has done all this with the active support of local associations and clubs from local MPs.

A maverick housing activist, Das said he faced threats of physical violence when food stalls had encroached on the beach were sought to be sealed. "Our waterfronts are now unbarred public spaces, which are truly open and democratic in nature," he said after receiving a Rs 20 lakh cheque, the MWIC's largest award.

Das, a civic activist and co-trustee of MWIC, Darryl D'Monte, has been in the forefront of maintaining the two Bandra promenades, said, "It has sometimes been a long and arduous struggle to get these projects going."



PUTTING A SHINE ON OUR SHORES: The Bandstand promenade is a popular evening haunt for people from across Mumbai. (Above left) At the Khar end, the Carter Road promenade is designed to project into the rocks. (Above right) Strollers at Carter Road. (Below, from left) Actress and MP Shobana Azmi, Deutsche Bank chairman Josef Ackermann, architect P. K. Das and his MWIC colleague with their Rs 20 lakh cheque.

Very often we have to do so in spite of the authorities. Six years after the inception of the two promenades in Bandra, we are facing opposition from the Maharashtra Maritime Board, which thinks it owns these public properties."

D'Monte accused the board of refusing the citizens' association permission to repair the sea walls, repave the structures and remove unauthorised encroachments.

The MWIC plans to utilise the prize money to push its plan for the Dadar-Prabhadevi beach, which is about

4 km long and suffers from erosion. "The nourishment plan aims to check the erosion and to regain the beach for public use in one of the most congested areas of the island city," said the MWIC.

THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Helped build the Carter Road promenade of Bandra, transforming what was a neglected and encroached seafront into a lively place for the public.
- Similarly helped transform the Bandstand promenade
- Spurred up Land's End, where Bandra fort stood, and built an amphitheatre there
- Helped spruce up Juhu beach, especially by relocating ugly and intrusive food stalls to a proper food court

ON THE ANVIL

- A plan to reinvigorate the Dadar-Prabhadevi beach, which is 4 km long and suffers from erosion. The MWIC wants the public to use the beach again
- Reviving and sprucing up the Versova waterfront
- Proposal to study, survey and map rivers, creeks, other water bodies and seafronts so more public spaces can be created
- Hold workshops, spread information

THE GOAL: TO OPEN UP OUR WORLD

The Mumbai Waterfront Improvement Committee (MWIC) was registered as a trust only a couple of months ago, but it has been involved in transforming the city for several years now. Its main aim is to create places along waterfronts, and maybe even other water bodies, for the public to relax and catch much-needed moments of leisure.

"The 44 kilometres of the western coast have never been considered in the planning and development process as an integral part of the city's land. On the contrary, the waterfronts have been constantly abused by reclamation, sewage disposal and encroachment. Yet, for the millions who live in our crowded city, the waterfronts are the only major open spaces—whether it is Marine Drive or Chowpatty, Haji Ali or Worli Seaface, Dadar beach or Bandra Bandstand, Carter Road or Juhu beach, or Versova," states the project description of the MWIC.

