

GREEN GUARDRAILS | Environmental woes due to upcoming data centres are concerning, but while addressing them, we want to also ensure new investment, MPCB chairman tells FPJ

Maha plans data centre guidelines, a first in India

Dhairya Gajara
MUMBAI

Maharashtra is likely to have its own Data Centre Policy, becoming the first state to establish comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing the facilities. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) has collaborated with IIT Bombay to regulate the rapidly growing digital infrastructure sector. The state's policy, expected to be finalised in a few months, will focus on the location, environmental impact and resource consumption of data centres.

The regulatory framework comes in the backdrop of protests in Thane's Balkum area, where residents have opposed the plan to set up an Amazon Web Services (AWS) data centre facility. Their concerns include noise pollution, intense heat generation and heavy resource diversion.

Talking to The Free Press Journal, MPCB chairman Siddhesh Kadam said the



Likely SOPs for data centres
Buffer zones Mandatory distance between data centres and residential clusters

Water Use of recycled and treated wastewater for server cooling

Heat Measures to monitor and control localised ambient heat generation

Noise Advanced acoustic barriers to curb low-frequency noise from cooling equipment

upcoming policy aims to address these urban ecological challenges by mandating sustainable operational benchmarks and strict zoning regulations. "Environmental problems being caused due to upcoming data centres in the state is a matter of concern,

but while addressing it, we want to also ensure new investment in Maharashtra. However, it cannot be at the behest of the environmental concerns," underlined Kadam.

According to MPCB's plan, the SOPs will define manda-

tory buffer zones between residential clusters and industrial data facilities. To prevent urban strain, future data centres will be encouraged to set up away from densely populated areas.

The policy is also expected to address high water consumption for server cooling by mandating recycled and treated wastewater instead of fresh municipal supplies. It will also include measures to monitor and control localised ambient heat generation, along with strict regulations for energy consumption.

Another key aspect would be curbing noise pollution, with a likely mandate to install advanced acoustic barriers to suppress low-frequency hums from heavy cooling equipment and generators.

"In the developed countries, data centres are already there. We've learned from those experiences as well. We are coming up with guidelines for what should be the operating measures and where these data centres should be," Kadam added.

IMD: Rains to continue playing truant

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Dry spell is likely to continue for Mumbai and its metropolitan region in September as well. For this week, the India Meteorological Department has not issued any rainfall warning for Mumbai and its neighbouring districts. However, it added that the region can see occasional spells of light rain.

As per the local forecast for the next 48 hours, the skies will be partly cloudy, with the possibility of occasional light rain in Mumbai city and suburbs. The maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 32°C and 25°C, respectively. The FPJ had reported last week that Mumbai received 66% below-normal rainfall in August this year. The poor rainfall is attributed to El Niño climatic conditions. However, due to heavy downpour in the first two months of the monsoon, Mumbai has already received 96% of its average annual rainfall. Meanwhile, the combined level of the seven reservoirs supplying water to Mumbai stood at 95.97% full on Sunday morning. The total useful water content is 13.89 million litres, while the total capacity of the seven reservoirs is 14.47 million litres.

HC dismisses plea to nix ₹115-cr Mithi river suit

Naming error cannot result in the plaintiff's rejection when law provides a mechanism to correct it: Court

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has refused to dismiss a ₹115.65-crore suit arising out of a 2007 Mithi River widening project, holding that filing the case in the name of a joint venture was a procedural defect that could be corrected.

Justice Sandeep Marne rejected an application seeking dismissal of the suit, observing that an error in naming the plaintiff cannot automatically result in rejection of the plaintiff when the law provides a mechanism to correct it.

The dispute relates to a contract awarded in March 2007 to the BPL-BBC Joint Venture for widening and deepening the Mithi river between Mahim Causeway and Dharavi Bridge. The joint venture comprised two registered companies - Backbone Projects Ltd (BPL) and Backbone Construction Pvt. Ltd (BBC).

Following disputes during execution of the project, a commercial suit was filed in 2017 seeking recovery of over



What's the dispute?

2007 A contract was awarded to the BPL-BBC Joint Venture (JV) for widening and deepening the Mithi river between Mahim Causeway and Dharavi bridge

2017 Subsequent disputes led to a commercial suit seeking recovery of over ₹115 crore along with interest

Application for rejection of the suit argued that the JV was not an independent legal or juristic entity

₹115 crore along with interest. The application for rejection of the plaintiff argued that

the joint venture was not an independent legal or juristic entity and could not institute proceedings in its own name. It contended that the suit should have been filed by the two constituent companies.

The contractor submitted that the suit had been filed in the joint venture's name as a bona fide mistake, as the contract had also been executed under that name. It sought permission to formally bring the two companies on record as plaintiffs.

Justice Marne accepted the submission, noting that the Code of Civil Procedure empowers courts to correct errors relating to parties. "If in every suit the plaintiff is to be rejected... upon finding that the suit is filed in the name of the wrong plaintiff, power conferred upon the court under Order I Rule 10 of the Code would be rendered otiose (effectively useless)," the judge observed.

The court noted that both companies had been identified in the original plaint as members of the joint venture and held that the defect could be corrected.

Thanekars intensify protest against Integral Ring Metro project

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

On the second consecutive Sunday (September 6), Thane residents, including prominent citizens, businesspeople and environmental activists, took to the streets to protest against the proposed Thane Integral Ring Metro project.

The protest was organised by Thane Against Integral Ring Metro, a citizens' forum. The Integral Ring Metro is being

spearheaded by the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) and Maha Metro to tackle internal traffic congestion.

Following the success of last week's signature campaign, residents formed a human chain along Pokhran Road No 2, between Swami Junction and Prashant Corner. Protesters and activists have cited "significant procedural and environmental red flags". Their concerns include widespread environmental damage



Concerns include massive tree felling, citizen displacement and worsening traffic bottlenecks during construction

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sening traffic bottlenecks during its construction phase.

Protester and environmental activist Rohit Joshi dubbed the TMC general body's approval to fell 3,900 trees "illegal". He claimed that no official Tree Authority Committee with citizen representation has been constituted in the six months since the municipal elections. He warned of taking legal recourse if trees are axed without holding proper public hearings.

Activist Adv Radhika Rane

noted that tree transplantation is "ineffective, with nearly 80% of transplanted trees failing to survive". She urged the government to first assess the ridership of under-construction Metro 4 and 5 before justifying an internal ring route. In a similar vein, protester Meghna Jadhav emphasised that the administration should focus on keeping Thane clean and green rather than pushing "unnneeded metro infrastructure".

NGO takes digital route to secure pets & strays

Dhairya Gajara
MUMBAI

JeevOne Welfare Foundation, a Mumbai-based animal welfare organisation, has launched an ambitious pet microchipping initiative to provide permanent identification for pets. The objectives of the initiative include mitigating animal abandonment, streamlining lost-and-found recovery and systematically managing stray populations.

JeevOne conducted its first microchipping camps in Kharghar on Sunday, where 25 companion dogs were implanted with JeevOne ID. It is a tiny, biocompatible microchip implanted beneath the skin of dogs and cats. Each microchip carries a unique identification number that links directly to a central database containing the animal's record, medical history and guardian contact information.

Microchipping is widely mandated across Europe and parts of North America, whereas India's animal management landscape has historically relied on localised neck collars or ear-notching programmes. However, traditional collars or physical tags

can easily snap or be removed, while microchipping ensures that lost or separated animals can be quickly identified using a standard RFID scanner at veterinary clinics, shelters or civic centres.

Talking to FPJ, JeevOne's founder Sanket Bhatt said that the initiative also aims to establish accountability for guardians to prevent deliberate pet abandonment and facilitate rapid reunifications when pets go missing. It is also expected to assist local communities and rescue networks in keeping accurate vaccination, sterilisation and medical histories for street animals.

"A JeevOne ID chip provides an animal with a permanent identity that cannot be lost, removed or altered. The aim is to build a more organised and connected ecosystem for animal welfare in India," said Bhatt.

The NGO aims to scale the initiative nationally after covering Mumbai and urban centres across Maharashtra. It is coordinating with local veterinary networks to establish scanning infrastructure, ensuring that shelters and clinics are equipped to read JeevOne ID chips.

Bhiwandi sees 32 dog-bite cases in a day

Danish Azmi
THANE

Around 32 people, including two children, in Kamatghar, Bhiwandi, were admitted within a few hours to the IGM Sub-District Hospital for dog-bite treatment on Sunday. Dr Madhavi Pedhare of IGM Sub-District Hospital said that the children had Category 3 (severe) dog bites. While local reports claimed that a single animal had attacked all the victims, this could not be specifically confirmed. The incident comes amid a steady number of dog-bite cases across Bhiwandi. According to official data, 3,292 dog-bite cases were recorded between April and July. According to the civic administration, Bhiwandi has more than 24,000 stray dogs. Around 7,000-8,000 dogs have so far undergone sterilisation. The B h i w a n d i - N i z a m p u r Municipal Corporation restarted its Animal Birth Control centre on November 11, 2024, after the facility had remained shut for nearly 12 years. The sterilisation has been entrusted to Vets Society for Animal Welfare and Rural Development.



Bappa on board

Devotees transport a Ganesha idol by train from Mumbai Central railway station to Surat — Vijay Gohil

₹57-cr Ponzi probe: EOW reaches out to 1k investors

Poonam Apraj
MUMBAI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW), which is probing an alleged Ponzi scheme currently pegged at ₹57 crore, is reaching out to nearly 1,000 investors to identify more victims and ascertain the total amount collected by the

accused.

Police said around 700 letters have already been sent to investors, asking them to formally lodge complaints. After receiving the letters, around a dozen investors had approached the EOW office and lodged complaints till Saturday, according to an officer. The investigation has

also revealed that the accused allegedly purchased around 25 acres of land in Kolhapur. The EOW has also written to the authorities concerned seeking initiation of the process to attach the properties.

The move comes after four, including the company's chairman, were arrested in mid-August for allegedly running

an investment scheme that promised returns of 7 to 8% per month. The alleged scheme came to light after the EOW's Economic Intelligence Unit conducted an undercover operation.

The accused allegedly operated under the names AI Origin and Digital Origin and accepted investments without

obtaining the requisite licence or registration from competent authorities, police said.

Investigators said the accused allegedly organised promotional activities to attract investors and agents. Around 60 people were taken to Thailand, where they were allegedly persuaded to promote the scheme.

Smart taxation, stamp duty tips

Mumbai: The Directorate of Income Tax (Intelligence & Criminal Investigation), Mumbai, in collaboration with the Stamp Duty and Registration Department, organised a mega outreach programme at 'Prakashgad', Bandra East, for 200 officers of sub-registrar offices across Mumbai city and suburban districts. Detailed guidance was provided on the statement of financial transaction and Form 165 under the new Income Tax Act, 2025, with particular emphasis on accurate PAN reporting, transaction/stamp value, data validation and rectification of reporting errors.



By invitation
Rajesh M Kayal

Nomination in a co-operative housing society is often misunderstood. Many members believe that once they nominate a person, that nominee will automatically become the absolute owner of their flat after their death. However, that is not the legal position. In Maharashtra,

nomination primarily determines with whom the society should deal after the death of a member.

What does the law say?

Section 30 of the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act, 1960, read with Rule 25 of the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Rules, 1961, provides the statutory framework for nomination. When a member dies, the society is required to deal with the nominee in accordance with the Act and Rules, subject to statutory requirements for admission and transfer of the deceased member's shares or interest. The important point is that transfer of membership to a

nominee is not the same thing as transfer of ownership.

Supreme Court and Bombay High Court's rulings

The Supreme Court in *Indrani Wahi v/s Registrar of Co-operative Societies case*, (2016) 6 SCC 440, also recognised the limited purpose of nomination. Nomination does not by itself confer absolute ownership. The Bombay High Court has subsequently relied upon this principle and reaffirmed that nomination and succession are two different legal concepts. It settled this distinction clearly in *Mohan Menghraj Shroff v/s Deputy Registrar, Co-operative Societies case* (2018). It held

that a nominee does not acquire any right, title or interest in the flat merely because his or her name appears in the nomination form. The court also observed that the nominee acts in a representative or trustee-like capacity until succession is determined.

In *Amit Suresh Sharma, Legal Heir of Late Ishwardas Sharma v/s District Deputy Registrar, Co-operative Societies case*, decided on 21 January 2026, the HC expressly held that Maharashtra co-operative law does not grant ownership to a nominee. Similarly, in *Pravinkumar Jethalal Dave v/s State of Maharashtra*, decided on 9

February 2026, the HC reiterated that a nominee represents the interests of the legal heirs unless succession law independently gives the nominee the property.

What happens when there are several legal heirs?

Consider a simple example. A member owns a flat and nominates his son. After the member's death, the society may transfer the shares and membership to the son, subject to the law and the society's procedure. But if the deceased member also leaves behind a wife, daughter and another son, transfer of membership to the nominated son does not automatically extin-

guish their rights. Their rights will depend upon the applicable succession law, a valid Will, family settlement, relinquishment deed, succession proceedings or other legally recognised mode of devolution.

Can a nominee sell the flat?

If there is a dispute between legal heirs, the society should not attempt to decide the ultimate title. The Bombay High Court in the *Mohan Menghraj Shroff case* made it clear that questions of title cannot simply be determined through society membership proceedings. A Will, where valid and applicable, deals with testamentary

succession. Ultimately, ownership and beneficial rights have to be determined under the applicable succession law. Therefore, a person who wants a particular heir to inherit a flat should not assume that merely nominating that person is sufficient. Proper estate planning, including a legally valid Will wherever appropriate, is advisable.

The bottom line

The distinction between nomination, membership and ownership is fundamental. The society recognises the nominee for membership and administration, while ultimate rights in the property are governed by succession law.