

Govt notifies sanctuary for flamingos along Thane creek

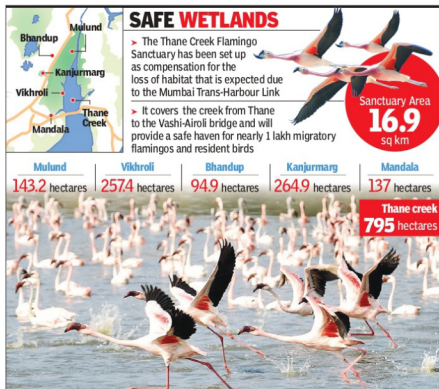
To Compensate For Habitat Loss To MTHL

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Mumbai: Mumbai, one of the few cities in the country to boast of a national park, will now be home to a wetland sanctuary as well. The state government has demarcated and notified 16.91 sq km for the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary.

The wetland sanctuary will be spread over 896 hectares extending from Mulund, Nahur, Bhandup, Kanjurumarg and Mandala. It will cover the western area along the creek edge, between the Vashi and Airoli bridge and another 795 hectares spread over the Thane creek, an area dotted by dense mangroves.

The sanctuary had been proposed by environmentalists five years ago to safeguard the city's wetland habitat. It gained momentum when the government realized it could serve as a compensation for the future loss of habitat on account of the 22km Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link (MTHL). At present, the Sewri mudflats serve as a home for flamingos between November to May, where they come from as far as Siberia via the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.



The Bombay Natural History Society had suggested that the government shift the alignment of the proposed MTHL by about 500-700 metres on the south side, to avoid affecting the flamingos. However, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), which is executing the Rs 10,000-crore infrastructure project has rejected the suggestion. Instead, the sanctuary has been offered as compensation, but it remains to be seen if the Forest Clearance Authority now approves the MTHL project.

N Vasudevan, chief, state mangrove cell, said, "The flamingos come to the Sewri mud flats only during low-tide

whereas they are there all the time in the Thane creek area," he said. "Normally the birds come in November and stay till May but this time, they are still around in the Thane creek," he said. D Stalin, director of the NGO Vanashakti, who had campaigned for the sanctuary said, "It is a matter of pride for the city"

Yellow LED lights to retain glow on Queen's Necklace

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Mumbai: Observing that the yellow glow must remain on Queen's Necklace, the Bombay High Court on Friday allowed the use of yellow LED lights to be installed in place of the yellow sodium vapour lights along the Marine Drive promenade.

A bench of Chief Justice Mohit Shah and Justice Anil Menon heard a petition filed by Energy Efficiency Services Limited, a company set up by Ministry of Power, for review of the court's July 2, 2015, order (in a PIL on traffic woes) where it directed "an exception is to be made for street lights from Nariman Point to Walkeshwar by restoring the sodium vapour lights to bring the glory of Marine Drive and the Queen's Necklace back to the city of Mumbai." The same bench had passed the order following complaints "regarding insufficient lighting for pedestrians on Marine Drive".

The review petition urged allowing white LED lights as they are brighter and give more light than yellow sodium lamps. It said the prime minister has launched a scheme for 100 cities in the country to be installed with LED lights. Marine Drive

would serve as the pilot project, it said. It also relied on various technical reports to support its contention that sodium vapour lights are not environment-friendly.

Additional solicitor general Anil Singh, who is also Maharashtra's acting advocate-general, argued that LED lights not only save energy but are cheaper compared to sodium lights. He argued that according to the police, white lights are safer and photographs from CCTV cameras are clearer in white than in yellow light. "White lights give more light and a better picture. Therefore in Wankhede stadium during the day-night matches and even on streets near the international airport, we have white lights, which is also better from security point of view. Let us continue with the white lights," urged Singh.

But the bench said, "Yellow gives a better glow to the Queen's Necklace". Singh then said as an alternative, the golden glow to Marine Drive can be given even by using yellow LED lights, hence there is no question of installing sodium vapour lights. The bench thereafter modified its earlier order and directed the use of yellow LED lights on Marine Drive.

Change CMAT: One test to be held in a year

Mumbai: Even as thousands of students were awaiting notification for the common management admission test held in September, the Council of Technical Education (AICTE) on Friday announced that they will be conducting only once in a year and not bi-annually. CMAT was conducted a year to give students opportunities to take their admissions to AICTE-recognised management institutions.

An AICTE official said, "By conducting a single test for admissions to B-schools was a provision. As all other entrance exams for MBA admissions are conducted only once a year, we have decided to move to once a year. The notification of the exam will be released soon and will ensure that the outcome is good and more students will appear for the test," he said. Over 10,000 students usually appear for CMAT in September.

Manish J. a TYBCom student, said they were waiting for the notification for a month. "If they were to hold only one exam a year, it should have been announced earlier," he said. E B Khedkar, president of the Association of Management of Maharashtra Institutes in Maharashtra, said "Holding only one exam a year is a positive step. Students' point of view, drawback could be there only once a year to appear for the test." — Yogita Rao