

NGO alleges flaws in PMC's tree census tender

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Pune: Alleging irregularities in the tree census tender by the Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) Tree Authority, city-based NGO Nagrik Chetna Manch has demanded that the entire tender process be scrapped and a stop work order be given to the agency which was granted the contract to carry out the tree census.

The Manch has written a letter in this regard to Municipal Commissioner Kunal Kumar and Mayor Prashant Jagtap bringing the issue to their notice.

According to the NGO, the Bombay High Court issued an order dated September 20, 2013 in a 2009 PIL for effective implementation of the provisions of Maharashtra (Urban Areas) Protection

NGO'S ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PMC

■ PMC released the first advertisement for tenders for the tree census in August 2015, after a delay of 1 year and 8 months. PMC's first step was to gauge the capabilities of the companies which bid or even just inquired or purchased tender documents. The second step was to change the criteria with the aim of eliminating competition and narrowing down the number of bidders. The third step was to get proxy bidders to fulfil PMC's condition of a minimum of three bidders.

and Preservation of Trees Act, 1975 and the Rules, 2009. The order specifies procedures for the functioning of the Tree Authority for carrying out of the tree census among other tasks.

The order had anticipated that the PMC would finalise the specifications and issue an advertisement for the tree census tender within three months by December 20, 2013

and receive the bids and carry out a selection within seven months by April 20, 2014.

Founder of the NGO, Major Gen (Retd) SCN Jatar said that as the irregularities are very serious and fall under criminal offences, Nagrik Chetna Manch requests the mayor and the municipal commissioner to suspend the approval or work order awarded in the tender and

stop any work that has commenced in this regard.

"The PMC should immediately recuse all personnel involved in the tender process from dealing with tree census. If the PMC fails to take appropriate action within three weeks of the receipt of the letter, Nagrik Chetna Manch will be constrained to approach the Competition Commission of India in public interest for redressal of its grievances in this regard," he added.

PMC released the first advertisement for tenders for the tree census in August 2015, after a delay of 1 year and 8 months. The Manch has stated in the letter that the modus operandi of the PMC in changing the criteria has raised misgivings regarding the tender process. PMC's first step was to gauge the capa-

bilities of the companies which bid or even just inquired or purchased the tender documents. The second step was to change the criteria with the aim of eliminating competition and narrowing down the number of bidders. The third step was to get proxy bidders to fulfil PMC's condition of a minimum of three bidders.

Due to the devious manner of awarding the tree census contract, Nagrik Chetna Manch has strong reservations that the tree census would inflate the number of trees as currently the number of trees per person in the PMC area is paltry 1.5 per person as opposed to the 4:1 in the Environment Protection Act 1986. Also, it helps all concerned to show more trees as the payment is for every tree counted.