



GRAHAK HITAY
GRAHAK SUKHAY



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MUMBAI GRAHAK PANCHAYAT

E-Magazine



Namaskar,

This is the 11th volume of our English e-magazine, which we launched to connect with our non-Marathi readers. Please read and share with your family and friends.
Be a responsible and resilient consumer.

- Team, MGP e-Magazine.



Gudhi of Consumer Interest Hoisted High!

Some are designing Rangoli at the entrance of Grahak Bhavan, and some are engaged in tying up decorative door hanging, Toran, with marigold and mango leaves... Some are tying up Gudhi and some are preparing for performing of a religious ritual, Puja... All the activists of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, dressed in traditional attire are busy preparing for the first day of Hindu Calendar Year... The air is filled with joy and enthusiasm. It is amid this exciting atmosphere, Gudhi is being tied and hoisted at the Grahak Bhavan!

It was on this auspicious day of Gudhi Padwa, in 1975, Mumbai Grahak Panchayat was founded and set up.

It was the visionary foresight of Shri. Bindu Madhav Joshi, Social Activist, Shri. Sudhir Phadke, popular musician and singer, and Shri. Madhukarrao Mantri, consumer protection stalwart, that helped the setting up of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat.

The influence of MGP has been growing stronger owing to selfless, like-minded Karyakartas. Mumbai Grahak Panchayat is now taking even larger strides.

In this way, MGP completed 49 years of its glorious existence and entered into its 50th year on Gudhi Padwa day on Tuesday, April 9, 2024.

It is indeed a matter of pride that one of the voluntary organisation making a rising impact on the society, which was just fantastic, but making an impact in the international arena and global platform is just amazing!

On this backdrop, if members wouldn't have been excited, hoisting Gudhi, on Gudhi Padwa day, on April 12, 2024, would have been surprising.

A special logo, commemorating 50th year of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, has been designed by Rajendra Rane. The logo has been painted on the walls of the godown of MGP. The first event on Gudhi Padwa day was the unveiling of the Grahak Panchayat logo and decorating the wall with the garland of marigold flowers and mango leaves. The main gate and main door was also decorated. To add to this, was also the natural creation of flower bed of fragrant Parijatak flowers at the entrance, creating mystic fragrance in the air on April 12 morning. Grahak Bhavan thus, was decked up and decorated in this traditional colourful way.

Thereafter, all the invited member guest and office bearers went on the terrace to hoist the Gudhi.

Adv. Shirish Deshpande, Chariman and Shri Sanjiv Mantri, one of the Trustees, hoisted the Gudhi and performed the Puja.

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Editorial

Legacy of Holistic and Profound Thinking

Last month, on Gudi Padwa day our organization completed 49 years and marked the advent of the 50th year. A celebration of the Golden Jubilee was kickstarted by hoisting a Gudhi on the terrace of the Grahak Bhavan in Juhu and it was illuminated with festive lights. The Golden Jubilee was also celebrated at the Thane Godown by drawing rangolis and having artistic decorations.

Every single member is proud of the accomplishments of our organization. The movement started in the year 1975, at the Scout Hall of Dadar and thrived through the monthly distribution from the 'Samrudhi' Society. Since then, the movement has maintained



recognition and credibility in the consumer world through various aspects such as the distribution of quality goods at reasonable prices, consumer protection, education, participation in policymaking, research, and mentoring.

The organization grew on the strength of the strong ideology and planning of the trio, Bindumadhav Joshi, a pioneer of the consumer movement, Madhukar Mantri, a social activist and Sudhir Phadke, singer-music director. A firm meeting of minds served as the rock-solid foundation for the organization.

Bindumadhav Joshi had comprehensive and profound thoughts about the consumer movement. Right at the beginning, he had stipulated an outline of the consumer movement as -

- Creating an Exploitation Free Society - Today there is no area where consumers are not exploited. Only organized consumers can overcome exploitation, have control over prices and quality, and have healthy competition in the market.
- Society needs an organization like Grahak Panchayat to advocate laws to protect consumers' interests, make sure that they are implemented, and create awareness among consumers.
- The consumer movement should reform the system. Grahak Panchayats should be vigilant so that the system is free from exploitation and all consumers benefit from it.

Our founders formed the Grahak Sanghas to organize consumers in groups to have friendliness, cooperation, and coexistence among the members of these groups.

Now the challenge before us is to form more Grahak Sanghas and increase their membership. Therefore, everyone who is benefiting from the work of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat should consider the task of formation of Grahak Sanghas very important. This year, while hoisting Gudhi, our President, Chairman, and Trustees have appealed to work towards this.

The challenges consumers have been facing are on the rise. In 1975, our founders illustrated inflation, profiteering, and unethical practices as the challenges faced by consumers. Now, besides these, there is a further addition to the list of challenges. Excessive consumerism, materialism, unreasonable demand for quick deliveries, tracking consumer behavior by using artificial

intelligence, marketing tactics, unfair business practices, etc. Bindumadhav Joshi laid down the four principles of organizing consumers, creating awareness among them, undertaking constructive initiatives, and putting up a fight to protect the rights of consumers to overcome these challenges. We need to have a strong consumer organization and also need a large army of volunteers to achieve the same.

The ideas put forward by the founders of our organization 50 years ago and the

model of Grahak Sanghas that they designed are guiding us even today. Therefore, in the age of getting goods delivered to doorsteps within minutes, even if little more efforts are required, we have a responsibility to ensure that the Grahak Sanghas sustain and their membership base widens. And if we want our 'voluntary and self-sufficient' organization to grow stronger, we need to come forward and promise that there is no dearth of volunteers.

- **Shubhada Chaukar**, *Editor*

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Gudhi of Consumer Interest hoisted high!

It was physically impossible for every Grahak Panchayat member to be at Grahak Bhavan in person, although each one aspired to. So, live online mode was set up.

Smt. Anita Khanolkar, Hon Secretary, Mumbai Grahak Panchayat shouldered the responsibility of being the Master of Ceremonies at the event. Dr. Bal Phondke, President, Shri Deshpande and Shri Mantri presented their thoughts and offered their best wishes to Mumbai Grahak Panchayat. Those Members present off line, in-Person, and those on-line also expressed their thoughts and extended their best wishes to MGP.

MGP office staff including Akshay Sawant, Sachin Naik, Mahesh Bhatade, and

Samir Gidye, despite being a holiday, keenly participated in the landmark event. Without their participation and support, it would not have been possible to plan and execute the Gudhi hoisting ceremony to commemorate the 49th anniversary of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat. We extend warm wishes to Mumbai Grahak Panchayat.

The ceremony concluded with all present enjoying sweets, tea and coffee and snacks.

We pray and wish that in the coming years, Grahak Panchayat institution gathers more steam and energy and breaches new highs and hoists it's Gudhi even higher each year.

- **Mangala Gadgil**

Translated by Girish Dikey

Jago Grahak Show on DD Sahyadri

Doordarshan, Sahyadri Channel, presents the popular programme 'Jago Grahak' every Monday at 7:30 pm, Tuesday at 2:30 pm, and Wednesday at 10 am. This programme is being organised by our organization. This show provides important information on various topics to consumers.



Many of our activists along with the experts in the field participate and explain the topic. This show is receiving excellent feedback from the viewers. Have you watched it? If not, Do watch. And earlier programmes can be seen on Youtube channel of DD Sahyadri. Many topics like food adulteration, buying real estate, Insurance, MGP Distribution System, Our Grahak Panchayat Peth, etc are already featured.



Golden Jubilee : Felicitating MGP Warriors

Goregaon's first Panchayat Peth of this financial year, ie 2024-25 organised for 5 days between April 11 to 15, 2024, was conducted with a very exceptional proud feeling.

During the five day Panchayat Peth, realisation dawned that April 12 happened to be, by date, Mumbai Grahak Panchayat's Foundation Day.

On April 12, 2024, MGP entered into 50th year of its glorious existence and that very thought of celebrating this important milestone, infused and instilled vibrant energy within we all members in our locality.

The Grahak Peth committee unanimously decided to recognise and celebrate the multi-decadal outstanding contribution of those senior and experienced mentors, who are and have been actively associated, and in the process, sculpted the fortunes of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat in the last 49 years.

The beginning of Golden Jubilee year thus began with the MGP expressing gratitude and honouring these leaders for their unstinted support and guidance, throughout.

Shri Ashok Rawat, who has been associated with Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, since inception in 1975 and completely committed to MGP, insisted on systemic improvement; Shri Kamalakar Pendse, who invested a lot of his time in on MGP's expanse, getting them to not only just join as the member, but also retain, getting them into permanent active mode; Shri Bhalchandra Naik, who shouldered diverse responsibilities, right from Girgaum vibhag right up to Juhu headquarters; Shri Shirish Deshpande, who is currently the Chairman and also very well-known for introducing and revising pro-Consumer provisions within consumer laws, rules and regulations and insisting on their mutually agreeable incorporation, not only at the national level, but also on international platforms, and Smt Anuradha Deshpande, Vice Chairman of MGP, who presides over peth committees and also fights against objectionable Advertisements, insisting on fair representation, were all felicitated with heart-felt gratitude for their valuable contribution over the years for consumer





protection. This well-organized felicitation of all the five leaders will be remembered for a long time to come.

The felicitation ceremony started with tuneful and melodious Ganesh salutation and Saraswati prayers.

All the invitees were welcomed and articulating the importance of the occasion on "Gauri Trutiya" day, the Master of Ceremonies underscored how MGP has been a learning ground and a bedrock of consumer movement.

The event was memorable, as it was the 50th Foundation Day of Mumbai Grahak Panchayat and felicitating those members who have been connected with the institution since inception and also the consumer movement, contributing on a honorary basis, will remain etched in the minds for a long time to come.

Smt Manisha Modak, Smt Tanuja Godbole, Smt Neha Joshi and Smt Nivedita Mahajan contributed to making the event a success under the able guidance of Smt Shubhada Chaukar, who is a member of Managing Committee at Mumbai Grahak Panchayat and also editor of Grahak Panchayat monthly magazine, "Grahak Tituka Melwawa"

Best Wishes Greetings Card citation, creatively designed and compiled by Smt Savita Donde for all the five felicitatees, was read out. Shri Kamalakar Pendse couldn't be a part, owing to ill-health. Goregaon Vibhag

Chairman of MGP, Shri Shashikant Salvi gave away the Greeting Card citation along with bag of Dried Fruits Baskets to all the 'Utsav Murti' present at the occasion.

Shri Salvi has also been associated with MGP for the last 45 years, striving for smooth functioning of distribution system and taking efforts to increase membership of individual consumers and families. His efforts still continue, unabated. Shri Salvi too was felicitated by Shri Shirish Deshpande for his untiring efforts and stellar contribution towards strengthening consumer movement.

Subsequently Shubhada Chaukar excellently engaged all the four 'Utsav Murti' in an interesting conversation which brought to the fore their experience, contribution to consumer movement and wealth of information that they hold, within.



Shri Rawat recounted how Shri and Smt Godbole as also Shri and Smt

Govilkar took untiring efforts in laying down the foundation of the grocery and essential items Distribution system. He also recalled how weekly distribution became a weekday ritual, and how the involvement of women increased over the years.

Shri Bhalchandra Naik who is an expert in Sanskrit and Vedic Mathematics, is also a professor of structural engineering. He recounted how MGP progressed with the evolving times, which not only helped in getting new generation of consumers involved in MGP, but also strengthened the structural and cultural fabric of the institution.

Adv. Deshpande, recalled how periodically he got the guidance and support from Shri Rawat, and mentioned the importance of systemic corrections. In this regard, Deshpande cited the example of UNGCP and how larger consumer benefit has been achieved.

Anuradha Deshpande gave insight into discussion that takes place in every household, how her association with Madhukar Mantri, Founder and other member office bearers helped her in shaping and developing her own personality.

Even as MGP's 50th anniversary celebration was underway, it dawned that Shri Subhash Desai had turned up visiting Panchayat Peth. Accepting to the request of MGP Chairman, Shri Desai came on the stage, and extended his best wishes and greetings to MGP.

Amongst those present at the occasion included Shri Prabhakar Gavane, Vice

Chairman of MGP, Senior Members Smt Neela Mhatre, Smt Savita Donde, Smt Yogini Ramdasi, former President Peth Committee, Shri Rajendra Rane, Member, Managing Committee and other Peth Committee members.

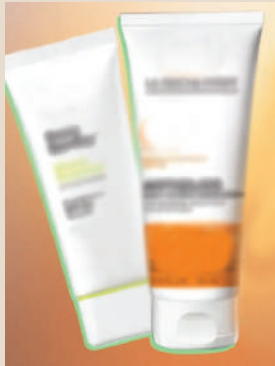
The felicitation ceremony started with tuneful and melodious Ganesh salutation and Saraswati prayers. Smt Uma Hardikar, our member presented the songs, while Smt Vasundhara Deodhar was the Master of Ceremonies.

- Vasundhara Deodhar

Translated by Girish Dikey

It's summer, Take care of your skin

During summer, the intense sunlight can make your skin appear red, develop sudden spots, and become rough. To prevent damage from ultraviolet (UV) rays, using sunscreen with good SPF (Sun Protection Factor) is essential. When purchasing sunscreen, don't just focus on attractive colours and fragrances but choose according to your skin's needs. For



dry skin, sunscreen with moisture, such as silicon or glycerin, is appropriate. Water-based or gel-based sunscreen is suitable for oily skin. For sensitive skin, mineral-based and fragrance-free sunscreen is preferable. SPF is crucial too. For daily use, sunscreen with SPF 15 is adequate, but in intense sunlight or at the beach, opt for SPF 30 or higher. SPF 15 provides 93% protection, SPF 30 offers 97%, and SPF 50 provides 98% protection against harmful UV rays.

For those near the sea or spending time outdoors, SPF 30 to 50 sunscreen is

recommended. UVA and UVB rays from the sun cause skin aging and burning, respectively. To prevent damage from such rays, choose sunscreen with a PA+ to PA++++ rating (PA stands for Protection Grade), offering different levels of protection.

Check the expiry date of the sunscreen when buying it, usually three years from manufacture. After expiration, its effectiveness decreases.

Every sunscreen contains chemical substances. There's no sunscreen without chemicals. Check the ingredients carefully to avoid allergies. Patch-test sunscreen on a small area before applying it extensively to ensure compatibility with your skin.

Regular use of sunscreen protects your skin from harmful UV rays and maintains its health. Sunscreen won't completely heal sunburnt or tanned skin, but it can prevent further damage.

Apply sunscreen 15 to 20 minutes before going out in the sun. Cover all exposed areas, especially those not covered by clothing. Reapply sunscreen every 2 to 3 hours or use spray or powder forms for convenience.

Reference – Grabak Sathi, CERC, Ahmadabad

Goregaon Peth- The ceremonial splendour!

Goregaon Panchayat Peth was convened between 11-15 April 2024. It also marked the beginning of the Golden Jubilee Celebration Year for MGP. With high spirits, all members and volunteers of Goregaon Vibhag put their best efforts into making the peth a huge success. The Golden Jubilee opening event was the icing on the cake.



Goregaon Peth was inaugurated by Senior Gynecologists Dr. Bal Inamdar and Dr. Nilima Inamdar

The peth was inaugurated on 11th April 2024. Chairman of Goregaon Vibhag Mr. Sashikant Salvi welcomed all to the peth. Dr. Bal Inamdar and his wife Dr. Nilima Inamdar, a reputed gynaecologist couple from Goregaon were chief guests at the inauguration ceremony. Dr. Inamdar has been a member of MGP and a Rotary Club member for many years. In his address, he mentioned that the four sources of gaining knowledge are through a guru, through books, observation, and experience. MGP guides consumers, members, and volunteers through all these mediums. He showed keen interest in contributing to the consumer movement and Shikshan through the Rotary Club. He appreciated all the aspects of MGP and was curious to know more.

Panchayat Peth President Anuradha Deshpande addressed the volunteers and encouraged them to work as a team. She explained the idea behind 'Setu Bandha Re', a new initiative by MGP Panchayat Peth, the

legacy of Grahak Shikshan, and multi-fold aspects of MGP's work.

From the very first day, shoppers arrived in large numbers at the peth. They enjoyed buying some unique items at the stalls, which were very tastefully decorated and displayed. Shoppers were happy to shop for some attractive fridge magnets, frames, clay, and pot art along with fancy colourful sarees and dresses. The cotton jackets at Nari stall were show stealers.

This year, MGP entered its 50th year on 12th April. To mark the beginning of the Golden Jubilee Celebration, a small heartwarming program was organised by Goregaon Vibhag. A detailed article describing this event is separately published in the magazine.

To have fond memories of this celebration a golden feedback tree was installed at the MGP stall called 'Selfie Point' as conceptualised by Shubhada Chaukar. The backdrop was a big tree with an expanse that spoke about the values and works of MGP. All shoppers, stall owners, and guests wrote their wishes and suggestions on colourful flowers made by volunteers and put them up on the tree. People took pictures or selfies at this corner, which was the highlight of this peth. At the end of the fifth day, the golden tree had blossomed with numerous colourful feedback flowers. The corner came to life with the helping hand of Rajendra Rane and Savita Donde.

Another novel idea at the peth was 'Chalte Bolte Khel', in which two volunteers took rounds at the peth to ask questions to one and all, a quick quiz kind of thing. Cloth bags were distributed as prizes to the winners.

The peth also had a Vitaran stall, which sold selected grahak products. This helped in

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Together we stand!



Annual Get-together of Borivali Vibhag- Chief Guest- Veteran Psychiatrist Dr. Harish Shetty, Vice Chairman of MGP Prabhakar Gawane, Vibhag President Dr. Suhasini Sant, Vibhag Chairman Rajendra Rane and honoured activist Anita Gondhalekar



Annual Get-together of Andheri-Jogeshwari Vibhag. Speakers on Financial Literacy - Abhay Datar, Sharmila Ranade, Uday Pingale. Adv. Shirish Deshpande, Chairman of MGP while addressing the gathering.



Team of Santacruz Vibhag Activists with Adv. Shirish Deshpande



Get-together of Vasai- Nalasopara- Team of Activists with Vibhag President Veena Gavankar and Chhaya Warange



Advocacy to action: commemorating 50 years of consumer empowerment

Since its inception in 1975, Mumbai Grahak Panchayat (MGP) has been a beacon of consumer empowerment, pioneering innovative approaches to protect consumer rights and promote fair market practices. With over 30,000 members across Maharashtra MGP is Asia's largest voluntary consumer organisation dedicated to fostering awareness, education, and advocacy on behalf of consumers. 2500 dedicated, selfless, and active volunteers shoulder responsibility of the various activities of MGP under the able leadership of Adv. Shirish Deshpande. Let's delve into the core aspects that define MGP's illustrious journey and its impact on consumer welfare.

MGP's unique distribution model is a role model of sustainability and affordability. Understanding that organised consumer action can yield significant bargaining power, MGP initiated a system where consumers unite in "Grahak Sangh" to collectively procure essential goods at fair prices promoting healthy, locally sourced products while minimizing environmental impact through reduced carbon emissions and plastic usage. MGP's sustainable lifestyle approach



has garnered international recognition with countries like Zimbabwe adopting the model for economic empowerment and Norway presenting a film in the UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

MGP's advocacy extends beyond individual grievances to encompass broader systemic issues affecting consumers. Through class action lawsuits, MGP has sought redressal for collective grievances, ensuring that justice is served on a larger scale. MGP has been instrumental in landmark consumer litigation cases, such as the LML Vespa and Paranjape builder, Mango Holidays, where it fought for the rights of aggrieved consumers, resulting in favorable outcomes. MGP represents consumers on various Government bodies like MERC, Electricity CGRF, FSSAI, ASCI, and Coffee Board.

Recognising the vulnerability and their lack of awareness regarding their rights, MGP operates Complaint Guidance Centres across Mumbai, Thane, and Pune where the aggrieved consumers are guided to file complaints and facilitate resolution by trained volunteers. By empowering consumers with knowledge and support, MGP ensures that their grievances are effectively addressed and resolved.

MGP has been instrumental in setting up the MahaRERA Conciliation Forum in collaboration with the Developers' bodies CREDAI, MCHI, and NARERDCO aimed at resolving the disputes between the home buyers and developers in the real estate sector. This Forum has dealt with over 5000 complaints and has been able to settle around 40% of the Complaints successfully which has not only provided speedy resolution to the homebuyers but also curtailed the

appeal reducing the successive litigation. This experience has led to the establishment of MGP-SAMET to provide affordable, efficient, and accessible dispute resolution through Conciliation and Mediation as an alternative to the lengthy, complex, and costly court proceedings. Presently SAMET has 15 trained Mediators.

MGP's impact transcends national borders with its involvement in international fora like Consumers International and UNCTAD. MGP has been at the forefront of shaping global consumer policy through its initiatives like revising the 30-year-old UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, setting up a monitoring agency for the implementation of guidelines, seeking advisory for airlines refunds during COVID, and advocating for a global online dispute resolution mechanism.

MGP has been involved in creating awareness and consumer education for the various strata of the Society. It runs Consumer Clubs in Schools, provides internships to College Students, and conducts awareness programs through demonstrations/skits at social gatherings. Since October 2023, its partnership with Doordarshan Sahyadri for the "Jago Grahak" series provides a platform

to educate consumers on a wide range of issues from health care to financial literacy.

For 43 years, MGP has been organizing Consumer Plaza across Mumbai, Thane, Vasai, Palghar, Ratnagiri, and Pune, curating local vendors to offer quality products at reasonable prices while ensuring fair trade practices and providing post-fair consumer support. "Setu Bandha Re", aims to bridge societal gaps by providing a marketplace for less privileged social organizations to sell their products.

In essence, Mumbai Grahak Panchayat (MGP) stands as a formidable force in championing consumer rights and promoting fair practices in the marketplace. This wouldn't be possible without the visionary founders, untiring volunteers, members of MGP, and the consumers' trust. As consumers, we hold immense power to drive positive change in the marketplace. Together let us stand united in our pursuit of a fairer and more transparent consumer environment. Here is an appeal to join MGP & be a catalyst for change. More power to consumers and the consumer movement!

- Sharmila Ranade

Courtesy – Free Press Journal, on April 8, 2024

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Goregaon Peth- The ceremonial splendour!

spreading awareness about quality products at reasonable rates and also helped in increasing membership. Manisha Modak, Bhagyashree Samant, President of Malad Vibhag, and other volunteers from Goregaon efficiently manned this stall for all five days.

'Jago Grahak' stall of the Grahak Shikshan Vibhag shared useful information for consumers. Some experts from BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) also joined this stall to guide consumers on various aspects of purchasing. A revolving model of Grahak Sanrakshan Kayada made by the students

of Vivek College was also on display. For two days students from this college shared information about the same.

These five days of Goregaon Grahak Peth were full of exciting and heartwarming events and celebrations with a total turnover of 95 lakhs. This peth, a joint effort of the Goregaon Vibhag Committee and Panchyat Peth Committee that marked the opening of the Golden Jubilee Year ended on a very pleasant note.

**- Vasundhara Deodhar
- Chandrashekhar Bhosale**

Remove Bournvita From 'Health Drinks' Category: Centre's Big Order

The advisory comes on the back of an investigation by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) that found the Bournvita to contains sugar levels much above the acceptable limits.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has issued an advisory to the e-commerce companies, directing them to remove all drinks and beverages including Bournvita from the category of 'health drinks', on their portal and platforms.



"National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body constituted under Section (3) of the Commission of Protection of Child

Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005 after its inquiry under Section 14 of CRPC Act 2005 concluded that there is no 'health drink' defined under FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations submitted by FSSAI and Mondelez India Food Pvt. Ltd," the ministry said in a notification, dated April 10.

Earlier, the NCPCR had called upon the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to initiate action against the companies that failed to meet safety standards and guidelines and were projecting health supplements as 'health drinks'.

Notably, as per the regulatory body, 'health drink' has not been defined in the country's food laws and to project something under the same violates the rules. The FSSAI, earlier this month, also instructed e-commerce portals against labelling dairy-based or malt-based beverages as 'health drinks'.

The controversy over the 'unhealthy' nature of Bournvita first arose after a YouTuber in his video slammed the powder supplement and informed that it contained excessive sugar, cocoa solids, and harmful colourants that could lead to serious health hazards in children, including cancer.



Appeal to Associate Members

All associate members are requested to renew their membership by paying Rs. 240 by 30th June 2024.

Be associated with Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, the prime consumer organization. Be a part of an esteemed consumer movement!

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