

# It's (D) raining

Every monsoon, these men on the street work overtime to ensure that our roads are clear of water-logging

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**R**AINS might be a source of inspiration for the poets, a perfect trekking opportunity for adventure enthusiasts, time to go for a long drive for romantic lovers, but then, there are a few, who, looking at the dark clouds gathered in the skies, pull up their socks and say- it's time to start working!

As one makes way through the congested city roads choked in knee- deep waters, a group of individuals of the civic administration are busy clearing the drainage vents to make way for the stagnated rain water. "These four months are the mainstay of our work. For the rest of the year, anyone hardly remembers us," says W Mohammad, a storm waterline worker adding, "During monsoon, we literally have to forget our family and work all through the day. The challenge is that we have to finish work only during daylight as working in nights is both- inconvenient as well as dangerous."

Working with the storm waterline is not easy as workers clear-



ing the waterholes is just prima facie. "After seeing the spot, we detect the source of chaos. If the clogging is near the opening of the waterhole, it can be removed manually. But there are times when we have to use machinery to clean the pipeline, in extreme cases we even have to enter the pipes ourselves. We have heard about life jackets and breathing masks being

used in countries abroad, but here, it is all about risking our lives," says Anil Salvi, another worker.

Salvi, who works under a contractor, further adds, "It is amazing what kind of rubbish we find when we are unclogging the drains. The fault of this, in my opinion, lies with the people as well as the PMC itself. If the people were to keep the streets clean and not throw their garbage, as it were, on the roads, then we would not have such problems. But at the end of the day, it is the PMC's duty to clean up after the people. However, it is only us who get the blame, for being late and for working slowly. People don't seem to realise that after one spell of rains, water gets stuck all over the city, and we are constantly going from one place to an-

## The swish set

other." And while we look forward to getting drenched in the first rains, working in wet conditions constantly has its own disadvantages. As Nitin Sonawane stresses on the hardships of the job, saying, "As you can imagine, our working conditions are horrible. We are susceptible to all sorts of diseases and poisonings. But we have no option but to do it. It is, after all, our job. After all someone has to do the dirty work, isn't it?"

Many a time, these workers have to risk their lives to make way for the choked drain