

Morning walks on dump?

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When a group of 25 to 30 senior citizens living in Gorai walked into the enclosed green space that was once the Gorai dumping ground on Saturday, they were thrilled. Most of them could not believe they were standing on 2.34 million tonnes of garbage, standing 32 meters high. They could soon be using the area for their morning walks. "The BMC [Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation] is considering allowing senior citizens to use the site for morning walks once the higher civic authorities clear the proposal," said BMC Project Engineer, A.V. Phadnis. "We are getting a good response from the locals." It took the BMC more than a year to change the dumping ground into a green zone. The scientific closure and sanitising of the dumping ground started in January 2008 and was completed in July 2009. During Saturday's visit, arranged by the BMC, senior citizens sat on the manicured lawns and enjoyed snacks as they watched migratory birds along the Gorai creek. "We are happy to witness the transformation of the dirty dumpsite into a green lawn," said local resident, Suhasini Dalvi. At least 2,000 metric tonnes of garbage collected from Kandivli, Borivli and Dahisar were dumped here every day. "This solid waste has been scientifically treated and arranged in three layers. The 32-metre high mound has been covered with high-density polyethylene so that rain water does not seep into the garbage and decompose it," Phadnis said. A geo-thermal net covered with asbestos forms the next layer, which is then covered with 300 cm of soil, grass and shrubs.

The closure of Gorai dumping ground is being carried by United Phosphorus Limited at the cost of Rs 50 crore. The firm will also be in charge of maintaining the site for 15 years.