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PMC chief hints at banning plastic in Pune

PUNE: Newly-appointed PMC commissioner Vikas Deshmukh said on Wednesday that maximum utilisation of the existing garbage processing units and increasing manpower to deal with related problems will be high on his agenda. While speaking to mediapersons on Wednesday, Deshmukh even hinted at banning plastic bags in the city.

"We have held meeting with villagers as well as the officials of the garbage processing plants. The directives have been given to processing units to increase manpower," Deshmukh said.

The new commissioner said the garbage processing at Uruli once had around 200 workers, but the number in the last few years has gone down to 25. The civic administration has asked the operators of these units to increase manpower in the next 48 hours, which will help in processing more garbage.

"Plastic bags create nuisance as far as processing of garbage is concerned. We will take steps to reduce its usage. Even reintroduction of ban on plastic bags can be considered. The civic administration will hold a round of talks with the elected members," Deshmukh said.

Pune generates nearly 1,600 metric tonne garbage every day.

Waste disposal is an acute problem due to non-availability of sites in the city. At present, the city's garbage is sent to the processing plant at Phursungi-Uruli villages. A plant has also been set up at Ramtekdi. Civic officials say that of the total garbage generated in the city every day, around 15% is plastic.

Deshmukh said the land acquisition process for setting up a garbage depot will be speeded up. "A long-term solution is needed to solve the problem. Small waste processing plants are the need of the hour. The civic administration has identified five sites in parts of the city where such plants will be set up. Plots ranging from two to five acres will be selected for the purpose," he said.

Deshmukh, who took charge on Tuesday, had said that solid waste management would be the top priority of the administration during his tenure.