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Roads in Madurai undergo revamp

MADURAI: Lanes and by-lanes of Madurai are getting a new look. Instead of the conventional bitumen roads, the municipal corporation has started laying paver blocks in several stretches of roads in the city.

The road laying works have gained momentum and the civic body is hoping to complete them before the onset of monsoon. The corporation has decided to lay paver blocks instead of bitumen topping as the former is supposed to have better resistance towards rains thereby minimising damage during monsoon and ending the menace of potholes. The city corporation had tried out paver blocks in few stretches of arterial roads including near Periyar Bus Stand and Arasaradi and has now started laying the blocks in much smaller roads that connect streets and residential areas.

Corporation commissioner R Nanthagopal inspected the paver block laying work at a cost of Rs 23.4 lakh in Thanappamudhaliyar street, the Rs 24.9 lakh project on Vadugakaval Koodal street and Rs 4.9 lakh work on Bhagat Singh street. He urged the workers to expedite the road laying work. In several areas like Anna Nagar, paver block work has already been completed on few streets.

"The road laying works need to be completed before the monsoons. Given the pace of work, we will be able to cover most of the stretches taken up for relaying," said a corporation official. The official said that paver blocks were laid on an experimental basis as they are expected to suffer less damage. Though paver blocks cannot replace bitumen topped roads totally, they are being used in possible stretches. "The most desirable aspect of paver blocks is that they would not get damaged during rains. Besides, paver blocks are also aesthetically appealing," said the officer.

In the budget estimates for 2013-14, the city corporation announced that road development works to the tune of Rs 37.19 crore would be taken up under the Tamil Nadu Urban Road Infrastructure Programme. Of the total amount, Rs 24.11 crore was earmarked for bitumen road, Rs 12.82 crore for paver block road and 26 lakh for cement concrete road. In addition to this, the corporation had also chalked out a Rs 24 crore road laying work in 2012, a part of which is also laying paver blocks.

The civic body had to take up these extensive road laying works, as several stretches of the road were damaged during the laying of the underground drainage (UGD) works under National River Conservation Plan and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) as well as during the implementation of the second phase of Vaigai drinking water scheme.