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Chennai makeover gathers pace as civic body steps on the pedal



Anna Nagar roundabout junction renovated with a tower lock and fountains CHENNAI: The cash-strapped [Greater Chennai Corporation](#) is on a beautifying spree under the 'Singara Chennai 2.0' programme that will be unveiled later by chief minister M K Stalin.

At least nine different projects including the mass cleaning drive that began nine weeks ago and has so far removed 17,500 tonnes of garbage and debris have been taken up. About 77,000 posters have been removed from walls at 2,100 locations and artwork and painting of walls projects ordered on three stretches. About 300 public toilets have been cleaned. Commissioner Gagandeep Singh Bedi goes on regular inspections, ordering zonal engineers to plant flowering plants on the pavements and road sides. A total of 99 medians and traffic islands will sport fountains, plants, art work and statues made out of scrap. New parks are being planned, too.

Comprehensive meetings are held every week with zonal officials and regional deputy commissioners to finalize ideas to beautify major junctions such as Madhya Kailash and city square. Powerpoint presentations are being made for each zone on how major streets and junctions can be beautified including by setting up water ponds, fountains and colourful lights.

Unlike earlier, when just one stretch like Pondy Bazaar was chosen for beautification, the civic body wants to give the entire city an aesthetic look. About 15 statues made of scrap have been placed at prominent places like the Kathipara flyover, Indira Nagar, Besant Nagar and the Marina. Since end-May, when the mass cleaning programme – the chief minister’s dream project – was taken up, workers have been diligently at work in slums and on roads and pavements. Posters are going from walls and the plan is to adorn them with artwork, but funding is a problem. “We are looking to tie up with major IT companies and other industries for CSR funds,” said chief engineer (roads), S Rajendiran. As part of the plan to bring colour to streets including beautifying 99 medians, residential welfare associations are being roped in. Regional deputy commissioners and zonal officials have held meetings to find people who can fund, repair and maintain them. “It has to be a citizen centric movement. We will allow them to set up boards or advertise,” said RDC (central) Sharanya Ari. In the next two weeks, work on revamping at least 30 junctions/traffic islands in each region on the lines of the Anna Nagar Roundabout will begin. The ultimate aim, says Bedi, is to change the look and feel of the city. “When people ride or drive around, they should be able to see the greenery, artwork and experience beauty. More projects including renovating parks and setting up new ones will be taken up. Once it is finalized, we will share all details,” he said.