

EYESORE NO MORE

City Toying with Underground Bins to Collect Waste

In a pilot project, BBMP to install containers with 1-t capacity in CBD to clear the mess

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Bengaluru: Many state-of-the-art technologies have been brought at a huge cost to the exchequer to solve Bengaluru's civic problems. For instance, the Python-5000, an automatic pothole-filling contraption costing ₹2.7 crore, was imported from Canada three years ago. And the mayor recently ordered an inquiry why it was not being used adequately.

While one hopes that such imports do not end up being just pilot projects, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike is spending ₹75 lakh on another pilot project that promises to take garbage mounds — the city's eyesores — underground. Well, three feet under. And eleven locations in the CBD have been chosen for these semi-underground containers each of which is capable of storing one tonne of waste.

Underground waste management systems are the way forward for releasing surface space for other uses

Each of these locations will have two such containers, one each for wet and dry waste. "These are not any regular bins one can find all over the city," Bengaluru Development Minister KJ George said, adding, "They are designed to be lifted mechanically by a trash compactor."

The corporation roped in Zonta Infratech, a Germany-headquartered firm specialising in waste and water management, for the pilot. Officials point out that the company ran a similar pilot with the Chennai Municipal Corporation.

"Garbage from these bins will be hydraulically unloaded onto a dedicated lorry. This has never been done in Bengaluru," said Subodh Yadav, BBMP's special commissioner for solid waste management.

"The pilot should take off in a week's time after all the approvals are through," said Ganga Maheshwari, senior manager (projects) at Zonta Infratech.

Bengaluru's experiment comes three years after the International Solid Waste Association, a global nonprofit, said underground waste management systems are the way forward "releasing valuable surface space for other uses and enhancing urban living conditions."



A few semi-underground waste bins placed in Tambaram, Chennai

Where Is It Done?

- Near Kids Kemp, MG Road
- In front of Canara Bank, MG Road
- In front of IndusInd Bank, MG Road
- The corner of Canara Bank, MG Road
- Indian Army Recruitment Zone near Bangalore Central
- Brigade Road G-3 bus stand
- Opposite Embassy Heights, Margrath Road
- Cubbon Park, near toy train
- Kamaraj Road
- Dickenson Road
- Opposite Alice Jewellers, Dispensary Road

Roosevelt Island (US), Wembley (UK), Abu Dhabi (UAE), Barcelona (Spain), Romainville (France) and Mecca (Saudi Arabia) are among other cities that already have underground waste management systems.

But with less than half of Bengaluru segregating waste at source, the success of the pilot remains to be seen. "Why run a pilot in ten locations instead of one," asked Mainak Chakraborty, co-founder of GPS Renewables, a waste-to-energy startup. "At the end of the day, waste needs to be segregated and processed. I'm not sure how well segregation is happening in the CBD area."