Chennai Corporation’s zero waste plan will take off before year-end

The planned launch in December 2020 was delayed due to the pandemic

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Proper disposal: A waste segregation plant has been set up at the Perungudi dump yard by the Corporation.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have put a spanner in the Greater Chennai Corporation’s ambitious ‘Zero Waste Management’ project but it is still on track to take off next year.

The civic body had planned to go zero waste by December 2020, and had initiated various projects in the dump yards at Kodungaiyur and Perungudi. Despite the delays caused by the pandemic, the civic body is hopeful the projects will be up and running before the end of the year.

A senior Corporation official said if not for the pandemic, the city would have gone zero waste by the start of January. While the pandemic led to the postponement of the project, several initiatives under solid waste management, including the reclaiming of dump yards through bio-mining, construction of bio-CNG plants, clearing of debris and the processing of legacy and combustible waste, were in various stages of completion. A few initiatives had been completed and were functioning successfully.

The civic body proposes to create dry and wet waste processing facilities, and segregate and dispose of garden waste. The civic body has also initiated projects to remove construction and demolition debris from the Kodungaiyur and Perungudi sites.

In a city which generates over 5,000 metric tonnes almost equally of dry and wet waste daily, the civic body has constructed 199 composting plants, established 50 plants for vermicomposting, installed 34 biogas plants, six biomethanation plants and put up 743 mulch pits for wet waste removal.

The civic official said nearly 600 tonnes per day (TPD) of wet waste was being processed in these centres. Of the six bio methanation plants, construction work for setting up the plant was complete in Anna Nagar and a trial run was in progress. The remaining five plants would come up at Madhavaram, Pallikaranai, Sholinganallur and Koyambedu, he added.

For dry waste, the civic body has commissioned 74 resource recovery centres, pyrolysis plants at Sholinganallur and Madhavaram to convert plastic waste into fuel, a 300 MT plant for converting combustible waste to fuel for cement factories, established e-waste collection centres in all 200 divisions and domestic hazardous collection centres in 17 places.

The civic body has awarded the contract for setting up processing units to deal with demolition and construction debris from Kodungaiyur and Perungudi under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) agreement and has also identified primary collection and secondary transportation options for the waste. While the Kodungaiyur dump yard will cater to zones 1 to 8, Perungudi will service zones 9 to 15.

The Corporation, which initially had two dumping sites at Kodungaiyur and Perungudi, has now got three more at Pallikaranai, Athipattu and Sathankadu after the city’s expansion in 2014. One of the biggest environmental issues the civic body has been

faced with was the legacy waste dumped at these sites over the past several years. The civic body initiated the processing of legacy waste through bio-mining.

The process was under progress in Pallikaranai, Athipattu and Sathankadu at a cost of ₹18.5 crore. The legacy waste at the Perungudi dump station has been estimated to be about 30.63 lakh cubic meters, for which preliminary work has been started.

The civic body has made an outlay of ₹350 crore for removing huge dump piles and reclaiming land situated near the Pallikaranai marshland.

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