

New PET project to tackle plastic bottles

PMC installs plastic bottle crusher at its main building, plans to place several of these around city

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In a heartening move, the civic body finally seems to be taking steps to address the alarming issue of burgeoning plastic waste in the city. Now, Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has decided to install plastic bottle crushers in public places across the city, starting off by installing one such machine at its main building.

According to civic body records, garbage generation in the city has now increased to nearly 1,700 tonnes per day, of which around 950 tonnes is segregated and the remaining 750 tonnes is mixed waste. Of this, around 15 per cent is plastic. Last year, it was revealed that plastic materials are thwarting the speed and efficiency of garbage processing units.

As a result, after tackling the issue of segregation of wet and dry garbage, PMC is now focusing on plastic waste. In the first phase of this, they are targeting plastic water bottles — one of the largest categories of plastic waste generated, especially at State Transport (ST) bus stands, railway stations, malls, etc.

Suresh Jagtap, head of the solid waste management department, said, "We have initiated the project for the installation of these crushers under our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) header. Ahmedabad-based company, Bio-Crush India, has shown interest. One machine has been installed at the PMC corporation main building a week ago." The machine can crush up to 500 pet bottles of different varieties and sizes per day.

Solid waste management department



(L) The machine from BioCrush installed at PMC last week; up to 15% of waste generated per day is plastic, with bottles being a significant percentage of this.

executive engineer Sudhir Kadam said, "We have installed this machine on a trial basis after the company approached us. Once the trial succeeds, we will install such crushers at public places where more people use water bottles and dump them. We will approach authorities of bus stands, malls and railway stations, asking for a small space and an electrical connection for the machine. We plan to execute these installations within a month and have already floated a tender for this under CSR funds."

Bio-Crush official Vijay Mishra shared, "One of our machines, which costs Rs 2 lakh, is with PMC at the moment on

a trial basis. It has the capacity to crush 10 kgs of plastic bottles a day, of an up to two-litre capacity size."

Environmentalist Lokesh Bapat, who has founded the Tellus Organisation that has been working to reduce plastic waste, told *Mirror*, "This is a good initiative. However, PMC also has to tackle plastic bags and road waste, which are causing more problems for the environment. For bottles, most companies have their own recycling plants. But, very few companies recycle road waste. PMC generates around 300 tonnes of plastic, of which road waste has the maximum share. It should be the focus."