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K. LAKSHMI
CHENNAI

Many major channels carrying floodwater to Cooum and Adyar rivers, which remain largely neglected, will be rejuvenated as the Water Resources Department (WRD) is preparing estimates for the restoration of waterways and their associated drains.

The project would be implemented with the concerted efforts of various government agencies under the aegis of the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust (CRRT). WAPCOS Limited, the chosen consultant, has prepared a detailed project report for the scheme.

Nearly 23 channels connected to the Adyar and eight drains to the Cooum, maintained by the Greater Chennai Corporation and the WRD, would be restored. While projects for the integrated eco-restoration of rivers have been in progress for a few years now, this scheme will aim for a holistic approach for rejuvenating channels linked to the Adyar, Cooum and Buckingham Canal.

Among the various components, the WRD and the Corporation will be improving the channels, removing solid waste and undertaking urban waterfront development work. Improving these channels is significant for flood mitigation in the city, and reducing river pollution.

“We conducted walk-through surveys in the Adyar and Cooum basins, and found challenges in implementing the drive. We have identified about 100 sewage inlets so far in various channels, including in the Kan-



Left untouched. The neglected Kolapakkam drain, overgrown with vegetation, is among the canals which will be restored under the initiative. — S. JITHU SANKARAN

CITY MATTERS

drathur and Thirapakkam drains, flowing into Adyar river. We plan to coordinate with local bodies, and ask Metrowater to strengthen the sewerage network and plug such sewage outfalls,” an official said.

Some channels draining into the Cooum include the Virugambakkam Arumbakkam canal, the Noolambur canal and the Arumbakkam surplus canal.

Many of these channels now have only one-third of their capacity and are covered with vegetation. The project proposes to increase their floodwater carrying capacity by three times to prevent spillovers.

“We are proposing to restore the right of way or boundary of channels by up to 10 m. For instance, there are plans to build a combination of chain-link fences and compound walls on both

sides of Kolapakkam channel. This will prevent encroachment and garbage dumping.”

On urban waterfront development, officials said saplings of native species, including neem, palm and bamboo, would be planted along the restored boundaries of the channels.

“We plan to create parks and provide lighting and benches wherever there is space, particularly in channels on the fringes of the city,” an official said.

However, many challenges await, such as plugging the sewage outfalls and the removal of encroachments. As of now, nearly 6,000 affected families, living within the boundary of the channels, had been identified for resettlement and rehabilitation, officials said.

Tenders are expected to be called for some components of the ₹260 crore project in two or three months. Similar work will be executed in 21 major drains linked to the Buckingham Canal, and is expected to be completed in three or four years.

Dumping of slurry in Cooum continues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Residents of Nerukundram and Mogappair complain that a portion of Cooum river in their localities is often an easy target for the discharge of slurry from construction sites.

While efforts to restore the stretch of the river from Paruthipattu are under way, residents charge that the pollution has not stopped.

I. Prasad, a resident of Mogappair, said lorries released slurry from the bridge connecting Nerukundram and Golden George Nagar along Poomanallee High Road. Heavy vehicles dumped slush daily despite police presence on the arterial road, including near Arumbakkam. This often led to the obstruction of water flow in the river up to Thiruvetkadu, he said.

Residents alleged that lorries disposed slurry from pile foundations in the construction site of the Tamil Nadu Housing Board near Arumbakkam. Members of the Golden George Residents’ Welfare Association said scrap was dumped along the riverbank near George Ramana Road. Debris dumped by commercial firms also occupied nearly 300 m along the riverbanks.

Police complaints

Stating that they have lodged police complaints, the residents said they expected the State government to allot a separate spot to dump slurry.

Previously, Metrowater had initiated measures to prevent sewage release by lorries into the Cooum and registered police complaints against offenders.

Officials said measures would be taken to follow up on the residents’ complaints.

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solid waste and undertaking urban waterfront development work. Improving these channels is significant for flood mitigation in the city, and reducing river pollution.

“We conducted walk-through surveys in the Adyar and Cooum basins, and found challenges in implementing the drive. We have identified about 100 sewage inlets so far in various channels, including in the Kundrathur and Tharapakkam drains, flowing into Adyar river. We plan to coordinate with local bodies, and ask Metrowater to strengthen the sewerage network and plug such sewage outfalls,” an official said. Some channels draining into the Cooum include the Virugambakkam-Arumbakkam canal, the Nolambur canal and the Ayanambakkam surplus course. Many of these channels now have only one-third of their capacity and are covered with vegetation. The project proposes to increase their floodwater carrying capacity by three times to prevent spillovers.

“We are proposing to restore the right of way or boundary of channels by up to 8-10 m. For instance, there are plans to build a combination of chain-link fences and compound walls on both sides of Kolapakkam channel. This will prevent encroachment and garbage dumping.” On urban waterfront development, officials said saplings of native species, including neem, palm and bamboo, would be planted along the restored boundaries of the channels. “We plan to create parks and provide lighting and benches wherever there is space, particularly in channels on the fringes of the city,” an official said. However, many challenges await, such as plugging the sewage outfalls and the removal of encroachments. As of now, nearly 6,000 affected families, living within the boundary of the channels, had been identified for resettlement and rehabilitation, officials said.

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Dumping of slurry in Coom continues



Residents of Nerkundram and Mogappair complain that a portion of Coom river in their localities is often an easy target for the discharge of slurry from construction sites. While efforts to restore the stretch of the river from Paruthipattu are under way, residents charge that the pollution has not stopped. L. Prasad, a resident of Mogappair, said lorries released slurry from the bridge connecting Nerkundram and Golden George Nagar along Poonamallee High Road. Heavy vehicles dumped slush daily despite police presence on the arterial road, including near Arumbakkam. This often led to the obstruction of water flow in the river up to Thiruverkadu, he said.

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