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‘Swachh Ambassador’ to bat for clean streets

A lot of work needs to be done, say residents

A survey to evaluate the cleanliness of the city will be held from January 4 to March 4 in view of Swachh Survekshan 2018. The city will be competing with 4,000 others in the country to secure a ranking based on community health and hygiene.

In 2017, Madurai secured a rank of 57 out of 400 cities.

Cleanliness will get 4,000 marks based on services provided. The report will include construction of toilets, clean roads, waste segregation and compost units. It will be submitted to representatives of Swachh Bharat Mission, who, in turn, will visit the city for direct observation.

An important component of the survey is feedback from citizens. They will be called through automated recorded phone calls.

Their use of the ‘Swachhata’ app - a redressal mechanism to inform the corporation about inadequacies in the area - will be ascertained.

Corporation Commissioner S. Aneesh Sekhar said the city would have a ‘Swachh Ambassador,’ a popular personality who will advocate the need for clean streets, waste segregation and an open-defecation free space. The corporation will host a happy street programme to create awareness. Tentatively, a marathon has been planned.

Stating that the corporation would focus on improving solid waste management in the city, he said that those shops that did not follow segregation methods would be fined.

A Health Department official stated that a very few has downloaded the Swachhata app. Only five to 10 complaints are registered on the app but the WhatsApp helpline gets at least 300 complaints a day. But the complaints on the helpline are not counted as part of the assessment.

Residents in the newly added areas say that door-to-door

garbage collection is not done regularly. K. Soundari, who lives in Muthusamy Street (ward 63-Villapuram), says that it is quite common to find garbage in every nook and corner of roadside. Community toilets do not function.

“People defecate in the open because there are no bathrooms. A lot of work needs to be done before the city is declared open defecation free,” she says.