

AI-powered vans to tackle 1.5L mt solid waste during Maha Kumbh

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Lucknow: More than 1.5 lakh metric tons of solid waste is expected to be generated during the 45-day-long Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. To tackle this challenge, unique solutions are being tested in Prayagraj that have not been tried before in Uttar Pradesh.

Deploying artificial intelligence-equipped special vans designed to detect uncleared trash piles on the roadside is one such solution being tested on the streets of Prayagraj. The van has the capability to generate an event ticket for the control room upon detecting a trash pile, alerting sanitation workers assigned to the concerned locality.

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The same solution could be recalibrated to identify trash piles in the Mela area to ensure regular cleaning on the ground. In the last edition of the Kumbh in 2019, about 18,000 metric tons of waste could not be treated and had to be dumped at the Baswar landfill site in Prayagraj. This time, the Mela administration and the local civic corporation have joined hands to develop a mechanism for daily waste collection and recycling.



According to estimates prepared by the urban development department, Lucknow city could produce about 68,000 metric tons of waste in 45 days. Moreover, to manage the excessive floating population, the local civic corporation has built 226 community and public toilets in the city and deployed 3,500 safai mitras (sanitation workers) to maintain cleanliness.

Municipal commissioner of Prayagraj, Chandra Mo-

han Garg, said, "As a pilot run, the AI-powered vans are being tested over a 70-km stretch in the city. We are conducting daily surveys of the same localities and streets with recalibrated settings to ensure the van can flag trash piles."

"To discourage single-use plastic during the Maha Kumbh 2025, a special campaign will be launched in Prayagraj from Dec 23 onwards. We want to sensitise local vendors and hawkers during the

drive, which will be monitored from headquarters. Ten lakh dona-pattal (traditional leaf bowls and plates) will be distributed to help vendors switch to eco-friendly alternatives ahead of Maha Kumbh," said Amrit Abhijat, principal secretary of the urban development department.

The local corporation has also freed up a 31-acre area to recycle waste generated during the largest religious gathering.