

MMR heritage areas to get a boost

MMRDA set to release circuit maps of nine places

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THE HERITAGE areas of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) are set to get a boost with the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS) of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) expected to release maps leading tourists to them soon. These will include heritage circuit maps of nine areas, including Pen-Alibaug, Kalyan, Thane; hill station walks in Matheran; and walking trails in Vasai-Virar.

"The heritage structures in Mumbai are well known and people have been documenting them but we also have heritage structures in the MMR region. We have made these maps but are yet to release it. We will be releasing them after the Assembly Session," said R A Rajeev, Metropolitan Commissioner, MMRDA.

The MMRDA proposes to tie up with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) to enable the distribution of the maps to the masses.

"We have collected the information and put them together in the brochures. We will print a few of them and it will be available online as well. MTDC can



The Durgadi Fort at Kalyan.

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take up the distribution and print them in large numbers. They will also decide their price," he added.

With the heritage areas in different parts of MMR being mapped, these areas are likely to see more tourist activity in the coming days and will also boost the heritage scenario of the areas. However, locals feel it is also important that these structures are also well conserved.

"It is a good initiative to bring out a map of the heritage structures of these areas but with that they also need to work on their conservation. These areas have many structures and artefacts of heritage value. But they are al-

ways picked up and taken to Mumbai. Our students have to go to Mumbai to study something which belongs here. We have been asking for a museum here to preserve these artefact," said Sadashiv Tetvilkar, a local historian from Thane.

Printed in colourful brochures in an easy-to-use format, the maps are a result of over three years of work. The heritage sites to be listed in the maps were zeroed in based on a list prepared by the HCS from 2011 after conducting a thorough survey. The Society had roped in Envirodesigners Pvt Ltd and Rachana Sansad's Urban Design Cell as consultants for the task. "The initial list had over 2000 heritage sites. So before printing the maps, we revisited these sites to check their existence and condition currently. The lists were then converted into a user-friendly map," said a senior MMRDA official.

Apart from the maps, the brochures will include related aspects like transport, history, important features, infrastructure and cultural heritage aspects like food and music. Along with the MMR, the Society will be releasing maps on areas within the city like Mumbadevi, Fort, Bazaars, Bandra and even a map on the coastal cycling trail.

