

STATE CLEARS DECKS TO BUILD A BOARDWALK FROM JUHU TO VERSOVA

By Chaitanya Marpakwar, Mumbai Mirror | Jun 3, 2016, 02:27 AM IST



Maharashtra coastal regulatory authority gives its nod for a wooden promenade between the two beaches as part of Andheri beach project.

Fancy a breezy stroll right by the shimmering waters off Juhu all the way up till Versova? You may soon be able to do that, since the state coastal zone regulator has cleared the decks to build a boardwalk between the two spots. The Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) on Thursday gave its go-ahead to a proposal for building a wooden walkway between the beaches at the two localities as part of the Andheri (West) beach makeover project.

This paper had last month reported how, following a race between two BJP legislators to beautify Versova beach, the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) had split the old Versova beach into two, christening the southern end Andheri (West) beach. The tourism agency, which wants to transform the beachfront between Versova and Juhu into a water sports hub, has also invited proposals for turning it into a new tourist hotspot offering water sports facilities including speed boating, jet skiing, winch parasailing, rowing and wind surfing.

The boardwalk is part of the beautification project. Officials said a wooden promenade will be built along the coast linking the two beaches, allowing pedestrians to walk over the sands and take in the mangroves and the seafront at close quarters.

The move follows demands by BJP legislators Ameet Satam from Andheri (West) and Bharti Lavekar from Versova to prettify the seafront and develop it as a tourism hub.

Satam had in November 2014 launched a massive drive to clean up the beach. The drive included demolition of over 100 shanties, with the help of close to 200 officials from various departments. Officials pointed out that the 2.3-km-long beach stretches along Andheri (West) and Versova assembly constituencies.



Blueprint of the promenade; officials say it will be one of its kind in the country

Satam said, "The overall plan envisions a seafront that offers water sports, an eatery and a marina. And

we are also planning to build the city's first boardwalk along the shore that will link Andheri and Juhu beaches. This will be the best beach in the city. The boardwalk plan has just been cleared by the authorities. It will be one of its kind in the country."

The MTDC has appointed noted architect PK Das as consultant to oversee the transformation of Andheri (West) beach. Banana boating, parasailing and other such activities will be part of the water sports facility. Besides water sports, the plan also features a floating jetty, and security watch towers that will be manned by coastal police.

When contacted, Das said, "The boardwalk will be made of timber and will be the first such boardwalk in the country. We will also light up the mangroves below the boardwalk so people will be able to walk even at night. It will be a beautiful seafront walk. Areas that are inaccessible now will become walking spaces for residents and tourists."

Satam said the plan to build the board walk would take off soon. "We were waiting for some technical permissions. Now that they are in place, the boardwalk project will take off. It will be the first of its kind in the country," he added.

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