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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT:

2
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36 Smart City roads to be ready by Feb: Minister

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chethan Shivakumar

Bengaluru: Thirty-six roads being developed under the Smart Cities Mission in central business district (CBD) will wear a new look by February, urban development minister Byrati Basavaraj said on Friday after inspecting the locations.

Work is under way on the roads spanning 30km. They include Race Course Road, Jawaharlal Planetarium Road, Raj Bhavan Road, Infantry Road, Commercial Street, Dickenson Road, Ulsoor Road, Queen's Road, Lavelle Road, Magrath Road, Ryan Road, and Rajaram Mohan Roy Road among others.

Most of these stretches were dug up before the lockdown and have remained in that state for months, posing problems to road users and robbing establishments of business. With multiple agencies like BBMP, Bescom, BWSSB, BSNI, traffic police and BMTC involved in the redevelopment, the project has also been affected by lack of coordination.

Bengaluru Smart City Limited managing director Rajendra Cholan accompanied the minister. "The biggest challenge for us was the pandemic. If not for that, we would have completed the project nearly six months ago," Basavaraj told reporters, adding, "Now we are doubling the number of labourers and they will work relentlessly to ensure the project gets over soon."

A team from the directorate of urban land transport (DULT) and a few consultants from World Resources Institute (WRI) have been guiding the redevelopment project in terms of design.

The inspection began with Byrati visiting Race Course Road. The contractors were informed to finish road developmental work within 15 days from Friday. "I will visit these roads again after eight days and in ca-



TRACKING PROGRESS: Minister Byrati Basavaraj accompanied by officials during an inspection of Raj Bhavan Road in CBD

“Leakage of water on to pavements should be stopped. Streetlights need to be installed and debris on sidewalks must be cleared immediately
Byrati Basavaraj |
URBAN DEVELOPMENT MINISTER

se there is no development, the contractors will be penalised or removed from the job," the minister asserted.

He fumed at the contractors in charge of Dickenson Road. "There are no barricades or safety nets or even lights. Commuters can meet with accidents on these roads. Safety measures must be put in place right away, else the contractor will be changed," the minister warned.

"BWSSB and Bescom are taking their own sweet time to finish their work, which is delaying BBMP's road work," he said, responding to queries about the reasons for the delay. A special meeting will be held in the coming week to discuss the progress of these roads, Byrati added.