

# Drive to protect wayside trees

It will be a continuous effort, says Mayor

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SOU - 22.14

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**COIMBATORE:** The Coimbatore Corporation on Friday began a drive to protect trees in the city by removing nails driven into it by advertisers.

It is estimated that more than 80 per cent of the 5,000-odd trees in the Corporation limits carried advertisement boards.

Mayor P. Rajkumar, who launched the drive in the presence of Commissioner K. Vijayakarthiskeyan, Deputy Mayor Leelavathi Unni, Deputy Commissioner P. Gandhimathi, Zonal Chairperson K. Athinarayanan and others, said that the civic body was forced to protect the trees as the number of advertisement boards had increased in the recent past, threatening their very existence.

The civic body would appeal to environmentalists and non-government organisations to strengthen its hands by taking out similar drives across the city.

The civic body would also carry out the drive to remove nails on a weekly basis. The objective was to rid the trees of advertisements and nails. Using nails on trees would



**A WELCOME INITIATIVE:** Mayor P. Rajkumar removing nails from a tree at Sungam in the city on Friday. Corporation Commissioner K. Vijayakarthiskeyan (left) is in the picture. - PHOTO:K.ANANTHAN

eventually affect the growth of the tree and its survival. Mr. Rajkumar said that the shortage of conservancy workers would not come in the way of the Corporation taking up the drive because it was being done only a weekly basis and that too as a special task, where it would pool workers for the purpose.

The Corporation would follow up this drive by asking all such advertisers to refrain from nailing their advertisements into trees. Thereafter,

it would initiate legal action against those advertisers.

In response to the move, environmentalists are of the opinion that the Corporation should straight away go after the advertisers who had chosen to damage trees for their commercial gain.

M. Yoganathan of Tree Trust said that almost all advertisements on trees carry the contact number of the advertisers, which the Corporation could use to initiate penal action.

Only if the civic body initiated penal action will the drive have any meaning. If not, it would send the signal that if the advertisers continued to nail advertisements, the Corporation would remove those.

Mr. Yoganathan added that only if the civic body carried the drive on a continuous basis, would it be possible for the environmentalists to welcome it because there had been many such half-hearted attempts in the past.