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## **Gujarat: Drab old walls get splash of colour in oldest housing cluster**

The multi-storey houses, old enough to be called heritage structures, have been decked up for the first ever three-day 'Dhal ni Pol heritage festival', which starts Friday.

Vertical gardens, brightly-hued graffiti and white paper lanterns. These are some of the things that adorn the Dhal ni Pol area in the walled city of Ahmedabad.

Advertising

The multi-storey houses, old enough to be called heritage structures, have been decked up for the first ever three-day 'Dhal ni Pol heritage festival', which starts Friday.

The festival, being organised by one Brihati foundation in association with Alliance Francaise and Threee foundation, is an initiative to encourage preservation of heritage and bio-diversity along with bringing in sustainable solutions for the residents and businesses of the area. The festival aims at improving public spaces in Dhal ni Pol, one of the oldest pols (housing cluster) of the city.

Dustbin installation, waste management programmes, street art, vertical gardens, new designs for street vendors, rehabilitation of architectural elements like otlas, chokdi, cotta stone pavements and facades of old havelis, are some of the developmental works that have been undertaken for the festival.

"Apart from activities like pol street games for children, movie screenings, food festival, dance lessons for pol residents, we are also looking at the socio-economic stimulus of Dhal ni pol residents. The businesses of these residents will be identified," said Krishna Handa, founder of Brihati foundation.

The festival is part of the 'Local to society' project of the Brihati foundation. The foundations plans to organise such festivals in different pols of the walled city every year.

"While hand holding activities will be undertaken for Dhal ni pol residents for a year, we have mapped 100 pols and plan to take one each year," said Handa.

As a part of the project, students of Gujarat Technological University were roped in for creating a functional workstation for the food vendors of Dhal ni pol. The students prepared a model for tea hawkers systemically designed to ease their daily work, maintain inventory, optimally utilise available limited space, provide protection from direct sunlight and keep the surrounding hygienic.