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Dhal ni Pol festival: Seeing, showing Walled City heritage in a new light

AHMEDABAD: Walk into a pol of Ahmedabad and what you conventionally expect to see is a quiet neighbourhood nestled in the bylanes of a colony, cobbled roads, old structures with intricate stone and wooden carvings and people living in harmony, keeping the neighbourhood community spirit alive.

However, if you happen to enter the Dhal ni Pol in Astodia area of the city during this weekend, you may find it in a new avatar – green air purifying plants neatly placed in a rack outside homes, paper lampshades hung on the top, graffiti painted on some of the walls in bold and bright colours and a contemporary touch added to the living heritage.

As the three-day Dhal ni Pol festival begins on Friday, the pol, instead of being a quiet neighbourhood, would be buzzing with activities — be it a wall painting workshop or an exhibition on art and architecture or even fusion music and dance, games or food fiesta. The festival which is supported by Threese Foundation and Alliance Francaise, is part of LxS (local to society) project undertaken by city-based Brihati Foundation.

“The idea behind the LxS project is to make the pol a lively space for generations to see and remember. Even though it’s a place that has stories to tell about its architecture, about its culture and the neighbourhood and its fables, it is not a place that attracts young people often. Through the project, we are attempting to integrate efforts at various levels right from maintaining cleanliness and adding more green patches to the pol with vertical gardening to make the pol aesthetically more rich,” said Krishna Handa, founder, Brihati Foundation.

“At the same time, we will engage people of the pol in activities which will help reflect the social fabric of the neighbourhood. We will hold events such as food festivals or film screenings in the neighbourhood with participation of youngsters and help bring people here. This will make the space have a positive social influence,” she added.