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No New Taxes, Projects in Corporation Budget

Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on Monday presented a `6.43-crore surplus budget with no new taxes, shifting its focus to fiscal discipline and completion of ongoing works.

The BBMP did not announce any major projects, but has proposed a few schemes to ease traffic congestion in the city.

Dr M S Shivaprasad, chairman, Standing Committee (Taxation and Finance), presented the budget with a total expenditure of `7,773.08 crore. Last year, former Mayor D Venkatesh Murthy had submitted a budget of `8,498.47 crore, but revised estimates pegged it at only `3,236.15 crore.

Among the new schemes announced in the budget is a flyover from Sirsi Circle to BHEL Circle in association with Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise (NICE) and an elevated road from Race Course Road to the railway underbridge via Shivananda Circle.

The BBMP also proposed an elevated road from Outer Ring Road (Ejipura Cross) to Kendriya Sadan in Koramangala and an elevated steel bridge from Minerva Circle to Hudson Circle under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM).

It has raised the grants for old wards from `2 crore to `3 crore and for new ones from `3 crore to `4 crore.

It announced a few new initiatives such as a separate act for the BBMP as the existing Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act is outdated for a city like Bangalore. Others are: an ambulance (Ambulance 109) for domestic animals in each zone and a concession of 50 per cent on property tax for those living in a radius of 1 km from garbage dumping yards.

No New Taxes Proposed in BBMP Budget

The corporation pulled in `2,500 crore from property tax, `182.48 crore from advertisement tax and `60 crore from trade licence fee. Besides, it got grants of `3,937 crore from the Centre and state. This included `1,527 crore from the 13th

Finance Commission, the chief minister's special grant of `2,160 crore for road infrastructure and development of lakes, and another `250 crore under JnNURM.

To raise revenue mobilisation, the BBMP has decided to take stringent action against those who default on property tax by confiscating their movable properties. A team led by the tahasildhar will be deployed to attach the immovable assets of defaulters.

This apart, a high value property tax recovery cell will be formed to focus only on 2,000 such properties that have been identified. The cell will pay attention to revision and collection of taxes from these properties.

The BBMP said zone wise tenders will be called for outsourcing of shop advertisements, and illegal advertisement hoardings will be removed. It also proposes to increase the rentals of its commercial complexes and markets.

Seems to be Realistic: Minister

District-in-charge Minister R Ramalinga Reddy seems to be “satisfied” with the BBMP budget. “There is no new tax proposed, which is good news for the public. Also, ward grants have been increased.” He said that as there are pending bills for `1,800 crore, and `1,700 crore is needed for ongoing works, the size of the budget looks big.

He said city MLAs and others have brought to the notice of the chief minister the financial status of BBMP. “Last year, the CM could not give more funds and this year, I am sure he will release (more funds),” he added.

Nothing New, Says Reddy

Opposition leader Manjunatha Reddy said there is nothing new in the budget. “The state government has announced more than `2,000 crore to the BBMP, which is the highlight of the BBMP budget. Other than this there is nothing new,” he said.

He said that every year they expect more revenue from the cable policy and advertisement tax, but never manage to collect

it. They announced the construction of houses for SC/STs and OBCs, but have not paid the money for the last year. “This is a deficit budget,” he said.