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## **Surface transport, overbridges to get focus in Corporation Budget**

Staff Reporter

*Shows revenue of Rs. 865 crore, surplus of Rs. 30 crore*

KOCHI: The Corporation budget, which was presented by the Deputy Mayor C.K. Manisankar at the Council here on Saturday, laid stress on initiating action on projects that have been discussed for long.

He presented a surplus budget of Rs. 30.54 crore, with revenue of Rs. 865.45 crore and expenditure of Rs. 834.91 crore.

One of the highlights of this year's budget was the projects announced for improving the efficiency of functioning of the Corporation. This includes the double entry account system for financial management to asset management monitoring information system.

Steps would be taken to have a public disclosure system in place, through which the public can get details of Corporation's activities. Another area given importance in the budget is improvement of surface transport. Public committees are being formed for implementation of road projects, which will have local councillor, former councillors and prominent personalities in the region as members, Mayor Mercy Williams said, as she addressed the media after the budget presentation.

The budget had a mention about operating 200 buses under the Special Purpose Vehicle

project to be started in association with the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation. When pointed out that the KSRTC is not keen for tie-ups with Corporation, Ms. Williams said that dissociating Corporation would mean disaster, as funds under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission would be released only through local bodies.

In his budget speech, Mr. Manisankar said that KITCO has been asked to prepare detailed project reports for railway overbridges at Pachalam, Atlantis, Ponnurunni, Mullassery Canal and Willington Island, flyover at Sahodaran Ayyappan Road and bridges at Island-Edakochi and Kannangatt.

Funds have been identified for overbridges at Ponnurunni, Pachalam and Atlantis and land acquisition works are progressing. Land acquired for Ponnurunni overbridge has been handed over to Roads and Bridges Corporation.

This year's budget marked out Rs. one crore as road maintenance emergency fund. Mr. Manisankar said that 98.85 km out of the roads under the Corporation were tarred during the last financial year.

Funds have been marked out in the budget for improving the drainage system in the city. As much as Rs. 102.07 crore has been identified under the JNNURM-KSUDP project for completing a modern sewerage system for the whole city area.

The Corporation has marked out Rs. 201.17 crore for drinking water distribution project and Rs. 9.2 crore for solid waste management, which included preparation of solid waste management bylaw, completion of Refuse Derived Fuel plant, effluent treatment plant, procuring fogging machine and vehicles. It was also suggested that the master plan for the city would be completed this year itself.

The social welfare projects that found mention in the budget were EMS housing scheme, building basic infrastructure for slum dwellers, constructing twin houses at fishermen colony, renovation of SRM colony and completion of the housing scheme.