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## **Municipal Corporation proposal irks farmers**

Staff Reporter

*They react angrily to Pradyumna's speech*

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*They oppose land acquisition for housing project on 60:40 formula*

*VMC proposal will result in their land value diminishing, they fear*

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VIJAYAWADA: The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) attempts to acquire land at Devi Nagar by involving the farmers in a housing project on 60:40 basis did not fructify, here on Tuesday.

Municipal Commissioner P.S. Pradyumna's words instigated the farmers to react aggressively and oppose the proposal in toto. The commissioner's speech unfolded a high voltage drama at the meeting, and farmers became emotional. They said a big "no" to 60:40 formula and suggested that the commissioner go for land acquisition and pay the compensation as per market value putting an abrupt end to the meeting.

According to the proposal made by the commissioner, the VMC would develop the land to provide amenities like roads, UGD and water with its funds. While the VMC keeps 40 per cent of the land developed, the land owners would get 60 per cent. The VMC is contemplating constructing houses under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) programme at Devi Nagar, he said.

"You will not get recourse even if you see your MLA/MP or even Chief Minister. I suggest you to be part of the development process," Mr. Pradyumna said, "None will come forward to purchase your lands, if it was notified under Land Acquisition Act, or you move the court of law. Even the Chief Minister would, at the most, suggest you to go for an agreement, which suits you."

"You (farmers) need the Corporation's and UDA's help if you want to develop a layout in your land after some time. If you agree to "our proposal positively", some of the issues like VLT, building plans etc could be sorted out at "my level." If need be, "I would give an undertaking" that the land would be developed in a year, and also would protect your lands from encroachments for next two years, he said.

But, the farmers were reluctant to heed his suggestions and promises. They stuck to their argument that their land values would diminish if rehabilitation colonies came up in their vicinity if the land was developed on 60:40 basis.

Mr. Pradyumna, trying to ease the situation, said he neither intended to hurt their feelings nor was trying to threaten them. "Housing is one of the prestigious projects of the State government. I was only trying to put across various options before you," he said, and left the meeting hall bringing an abrupt end to the meeting.

Earlier, in charge Sub Collector B. L. Chennakesava Rao, VMC Chief City Planner P. Timma Reddy, Vijayawada (Urban) Tehsildar Ch. Ramesh Babu made futile attempts to convince the farmers to agree for the proposal.