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Panchkula MC to revise budget

The Panchkula Municipal Corporation (PMC) is revising its budget for the current financial year after objections were raised by PMC Commissioner Ashima Brar that the income estimates projected in the Rs 80-crore budget were far-fetched.

The Commissioner pointed out that the estimates prepared by the corporation stating that it will realise Rs 24 crore from the Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) on account of share from extension fee from the urban body could throw the corporation's plans out of gear as the HUDA has not been paying the money for more than 10 years and it is unlikely that the money will be recovered entirely this year.

According to officials, the HUDA has not paid nearly Rs 24 crore since 2001 when a memorandum was signed between the corporation and Urban body that 75 percent of the realisations from the extension fee and the revenue from passing of building maps will be paid every year. Officials said that despite repeated reminders the money has not been paid.

While the officials said that they will again remind the HUDA that it needs to pay the money to the corporation, they add that the commissioner reasoned that in case the HUDA fails to pay the entire amount in one go, the corporation's estimates on expenditure will not be met from the income estimates.

PMC Commissioner, Brar, confirmed that the budget is being revised.

Officials said that developmental works are likely to get hit. The corporation was banking on the money coming from HUDA as its expenditure on development is expected to shoot up due to the inclusion of new areas like that of Pinjore coming under its jurisdiction.

The corporation, in the earlier budget which it has been asked to revise, had proposed an increase of over 9 percent of the budget expenditure from last year's Rs 70 crore.

However, Accounts Head of PMC, Bachan Singh, said that while there is an increase in the overall budget, there will be a cut in developmental expenditure compared to last year and

the hike in the budget is due to the increase in salaries and other office expenses.

Chief Controller of Finance, HUDA, S C Kansal, said that he is not aware about the matter. Estate Officer, HUDA, Ashwani Sharma, said that in case he receives in writing a demand from the corporation, he will act on the matter.

PMC officials, however, said that HUDA is not abiding by the terms of the memorandum that 75 percent of the extension fee will be paid to it to maintain the different sectors. The PMC not only makes internal roads, but also spends money on the upkeep of parks and sanitation.