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User charges on garbage opposed

Staff Reporter

Congress flayed for including the proposal on the agenda

Dues to civic body from State to the tune of

Rs. 198 cr, according to CPI(M) leader

User charges will exceed D&O licence amount, he says

VIJAYAWADA: The city unit of the CPI (M) on Monday vehemently opposed the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC)'s move to levy user charges on garbage.

Addressing a press conference here, CPI(M) floor leader in the VMC general body Ch. Babu Rao came down heavily on the ruling Congress for including the proposal to levy user charges

on garbage in the agenda of the general body meeting scheduled for June 27. Though the proposal was deferred some time back, the Corporation was gearing up to introduce it through backdoor, he said.

The Congress party had utterly failed to prevail upon the State government to release the dues to the Corporation to the tune of Rs. 198 crores. The State government neither released its share nor the share released by the Centre for programmes taken up under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) programme in the city.

The Congress should have lodged a complaint with the Centre against the State government for withholding the funds, but it was only interested in burdening the people with user charges, he said.

The Corporation was poised to collect Rs. 600 to Rs. 24,000 a year from users for lifting garbage. While it would be Rs. 60 to Rs. 900 a year for each family, it would be Rs. 600 to Rs. 24,000 a year for traders and house owners.

Around Rs. 3.98 crores would be collected from 21,053 commercial establishments, while it would be Rs. 4.14 crores from 1,57,214 residential properties. If the proposal was implemented, the VMC officials would burden the people by at least Rs. 8 crores a year, he alleged.

Mr. Babu Rao pointed out that user charges would exceed the amount being collected as Dangerous and Offensive (D&O) trade licence fee and property tax.

In all, 21,000 commercial establishments and 1.57 lakh house owners would have to pay user charges to the tune of Rs. 8 crores a year, he maintained.