

The Times of India 09.10.2014

Several commercial buildings under Gaya civic body scanner

GAYA: Marriage halls and other commercial buildings have come on the Gaya Municipal Corporation (GMC) radar for three different reasons including massive evasion of municipal tax and encroachment of public land. GMC officials on Tuesday raided several commercial buildings including a couple of marriage halls located near the Gaya circuit house.

According to municipal commissioner D S Ram Chandar, incidence of massive evasion of municipal tax has come to light during the Tuesday operation against the owners of commercial buildings. He told TOI that initially 50 big buildings spread over different wards of the GMC have been identified for thorough examination of the premises and documentation of violations of building construction laws and other rules.

According to Chandar, the evasion of municipal tax is simply mindboggling. In respect of one of the marriage halls raided by the municipal officials, it was found that as against a tax liability of about Rs 1.5 lakh per annum, only Rs 11,000 was being paid by the owner. Not only that, parking space of the hall has

been converted into a kitchen and the municipal drain has been encroached upon. Asked about the follow up action, the municipal commissioner said the violators of the law will be adequately penalised. Besides the upward revision of the municipal tax of the commercial buildings in accordance with the real measurement, notices are being issued to the violators for encroachment removal.

Asked about the involvement of tax collectors and other GMC employees, Chandar admitted that quite a few of the tax collectors and other GMC employees are neck deep involved in malpractices. As of now, class IV employees of the municipal body are engaged in tax collection. He plans to give the tax collection job to class III employees of the municipal body.

On account of tax evasion and other leakages, the GMC is in the red, said Chandar. As against the establishment cost of about Rs 24 crore per annum, the revenue from the holding tax and other sources were a meagre Rs 7 crore per annum leaving the big gap of Rs 17 crore between income and expenditure. He was trying to double the corporation's tax revenue from the existing Rs 7 crore to Rs 14 crore, he said.