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Mettupalayam Municipality seals shop for illegal sublet

The Mettupalayam Municipality has recently sealed a shop at the municipal bus stand after it found the shopkeeper to have illegally sublet the premises.

The sealing and the civic body's proposal to auction all its shops in the town has angered the Opposition councillors who staged a protest on Tuesday.

Mobile shop

Municipal Chairman D. Sathish Kumar said that the shop that the officials sealed belonged to a Sarvodaya organisation, which after taking it on action had sublet the premises for setting up a mobile phone shop.

This was in violation of the rules and resulted in loss of

revenue.

A rough study the Commissioner K. Saravanakumar has suggested that owners of almost all the 200 shops had illegally sublet the premises for rent which was far higher than what they paid the Municipality.

If the Municipality were to auction all the 200 shops, including the prized 100 in the bus stand, it would get at Rs. 2.50 crore a year as against the Rs. 75 lakh it earned at present.

Renovation

Mr. Kumar said that the civic body had been forced to take such a step because it needed to boost revenue to pay its share in various development projects that the Central and State governments had approved.

For instance, it needed money for the following projects - bus stand renovation, new municipal office, workers quarters

project and water supply improvement.

To improve the income from shops, the Municipality would first auction the shop it had sealed to see what the highest bid was.

Based on the amount the shop generated, it would fix the rent for the other shops.

If the shopkeepers were ready to pay the revised rent they could continue using the shops else the civic body would auction the shops afresh keeping the highest bid amount as a guideline.

Mr. Kumar also said that the Opposition had no basis for opposing the initiative that was aimed at boosting the civic body's revenue.