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## Corpn. pins hopes on funding from Centre

**Karthik Madhavan**

Just as anybody else the Coimbatore Corporation also eagerly awaits the Union Budget, to be presented by Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Thursday.

The reason for the wait is not difficult to fathom – the Corporation expects the Minister to announce the second part of the urban infrastructure development scheme, in other words, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) II.

At stake for the civic body are schemes worth Rs. 1,880 crore. According to Commissioner in-charge S. Sivarasu the civic body had sought funds for the second phase of the storm water drain project, cleaning the natural drains that criss-cross the city, improving the eight water tanks and the 24x7 drinking water supply scheme.

The Corporation has placed a demand of Rs. 490 crore to the Central Government to construct storm water drains measuring 1,482 km in 81 zones. It has sought Rs. 500 crore to improve Sanganur Pallam, Ganapathy-Singanallur Drain, Vilankurichi Drain, Karupparayan Kovil Drain and the Kovilmedu Drain.

The civic body has submitted a proposal for Rs. 200 crore to clean the eight water tanks that fall within the city limits.

And, another Rs. 690 crore to supply water round-the-clock to the residents of the old city area (60 wards).

If Mr. Chidambaram were to announce the scheme and allocate money for the same, it would take the city to the next level of development. Coimbatore had gained in infrastructure from the first JNNURM scheme in that it was able to implement the Pilloor Dedicated Drinking Water Supply Scheme, solid waste management scheme, underground drainage scheme and the storm water drainage in a part of the city.

It was to have taken up the tanks cleaning project as well but could not do so for a variety of reasons.

Mr. Sivarasu says that the Corporation is confident of securing funds from the government. But his optimism appears misplaced if media reports are anything to go by. The reports say that the Minister may cut spending to focus on reducing the budget deficit and ensuring fiscal discipline.