

# Cash-strapped CMC to collect pending dues

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, June 7:** The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has initiated the process to collect unpaid taxes on hoardings and house rents from shopkeepers.

Sources said CMC commissioner Bikash Chandra Das has sought all files related to the pending taxes on hoardings and advertisements. Das reportedly asked the officials concerned to find out the reasons behind the gradual fall in revenue collection from hoardings and advertisements. It is learnt that the civic body has failed to collect hoarding taxes to the tune of ₹5 crore.

Similarly, house rents to the

tune of ₹1.5 crore have been due on the shopkeepers, sources added.

The civic body had constructed at least 26 market complexes at Pilgrim Road, Biju Patnaik Square, Malgodown, Choudhury Bazar, Buxi Bazar, Rani Haat, Zobra, College Square, OMP Square, Badambadi and Potapokhari. It has rented out at least 850 shops at these market complexes to traders.

"The civic body is entitled to collect rents anywhere between ₹250 and ₹1,100 from the traders who have availed shops at the market complexes. However, the officials have failed to collect house rents to the tune of ₹1.5

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crore from the shopkeepers," said a CMC official.

A few corporators, meanwhile, urged the CMC authorities to hike the house rents at market complexes as a revenue boosting exercise. "Private landlords in



the city are charging at least ₹1,500 rent for a room, but the civic body has rented out many shops at ₹250. It should hike the rents for shops at market complexes," said corporator Charulata Sahu.

On the other hand, corporator

Jaydev Jena suggested construction of a few multiplexes and renting them out to big commercial entities to improve its revenue collection.

Bikash Behera, chairman of CMC standing committee on licence and appeal, said the civic body will renovate its market complexes and hike rents. "We will soon devise a strategy to collect the outstanding rents from the shopkeepers," he said.

CMC sources said the civic body has decided to serve notices on shopkeepers who failed to clear their dues. "CMC may initiate legal actions on house rent defaulters," said a civic body official.