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## **BBMP budget: It's new politics, old arithmetic**

Taking a cue from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Mayor D Venkatesh Murthy announced schemes for Backward Classes and Dalits in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Budget on Friday. However, he has no specific schemes for minorities.

Murthy, who belongs to the Kuruba (shepherd) community like Siddaramaiah, named all his welfare schemes Kanaka, after their icon Kanakadasa. Again in line with Siddaramaiah's focus on education for Backward Classes, the BBMP budget announced `5 crore for meritorious students from such communities for higher education in India and abroad.

An element of former chief minister B S Yeddyurappa is also present in the Budget. Fifty bicycles will be distributed to milk and newspaper vendors in each ward.

The budget, despite claims by the government, is also delayed and unrealistic. The outlay is Rs 8,519.66 crore, and assures

tax collection of Rs 3,307 crore. Last year, the target was Rs 3,200 crore, but yielded just Rs 2,000 crore.

Murthy's main focus in this Budget is making healthcare facilities affordable and tackling the garbage crisis. Infrastructure projects announced in the budget are all carryovers from last year.

The BBMP has identified 528 slums where ragpickers, pourakarmikas, auto drivers, domestic helps, construction labourers and other urban poor reside for programmes under the National Urban Health Mission. About Rs 20 crore has been allocated for this.

Health workers are to be appointed in all wards and in BBMP's maternity hospitals. Six referral hospitals will be upgraded with dialysis and modern lab facilities.

The BBMP referral hospital in Hosahalli near Vijaynagar will be upgraded with ICU and NICU units at a cost of Rs 3 crore.

A new laboratory to detect dengue will be set up at the Dasappa Hospital at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore.

In the state budget, Siddaramaiah had announced Rs 100 crore grants to the BBMP for solid waste management. "In keeping with the CM's direction, BBMP has selected 22 wards to make them garbage-free. It is proposed to establish an electricity generation unit at Mavallipura. Bio-methanation plants will be set up at selected places. Dry waste collection centres and segregation units will also be set up," Murthy said. A sum of Rs 50 crore has been allotted for this.

A sum of `300 crore has been earmarked to asphalt main roads. About Rs 10 crore has been allocated for railway underbridges and overbridges. Arterial and sub-arterial roads get Rs 50 crore, while Rs 20 crore has been earmarked to widen Bannerghatta Road. Apart from this, Rs 20 crore has been allotted to maintain flyovers and bridges, and Rs 10 crore to maintain road humps. The improvement of 200 main junctions gets Rs 30 crore.