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MMC first to start online tax payment

MARGAO: Margao municipal council (MMC) on Monday became the first municipality in Goa to launch an online house tax payment facility for its residents.

Deputy chief minister Francisco D'Souza along with the municipal administration (DMA) director Elvis Gomes inaugurated the facility in the presence of MMC chairperson Dayanand Deulkar and chief officer Deepali Naik.

D'Souza praised the council for taking the initiative and pointed out how it would be beneficial to the 45,000 odd tax payers of Margao as it would save residents the trouble of visiting the council and also reduce paperwork.

D'Souza added that by visiting the council website, residents would also be able to find out what their dues to the council amounted to.

The online house tax payment can be done using any bank credit or debit card. It has been set up by MMC in collaboration with a private company and HDFC Bank.

D'Souza and Gomes urged the council to expand the online payment facility to handle all taxes due to the municipality.

Gomes said DMA would help fund such a system provided the initiative and enthusiasm comes from the municipality. He observed that this was one of the good things MMC had done in the recent past.

At the last council meeting Naik had announced plans to engage a private agency to survey residential and commercial establishments in the council's jurisdiction for purposes of recovery of taxes.

The Indian Audit Bureau had recently slammed MMC for "ineffective" recovery of taxes, resulting in accumulation of arrears to a whopping 5.8 crore during the financial year 2011-12.

The audit observed that MMC's system of tax recovery was not satisfactory, leading to accumulation of tax arrears. The audit pointed out that house tax recovery by the civic body was around 308.44 lakh though the total demand was pegged at 668.14 lakh. This implied that MMC could recover only 46.16% of the arrears, leaving a balance of 359.70 lakh as arrears.