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State Govt apathy left MCD handicapped: Mayor

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Dehradun Mayor Vinod Chamoli has accused the State Government of sabotaging the functioning of the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun. While talking to The Pioneer, Chamoli said that in spite of the importance of the works being undertaken by the MCD, the State Government has created a situation wherein the civic body has become handicapped.

Presently the MCD is solely responsible for collection of house tax, relief measures in waterlogged areas and civic sanitation in addition to various other urban development and civic facilitation works. However, due to the protracted apathy of the State Government MCD has become isolated and not in a position to undertake its tasks efficiently in spite of spending its limited resources.

It is pertinent to mention here that early in August the Mayor had called on Chief Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank requesting him to facilitate the implementation of the 74th Amendment in Uttarakhand to empower urban local bodies so that they could execute their functions efficiently. However, the Mayor is unhappy with the apathetic attitude of the CM office and the State Government regarding the condition of the MCD and other civic bodies.

Though the State Government had announced its plan to upgrade a couple of municipal councils to municipal corporations, presently the MCD is the only municipal corporation in the State. Considering its importance, one would expect the MCD to be well equipped and efficient enough to meet the requirements of a developing town like Dehradun.

However, both elected public representatives and Government officials acknowledge that the condition of the MCD from the organisational and efficiency point of view has substantially deteriorated due to the apathy of the State Government since Ramesh Pokhriyal replaced Bhuwan Chandra Khanduri as the State Chief Minister.

Examples of the apathy of the State Government are the deteriorated condition of the historical MCD building and the protracted inefficiency of the MCD to tackle waterlogging, deterioration of civic sanitation and unauthorised constructions on land owned by the MCD. Following heavy rains in Dehradun the MCD building has started leaking and as a result the area in front of the notice board is covered with up to 2 inches deep water.

Mayor Chamoli states that he had sent a proposal for renovating and developing the MCD

building at a cost of ` 20 crore but the Government recommended to execute the task under the PPP mode.

Chamoli says that the MCD cannot build its own building and town hall under PPP mode because that will make it more of a commercial enterprise whereas the MCD is of and by the people and authorised to have its own building and construct a town hall for the public. According to the Mayor, the State Government has sabotaged the functioning of the MCD and is neglecting the condition of the MCD and the resulting problems being faced by the citizens of Dehradun.

In effect, when the MCD is facing the ire of the public for problems related to waterlogging, civic sanitation and encroachment, it is actually the apathy of the State Government which is responsible for the inconvenience being faced by people in Dehradun.