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Pay panel suggestions for PMC workers okayed

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PUNE: The standing committee of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) on Saturday approved a proposal to implement the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations for about 20,000 civic employees. The decision will put an annual burden of Rs 250 crore on the civic coffer.

The decision to implement the pay panel recommendations for civic employees also saw the changed political alignments at work in the PMC for the first time. Having called off the Pune Pattern recently, the BJP- Shiv Sena on Saturday opposed the move. The saffron combine alleged that the NCP-Congress had taken a hasty decision in the matter to gain political mileage ahead of the assembly polls. The Congress, on its part, supported the proposal in keeping with the altered political equations.

Speaking to reporters, standing committee chairman Nilesh Nikam said, "The PMC had appointed a panel headed by (NCP corporator) Anil Bhosale to decide on the implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations for PMC employees. The panel submitted its report and accordingly, the standing

committee decided to give the green signal for the implementation. The recommendations will be implemented next year and the PMC employees will get arrears from November 2008. This will put an additional burden of about Rs 250 crore on the civic body."

"The PMC pays salaries of about Rs 400 crore every year to its staff. In keeping with the government directives, the amount is less than 35 per cent of the total civic budget," Nikam said.

The BJP and Shiv Sena members in the standing committee opposed the decision. "The NCP-Congress made unnecessary haste to push the proposal through. We are not opposing the implementation of the Pay Commission recommendations per se. But the fact is that the PMC would not be able to do so considering the economic conditions. Also, the state government has strictly asked municipal corporations to give a serious thought to their financial health before taking any decision in this regard," BJP corporator Ujwal Keskar said.

Shiv Sena's Sham Desphande said if the PMC goes ahead with the move, it will be spending about 60-80 per cent of its revenue on salaries.

The NCP-Congress has called a special general body meeting on Friday to approve the standing committee's decision to implement the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations.