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Lack of staff affecting road repair: Corporation Express News Service

KOCHI: Lack of adequate number of employees and hesitation on the part of approved contractors had affected planning and supervision of work related to maintenance of city roads, the Kochi Corporation submitted before the High Court on Tuesday. This was revealed in the Action Taken Report submitted by the civic body as per the direction by the High Court on the basis of a petition filed by C P Ajith Kumar regarding the pathetic condition of roads. It was submitted before the court that the posts of 10 overseers, six assistant engineers out of the sanctioned 14, and one assistant executive engineers out of the sanctioned six, were lying vacant and this had affected planning and supervision of work.

However, repair work on around 700-km of road under the jurisdiction of the Corporation has been completed. "Most of the roads were re-tarred during February to April- 2009. But the roads again got damaged due to certain reasons.

"Heavy rain immediately after the tarring work, heavy traffic, leakage of KWA waterlines, unauthorised road cutting for laying cables and pipes, high water table, heavy loaded vehicles, lack of curing time due to heavy traffic and intervention of traffic police are some of the major reasons for this," the report said.

The report said that though the civic body had taken steps for patchwork, the work was obstructed owing to many reasons. “The traffic police stopped work several times in a day when there were long queues of vehicles. “Further, the Corporation contractors are reluctant to participate in the tendering process because tender excess is not permitted for Corporation work,” the report said. Only 3 percent of approved Corporation contractors had taken up the road tarring work as it involves huge investment. Earlier, the government had allotted vehicle tax compensation in proportion to the length of the road owned by the Corporation.

This has been stopped and funds allotted under Road Maintenance Grant is not in proportion to the length of the road. The Corporation needs Rs 40 crore a year for maintenance of roads but only Rs 5 crore is allotted, the report said.