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## **Municipality Collects Rs 15 Lakh as Rent**

Following a drive launched by Sambalpur Municipality on December 5, about `15 lakh has so far been collected as pending rent from shopkeepers who had taken the shops on lease from the municipality.

In order to prevent their shops from being sealed, the defaulters are making efforts to pay the amount to the Municipality.

“Since there was no response by the lesses after the Municipality issued several notices to them demanding payment of arrear rent, we were forced to launch a drive to seal their shops,” said Executive Officer of the Municipality Aniruddha Padhan.

The result of the drive was encouraging and the shopkeepers are now willing to pay their rents, he said.

According to reports, the Municipality owns about 688 shops in the town which it had leased out on rent from past several years. But in absence of any follow up to collect the rent by officials, a majority of the shopkeepers avoided paying the monthly rent.

The shopkeepers owe around `50 lakh to the Municipality though the actual rent per shop is miniscule. There was no hike in the rent amount over the years which should have been done, according to norms.

In the past few days, the Municipality sealed about 45 shops at Golebazar, Kamlibazar, Hospital road, VSS Marg, Sen Park area of the town and 10 shops at Kunjelpada Chowk on Friday.