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Reluctance to collect professional tax draining Corporation coffers

Civic body has not responded to queries raised by auditors

The Kochi Corporation's approach of going soft on professionals in the city has led to a huge revenue loss, an audit report has found.

The annual audit, conducted by the Local Fund Audit wing of the State government, has revealed that the civic body was reluctant to collect professional tax from the various professionals working in the city.

There are around 2,000 lawyers attending to various city courts as well as the High Court of Kerala. Of this, 120 work as government pleaders and 100 others as public prosecutors. However, professional tax was collected from only a few lawyers. The civic body officials did not respond to the queries raised by the auditors in this regard.

A large number of doctors are employed in nursing homes, health care centres, private hospitals, government hospitals and super specialty hospitals in the city. On inspection of the records, according to the auditors, professional tax was collected from only a few doctors. The civic body sustained heavy loss on account of the failure of the authorities to collect the tax, said the report.

The State auditors also pointed out that the civic body was in the dark about the officials engaged in the work of the Kochi metro rail. The civic body has not paid attention to collect professional tax for the 2014-15 fiscal though the metro works began in the city in 2013. There were also lapses in collecting the tax from those employed in Kendriya Vidyalayas and unaided CBSE schools in the city.

The audit report has pulled up the officials of the corporation for their failure in assessing and collecting the professional tax. It also found lapses in maintaining the documents related to the collection of professional tax.

GAPING HOLES

Annual audit finds that civic body has collected tax only from a few lawyers and doctors in the city

Auditors point out the Corporation is in the dark about officials engaged in metro rail work