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## Civic body mops up Rs 18.59 crore as local body tax in current month

AURANGABAD: Though the cash-strapped Aurangabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has mopped up Rs 18.59 crore as local body tax (LBT) in November this year, it is still struggling to achieve its annual target of Rs 200 crore LBT collection.

Deputy municipal commissioner Suresh Pedgaonkar, however, said that the civic body would achieve the target as it has collected Rs 112.9 crore till date under the head. "Normally, the collection figures are quite encouraging in the last two quarters of every financial year. From now onwards we hope to receive a monthly collection of about Rs 20 crore," Pedgaonkar said on Friday.

But experts in the field said that LBT collection figure in the city would not touch the Rs 200-crore mark. "It is only because of the Dasara and Diwali festivals that the AMC could collect Rs 18.59 crore in November. Otherwise, the average monthly collection is in the range of Rs 15 crore," they said.

When asked, Pedgaonkar said the last month's LBT collection was Rs 14.65 crore. "It is true that AMC's tax collection is in the range of Rs 15 crore but we are now focusing on assessment of bills and taking various measures to increase collection.

Municipal commissioner Harshdeep Kamble has also asked us to generate Rs 20 crore a month on account of LBT," he added.

Pedgaonkar also said that the trading activities in the current season were quite satisfactory. "These days, the dealers are importing significant quantity of goods and it seems that markets are on the upbeat. We hope to receive a good amount on account of LBT."

During the previous festival season, the AMC had generated Rs 17.8 crore. "This time we have already collected Rs 18.59 crore and a few more days are remaining. The dealers have to pay the LBT before the 20th of every month but they make the payment even 10 to 12 days after that," he explained.

Since the LBT is the main source of revenue for the municipal body, the administration is implementing various initiatives to improve the tax collection. It has recently conducted a tax recovery drive against liquor dealers, hotels and transporters.