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No tax hike in civic agency's '14-'15 budget

Standing Committee Chairman of North Delhi Municipal Corporation Mohan Bhardwaj on Wednesday finalised the civic body's amended budget estimates for the financial year 2013-14 and budget estimates for the year 2014-15, announcing an increase in yearly old-age pension from Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,200 from April 1, 2014.

However, all proposals to increase property tax, theatre tax, sanitation fee for organising social events, road tax, night fee, health and trade licence fees have been rejected.

Along with these, proposals to increase parking rates, usage charges for door-to-door garbage collection, congestion charges for the year 2014-15 have also been excluded from this year's budget. According to the corporation's estimates, the move will shield Delhi residents from taxes to the tune of Rs 600 crore annually.

For the financial year 2014-15, the corporation has earmarked

Rs 50 lakh for the renovation of roads, Rs 40 lakh for sanitation services, Rs 15 lakh for repair and maintenance of street lights and Rs 50 lakh for development works in each ward "on the basis of suggestions by the citizens".

A sum of Rs 120.75 crore has been earmarked for unauthorised colonies, Rs 31.5 crore for approved colonies and Rs 5 crore each for development works in rural areas and Chhath Puja arrangements.

While Rs 50 crore has been earmarked for regularised colonies and Rs 8 crore will be provided to villages in urban areas. For renovation of roads in villages, Rs 5 crore has been proposed, and another Rs 2 crore for the maintenance of cremation grounds.

With a view to encourage girl students, an amount of Rs 10 crore has been set aside for yearly scholarship of Rs 500 per student. For school uniforms of nursery students, Rs 70 lakh has been allocated, whereas for akharas and gymnasiums, Rs 40 lakh has been earmarked.

Bhardwaj has appealed to officials to make full use of the budget for development works and said a departmental inquiry will be ordered against them if lethargy or dereliction of duty is noticed.