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VMC gives relief in proposed tax hikes

VADODARA: The standing committee of Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) reduced the hike in commercial tax proposed by administration while clearing the draft VMC budget for Rs 3,184 crore for the financial year 2014-15. The draft budget had raised the factor used to calculate the property taxes for commercial properties.

The VMC administration had proposed to raise the multiplying factor for most commercial properties to 5.6 from the existing factor of four. But the standing committee of the VMC on Tuesday reduced this to 4.5.

The standing committee has suggested a cut of Rs 3.42 crore in the revenue budget to take care of the deficit caused by the reduction in the commercial tax collection due to the reduction in the multiplying factor. By doing so it has also maintained the surplus of Rs 73 crore in the revenue budget.

The standing committee has also made a series of other decisions to reduce the burden on citizens. It has been decided to reduce the charges for digging trenches on VMC roads and property for various lines from Rs 2,500 to 1,500. The charges for a Gujarati copy of birth and death certificates have been reduced from Rs 80 to Rs 25.

The committee has proposed to bring down the charges of providing water tankers to Rs 300 from Rs 400. For religious events, this has been pegged at Rs 150. Forms for birth, death and marriage certificates will now be provided free.

Laser fountain not at any city garden

Vadodara standing committee chairman Hitendra Patel said after the budget meet that the multimedia laser fountain that was mentioned in the draft budget would not come up at any garden in the city. Patel also clarified that the VMC would not demolish the 'atithi gruhs' or marriage halls rented to citizens near the garden for the project. "There is no formal proposal before us in this regard and the question of demolishing these facilities does not arise. Any demolition will only be done to renovate them," he said.

Cricket stadium not a priority

The project of a cricket stadium in the city was not a priority for Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC), standing committee chairman Hitendra Patel said while giving details of the 2014-15 budget. "It is a suggestion and we are carrying it forward. It will be done only on a public-private partnership (PPP) mode," he said. The stadium is proposed to be constructed from land that the civic body will receive after deduction of land while drawing town planning schemes. While the draft budget presented by VMC administration did not clarify the mode that VMC will adopt for the project, the standing committee clarified that it would be through the PPP route.

