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## Civic body recovers Rs 40L from APMC shopowners

AURANGABAD: The Aurangabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) on Thursday sealed 25 shops at Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) premises and recovered property tax of close to Rs 40 lakh from the shopowners. Tax collection in charge in the AMC, Shivaji Zanzan, said that the 25 shops were sealed in the morning hours but 15 of them were opened after the shopowners cleared the outstanding amount.

"It was a satisfactory day for the tax recovery department," he said. Since the AMC initiated tax collection drive against the APMC shopowners, it has recovered a total of Rs 76 lakh.

The AMC is eyeing recovery of Rs 5 crore from APMC shopowners till March 31 and to speed up the tax recovery, the AMC has set a special camp in the market. But sources in the AMC said that reaching the Rs 5 crore mark is not a possibility. "The AMC has reduced the tax amount of all the shopowners and thus the total collection should be in the range of Rs 1.5 crore," the source said. About 907 shopowners in the premises have been evading property tax since 1998. They were demanding reassessment in the tax saying that the civic body should levy property tax as per the net rateable value (NRV) of 1998 instead of its value in 2006.

After the construction of 907 shops in 1998, the APMC had allotted it to 826 owners. Some of the shopowners had purchased two blocks. The APMC was supposed to collect the

tax from the occupants and pay it to the civic body. But there was dispute over this process.

In 2006-07, it was decided that the shopowners will directly pay the tax to the AMC. And the municipal body had issued tax notices based on NRV of 2006 but the occupants wanted it as per the NRV of 1998. Zanzan said that the civic body had accepted the demand of the shopowners and issued new bills to them.

Meanwhile, the AMC on Thursday collected Rs 53.37 crore on account of property tax and Rs 17.69 crore under the head of water charges in 2013-14. "The total collection has touched Rs 71.06-crore mark," Zanzan said.