The Times of India 23.05.2017

Corp increases rent for Saidapet market, vendors irked

TNN | May 23, 2017, 09.33 AM IST



CHENNAI: The Greater Chennai Corporation has increased the rental rate for the Saidapet Abdul Razzak Vegetable Market irking its vendors. The market's vendors on Monday filed a complaint with commissioner D Karthikeyan against the increased rates.

Earlier in 2015, a Rs 9 crore-project was announced to transform the market, which is one of the oldest in the city, into a modern 2 storey structure inspired, by urban markets of Singapore. But the project was stalled as it is facing resistance from vendors who are worried about their relocation during the construction. Severe financial crunch in corporation also is a reason for the project not taking off.

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It was with the aim to increase overall revenue that officials recalibrated the rate from Rs 6 per sqft to the market value of

Rs 40 per sqft. "If they had built the new structure and increased the rent, it would have been fair. But we are facing the same old problems in the market," said T Bhaskar, secretary of the market's association. "We want them to reduce the rent." Among the 300-odd vendors in the market, more than 50 are permanent.

However, revenue officials and local officers say they had a meeting with the vendors earlier in January and finalised the rates with their approval. "We researched the surrounding market rates, had a discussion with vendors and even reduced the rates on their request," said a senior corporation official. "We are only following rules that these rates have to be revised every 9 years." Officials also added that rental rates of all shopping complexes owned by corporation will be increased soon.