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Corporation has no building bylaws

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Draft regulations await Government approval since 2007

Civic body is still following MUDA's zonal rules prepared in 1992

Corporation told to have a fire safety officer

MANGALORE: Although Mangalore is touted to be the fastest growing city after Bangalore, its city corporation is still working on having its own building bylaws.

The corporation's criteria for issuing licenses for constructing buildings and completion certificates are based on the guidelines mentioned in the zonal regulations of the Mangalore Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

The MUDA prepared the zonal regulations according to its comprehensive development plan, which is now called the master plan, prepared in 1992 for ten years.

“Although the validity of the plan has expired, the corporation is still following the zonal regulation guidelines prepared by MUDA as the Government is yet to approve its new master plan,” town planning officer at the corporation Balakrishna Gowda told *The Hindu*.

The corporation was following the old guidelines, in accordance with the powers conferred on it under the provisions of Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961, he said.

The corporation prepared the draft of building bylaws in 2007. But, as the new master plan of MUDA had not been approved, the Government had asked the corporation to wait till the master plan was approved.

The Government had asked the corporation to make necessary amendments in its draft bylaws after MUDA's master plan was approved. Hence the corporation would have to send its bylaws again to the Government for approval after making necessary amendments, Mr. Gowda said.

Minister in-charge of Dakshina Kannada J. Krishna Palemar told *The Hindu* that the new master plan of the MUDA would be finalised at a meeting in Bangalore on Wednesday.

He said that he would also be attending it.

Justifying the Government's decision of withholding the corporation's draft building bylaws Mr. Palemar said that there should not be any contradictions in the guidelines of the corporations building bylaws and the new master plan of the MUDA.

If both the guidelines do not go together, people would face problems he said and added that the corporation should incorporate the amendments in its draft bylaws wherever necessary.

The Section 295 of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976 does suggest that the corporations should have building bylaws. It states: “With the approval of the Government the corporation may make bylaws... with provision of means of egress (exit) in case of fire...”

Fire safety

Mr. Gowda said that since 2005, the civic body was demanding two certificates from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services for issuing licenses for construction of high-rise buildings and completion certificates. Builders, who took up construction of buildings with four or more number of floors would have to produce “no objection certificates” from the department for obtaining license for construction from the corporation.

Once a building was completed, its builders had to produce another “no objection certificate” from the department to secure completion certificate from the civic body, he said.

‘Deemed safe’

Mr. Gowda said that once the department issued the second “no objection certificate” the corporation would deem that all norms pertaining to fire safety had been adhered to by the builders.

No checking

“We do not make any periodical checking to ensure if those buildings have been maintaining fire safety measures,” he said and added that it was better if the civic body had a fire safety officer, which the corporation was lacking now.

Referring to the fire in a high-rise building near Ambedkar Circle recently he said that the building was constructed in 1994-95.

