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Vadodara Municipal Corporation's town planning scheme head nowhere

VADODARA: Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) that had announced ambitious plans to come up with 26 town planning (TP) schemes in the city, has managed to ensure that only six are submitted to the state government within the statutory deadline. The state government will now have to look into the remaining 20 schemes.

In March last year, the VMC had announced its intention of coming up with 26 TP schemes in the city and this was cleared by the general board. According to the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, 1976, these draft schemes have to be published in the state gazette within nine months and if this does not happen, the civic body can seek an extension of three months.

But in the case of VMC, the civic body could not complete the work in a year's time and the ball is now in the state government's court. Former deputy mayor and BJP councillor Shailesh Mehta raised the issue with the urban development minister Anandiben Patel stating that only six schemes had been published in the gazette and a year had passed.

Mehta pointed out that the state government could now entrust the responsibility to its town planners instead of the VMC. If this was not done in time, the schemes in these areas could not come up for the next three years, he said.

VMC officials said the work could not be completed in time by agencies, which had been given the task. A VMC official added that the task was daunting and it seems this was not realized when they took up the work.

The schemes are important to the VMC not only for systematic infrastructure development, but also because the civic body gets plots of land that it can lease out for revenue. Also, it needs the plots for residential schemes for the urban poor as well as for welfare facilities.