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Civic budget: Mayor goes to school

COIMBATORE: The corporation budget presented by mayor S M Velusamy on Thursday stood out for the absence of any big idea.

Education got maximum fund allocation and infrastructure projects for water and sewage were promised for areas newly added to the corporation. No major infrastructure project like metro or mono rail features in the budget document but there is mention of subways and multi-level car parking which have already received the approval of the corporation. "The completion of the announced projects and the ongoing projects are the top priority of the city municipal corporation," said Velusamy, mayor, Coimbatore Municipal Corporation.

The mayor has budgeted for deficit of Rs 20.99 crore with income for the financial year 2013-14 estimated at Rs 808.12 crore as against expenditure of Rs 829.11 crore.

The major focus of the budget is on education sector and corporation school students are likely to benefit. Ranging from the distribution of tablets to 36 boys and six girls from the special corporation school for hearing and speech impaired students to self defence training for girl students from Class 8

upwards, the city corporation has made significant allocations. Career counselling, smart class rooms and yoga training will also now be a feature of corporation schools. "All the proposals included in the budget will be realised and allocations were made to ensure that the budget is balanced and effective in all aspects," said G Latha, commissioner, Coimbatore Municipal Corporation.

Expectedly, the corporation has focussed on beefing up infrastructure in the city suburbs that have been recently added to the corporation. New water distribution lines at the expense of Rs 80 lakh will be built for Kavundampalayam and Vadavalli areas. Water distribution lines in Kurichi and Kuniamuthur areas that draw water from the Aaliyar drinking water supply scheme will be built. The corporation will seek funds from the state government for these projects once a Detailed Project Report is prepared. The civic body has also allocated a crore each for implementing the Integrated Underground Sewage and stormwater drain in 40 newly-added wards of the corporation.

For the core city, Rs 2 crore has been allocated for two skywalks near Coimbatore Medical College Hospital and Singanallur Bus Stand. The corporation has also allocated Rs 12.75 crore for developing a new road from Kovaipudur to Puttuviki locality after the completion of a new bridge at Puttuviki. The route is expected to serve as an alternate way for Kerala-bound vehicles that need not enter the city centre. The corporation has announced the construction of special modernised toilets for [women](#) at Singanallur and Ukkadam

bus stands and also at Corporation SRP Ammani Ammal and Oppanakara Street Girls Higher Secondary Schools. "The special toilets should be constructed at Mettupalayam and Gandhipuram bus stands," said V Ramamoorthy, CPM councillor ward no 21.

The budget has also made provision for shifting Thiagi Kumaran Market from the Town Hall area to another location with better parking facilities. Additional allocation has been allocated for shifting Aringar Anna Vegetable Market near Sai Baba Colony to Kavundampalayam, which was announced in the previous budget with an allocation of Rs 50 lakh.

Health sector will receive Rs 50 lakh for upgrading urban health posts and for conducting medical camps for sanitary workers.

Playgrounds in all five zones and 20 corporation schools are to be expanded and funds amounting to Rs 1.1 crore have been allotted for the purpose. Ten new parks in five corporation zones including two women and childrens' only parks are included in the proposals with an allocation of Rs 2 crore for these projects.

Councillors from DMK and Congress, the main opposition, boycotted the budget discussion session and claimed the corporation has only rehashed previous projects in the budget. "There is absolutely nothing new in the budget and almost everything has been already announced. Most of the announcements including skywalks and other proposed

projects are long pending," said A Nandakumar, leader of opposition, CMC.