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## Civic body looks to up tax collection for more revenue

CHENNAI: The corporation on Monday presented a Rs 3,630-crore budget with a deficit of Rs 1.1 crore. It expects to earn Rs 780 crore from taxes, including property and professional taxes.

The size of the corporation budget was Rs 2,922 crore in 2012-13. There has been an increase of Rs 707 crore this year.

Despite the law saying the corporation should revise property taxes every five years, the civic body has not hiked it since 1998. As a result, its revenue is the lowest among the corporations of the six metros. This year, it has collected Rs 370 crore against its target of Rs 558 crore.

A corporation official said, "It is a challenge for us to generate funds for development. If we fail to find money, it will reflect on our major projects. Some projects could not be completed as there has been a drop in tax collection. So we will give priority to tax collection."

Records show that the number of tax payers in the city has increased from 6.5 lakh to 10.82 lakh after the expansion of

the city. The civic body has not revised the property tax in the old limits.

"The revision of property tax is held up due to political reasons. The only option is to increase collection," said a senior corporation official. In a bid to increase tax collection, the civic body will introduce collection counters in each of the 200 wards.