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New Council proposes several new projects

Staff Reporter

Seeks grant, nod to raise loans to execute works

: The new council of Madurai Corporation, ruled by All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, has proposed to four-lane the Ring Road connecting Madurai with Tirumangalam and lay the second Ring Road connecting Madurai-Tiruchi highway with Madurai-Bangalore Highway near Sholavandan.

The local body, led by Mayor, V.V. Rajan Chellappa, sought the State Government clearance for the projects and raise the required funds of Rs. 241 crore either as grants from the State Government or through bonds or loan from any financial institution.

The existing Ring Road required four-laning considering the increased flow of vehicles on the 27.2 km-long two-way road. The new Ring Road would de-congest traffic in the city.

The council also passed resolutions to shift the vegetable and fruits market to 26.74 acre Mattuthavani (near the integrated bus stand) as had been proposed by the Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa, in 1994.

The Corporation also wanted to take a re-look at the classification of city streets for fixing property tax, set up three multi-level car-parking and a hi-tech entertainment park for children with 4 D theatre and computer games.

The council also sought Rs. 102.13 crore State Government grant for implementing various projects under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.

It also sought the Government's clearance to get Rs. 100 crore loan from HUDCO towards the Corporation's contribution to the mission.

Recruitment of 50 drivers through Employment Office on daily-wages basis was also unanimously passed.

The first ordinary meeting of the council began on a protest note with the Mayor making adverse remarks against the Union Minister, M.K. Alagiri, while moving a resolution to thank the Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa.

When he recalled Ms. Jayalalithaa's speech during local body election campaign that those who claimed themselves as "person with brave heart" had run away in fear, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam members, led by their leader, M.L. Raj, objected to it.

The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam councillors (85 of them in the 100-member council) shouted them down.

They were joined by those in visitors' gallery, who also shouted slogans against Mr. Alagiri.

Later, when the Mayor invited the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader, P. Salaimuthu, to speak on the thanks-giving resolution, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam members demanded that they should be first allowed to speak as they were the Opposition party.

“We have to go through the rules (of the Corporation) whether to recognise you (DMK) as the opposition party. We will decide it in the next meeting,” Mr. Rajan Chellappa said much to the dismay of the DMK men, who staged a walkout.

The DMK councillors who entered the hall later sought permission to participate in the discussion.

The Mayor said that the DMK leader should have given the list of their councillors who would speak on subjects.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam men once again staged a walkout and this time they did not return.

Most of the councillors found fault with the previous DMK regime for all the problems of the city – fixation of property tax and underground drainage charges, poor status of parks, stagnation of rainwater for non-execution of stormwater drainage among others.

The CPI (M) councillor, M. Chellam, wanted the Corporation to seek additional funds from the State Revenues for the local bodies.

Many councillors complained of poor roads and stagnation of rainwater leading to mosquito menace. Seeing that only the senior councillors (who are members of the council for second or third time) were only participating in the discussion, the Mayor encouraged the new faces to speak.

A very few women councillors spoke.

Earlier, the newly elected member from Ward 15, Jayalakshmi, took oath as a councillor.

All the councillors and officials were introduced in the hall in the presence of the Deputy Mayor, R. Gopalakrishnan, and Commissioner, S. Natarajan.