



## INDIA – December 2022

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### PMC TO REVIEW PROPERTY TAX IN MERGED VILLAGES

The Pune municipal commissioner Vikram Kumar has constituted a committee headed by additional municipal commissioner to review the property tax in the recently merged villages.

The Maharashtra government had merged 11 villages in the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) in 2018 while two years later, additional 23 villagers were merged into civic limits.

However, as the state government recently announced separate municipal councils for Phursungi and Uruli , the issue of additional taxes in the merged villages has come to the fore.

With citizens in these villages demanding to lower property taxes in absence of basic amenities, municipal commissioner has formed a committee which has been asked to submit the report.

“A committee led by additional municipal commissioner Kunal Khemnari will review the property taxes in these areas merged into PMC limits. It is expected that the committee will submit the details within 15 days and check whether taxes applied are more,” said Vikram Kumar.

Earlier on Wednesday, former minister and Balasaheb Thackeray Shiv Sena party leader Vijay Shivhare met municipal commissioner Vikram Kumar and raised the issue of additional taxes to these villages.

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The property tax collected from residents of these areas is more than those living in central parts, when the latter are getting more amenities. Most of the merged villages are deprived of roads, garbage management, street lights and other amenities. Most of these merged villages have seen massive real estate development in view of relatively cheap land rates and its availability. Approximately five lakh people live in these areas which are now added into PMC.

Besides taxes, another major issue these areas are facing is about water supply. PMC has already appointed a consultant to study the water network in these areas and civic body trying to merge these villages in 24x7 water scheme.

Meanwhile, electrical department head Shrinivas Kandul said, "In last 16 months, PMC has paid ₹6 crore electricity bills for these areas after they got merged in PMC. The civic body is also installing more streetlights in the merged areas."

### **TAJ MAHAL GETS NOTICE FOR PROPERTY TAX, WATER BILLS. "MISTAKE", SAY HERITAGE OFFICIALS**

*Three notices have been received so far, two for the Taj Mahal and one for the Agra Fort, ASI's superintending archaeologist in Agra, Raj Kumar Patel, confirmed to NDTV.*

The Taj Mahal in Agra, which draws millions of tourists to India each year, has been served notices for property tax and water bills for the first time in its 370-year history. Officials of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) call it a mistake that they hope will be remedied soon.

Both the Taj Mahal and the Agra fort have been served notices for outstanding bills by various units of the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government. The ASI has been asked to pay more than ₹ 1 crore in "dues".

Three notices have been received so far, two for the Taj Mahal and one for the Agra Fort, ASI's superintending archaeologist in Agra, Raj Kumar Patel, confirmed to NDTV.

"For the Taj Mahal, we have got two notices, one for property tax and the other from the water supply department that has 12 points. A total of 1 crore plus rupees has been demanded from the ASI," Dr Patel told NDTV.

The official said it had to be an error as such taxes don't apply for monuments.

"First of all, property tax or house tax is not applicable to monument premises. Uttar Pradesh laws have this provision too and so do other states. As for the water notice, in the past no such demand has been made and we do not have any water connection that we use

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for any commercial purposes. The lawns that we maintain inside the Taj complex are for public service and there is no question of dues," Dr Patel said.

The Agra fort, a UNESCO world heritage site built by the Mughal emperor Akbar, was the main residence of the emperors of the Mughal Dynasty until 1638, when the capital was moved from Agra to Delhi. This historic monument has also received a five-crore rupee tax demand, according to ASI officials.

"The cantonment board had served us notice for the Agra fort, a world heritage monument - a total of over ₹ 5 crore. We have replied to them that the concerned government Act exempts monuments," Dr Patel said.

The Times of India quoted a senior municipal officer in Agra saying an investigation had been ordered into how the notices had been issued. The officer also said a private company was processing the notices on contract with the government.