

Local bodies to get 494 crore to strengthen urban infrastructure

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Lucknow: The urban development directorate is going to disburse Rs 494 crore to cities having population less than 10 lakh for carrying out development works.

Officials said Rs 244.5 crore will be provided to 200 municipal councils in the state, while Rs 143.5 crore will be given to 517 town councils. Similarly, Rs 98 crore has been sanctioned for 10 municipal corporations and Rs 8 crore for 13 Cantonment boards. Though UP has 17 municipal corporations, only 10 among them, Aligarh, Ayodhya, Bareilly, Firozabad, Gorakhpur, Jhansi, Mathura, Moradabad, Saharanpur and Shahjahanpur, have less than 10 lakh population.

To upgrade urban infrastructure and strengthen services, the 15th finance commission had cited the need to provide grants to urban local bodies across the country. Subsequently, the ministry of finance prepared a budget to allocate money to urban bodies from 2021-22 fiscal up to 2025-26.

Officials posted in the directorate said disbursement of fund is crucial for the local bodies as the money is coming under the untied grants head that can be used by the local bodies for local needs and other purposes except for salary and other establishment expenses.

The Union government provides tied grants that are used only for strengthening basic services like water supply, sanitation and rainwater harvesting.

Director, local bodies, Shakuntala Gautam said untied grants are used to empower local governance and provide better services.

"We have finalized the allocation for each district,said a senior officer.