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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT:

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20K works under MLAs' funds stuck for 2 yrs

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BENGALURU, DHNS

WORK NOT IN PROGRESS

Over 20,000 works sanctioned under the Karnataka Legislators Local Area Development Scheme (KLLADS) have not started even after a lapse of two years, compounding the frustration of MLAs who are under pressure from their constituents.

Typically, these are works such as construction of bus shelters, roads, parks/playgrounds.

Under the KLLADS, the state government releases Rs 2 crore to each of the 224 members of the Legislative Assembly and 75 members of the Legislative Council. The elected representatives are free to spend the money in their constituencies to take up developmental works, for which they need to prepare an action plan.

For long, legislators have complained that the KLLADS is fraught with bureaucratic hassles that make it difficult to put the money to use. MLAs are required to submit proposals of works they want to take up to the deputy commissioners.

The Covid-19 pandemic made it worse as the government trimmed the allocation

- Funds available as of April 2020: Rs 672.55 cr
- Funds released in 2020-21: Rs 296 cr
- Total availability: Rs 976.05 cr
- Money utilised between April and December: Rs 214.29 cr
- Unspent money: Rs 761.76 cr
- Completed works: 12,345
- Works yet to start for two years: 20,265

under KLLADS. In the 2020-21 fiscal, between April and December, the government released Rs 296 crore against an allocation of Rs 602.65 crore.

Belagavi has the highest number of pending works at 1,692, followed by Kalaburagi (1,523) and Raichur (1,425) -- all in north Karnataka.

At the end of December 2020, deputy commissioners had Rs 761.76 crore in their accounts for the KLLADS scheme.

► MLAs, Page 5

16

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MLAS, FROM PAGE 1

"What's happening is that there is no clarity on the availability of funds," former Congress minister Priyank Kharge, who represents Chitrapur in Kalaburagi, said. "I have checked with our deputy commissioner multiple times on how much funds are available. Without knowing the availability of funds, how can I prepare an action plan for the works that I want to take up in my constituency?"

The pendency is huge in Bengaluru Urban also, with 1,242 works being nonstarters for the last two years. "There is a serious liquidity

crunch owing to the pandemic situation," BJP's Chickpet legislator Uday Garudachar said. "When I spoke to the CM recently on the issue, he assured me that the funds would be released soon. I am confident that we will get the funds at the earliest and will be able to commence work," he said.

The KLLADS started in 2001-02, with Rs 25 lakh for every legislator. The amount was increased to Rs 1 crore in 2006 and to Rs 2 crore in 2013. The government has ruled out hiking this to Rs 5 crore.

(With inputs from
Shrutika H M Sastry)