

**Title: Need to ensure that Central financial assistance provided to Government of Punjab is distributed to municipalities for their smooth functioning.**

**SHRI VINOD KHANNA (GURDASPUR):** Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House towards municipalities of Punjab, which are in severe financial mess. The municipalities of Punjab were promised sufficient financial assistance from the State *in lieu* of abolition of octroi on the basis of which the Government of Punjab had approached the Central Government for financial assistance, which was accorded. But even after two hefty instalments paid to the State Government, municipalities have not been paid even single penny out of the financial assistance received by the Government. This has landed the municipalities all over Punjab and people living in urban areas into difficult situation. The municipalities are not able to pay salaries to their employees for the last two months. Development and maintenance works have also stopped.

I, therefore, request the Union Government to ensure that the amount of financial assistance given for municipalities should immediately be distributed to them and the amount should not be diverted or used up for other projects. Also, in order to ensure smooth functioning of these local bodies, sufficient finance be provided to municipalities for distributing salaries to municipal workers, for maintenance and for completion of projects already undertaken.