

L-G VK Saxena approves pro-people interim land-use framework for municipal areas in Ladakh

Land up to two kanals within municipal limits can now be utilised for residential, commercial, industrial or mixed-use purposes, without any approval

Leh, July 08: In a significant pro-people deregulation initiative, Lieutenant Governor Shri VK Saxena has approved an interim land-use regulatory framework allowing the utilisation of land up to two kanals within Municipal Committee limits, for residential, commercial, industrial or mixed-use purposes, without requiring any approval. The move aims at removing long-standing uncertainty over land use and ensuring that citizens do not face hardship in obtaining building permissions in the absence of notified Master Plans in Ladakh.

The decision addresses a major regulatory gap that existed due to the absence of notified Master Plans and Zonal Development Plans, under which there was no clearly defined distinction regarding the nature of activities – residential, commercial, industrial or mixed-use – that could be undertaken on land within municipal areas. This often resulted in uncertainty for citizens seeking building permissions and undertaking legitimate developmental activities.

Recognising the inconvenience being faced by the people, the Lieutenant Governor intervened to establish a transparent, demand-driven interim framework that enables development while ensuring proper regulation, until statutory planning instruments are notified.

“For the areas falling under the Municipal Committees in the Union Territory of Ladakh, the developmental proposal and building permission/application shall not be restricted solely on the ground of the non-availability of the Master Plan/Zonal Development Plan....Land up to 02 kanals, within the municipal area, can be used for residential/commercial/industrial/mixed use for which no approval shall be required from any authority,” the order said.

"Planned urban development is essential for the long-term growth and sustainability of Ladakh. At the same time, the absence of notified Master Plans should not become a hurdle for citizens seeking to construct homes, establish businesses or undertake legitimate developmental activities. This interim framework balances developmental needs with environmental safeguards and provides much-needed regulatory clarity until the Master Plans are finalised," said L-G Shri Saxena.

Presently, there are no Urban Development Authorities in Ladakh, which is a statutory prerequisite for the preparation and notification of Master Plans and Zonal Development Plans. Consequently, urban development and building permissions in Ladakh are presently regulated through the Ladakh Building Bye-laws, 2025.

While no approval will be required for residential/commercial/industrial or mixed use on land up to two kanals, the following activities shall not be permitted without prior approval, on land up to 02 kanals:

- **Residential areas:** Red, Orange and Green category industries; slaughterhouses; commercial animal rearing; stone quarries and similar activities; storage of inflammable materials; and burial grounds/crematoria.
- **Commercial areas:** Red and Orange category industries; slaughterhouses; and burial grounds/crematoria.
- **Mixed-use areas:** Red, Orange and Green category industries; slaughterhouses; commercial animal rearing; stone quarries and similar activities; storage of inflammable materials; and burial grounds/crematoria.

The approved framework is also aligned with the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's broader deregulation exercise, based on the principle of "Everything is permitted unless specifically prohibited," thereby facilitating ease of doing business, reducing procedural delays and ensuring that genuine developmental activities continue in a transparent and regulated manner while the statutory planning framework is being prepared.

Municipal Committees have been directed to issue detailed operational guidelines for the effective regulation of land use and building construction in accordance with these directions. The interim framework shall remain in force until the Master Plans, Zonal Development Plans and related statutory regulations are notified, after which all future development shall be governed by the provisions of the notified planning framework.