

L-G VK Saxena extends pro-people land-use deregulation in Ladakh

Authorizes Chief Secretary and Divisional Commissioner to approve change in land use on land up to 2 acres

Leh, August 2: Continuing with the pro-people deregulation exercise aimed at promoting citizen-centric governance in the Union Territory, Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, has decentralised the land-use regulatory framework and authorised the Chief Secretary and Divisional Commissioner also to accord approval on land issues for development works in areas outside Municipal Committees in Ladakh.

While Shri Saxena on July 8 had already exempted residential/commercial/industrial or mixed land use development on land up to two kanals from any prior approval, the Lieutenant Governor has now authorised the Divisional Commissioner to accord approval for change in land use plan on land above two kanals and up to four kanals. For land measuring above 4 kanals and up to 2 acres, the Chief Secretary will have the authority to accord approval for such land use applications. The approval for change in land use on land above 2 acres will continue to be granted by the Lieutenant Governor.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor was the sole authority for deciding all such matters. This decentralisation of the regulatory framework will, therefore, ensure speedy disposal of the applications for land developmental works.

Aligned with the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of deregulating governance and promoting "Ease of Living" and "Ease of Doing Business", this decision also addresses the regulatory challenges arising due to the absence of notified Master Plans and Zonal Development Plans in Ladakh. Till now, developmental proposals and building permission applications in Ladakh were often affected or delayed because of centralized power and uncertainty regarding land use. However, recognising the inconvenience faced by citizens, the Lieutenant Governor approved a transparent interim framework and decentralised powers to facilitate legitimate development while ensuring orderly regulation until the statutory planning framework is notified.

The new framework is expected to provide significant relief to people residing in villages by enabling them to construct houses, establish commercial establishments, undertake small-scale industrial activities and develop mixed-use properties without unnecessary procedural

delays. Together with the earlier framework for municipal areas, the initiative ensures that both urban and rural residents benefit from greater regulatory clarity, reduced compliance burden and faster approvals, thereby promoting planned development, economic activity and investment across Ladakh.

"Our objective is to make governance simpler, more transparent and people-centric. Citizens should not suffer merely because statutory planning instruments are yet to be notified. Authorizing the Chief Secretary and Divisional Commissioner with the powers to approve development proposals will ensure that people living in rural areas can build homes, establish businesses and undertake legitimate developmental activities without unnecessary procedural hurdles. This interim framework strikes the right balance between facilitating development and safeguarding environmental and planning concerns until the Master Plans and Zonal Development Plans are notified," said L-G Shri Saxena.

The Revenue Department has been directed to issue detailed operational guidelines for effective regulation of land use and construction activities outside municipal limits. The 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 notified planning framework.