

Finally, land-pooling policy comes through

Experts say that nearly 40,000 acres will open up for planned development after 89 villages in Delhi were notified for urbanization, paving the way for the construction of nearly 25 lakh housing units in the national capital

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The Delhi state government has gone on overdrive and decided to notify land around 89 villages as "development areas" after Anil Bajjal, lieutenant governor, notified 89 villages in Delhi for urbanization on May 16.

Bajjal's notification of 89 villages as urban areas was the first of two steps necessary to start land pooling in Delhi. DDA, which is responsible for the development of urban areas, notified the policy in June 2015. However, the land of the rural areas remained agricultural and to change the land use, the first step was to change the character of the villages—from rural to urban. On May 16, Bajjal notified the decision to change the character of these villages.

In the second step, the agricultural land of the farmers of the villages will be declared as "development area" under Section 12 of the DDA Act. All the land, outside the "lal dora"—area demarcated for village residen-

tial areas—will be declared "urban development areas". After this the land use will automatically become non-agriculture.

Once this is over, DDA can operationalize the land pooling policy (LPP). Under the policy, farmers can give land to DDA for land pooling and if a farmer or a group of farmers give more than 20 hectares (50 acres) to DDA, the authority will return 60% of the land after developing it. DDA will return only 48% of the land for land pooling lower than 20 hectares. DDA will develop physical infrastructural facilities like roads, sewers, water supply lines, parks and playgrounds, etc, along with social infrastructure like schools, hospitals, post offices, and police stations upon the land it retains.

Besides, DDA will also meet the cost of development by selling the developed land left with it to developers or end users. The land given back to the original owners by DDA, too, can be used for housing or any other commercial purpose.

The Union government is keen to expedite the whole process of land pooling, so that development activities can be accelerated in Delhi, as this will attract huge private investments into the area.

Only DDA is authorized to carry on real estate development in Delhi, which affected the pace and quality of development in the state. But, under the land-pooling policy, landowners can rope in private parties

to develop housing projects on the land returned to them by DDA. Under the new master plan, DDA will also allow the development at floor area ratio (FAR) of 4—the ratio of built-up area to the land area—which is now around 2.5 to 3.

As private developers would be roped in, high-quality residential and commercial units are likely to be developed. A DDA official also said that a large portion of the area will be earmarked for affordable housing.



FAST FACTS

DEVELOPERS AND CONSULTANTS SAY THAT, ULTIMATELY, ALL THIS WILL LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ULTRAMODERN CITY INSIDE DELHI

