

LG puts Delhi departments on deadline to cut red tape

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI'S drive to cut red tape has entered a deadline-driven phase, with Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu directing departments to speed up pending reforms and ensure their benefits are felt by citizens and businesses.

Reviewing the deregulation and compliance reform exercise on Friday, Sandhu

said success should not be measured merely by the number of "priority areas" marked completed on government portals. The real test, he said, was whether traders face fewer forms, entrepreneurs make fewer visits to government offices and citizens get faster approvals.

The meeting, following the previous review on July

29, was attended by Chief Secretary Rajiv Verma, the MCD Commissioner, DDA Vice Chairman and senior officials from the Education, Urban Development, Tourism and Health departments.

Sandhu directed departments to formally notify pending reforms at the earliest instead of allowing them

to remain confined to files and inter-departmental correspondence.

The review came a day after the unveiling of the Master Plan for Delhi-2047, which officials said has paved the way for completing the remaining Phase-I reforms.

Of 23 priority areas under Phase-I, 13 have been imple-

mented, four have become redundant following the new labour codes and six remain pending. These include flexible zoning norms, road-width requirements for rural industries, changes in building regulations and third-party building approvals and inspections.

Phase-II has also gathered momentum. Seven prior-

ity reforms had been fully implemented by August 20, including removal of duplicate MCD trade licences, permanent registration for shops and commercial establishments and electricity connections of up to 200 kW without physical inspection.

Another 18 reforms are at advanced stages.

The Delhi Ease of Doing



Business Bill, 2026, revised following Cabinet directions, is expected to come before the Cabinet soon. The Delhi Right of Citizens

to Time-Bound Delivery of Services Bill, 2026, has already been passed by the Assembly and awaits final notification.

Taranjit Singh Sandhu says reforms must translate into faster approvals, fewer office visits

6 get lifer for kidnapping makeup artist for ransom

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NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has sentenced six men to life imprisonment for kidnapping a 23-year-old makeup artist for ransom in 2016, and imposing a fine of Rs 50,000 on each of them. Principal District and Sessions Judge Pankaj Gupta was hearing arguments on the quantum of sentence against Wasim Ansari, Deepak alias Deepu, Vinod Kumar, Nasir Ali, Neeraj Sharma and Rizwan, who were convicted of criminal conspiracy and kidnapping for ransom. In an order dated August 17, the court said, "Keeping in view all the facts and circumstances of the case and the mitigating circumstances as mentioned above, all the convicts are sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for life (each) and pay a fine of Rs.50,000 (each)".

The case relates to the abduction of Abhishek Khetrpal, a makeup artist,



who was kidnapped near the Radisson Blu Hotel in Dwarka on October 20, 2016. He was kept in captivity for about three days before being rescued from a house in Uttar Pradesh on October 23.

According to the prosecution, Khetrpal had gone to meet a person who was posing as a prospective client when he was overpowered and taken away. The accused allegedly demanded Rs 2 crore from his mother for his release.

The court had relied on

Khetrpal's testimony, including his identification of the accused, as well as evidence relating to mobile phone numbers and recovery of his belongings. The six were convicted under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 120B and 364A read with Section 120B. They were, however, acquitted of charges relating to administering a stupefying substance and destruction of evidence. During sentencing, the prosecution sought maximum punishment, describing the offences as grave.

Ageing Delhi colonies to get a chance to rebuild

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NEW DELHI

OLD government colonies, ageing housing societies and planned residential neighbourhoods in Delhi could get a chance to rebuild under a "regeneration" plan envisioned in the Master Plan for Delhi 2047 (MPD-2047).

The plan proposes a minimum area of 3,000 square metres for such projects, with plots allowed to be merged or reconstituted. MPD-2047 states that those taking up redevelopment of these old and dilapidated residences could get construction rights of up to 1.5 times the base Floor Area Ratio (FAR), broadly allowing more built-up space than currently permitted.

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erties with more living space, wider roads and better civic amenities, according to the plan prepared by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

For government and employer housing, including staff quarters of public sector units, regeneration could be taken up as group housing projects, with some development norms relaxed subject to central government's

approval. In group housing societies, including Cooperative Group Housing Society plots and DDA colonies, resident welfare associations, societies or federations would have to take up the redevelopment collectively.

Plotted residential colonies, including cooperative house-building, resettlement and rehabilitation colonies, could also be redeveloped through schemes under rules to be notified. New road plans would have to be

approved before redevelopment begins.

Residents may also have to give up some land for road widening, in return for additional FAR credit on the remaining plots. The projects would also be required to provide modern infrastructure, including water-reuse systems, decentralised sewage treatment, waste segregation, renewable energy, multi-level parking and wider internal roads.

The provision, however, would not cover areas such as urban villages, unauthorised colonies, slums, the Ridge, Yamuna floodplain, land pooling and low-density areas, ASI- or NMA-protected zones, Lutyens' and Civil Lines Bungalow Zones, Connaught Place and its extension, and Transit Oriented Development areas.

IndiGo faces booking system glitches again

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NEW DELHI

THE country's largest airline IndiGo's ticket booking system briefly faced issues on August 21, Friday, and people were unable to access online services. On Wednesday also, the airline's booking system had experienced issues.

"We are currently experiencing intermittent issues with our core reservation platform, which may make it difficult for some customers to access our online services," IndiGo said in a message on its website on Friday.

Teams are working on priority along with the partner to resolve the issue as quickly as possible, IndiGo said and regretted the inconvenience. An official said the issues have been



resolved and the system is functioning normally now. The airline is using the Navitaire reservation system.

IndiGo operates around 2,200 flights daily connecting various domestic and international destinations. In July, the carrier flew 80.82 lakh passengers on domestic routes, and the market share stood at 67.4 per cent.

Over 2K industrial units inspected in 7 months

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NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government has inspected 2,011 industrial units till July this year as part of its pollution-control drive, with 106 units found violating environmental norms, officials said on Friday. Environmental compensation has been imposed on 44 units, while closure orders have been issued against 33 factories for non-compliance, they added.

The inspections were carried out under the campaign led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta to strengthen monitoring of industrial pollution and ensure compliance with prescribed environmental standards. Of the units inspected, 106 were found to be non-compliant with environmental



norms, while 78 were found operating without a valid Consent to Operate (CTO) from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), CM Gupta said.

Action is also being taken against other units in accordance with relevant environmental laws and regulations, she added. "Our objective

is not merely to take action, but to ensure effective control over pollution at its source," Gupta said.

According to the government, its pollution-control campaign is not restricted to industrial emissions and includes action against road dust, vehicular emissions, construction and demolition activities, waste burning and other sources of pollution. It has also strengthened on-ground monitoring of industrial emissions to identify violations and take timely action, according to a statement.

Gupta said citizens also have an important role to play in the fight against pollution and urged them to report industrial pollution, open burning of waste, dust pollution, illegal dumping and other activities harmful to the environment.

Building collapses during demolition; 1 dead, 3 injured

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A labourer was killed, and three others were injured when a two-storey building collapsed during demolition work carried out by a private contractor in the Karol Bagh area at 11:15 am on Friday, officials said.

The incident occurred on Pyare Lal Road in Regarpura, central Delhi, where labourers were demolishing an old structure. According to the preliminary enquiry, the building owners had hired a private contractor to carry out the demolition work.

Police said in a statement that the owner had not taken permission from the concerned agency to pull down the structure. Police said the building suddenly collapsed during the demolition, trapping the labourers working at the site.

After being informed by local residents, officials said police and fire service personnel rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations. Police said one of the labourers, Sheikh Shamshad, sustained critical injuries and later succumbed. His body was shifted to the mortuary at Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC) Hospital.

BJP goons attacked CJP volunteers: Kejriwal

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AAM Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday accused the BJP of attacking CJP volunteers when they were on a visit to a Rajasthan village.

Responding to a post of Ashutosh Ranka, co-convenor of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), Kejriwal said that "BJP goons" attacked the CJP volunteers. "What's going on in the country? BJP's goons have brutally



attacked CJP's volunteers. They beat them up, tore their clothes, and smashed

the car windows," Kejriwal said in a post on X.

Kejriwal further questioned whether it was to prevent them from raising their voices for children's good education. He also alleged that the BJP wanted to keep the children illiterate.

A scuffle broke out at a village in Rajasthan when villagers, allegedly accompanied by BJP workers, put up barricades and forcibly pushed back a CJP team that had gone there to inspect a

government school as part of its "School Thik Karo" campaign.

Videos of the incident showed a large number of people engaging in a heated exchange with the CJP team, pushing and shoving its members as they tried to enter the village.

Some clips also showed smashed windows of cars, believed to belong to the visiting CJP team. Ranka alleged that the CJP team was attacked on the orders of Rajasthan Education Minister Madan Dilawar.

Rtd colonel cheated of Rs 15.5L in digital arrest scam; four held

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

A retired Indian Army colonel was allegedly cheated of Rs 15.50 lakh in a "digital arrest" cyber-fraud in which fraudsters impersonated police and enforcement officials, an officer said on Friday.

The Delhi Police said that they have arrested four people, accused of facilitating the racket by supplying mule bank accounts to cyber-fraud syndicates linked to operators in Cambodia and UAE/ Dubai. The accused were



arrested from Punjab and Rajasthan, and four mobile phones and six SIM cards allegedly used in the commission of cyber offences were recovered, police said on Friday.

According to police, the beneficiary bank account into which the retired colonel transferred the money has

been linked to 17 complaints registered on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) across multiple states and Union territories.

The complaints involve fraudulent transactions running into crores of rupees, indicating that the account was allegedly being used as part of a wider cyber-fraud network, police said. "The case came to light after the retired colonel, a resident of Munirka Enclave, filed a complaint through the NCRP alleging that he had been cheated of Rs 15.50 lakh," a senior police officer said.

FLU ALARM IN CAPITAL AS H1N1 CASES CLIMB TO 1,777

Union Health Minister says JP Nadda govt has stepped up surveillance; 246 dengue, 80 malaria cases also reported

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI has intensified disease surveillance as H1N1 cases climbed to 1,777 this year, even as dengue, malaria and chikungunya remain under close watch. The government has assured that hospitals have adequate beds, doctors, medicines and essential equipment to deal with the situation.

A high-level review

chaired by Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on Friday assessed the Capital's preparedness for influenza and mosquito-borne diseases. Delhi Health Minister Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh presented the latest figures and measures being taken.

Delhi has reported 2,392 Influenza-A cases in 2026 so far, including 1,777 H1N1 cases, 37 H1 cases, 138 H3 cases and 440 cases in other categories.

Singh said there was no shortage of hospital beds, medicines or medical equipment and facilities could be expanded if required. The focus was on early detection, immediate treatment and continuous surveillance, he said.

The Delhi State Health Mission is monitoring influenza-like illness, severe acute respiratory infections and confirmed influenza cases daily through the In-

tegrated Disease Surveillance Programme. Hospitals and district health authorities have been issued protocols covering screening, treatment, ventilator management, mask use and home-based care.

Residents have been advised to maintain respiratory hygiene, wear masks in crowded places, wash hands regularly and avoid close contact with people suffering from respiratory illnesses.

Meanwhile, Delhi has recorded 246 dengue cases, 80 malaria cases and 19 chikungunya cases, with no deaths reported from the three mosquito-borne diseases.

Local bodies have visited over 2.38 crore houses, while spraying has been conducted in around 3.20 lakh houses. Mosquito breeding was detected at 91,217 locations, leading to 74,591 notices and 6,724 cases being registered.

Delhi has 35 sentinel sur-

veillance hospitals, apex referral laboratories at AIIMS and NCDC and a malaria reference laboratory at MAMC. Hospitals have been directed to maintain adequate stocks of diagnostic kits, medicines, fluids, blood products and beds.

Singh urged residents not to panic, saying the government was closely monitoring the situation and would strengthen arrangements wherever necessary.



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