

Wait for master plan nears end

After Missing 4 Deadlines, MPD 2021 May Be Cleared In A Couple Of Months

Suhas Munshi | TNN

New Delhi: The manual for Delhi's development—Master Plan 2021—has been under review for one-and-a-half years. The process of ratifying the plan that will decide the future of development in the capital has missed four deadlines, though. Now, with work on two chapters remaining, senior DDA officials say it will take only about a couple of months to clear MPD 2021.

About 120 modifications are likely to be made to the existing Master Plan in this time. A new chapter on transit-oriented development

CHANGES LIKELY

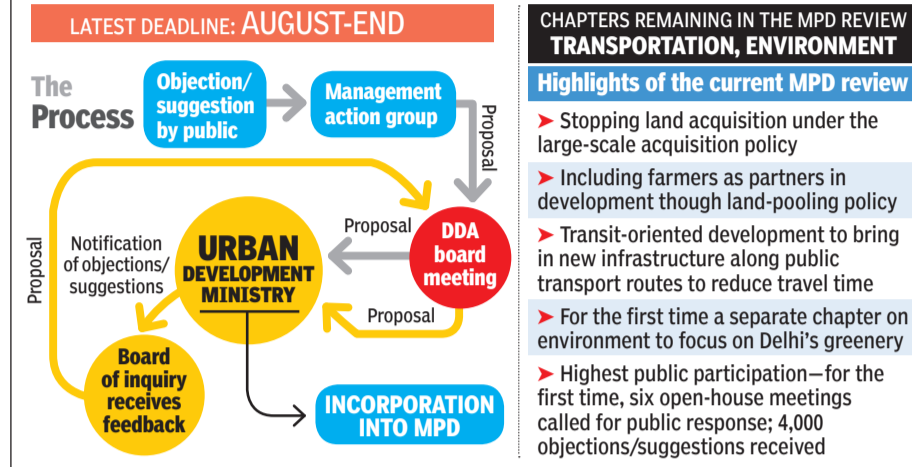
will be added to the existing draft and the chapter on environment is being rewritten. Senior officials say most of the work of review and amendments is over and that two chapters—one each on environment and transportation—are left to be prepared.

"Just two chapters are left. It won't take much longer to clear the Master Plan. Hopefully, it will take about two months or so," a senior official said.

Work on amendments was hit hard in the recent past by the model code of conduct enforced during the gen-

GRAND VISION, POOR EXECUTION

MASTER PLAN DELHI 2021					
First notified in 2007	Review began in 2012	MISSED DEADLINES	JULY 2013	DEC 2013	JAN 14 2014
					MAR 2014



eral elections. Sources say that the two chapters on environment and transportation are still being discussed with

the management action group. "Some details of the amendments were stuck with the management action

group and proposals already finalized were not cleared by the Authority.

Hence these could not be

sent to the urban development ministry for final notification," said an official.

Now, in anticipation of another round of assembly elections in Delhi, officials are working extra hard to beat the next code-of-conduct embargo on meetings and file movement.

"For the past 4-5 months, we have cut short one step in the existing process of incorporation of an amendment into MPD. Instead of the urban development ministry being given the proposal in the first round to review and notify it for the public's comments, the files are sent directly to the Authority vice-chairman, who directly notifies the proposed amendment, saving a lot of time," said the official.

One reason for the delay, say officials, is the huge response from the public to the amendment exercise.

"DDA, for the first time, decided to invite public opinion not only through their website but also through open interactive house sessions. Six of these were conducted in different zones of the city. There was huge feedback. The feedback we received from them and that we got on the website totalled 4,000 independent entries," the official said.

suhas.munshi@timesgroup.com

₹20/hour parking rate for all NDMC markets

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The new parking rate of Rs 20 per hour will apply to all big markets in New Delhi Municipal Council's (NDMC) jurisdiction, not just Connaught Place. Sources said Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS), which has taken over more than 90 of the 104 parking spaces across the NDMC zone, has been asked to charge the new rate.

"The proposal to increase parking rates was passed by NDMC over a year ago but private contractors did not implement it effectively," said a senior NDMC official. Users will now pay Rs 20 per hour (up from Rs 10) for the first five hours, and a flat rate of Rs 100 for the whole day in places like CP, Barakhamba Road, Shivaji Stadium, Baba Kharak Singh Marg and Sarojini Nagar.

"Some market associations, such as those in Khan Market and Shankar Market, have agreed to run their parking lots themselves under the Bhagidari Scheme. They will have to pay us the revenue collected before the renewal of contract and they can charge users a maxi-



DIMTS has taken over more than 90 of the 104 parking spaces

Users will now pay ₹20 per hour (up from ₹10) for the first five hours, and a flat rate of ₹100 for the whole day in places like Barakhamba Road, Shivaji Stadium, Baba Kharak Singh Marg and Sarojini Nagar

mum of Rs 20 or nothing at all," the official added. The civic agency that caters to most of Lutyens' Delhi had recently outsourced the modernization work of its old parking lots to DIMTS, which then carried out a feasibility survey. Roping in DIMTS, officials said, will keep a check on the parking mafia which overcharges.

"The plan is to bring in the billboard system to provide real-time updates of the space available in a particular parking lot. A vehicle will not be able to enter a lot that is full and an automated computerized board will show the next available spot to the driver," said an official of the civic body.

The three municipal corporations that run more than 400 other parking units, however, do not plan to change their rates. "The proposal to increase parking charges has been placed by the executive twice in the budget but the legislative wing has always opposed it. We will continue charging Rs 10," said a senior official of a municipal corporation.

CBI seeks death for 17 cops in encounter case

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Stating that the July 3, 2009, Ranbir Singh fake encounter falls in the "rarest of rare category" and that police personnel behaved in a "predatory manner", CBI on Saturday sought death penalty from a trial court for the Uttarakhand cops who were convicted for the murder of the 24-year-old Ghaziabad resident.

After hearing the arguments on quantum of sentence, the court reserved its order on sentencing of the 17 policemen for June 9. Of the 18 cops convicted in the case, one was let off by the court on Friday after he furnished a bail bond as he was only convicted for fabrication of evidence and had already undergone what could have been

the maximum jail term for the offence. Delhi Police was also directed to provide "high security" to the 17 convicts, especially while bringing them from Tihar Jail to the court.

Appearing for CBI, senior public prosecutor Brajesh Kumar Shukla demanded death penalty for the accused who have been convicted for murdering the youth in a jungle near Dehradun, saying the policemen abused their position.

"They (police) were the protectors of law but they behaved in a predatory manner. They should have given protection to the victim, but they killed him in a fake encounter. In a case where fake encounter is proved, the situation is rarest of rare and death penalty should be



Ranbir Singh

awarded," Shukla said. They should be awarded the harshest punishment so that "no public person in future can even think of doing such crimes", the prosecutor said. He also read verses from the Mahabharat and the Bible while seeking death penalty for the convicts. He also

quoted Shakespeare and said killers of an innocent boy deserve to be hanged.

On Friday, the court had convicted 18 Uttarakhand cops, including six sub-inspectors and one constable, in connection with the 2009 killing of Singh, who had gone to Dehradun to take up a job there. Meanwhile, the court ordered the "high security" for the convicts after the lock-up incharge at Tis Hazari expressed apprehensions about the present security provided to the convicts. He also made a plea that the convicts be handcuffed. This plea was backed by CBI, the prosecuting agency in the case. However, the court declined the plea, saying "high security" during transit and other related activities would suffice.

"If you are apprehending some untoward incident, then provide high security by deploying additional police forces. There is no need of bringing them here in handcuffs," special CBI judge JPS Malik said. The lock-up in charge in his application said that there is apprehension that the convicts may harm each other. The official also claimed that while the convicts were transported to the court on Saturday, he heard that they were blaming each other for the outcome of the case.

However, the police's plea was opposed by the convicts counsel. "Tihar Jail superintendent should have moved such type of application," the counsel said and asked why the convicts should be handcuffed.

2 Jharkhand girls sedated, gang-raped in capital

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Two women from Jharkhand, in their early 20s, have alleged that they were sedated and gang-raped by an unidentified man and his aides, whom they accompanied on being promised a confirmed ticket to their hometown.

The assault took place on Wednesday evening but came to police's notice on Friday after the women regained consciousness. The northeast district police have registered a case of sexual assault (gang rape), abduction and poisoning under IPC.

One survivor said they worked at a church in south Delhi and lived in southeast Delhi. They had gone to

FOUND DAZED

Anand Vihar to board a train to Ranchi on Wednesday but their ticket was on the waiting list. They met a man, who identified himself as Raju, at the station. He said that he also belonged to Jharkhand and promised them a confirmed ticket. They got into an autorickshaw, which had another man, the women said.

The auto stopped to get a refill and the two women were served mango shake. They don't remember anything after that, police said. On Thursday, one of them was found walking in New Usmanpur area looking dazed and dishevelled. The other woman was found on Friday morning in a disoriented state. She was also bleeding. They were taken to hospital.

Police said that the statement of one of the women has been taken but the other woman is still not in a position to speak.

The accused are not known to the survivors and the cops are tracing their relatives. The CCTV footage of Anand Vihar railway station is being analysed.

DRAWS WATER FROM NARMADA TO APPEAR CLEAN FOR 11KM; COPYING RECLAMATION OF LAND WILL BE DISASTER

River experts say Sabarmati no model for Yamuna

Jayashree Nandi | TNN

New Delhi: The Sabarmati riverfront project can't be a model for the Yamuna floodplains believe experts, almost unanimously. Many of them don't even consider the Sabarmati project worth replicating as the 11-km stretch of the river that flows through Ahmedabad draws channelized water from Narmada. This may not be possible in Delhi at all. The 22-km stretch in Delhi, which has 18 drains flowing into it, needs a different set of solutions.

Reclamation of the floodplains to create a concrete riverfront, like in Ahmedabad, may be ecologically unsound, and even dangerous for Delhi that's already extremely vulnerable to floods, argue experts.

Recently, a committee of experts formed by National Green Tribunal and headed by ecologist C R Babu had recommended that DDA's ambitious plan for developing recreational facilities, parking lots and promenades

be scrapped. Its Yamuna Riverfront Development scheme will reduce the river's flood-carrying capacity and increase flooding and pollution, the report had said.

It, instead, recommended a ban on developmental activity in the river's Zone 'O' and its active floodplains on the UP side.

It also said that a 52-km stretch of the Yamuna in Delhi and UP be declared a 'conservation zone' as restoring the river's ecological functions is heavily dependent on the environmental flow through this stretch, particularly in the lean season.

Babu, who has been asked to submit a report on the Sabarmati model by the Delhi government, has reserved his comments for now. "I will share my view as soon as I submit my report to the government," he said.

Manoj Misra of Yamuna Jive Abhiyan, who has been studying different stretches of the river and its problems, dismissed the Sabarmati solution. "We cannot call it a



URBAN MESS: The Yamuna is heavily polluted as 18 drains flow into it during its 22km journey through Delhi

Sabarmati model. It can be called the Narmada canal model. It's like a mirage created for a brief stretch. Let's be clear about it. If the Delhi bureaucrats have gone there to learn

from the Gujarat model, it's up to them to figure out if it can be implemented. I cannot call the Sabarmati project a river rejuvenation project — it's more of a real estate project where the

riverfront has been developed. That is not advisable for Delhi," said Misra.

The Yamuna also has huge pollution problems that have reduced it to a "drain". Various phases of Yamuna

Action Plan, costing over Rs 6,500 crore, which were overseen by both BJP and Congress governments, have failed to improve the situation.

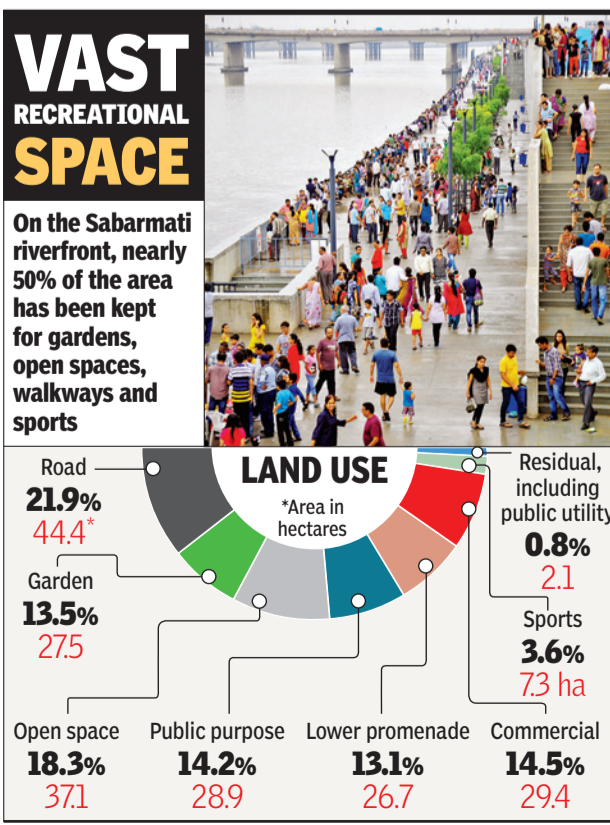
The plan involved installing expensive sewage treatment plants and expanding urban sewerage to keep waste water away. But the STP capacity is not just inadequate; the existing STPs are not performing to their full potential, leading to more than half of Delhi's sewage ending up untreated in the river.

Again and again, the importance of environmental flow was raised to ensure that there is enough water in the river to be able to dilute the pollutants to some extent. But that means rationing water with neighbouring states. Only renegotiating a May 1994 MoU among upper Yamuna basin states that says Delhi will get 0.724 billion cubic meters (BCM) of water of the 11.983 BCM of annual utilizable flow of Yamuna up to Okhla may ensure more wa-

ter in the river. A minimum flow of 10 cubic metres per second is the minimum that's required to dilute the water in Yamuna, added Misra.

"Sabarmati happened because Narmada is diluting its water. How will we do it in Yamuna? It has a different set of challenges," said Chandra Bhushan, deputy director general of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

And channelizing may not solve the real problem with the river, say other experts. "Upstream of Sabarmati in Narmada from where the water is drawn there is a dry riverbed and downstream where the 11-km stretch ends in Vasna, the river turns as polluted as Yamuna or even more. So creating a channel to dilute water may not be a great idea. They have also reclaimed 200 ha of floodplains for real estate development. I don't think that's advisable," said Himanshu Thakkar of South Asia Network on Rivers, Dams and People.



'London Eye', museums and highrises

Paul John | TNN

Ahmedabad: The Rs 1,152-crore Sabarmati riverfront project was aimed at urban rejuvenation and reclaiming of the river bank as a public asset to restore the city's relationship with the river. The project consists of more than 11 km of an uninterrupted pedestrian concrete promenade on each bank and public ghats for direct access to the river.

The first proposal was received in 1961 from a group of prominent citizens of Ahmedabad and French architect Bernard Kohn, who had envisioned an ecological zone along the banks. Construction work started in 1997, but nothing really moved till 2003, when Narendra Modi put the project on the fast track.

A prominent feature of

the project has been reclamation of more than 203 hectares of land by the special purpose vehicle, Sabarmati Riverfront Development Authority. A large part of this space has been allocated for free and open public use. More than 85% of the riverfront land has been reserved for public infrastructure, recreational parks, sports facilities and gardens.

Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (SRFDCL) has planned major recreational activities, starting with a 135-metre tall observation wheel — an exact replica of London Eye — and nine river adventure activities, including speed boat, aqua bus rides and zip line adventure sports.

The Narmada canal, north of the city, channels water to the riverfront,

which is retained because of the barrage at Vasna. However, since water from Narmada may not be available for long, over Rs 300 crore is being spent by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation to divert 60 million litres of the city's sewage from the Pirana treatment plant and the sewage within the interceptor drainage lines of the riverfront.

RIVERFRONT PLAN

erfront to a special tertiary sewage treatment facility to be finally drained into the river.

So, the river will hold tertiary treated sewage water. There are major interceptor sewer lines on both banks of the river, capturing more than 38 sewage discharge points and routing the sewage to newly-commissioned treatment plants

south of Vasna barrage.

Another major aspect of the project is rehabilitation of more than 10,000 evacuees from the riverbank slums following a high court direction. The allotment of EWS houses is in process. Besides this, traditional dholi ghats and flea markets on the riverbank, which are almost 600 years old, have been accommodated in the riverfront project. The traditional vendors are in the process of being allotted space on the riverfront.

The project has a cultural component too. A cluster of about eight museums has been planned along the riverfront walkway along the 1.25-km stretch behind National Institute of Design, all the way to the other side of the bridge. These museums will have computer animation, air and space, textile and

fashion, Gujarat tribals, natural history/natural science, contemporary art and design and crafts as themes.

The average width of the Sabarmati channel was 382 metres and the narrowest cross-section 330 metres. To develop the riverfront, SRFDCL uniformly narrowed the channel to 275 metres, ensuring that this constriction did not affect its carrying capacity.

Development rights are being given to private developers on 14 per cent of the land.

A new set of development regulations have been formulated. At least four skyscrapers, 101 metres high, will come up here while other buildings will have a height of 25-80 metres. A total of 52 buildings have been planned on the riverfront.

paulljohn@timesgroup.com