

NGOs to operate from residential areas

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New Delhi: In a big relief to non-profit making organisations facing closure threat, the government is likely to allow NGOs to operate from residential localities on mixed land use streets by amending Delhi's Master Plan-2021.

Also, NGOs which existed on the date of notification of Master Plan-2021 will be permitted to function from all localities, including posh A & B colonies.

Several NGOs operating from south Delhi localities like Hauz Khas, Vasant Kunj, Malviya Nagar and Greater Kailash, whose offices were sealed by the MCD recently, are likely to get relief.

However, there is a rider in the urban development ministry's move as only those NGOs which are non-profit making entities would be liable for the relief.

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itating organisations working for social causes, permits those NGOs which existed as on February 7, 2007 — the date when MPD-2021 was notified — to continue operating in all areas, including posh colonies falling in A & B category. The fresh amendment seeks to put NGOs at par with guesthouses which were al-

lowed to function on "as is where is basis" under MPD-2021.

According to official sources, the UD ministry has decided not to put any restriction on the number of employees in NGOs while extending relief. The proposal, considering that most of the NGO's staff are expected to work in the field, argues that there should be no restriction on the number of employees. "The ministry is of the view that the NGOs cannot be compared with industry," said a senior ministry official.

The ministry has put up an "eligibility criteria" for extending the relief, as only those NGOs which are registered as non-profit making entities under section 12A and section 12AA(1)(b) of the Income Tax Act, 1961, will be allowed to run their activities from residential premises. However, NGOs which have not regis-

tered themselves are likely to be given a year's time to do so.

The NGOs had petitioned UD minister S Jaipal Reddy and minister of state Ajay Maken to allow them to operate from non-institutional areas and to include such a provision in MPD-2021, pleading that most of them were implementing government programmes for people apart from those funded by various agencies.

The petitioners argued that the majority of non-profit organisations in the Capital, as in other cities, operated out of premises in non-institutional areas to provide essential services — education, health, social welfare, crisis support and emergency relief — to the poor and marginalised.

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