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## Amendment to Urban development bill irks environmentalists

By Akram Mohammed | Published: 21st July 2016 06:48 AM | Last Updated: 21st July 2016 06:48 AM

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BENGALURU: THE Karnataka Urban Development Authorities (amendment) Bill, 2016, passed without any discussion in the Assembly, is now facing opposition outside the legislature. Apart from demands from environmentalists to strike down the amendment, a petition has also been started on change.org.

However, Infrastructure Development Department, said the amendment was necessary to ensure fair competition between government layouts and private builders.

As per the recent amendment, any layout developed by an Urban Development Authority (UDA) will have to set aside 10 per cent of the layout area for parks and 5 per cent for civic amenities. Existing rules had made it mandatory to set aside 15 per cent and 10 per cent for parks and civic amenities, respectively.

A department official said that the rules were eased for private developers several years ago. "While UDAs had to set aside 25 per cent of the total area, private developers were setting aside only 15 per cent, allowing them to have more sites in the layout. This gave them an undue advantage, making it harder for UDAs to enter into agreements with land owners. Therefore, the amendment was brought to ensure a level playing ground," the official said.

Upward revision

The amendment will be a blow to the depleting green cover in the city, said Dr T V Ramachandra of Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science.

If the argument of the government is to ensure a level playing field, then they should have mandated even private developers to set aside 25 per cent of the total area for the said purposes. "Such measures, which propose to reduce lung spaces, is suicidal," he said.

Describing the Bill as 'senseless' and 'opportunistic', he said the purpose of it was to serve the interests of builders.

Petition gets 4,000 signatures

As the Bill continued to generate negative reactions on social media, a petition was launched on change.org, which has attracted close to 4,000 signatures in a day.

The petition by the 'Save BLR' group, urged Chief Minister and Infrastructure Development Minister to cancel the Bill as it only helped "land sharks and irresponsible builders, with zero benefit to the city or its citizens."

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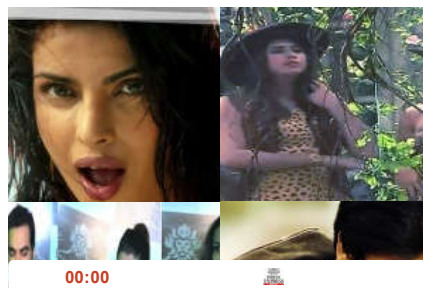
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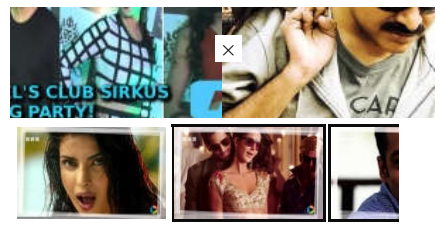
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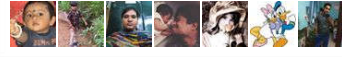


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