Delhi Master Plan 2021 – Court Stay on Amendments

What is the issue?

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- Supreme Court has stayed the notification of amendments to the Delhi Master Plan 2021 – for not declaring the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.
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- The prime question was on - whether issues such as safety, traffic, parking, and civic amenities were considered before the amendments were cleared.
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What is the case about?

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- The Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the body created by an Act of Parliament in 1957 “to promote and secure the Development of Delhi”.
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- It frames the Master Plan that lays down the guidelines, policies, and space requirements for various socio-economic activities for the city’s population.
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- The Master Plan is also the basis for all infrastructure requirements of city and DDA is currently working on its outlay for the year 2021.
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- Affidavits on the “Environment Impact Assessment” with considerations for the amendments to the 2021 plan weren’t filed by the concerned authorities.
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- Hence, Delhi government, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and the 3 Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCDs), have been flanked by the Court.
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Why where these amendments put forth?

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- A Supreme Court-mandated “sealing drive” is currently underway, and establishments are being sealed for various real-estate violations.
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- The proposed amendments were hence made due to pressure from owners of commercial establishments who were facing the prospect of closure.
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- Notably, all political parties were all under severe pressure from trader groups in order to stop the sealing drive as businesses were taking a massive hit.
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- Due to the urgency, a mere five-day public hearing was undertaken to discuss the amendments with trader bodies, resident groups and other stakeholders.
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- While complete consensus wasn’t achieved, a compromised version now awaited notification by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
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- If notified, these amendments would have become part of policy but the SC decried these actions as it seems to be made with utter disregard for principle.
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What are the proposed amendments?

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- The amendments include increasing the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and reduction of conversion charges, and allowed the amalgamation of plots for parking.
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- Notably, while the current FAR is 180 (per 100) for local shopping centres, the amendment intends to make it 350, which is the standard for residential plots.
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- Due to pressure from many Resident welfare associations (RWAs), provisions were made for shutting bars and pubs in residential areas.
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- Another amendment sought to make certain markets pedestrian-only, if newly authorised commercial establishments could not provide parking

facilities.
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- Fire and other safety concerns were also raised by residents regarding allowing commercial units to function from basements.
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- But as the amendments were rushed up by the authorities due considerations weren’t given to all aspects in a holistic manner.
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- Hence, Supreme Court has flagged various important issues like safety, and parking space for further brainstorming and has currently stalled proceedings.
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Quick Facts

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Floor area ratio (FAR)

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- FAR is the ratio of a building’s total (gross) floor area to the size of the land on which it stands.
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- A higher FAR translates into a taller building.
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Source: Indian Express

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