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New online layout approval system by Aug.

Residents, businesses, industries and start-ups that are applying for layout plan approvals and permits for building construction are soon likely to find the process much easier.

The Greater Chennai Corporation plans to speed up the process by introducing a new online layout approval system for urban development by August.

An official of the Corporation said a trial run of the new system had begun in the northern areas of the city covering Tondiarpet, Royapuram, Manali, Madhavaram and Tiruvottiyur.

The Union Urban Development Ministry has directed the civic body to take initiatives for online layout approval as the State ranks low in implementing the 98-point action plan for business reforms. A large chunk of investments in Tamil Nadu are concentrated in Chennai. But, the process of obtaining layout plan approval and building approval continues to be challenging.

The Corporation had launched an online system in 2009 but it had glitches, was not fully automated and the whole process took between three to six months.

At least 10,000 buildings are developed in the city every year. Many of them remain unapproved because of red tape and issues relating to the existing system.

The old online system was also not integrated with the payment gateway.

“Any NRI who wants to start a business can get building approval or layout plan approval online without visiting the Corporation office through the new online system. The new system covers the process end-to-end,” said an official of the Corporation. Officials at the regional level are set to be instructed on how to expedite the process after August.

After online submission of the application through Chennai Corporation citizen portal, the system will generate an acknowledgement and an automated inspection schedule. The applicant will receive SMS and email notifications. After

inspection, the payment of fee and printing of approved plan copy can be made through the citizen portal.

At a recent meeting, senior officials focussed on integrating a single window system with agencies such as the Airport Authority of India and CMDA. Construction of many multi-storied buildings have been delayed owing to restrictions relating to air traffic.

India was ranked 142 in Doing Business Report, 2015, released by the World Bank. The rank has improved in 'dealing with construction permit' and 'getting electricity' indicators as some cities such as Chennai have already initiated measures. However, many delegations visiting the city have stressed the need for quick approval.