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Hyderabad HDA Targets 94 Illegal Housing Projects

August 10, 2025

— Categories: Real Estate



The Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) has identified 137 housing schemes operating without proper authorization, of which 43 have now secured official approval, while 94 remain illegal.

This revelation emerged during a session of the Sindh Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in Karachi on Thursday. PAC Chairman Nisar Ahmed Khuhro instructed the HDA to take firm action against all unapproved housing projects. He also raised concerns over delays in recovering approximately Rs2.5 billion in outstanding dues from builders.

Khuhro directed HDA Director General Asghar Ali Ghangro to issue immediate payment notices to defaulters and to seal their offices if payments are not made promptly. He emphasized that recovering these funds is essential for financing development projects and protecting public interest.

During the briefing, Ghangro explained that many developers begin marketing and booking plots or completed units before securing mandatory no-objection certificates (NOCs) for water supply and drainage systems. Although water connections are often provided to these schemes, untreated wastewater is discharged directly into rivers, canals, and distributaries, creating environmental hazards.

The PAC stressed that adherence to planning regulations and environmental safeguards is critical to sustainable urban growth in Hyderabad. Illegal housing projects not only evade government oversight but also risk providing substandard facilities to residents.

HDA officials confirmed that ongoing efforts include cross-checking records, coordinating with municipal authorities, and publishing public notices to warn potential buyers against investing in unauthorized schemes. Buyers are being urged to verify a project's NOC status with the HDA before making any payments.

Urban planners have repeatedly cautioned that unchecked expansion of illegal housing colonies places severe pressure on civic infrastructure, leading to water shortages, poor sanitation, and traffic congestion. The PAC session underscored the importance of enforcing regulations to curb such practices.

As part of the crackdown, the HDA is preparing a list of defaulting developers and intends to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance. Notices will also be sent to housing societies to immediately halt operations until they secure the necessary approvals.

The provincial government has signaled that further legislative measures may be introduced to tighten penalties for operating unapproved schemes, aiming to deter future violations. Officials maintain that a transparent approval process, backed by consistent enforcement, is key to ensuring that housing development in Hyderabad meets both legal and quality standards.

The PAC has scheduled follow-up meetings to review the HDA's progress in recovering dues and shutting down illegal projects, to restore order to the city's real estate sector.