

Business

Delhi hawkers to be free from threat of eviction after five-year delay

Delhi govt officials set up TVC to issue vending certificates

MUMBAI: Delhi is set to become the first Indian city to fully implement a law that protects street vendors against the threat of eviction, authorities in the capital said on Thursday, five years after the landmark legislation was first introduced. Delhi government officials have set up Town Vending Committees (TVC), which will survey hawkers in the city and then issue vending certificates to give them the right to do business from a fixed spot, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

“Without street vendors, no city can function. We just need to regularize them so that other citizens are not inconvenienced,” Kejriwal posted on Twitter. “Vendors will get the right to make an honest living, and they will not be harassed by the police and other authorities,” he said, adding that licenses would be issued before the end of the year. With Asian towns and

cities expanding and striving to become more international and attract investment, street vendors and hawkers are viewed increasingly as a hindrance to city planning.

Vendors selling everything from snacks and tea to toys and clothes are a common sight in India's cities, with items for sale spread out on pavements or in mobile carts. The Street Vendors' Act was introduced by federal lawmakers in 2014 to help protect the country's hawkers from eviction, with states required to establish hawking zones, set up TVCs and issue licenses.

Unlicensed hawkers are often targeted for bribes by criminals or corrupt officials and police, and flee eviction drives which are becoming more common as cities modernize and competition for space grows from pedestrians and cars. “The law emerged after a long struggle for improved liveli-

hood security, legality and protection from eviction,” said Shivani Chaudhry, executive director of the Housing and Land Rights Network, a non-profit in Delhi.

“Street vendors form the backbone of the city economy. Non-implementation of the law has resulted in their continued persecution, including arbitrary evictions, and lack of recognition of their rights,” she said. No states had fully implemented the 2014 act, according to the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). Members of NASVI, who are staging a protest in Delhi on Thursday against the slow rollout of the law, said there was still no detailed plan for its implementation in the capital.

“There is a lack of political will to implement the law, and there is a pushback from citizens because of the misconception that vendors cause

congestion,” said Shalini Sinha at WIEGO, a global non-profit that helps informal workers. “But walkability is not at odds with street vending, and authorities should be more concerned about livelihoods than vehicle parking,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Delhi has now set up 28 TVCs with representatives from street vendors, the municipal commission, police and town planners, who will conduct the survey. But there are few other details on the law's rollout, said Arbind Singh, a coordinator for NASVI. “The same authorities promised implementation five years ago. Now, with local elections in Delhi due soon, the promise of implementation looks to be just a political gimmick,” he said, referring to polls due by February next year. “Meanwhile, evictions continue - so we are very skeptical.” —Reuters

Nissan to build new Juke car at UK plant as Brexit looms

SUNDERLAND, England: Nissan said it will begin making the next-generation Juke vehicle at Britain's biggest car plant on Monday, just over two weeks before a possible no-deal Brexit which the industry has warned could bring production to a halt. Nissan decided in 2015, before the 2016 referendum was even held, to make the latest version of the sport utility vehicle at its northern English Sunderland factory, reflecting how major decisions are made years in advance.

The Japanese company, which was en-

couraged by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s to use Britain as a gateway to the Continent, has spent 100 million pounds on the latest investment in Juke with 70% of the output for EU markets. “Thirty-five years ago Nissan decided to create a plant in the UK to serve our European markets,” said Nissan's Europe Chairman Gianluca de Ficchy on Thursday.

“The new Juke represents a further 100 million pound investment in our Sunderland plant and is designed, engineered and manufactured in the UK for European customers,” he added. The factory is also due to build the new Qashqai model from next year but the firm has previously said it could review that 2016 decision especially if there is a change to “free trade agreements.” Nissan's then Europe manufacturing boss Colin Lawther told lawmakers in 2017: “As those circumstances change - and we will not wait until the end of the process - we will continually review the decisions that

we take based on anything that materially changes.”

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he is prepared to take Britain out of the European Union without an agreement but is seeking a deal with the bloc, although time is running out to secure an orderly departure before the Oct. 31 deadline. The car industry fears that a no-deal Brexit will add tariffs on vehicles, engines and components as well as introduce customs delays which could rapidly stop production and risk the long-term viability of British sites.

Ministers have said they are prepared for a no-deal outcome and could help affected sectors. Brexiteers have long argued that Europe's biggest economy, Germany, which exports hundreds of thousands of cars to Britain each year, would protect that trade. Nissan is ending the night shift at the Sunderland plant and the overall headcount of staff will be a little lower at around 6,000 as it focuses on ramping up the new vehicle. —Reuters

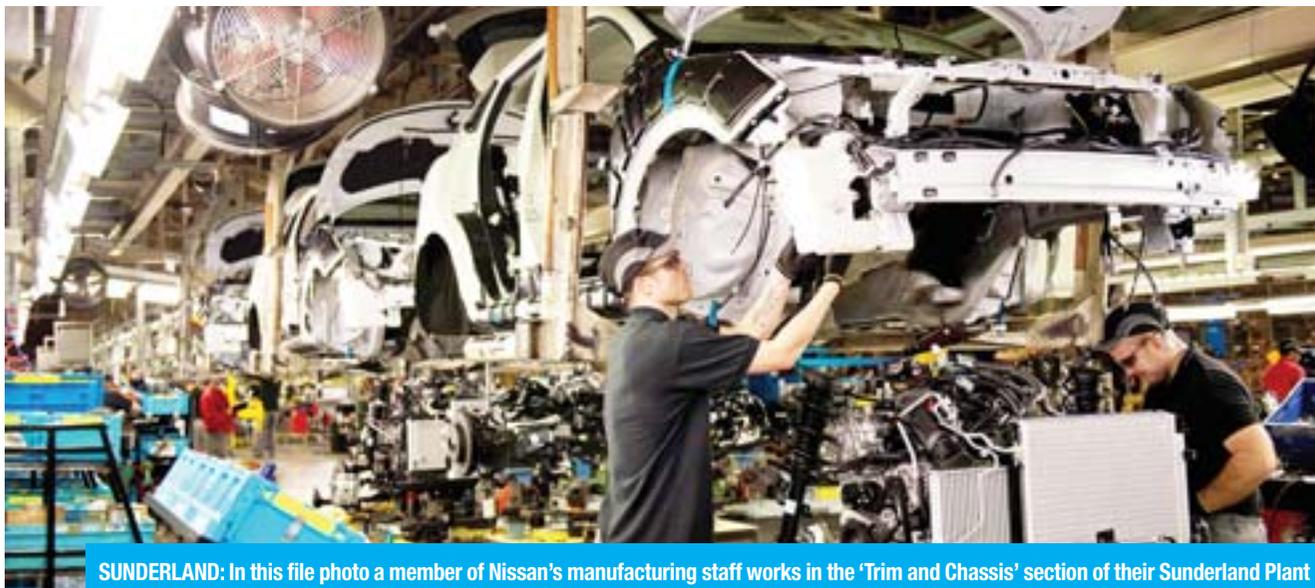
British city launches innovative fund to tackle climate change

LONDON: The mayor of one of Britain's largest cities has launched an innovative fund aimed at tackling social and environmental problems from hungry children to carbon emissions. The 10 million pound (\$12.20 million) venture - the first of its kind in the UK - launched on Wednesday aims to attract private sector contributions to advance Bristol's 2050 vision of a “fair, healthy and sustainable city” that is “carbon neutral and zero-waste”.

Bristol city council invested 5 million pounds in CityFunds, an example of ‘impact investing,’ a multi-billion dollar movement which pursues social and environmental outcomes and financial returns. Rather than focusing on a single issue, CityFunds invests in local companies that work towards achieving the south-western city's four socio-economic priorities, from equal access to housing to greening transport.

Big Society Capital, a social investment firm, also invested in the fund which backs projects including a wind turbine built by residents to power deprived communities. Bristol is one of more than a dozen cities including New York, Buenos Aires and Taipei that in September announced plans to fight global warming and pledged to report their progress to the United Nations. Bristol's mayor, Marvin Rees, said in a statement the fund would transform the city, which suffers from inequality, and could be a “step towards delivering inclusive and sustainable growth.”

The idea for CityFunds was partly inspired by similar projects in American cities like Chicago which have worked with business to tackle poverty, said Anna Shiel of Big Society Capital. The “scale, longevity, and inclusivity” makes this fund unique, said Shiel, adding the model could be replicated across the country. So-called social entrepreneurs face scrutiny from investors over their ability to deliver social and environmental impact as well as profit. —Reuters



SUNDERLAND: In this file photo a member of Nissan's manufacturing staff works in the 'Trim and Chassis' section of their Sunderland Plant in Sunderland, north east England. — AFP