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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

Date of decision: 6th August, 2026

Uploaded on: 7th August, 2026

CNR No. DLHC010007332014

+ **W.P.(C) 4806/2014**

SURAJ BHAN AND ANRPetitioners

Through: Mr. Kushagra Pandit, Adv.

versus

LAND ACQUISITION COLLECTOR (SW)

AND ORS

.....Respondents

Through: Mr Sanjay Kumar Pathak, Standing
counsel with Mr Sunil Kumar Jha and
Mr Mohd Sueb Akhtar, Advs. for
LAC.

Mr Sameer Vashisht, Standing
Counsel (Civil) GNCTD with Ms
Harshita Nathrani, Adv.

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CNR No. DLHC010008492015

+ **W.P.(C) 6356/2015**

M/S BAHRI PROPERTIES PVT. LTD.Petitioner

Through: Mr. Siddharth Batra, Mr. Chinmay
Dubey and Ms. Shivani Chawla, Advs.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Vedansh Anand (SPC) with Mr.
Shivam Kumar, Adv. for UOI.

Mr Sanjay Kumar Pathak, Standing
counsel with Mr Sunil Kumar Jha and
Mr Mohd Sueb Akhtar, Advs. for
LAC.



Ms. Manika Tripathy, SC for DDA
with Mr Ashutosh Kaushik, Adv.

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CNR No. DLHC010018192015

+ **W.P.(C) 6357/2015**

VIRENDER LAL BAHRI & ANR

.....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Siddharth Batra, Mr. Chinmay
Dubey and Ms. Shivani Chawla, Advs.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS

.....Respondents

Through: Ms Arunima Dwivedi, CGSC with Ms
Himanshi Singh, Adv for UOI.
Mr Sanjay Kumar Pathak, Standing
Counsel with Mr Sunil Kumar Jha and
Mr Mohd Sueb Akhtar, Advs. for
LAC.
Ms. Manika Tripathy, SC for DDA
with Mr Ashutosh Kaushik, Adv.

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CNR No. DLHC010008482015

+ **W.P.(C) 6363/2015**

VINOD KHANNA & ORS

.....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Siddharth Batra, Mr. Chinmay
Dubey and Ms. Shivani Chawla, Advs.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS

.....Respondents

Through: Ms Arunima Dwivedi, CGSC with Ms
Himanshi Singh, Adv for UOI.
Mr Sanjay Kumar Pathak, Standing
counsel with Mr Sunil Kumar Jha and
Mr Mohd Sueb Akhtar, Advs. for
LAC.



Ms. Manika Tripathy, SC for DDA
with Mr Ashutosh Kaushik, Adv.

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CNR No. DLHC010018202015

+ W.P.(C) 6378/2015

KANTA BAHRI & ORS

.....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Siddharth Batra, Mr. Chinmay
Dubey and Ms. Shivani Chawla, Adv.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS

.....Respondents

Through: Ms. Arunima Dwivedi CGSC with Ms
Himanshi Singh, Adv. for UOI.
Mr Sanjay Kumar Pathak, Standing
counsel with Mr Sunil Kumar Jha and
Mr Mohd Sueb Akhtar, Adv. for
LAC.
Ms. Manika Tripathy, SC for DDA
with Mr Ashutosh Kaushik, Adv.
Ms Zehra Khan, Panel Counsel and Ms
Nishka Sharma, Adv. for R-4.

CORAM:

JUSTICE PRATHIBA M. SINGH

JUSTICE VIKAS MAHAJAN

Prathiba M. Singh, J. (Oral)

1. This hearing has been done through hybrid mode.
2. *Vide* order dated 7th February, 2026, this Court had taken serious note of the fact that the office of the Land Acquisition Collector [*hereinafter* 'LAC'] is severely short staffed and there are several vacancies therein. This has had a cascading effect on the functioning of the LAC's office. There is lag in giving instructions in matters which are being listed before the Court, Affidavits are also not filed on time and Counsels as not given instructions on



time. Even the verification of records is delayed – leading to years of delays in payment of compensation, processing of reference applications etc.,

3. In fact several reference applications and compensation claims are not being processed due to lack of staff. Writ petitions are being filed in this Court on a daily basis. In that background, the following directions were issued *vide* order dated 7th February, 2026:

“8. Accordingly, let the Secretary, Services, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (hereinafter, ‘GNCTD’) look into the matter relating to short staffing at the LAC in terms of the sanctioned posts and the presently working staff. Let a status report be filed by the Secretary, Services, GNCTD in respect of the following by the next date of hearing:

- “i. Total sanction strength of the LAC in all Districts in Delhi;*
- ii. Total number of officials presently working in the LAC office;*
- iii. Steps taken to fill up the vacancies, if any;*
- iv. Proposal to immediately fill up the vacant positions in the LAC offices in the various districts.”*

4. The above order was directed to be served upon Mr. Sameer Vashisht, Id. Standing Counsel for Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (hereinafter, ‘GNCTD’). Certain correspondence and documents including a status report dated 6th August, 2026 from the Services Department, GNCTD has been handed across today.

5. The first and foremost is a letter dated 3rd August, 2026 addressed to the Id. Standing Counsel in which it is acknowledged that there is no sanctioned strength of the LAC in all districts in Delhi.

6. The total number of officials presently working in the LAC office in



different districts are as under:

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>Name of District</u>	<u>S.No. of Sub-Division</u>	<u>Name of Sub-Division</u>	<u>Name of NT/ASO in Sub-Division</u>	<u>Name of NT/ASO in Charge of LAC</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1.	South East	1	Jangpura	NIL	NIL	Sh. Sanjay Pandey, ASO, Posted in SR-V(i) (Kalkaji) and Sh. Rajan, ASO, physically working in Revenue HQ in diverted capacity and Sh. Ravi Shekhar Singh, ASO is working in District (South-East) in diverted capacity from District (South)
		2	Kalkaji			
		3	Badarpur	Nil		
2.	Old Delhi	4	Sadar Bazar	NIL	Sh. Sanjeev Kumar, ASO, Posted in Personal Branch of LAC	Sh. Sanjeev Singhla, NT, Posted in SR-I
		5	Chandni Chowk	NIL		
3.	North	6	Burari	Sh. Mohan Singh, NT	Sh. Pawan	



		7	Badli	NIL	Kumar,	
		8	Adarsh Nagar	NIL	ASO/NT posted in personal branch of LAC	
4.	New Delhi	9	Delhi Cantt.	0	Sh. Atul Bhardwaj, NT and Sh. Satyapal, Kanungo	
		10	New Delhi	0		
5.	Central	11	Patel Nagar	NIL	Sh. Pawan Kumar (Sr. Asst) and Sh. Surender Yadav (Patwari)	
		12	Karol Bagh	NIL		
6.	Central North	13	Shakur Basti	0	Rewti Prasad, NT	
		14	Shalimar Bagh	0		
		15	Model Town	0		
7.	South West	16	Najafgarh	NIL	Sh. Rajan	Smt. Pooja Kataria (ASO)



		17	Matiala	Sh. Vishal Rana (NT/ASO)	Lumb, NT/ASO (LAC)	working in Personal DM Branch, Smt. Joyti Juneja, ASO working in (SR-IX, Kapashera)
		18	Dwarka	NIL		
		19	Bijwasan	Sh. Rahul Yadav (NT/ASO)		
8.	Outer North	20	Mundka	0	Sh. Tarun Malik, SO	
		21	Narela	0		
		22	Bawana	0		
9.	North West	23	Kirari	0	0	
		24	Nangloi Jat	01 Smt. Renu Sadana, ASO		
		25	Rohini	01 Smt. Asha Rani, ASO		
10.	North East	26	Karawal Nagar	0	01 Sh. Ganga Vishnu, ASO	
		27	Gokalpur	0		
		28	Yamuna Vihar	0		
		29	Shahdara	0		
11.	East	30	Gandhi Nagar	Sh. Pankaj Kumar, NT	0	
		31	Vishwas Nagar	0		
		32	Patparganj	0		
12.	South	33	Chhatarpur	0	Sh. Arvind Kumar Singh, S.O.	
		34	Malviya Nagar	01 NT Named Sh. Vijay Singh		



		35	Deoli	01 NT Named Sh. Ram Khilari		
		36	Mehrauli	01 NT Named Sh. Deepak Kumar		
13.	West	37	Vikaspuri	01 ASO named Sh. Kamal Arora	01 Sh. Aakash Drall, ASO	
		38	Janakpuri	0		
		39	Rajouri Garden	0		

7. As an interim measure, the Services Department states that it is in the process of posting 15 Assistant Section Officers (hereinafter, 'ASOs') in the Revenue Department for posting in LAC to tackle the issue of short staff.

8. The Court has also perused the detailed letter dated 30th July, 2026 written by Mr. Neeraj Semwal, Secretary (Revenue)-cum-Divisional Commissioner to Ms. Nandini Paliwal, Secretary, Services Department. In the said letter, the substantial shortage of ministerial staff has been highlighted in the following terms:

Sr.No.	Name of Post	Sanctioned	Filled	Vacant
1.	Grade-II (DASS) (ASO/NT)	138	51	87
2.	Grade-III (DASS)/Senior Assistant	301	191	110
3.	Grade-IV (DASS)/Junior Assistant	355	43	312



4.	<i>Stenographer</i>	57	8	49
	<i>Total</i>	851	293	558

9. A perusal of the above would show that insofar as the LAC office is concerned, there is hardly any staff in all the districts and the number of officials are almost NIL or zero in most districts and in some the number of staff is in single digits.

10. Land acquisition matters affect the rights of citizens substantially as, for several years, compensation claims are not processed despite the land being acquired for infrastructural projects. The posting of staff is absolutely critical for the functioning of the LAC office as also dealing with the matters which are pending in Courts. In the opinion of this Court, the government needs to take immediate steps to recruit the staff for posting in the LAC offices.

11. In order to have an assessment as to how many staff members would be required in each of the districts, the Court has queried Mr. Radhey Shyam Meena, who is the LAC (Outer North) and is present in Court. He submits that in all the three divisions *i.e.*, Mundka, Narela and Bawana, there is no staff which is posted. There is only one Section Officer, Mr. Tarun Malik, who is working. As per him, the requirement in each of the districts would depend upon the case load in the said district, however, at the bare minimum, the following would be the staff which would be required:

- | | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|---|--------|
| (i) | Section Officers | : | 1 to 2 |
| (ii) | Assistant Section Officers | : | 2 |
| (iii) | Patwaris | : | 2 |
| (iv) | Junior Assistants | : | 2 |
| (v) | Senior Assistants | : | 2 |



12. The above numbers would show that at least 10 people would be required in each of the districts, which is almost NIL as on date.

13. Ms. Nandini Paliwal, Secretary, Services Department is, accordingly, directed to file a status report, after posting at least 4-5 staff members for each District to the Revenue Department as an interim measure, so that they can be posted with the LAC offices and, thereafter, give a timeline for taking steps for regular recruitment of officials for the LAC offices. The Services Department shall also file a status report in respect of the communication dated 30th July 2026, for posting of staff to the Revenue Department. The said status report shall be filed within a period of two weeks.

14. List on 9th September, 2026.

**PRATHIBA M. SINGH
JUDGE**

**VIKAS MAHAJAN
JUDGE**

AUGUST 6, 2026/aj/Ck