

# THE BILLION-DOLLAR MAKEOVER

By Philip Varghese

**B**hendi Bazaar, one of the most crowded, dingy and rundown neighbourhoods in an otherwise well-planned south Mumbai, is all set for a revamp in the next five years.

The Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), which is undertaking a massive redevelopment plan of the locality, held an exhibition displaying the details of the 'Bhendi Bazaar Project' at the trust office on Wednesday. The event exhibited different stages of the redevelopment and made-to-scale models of the plan.

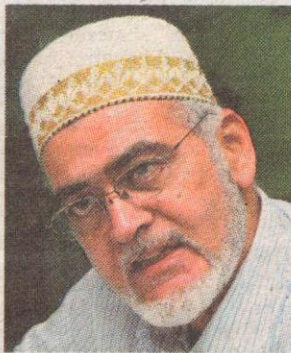
Initiated by Dr. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, head of the Dawoodi Bohra community, the project involves demolition and reconstruction of cessed and dilapidated buildings in the locality, and will be implemented by the trust on a no-profit, no-loss basis.

Almost 80 per cent of the residents of the locality are Dawoodi Bohras, which is a million-strong tightly-knit community, that lives currently in 150 sq.ft. tenements.

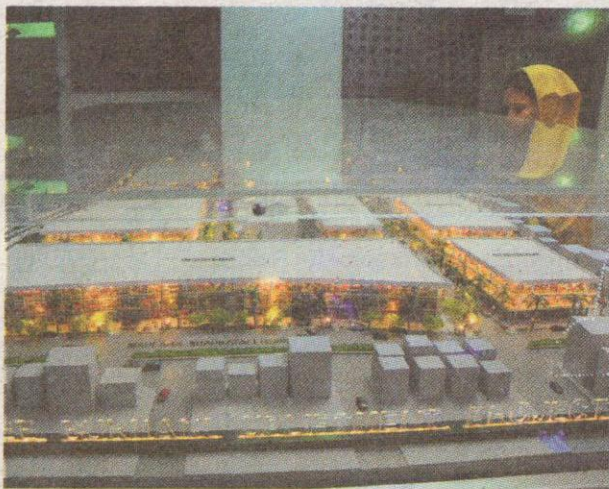
"Right now, the locality is a rabbit-warren of shops and dilapidated buildings, with tangles of streets; some so narrow they can only support pedestrian traffic. We

are going to upgrade over 3,200 homes with quality space for 1,250 businesses, rebuilding the lives of around 20,000 people, wherein 16.5 acres of land, which comes within the purview of the project, will be planned holistically. All residents and businesses will be accommodated in buildings of varying heights, ranging from seven stories to forty stories," said Abbas Master, Chief Executive Officer of SBUT.

Master further added,



Abbas Master, Chief Executive Officer, SBUT



A woman looks at made-to-scale models of the plan at the exhibition.

"Residents will be provided with a minimum of 350 sq. ft. carpet area, giving each home a self-contained one-

bedroom unit with a kitchen and a bathroom. The proposed redevelopment will transform Bhendi Bazaar

into a diverse sustainable community with a healthy neighbourhood. It will attract new business and private investment, increase employment and contribute to the socio-economic growth of its residents. Through public improvement, it will enhance liveability and serve as a socio-economic development tool."

The bigger concern is making sure that post-redevelopment, the cost of living for the 3,200-odd families here stays the same, even though most of them will move into bigger, better and greener apartments and commercial establishments.

Giving details of the transit accommodation for the existing residents, Renu Soman, Head of Corporate Communications, SBUT, said, "A whole new complex is currently being built to provide temporary accommodation to the tenants. Each unit will have a well furnished room with a kitchen and an attached bathroom. Building maintenance is managed by a professional housekeeping agency and sustainable practices such as sewage treatment and water recycling have been put into place."