

# Bhendi Bazaar cluster revamp to begin soon

**AFTER TROUBLE** Trust in-charge of the redevelopment clears air on residents' apprehensions, says work on three clusters is set to start

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**MUMBAI** After several delays and stiff opposition from residents, the ambitious 16.5-acre Bhendi Bazaar cluster redevelopment scheme seems to be back on track, with developers Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT) set to start work on three out of the 9 clusters.

Addressing a press conference, Abbas Master, chief executive officer, SBUT clarified the various apprehensions regarding the project and said construction would begin shortly. "Final permissions are awaited and work on the three clusters, covering five acres, will begin soon," he said.

The trust also cleared the air on apprehensions that the redevelopment would give rise to a gated community — where the Bohra community would be segregated from others and their redevelopment prioritised. "We want all residents to live with their neighbours as before. This project is for the community at large and not exclusively for Bohras," he said.

Refuting claims that residents had not been kept in the loop about the revamp plan,

## FROM CRAMPED HOMES TO LARGE APARTMENTS

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

**The project covers:**  
**16.5 acres** in the congested Bhendi Bazaar area

**Plans to rehabilitate:**  
**3,200 residents** and **1,250 commercial establishments** in the area

All residents will be given houses of a minimum **350 sq ft area**, while commercial premises will be accommodated in modern complexes

In all there are **9 clusters**, of which six will be reserved for rehabilitated residents, two for sale premises and 1 for Mhada buildings



■ Bhendi Bazaar in south Mumbai is one of the most congested areas in the city. FILE PHOTO

**STATUS:** 7 buildings have been demolished out of 280

**600 tenants** and their families have been moved to transit accommodations

**"We want all residents to live with their neighbours as before. This project is for the community at large."** ABBAS MASTER, chief executive officer, SBUT

Master said: "We have explained the project in detail to every resident and we even have a help desk in place to clear doubts."

He also trashed rumours that the existing places of worship would be shifted and assured that residents would be reha-

bilited in the vicinity of their original accommodation itself. "Not a single religious place will be touched."

Congress legislator Amin Patel, who was present at the media briefing, said he would ensure residents' concerns are

addressed. "I will convene a joint meeting of all disgruntled residents along with the trust members and government officials," said Patel.

The largest cluster project in the city — the redevelopment of 16.5-acre Bhendi Bazaar in south

Mumbai — had run into trouble over the last few months, with residents raising several apprehensions that they would be given a raw deal. Residents apart from those belonging to the Dawoodi Bohra community fear that the SBUT will

create an exclusive enclave for the Bohras. In addition, they had alleged that the SBUT was planning to create an exclusive Bohra enclave.

"We are not shown any concrete plans and just fancy models. How can we just give our

consent?," asked Juber Khan, a resident.

The SBUT meanwhile claimed that 77% of the tenants — from a total of 3,200 residential and 1,250 commercial premises — have signed the consent agreement forms for revamp.

### THE CLUSTER SCHEME

**ADVANTAGES**

**THE STATE GOVERNMENT** introduced the cluster development scheme under Development Control Rule 33(9) in 2009 to ensure holistic and integrated development of congested and unplanned areas in the city

**IT INVOLVES** redevelopment of all the structures, irrespective of whether they are slums, old or new buildings, and the developer is given a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 4 for undertaking the venture

**THE KEY ADVANTAGE** is that individual revamp cannot improve support infrastructure like in cluster development, and more open spaces can be developed under this scheme

### ROADBLOCKS

**THE DEVELOPERS** have been critical of the delays, since unlike in other schemes where the civic body gives the approval, for cluster development projects there is an additional requirement of a green nod from the state government

**DEVELOPERS BLAME** the urban development department for the delays, and say this causes a lot of hardships

**THEIR MAIN GROUSE:** 70% of tenants and all landlords are required to agree to undertake such kind of redevelopment.