

Panel recommends Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment for environmental nod

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GIVING a boost to what will be the first major cluster redevelopment project to take off in the city, the state-level expert panel has decided to recommend the Bhendi Bazaar proposal for environmental clearance.

The State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) screens proposals for construction projects spread over 20,000 sq m and recommends them for clearance to the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA). The latter, headed by the environment secretary, will now accord approval to Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment, which will be spread over a plot of 66,264.74 sq m.

"The proposal will probably come up before the SEIAA in their next meeting. The project should get the SEIAA's approval within a month or two," said Ravi Bhushan Budhiraja, chairman of SEAC.

Bhendi Bazaar redevelopment is perhaps the single largest urban renewal project in the country. It will transform the 200-year-old market, made up of commercial and residential buildings, into a planned neighbourhood of swanky highrises. The redevelopment project, being undertaken by Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), will contain eight clusters of buildings for 20,000-odd residents and is expected to be completed in 2023. The trust is aiming to begin construction in April this year.

"Since it is the first major cluster redevelopment project, we wanted



MAKEOVER PLAN

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■ It is expected to be completed in 2023

to make it ideal. Things such as green spaces, open areas, proper parking facilities and pedestrian bays were our major concerns and they have been largely met. It seems like a well-planned project," said Budhiraja.

Recommendation for green clearance has come with a set of conditions. The project proponent will be responsible for securing traffic permissions during the construction phase as a large number of trucks will ply in the region every day for nearly three years. SBUT will also have to secure necessary permissions for disposal of debris and erect foot over-bridges at important junctions.

Currently, SBUT has commenced work on shifting the project-affected people to plush transit camps in Mazgaon and Byculla and demolishing buildings in a cluster.