

Temporary complex puts back on track the Rs 3,000-crore Bhandi Bazaar redevelopment

A swank makeshift complex near J J Hospital will house close to 200 shops, ending an impasse between shopkeepers and the project developers



The ground-plus-two storey structure near J J Hospital is expected to be ready in a few days. (Below) An aerial view of the upcoming complex

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The ambitious Bhandi Bazaar cluster redevelopment project is back on track, with a bit of repackaging that will ensure the decades old shops and eateries dotting the area won't have to shift out.

Close to 200 commercial establishments will be temporarily accommodated in a swank complex being constructed on a roughly one-acre plot near J J Hospital, barely 500 mt from their present location.

Post redevelopment, these establishments will be shifted to the commercial centre in the heart of the area.

In December last year, work on the project had run into trouble, several shopkeepers and residents claiming there was no clarity on which new buildings they would be allotted space in, and how big those would be.

The Rs 3,000-crore project, developed by the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), slowed down as the rentals demanded by the shopkeepers didn't fit in the SBUT budget, and there is no provision of providing temporary rehabilitation to commercial establishments.

THE PLOT COMES TO THE RESCUE

Besides the impasse between the shopkeepers and the SBUT officials, there were concerns that the area, spread over 16.5 acres, would lose its old world charm because of the redevelopment.

However, the idea of converting a one-acre plot, which is owned by SBUT and at one point in time housed Noorbaugh Hall, into a tempo-



A NEW BHENDI BAZAAR

> The Bhandi Bazaar redevelopment project, - one of Mumbai's most ambitious attempts to reconfigure a crowded residential-commercial area to provide for better housing, improved business environment, wider roads and ample open spaces - kicked off in September last year.

> The project, the brainchild of the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), aims to move 3,200 families into 350-sqft apartments from their smaller, dilapidated flats; create modern spaces for 1,200 businesses; and free up nearly one-sixth of Bhandi Bazaar's 16.5 acre sprawl for open, recreational areas.

> The Rs 3,000-crore project, launched in 2009, demolition of 249 four-to-six storied buildings and will impact the lives of close to 20,000 people.

Care will be taken to retain existing religious structures.

rary shopping centre was welcomed by the shopkeepers, who are more than happy to conduct their business out of a plush building.

The ground-plus-two storey structure, designed to house commercial establishments from Clusters 1 and 3 (which have 49 buildings), is expected to be ready in a few days.

Bhandi Bazaar has been divided into nine clusters, and two clusters will be developed in the first phase. These two clusters have a total of 49 buildings and 299 shops.

Majority of the shopkeepers have agreed to move to the shopping centre, while the rest have accepted rentals offered by SBUT to move out. The officials said around a hundred shops have already been allotted space.

The shopping centre will have an open-air atrium, spacious walkways, escalators, and glass cladding facade.

Abbas Master, CEO, Saifee Burhani Upliftment Project, said: "The temporary shopping centre is a lot like the permanent commercial centre we have planned for the area. We didn't want to come up with a random transit shopping centre. In fact, we wanted it to be the talk of the town."

He said none of the shopping arcades within the five-km radius will be able to match up to the temporary shopping centre.

The shopkeepers said it was a win-win situation. "With so many buildings up for demolition to make way for redevelopment, taking rentals from SBUT made no sense as there is hardly any area available on rent in the vicinity. Moreover, moving far away from the area didn't make business sense. Moving to the temporary shopping centre is the best option," one of them said.