

Locals initiate Dharavi revamp

AISHWARYA NAIR
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

The state's efforts to redevelop Dharavi has remained strictly on paper for the past 14 years, but residents of Dharavi Koliwada, acting on their own initiative, have started revamping their surroundings with the help of Urbz, an organisation for social development. Local artisans and contractors are also a part of the project.

The project has been underway for the past eight years while work on the ground started this year, and two projects pertaining to revamping the chawl and other residential and commercial structures have been completed.

The redevelopment plans have been prepared with the help of Urbz members with landlords and tenants pooling in money for the revamp.

Under the 'We Build' project undertaken by Urbz, local builders from Dharavi were roped in to design the best possible house they could imagine. Later, these designs were implemented with the help of local artisans.

The century-old Jai Ram Seth Chawl in Dharavi Koliwada, which was a dilapidated structure, has been refurbished into a three-storey building with eight rooms in each corridor. The project was started in January this year and was completed by September.

"The rooms were in such a precarious condition that it couldn't have survived this year's rain if it wasn't revamped," said Rajashree Lad, a resident of the chawl for the past 40 years.

● Two projects pertaining to revamping the chawl and other residential and commercial structures have been completed.

● The work have been done with the help of Urbz, an organisation for social development.

● Local artisans and contractors are part of the project.



The redeveloped house (L) and building (R).

MHADA TO HAND OVER SECTOR 5 TO STATE

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (Mhada) has been instructed to handover sector five of Dharavi, which was under them for redevelopment, to the state in a bid to redevelop all the five sectors together. The state has recently released a notification on the same. The state is planning to conduct the redevelopment under Special Purpose Vehicle (SPC) model.

"Every family gets the opportunity to design their own house, and hence it is as per their needs," said Akshay Aaditya from Urbz, who is working on the project. Another refurbishment was done on a set of few commercial structures, which have been converted into a three-storey structure. The place is known as Koli

The plan to redevelop the entire Dharavi was proposed 14 years ago. However, no work has been initiated, as the contract has not found any bidders till now.

"Since the government has given Dharavi Redevelopment project (DRP) a special status, the redevelopment of all five sectors will be combined. The Mumbai Board will soon hand it over," said senior official from Mhada.

A total of nine clusters under Dharavi were und-

er the Mumbai Board, out which work at only 1 sector has begun. According to a Mhada official, the work done in sector five is negligible since the housing authority has managed to give only around 385 flats till now.

Last week, the Mhada had received a notification from the state. However, its still unclear whether the ongoing works should be stopped or not. "We are going to write to the state seeking clarification," added the official.

Jamath and there have been plans to use it as a community centre.

"If we wait for the government, nothing will happen. The locals will have to initiate work on their own," said Prakash Koli, a local contractor.

"The project is not only about designing, but also about formulating a programme by talking to the

locals and documenting their lifestyle. After interacting with them, we get an idea of what kind of structure is needed," said Jai Bhadgaonkar, another member of Urbz.

The organisation is in the process of taking up two more projects wherein residential chawls located off Sant Rohitdas Marg will see a revamp.