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CM halts Pereira Wadi razing

Sukhada Tatke | TNN

Mumbai: The beleaguered residents of Bandra's Pereira Wadi finally got some relief on Thursday when chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh intervened and ordered a halt to further demolition of their 125-year-old enclave.

Residents and local activists have alleged that a senior Congress minister, interested in the redevelopment of this prime property, was behind the demolition of their homes.

On Thursday, a delegation of some residents led by Joseph Dias of the Catholic Secular Forum and Edwin Britto of the Janata Dal met the CM and deputy CM R R Patil to complain about the manner in which the police had cordoned off the area and allowed the "builder's men" to raze their homes early this week.

Deshmukh promptly initiated an inquiry into the incident and the alleged manipulation and fraud in the redevelopment of Pereira Wadi. Patil, who is also the home minister, ordered a probe into the police's "heavy-handedness". For the last three days, TOI has been reporting on how families, including women and senior citizens,



HOPE FLOATS: A resident languishes on the pavement after his home is demolished

have been forced out of their homes and manhandled by the police. Many of the traumatised residents have had to spend nights on the pavement without a roof over their heads.

In their memorandum, the delegation called for a stop to any further demolitions and compensation to the victims and demanded that the victims be reinstated in their houses at the earliest. "Deshmukh gave us a sympathetic hearing, after which he

THE STORY SO FAR

- Around 100 families live in Pereira Wadi, a 125-year-old gaothan in Bandra (W)
- Redevelopment under the SRA scheme needs the okay of at least 70% of residents. Residents claim the developers did not have this
- However, Sai Arnav Builders chief Dilip Bobde Patil denies the charge
- Cops have been accused of covering up complaints by a section of residents

issued instructions that a state inquiry be conducted pending which the status quo be maintained," said Dias. "Patil has asked additional commissioner of police Archana Tyagi to investigate the allegations against the police during demolition," he added.

The residents had claimed that women officers dragged women by their hair and threw out their belongings.