

DNA, Mumbai, 01 Nov 2007

Facelift drive for rehabilitation sites

In the wake of World Bank president's visit to project sites, emphasis is being laid on CEMP's effective execution

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As the World Bank chief Robert Zoellick is arriving on Thursday to inspect some of the projects in Mumbai funded by it, Mumbai Metropolitan Development Authority (MMRDA) is ready with a community environment management plan (CEMP).

In its attempt to address resettlement issues like ensuring ideal maintenance of buildings and restoring the lives of project affected people (PAP), especially their livelihood activities, MMRDA has even hired a private firm to conduct a socio-economic survey and training of PAPs for better community management.

The World Bank (WB) concern over alleged inappropriate resettlement of PAP, which had resulted in suspension of funding by WB

for a period of nearly six months last year, still haunts Mumbai's metropolitan administration. The new colonies set up for PAPs are fast turning into vertical slums due to poor management of garbage and lack of awareness among the tenements. In the backdrop of World Bank president's visit to project sites, much emphasis is being laid on CEMP's effective implementation.

"The CEMP is a pilot-project of MMRDA at its rehabilitation site in Kanjurmarg. The idea is to breathe a new life in PAP's surroundings. This will be replicated at other rehabilitation sites after successful experiment here," revealed Dr VS Tondwalkar, project director for Mithi River Development & Protection Authority.

MMRDA has also appointed a private firm ERM India to conduct a socio-economic survey of the PAP rehabilitation centres and train PAPs on issues related to basic amenities, environment, health, and safety. MMRDA will be shelling out around Rs42 lakh for the project.

There are over 20,000 PAPs rehabilitated under Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) after shifting from their shanties along the railway tracks.

"Lack of cleanliness, indiscipline in garbage dumping, poor-maintenance of society premise, lack of awareness about power and water supply, and sewage system are the major problems that will be addressed under the project," sources involved in rehabilitation told DNA.

The World Bank has been insisting resettlement and rehabilitation project should be the model to facilitate Mumbai's long-term development. Bank had raised serious doubts about the equitable resettlement and rehabilitation of people affected by the MUTP project and later suspended funding in March 2006.

On the contrary, state government officials, too, had objected to WB's funding criteria terming it 'rigid'. The World Bank has so far extended about Rs840 crore to MMRDA for the projects, mainly the Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP).



WB president Robert Zoellick arrives today

Soon after his visit to Pakistan, World Bank president Zoellick will arrive in Mumbai on Thursday afternoon. He will be apprised of Mumbai's overall picture and transport scenario.

He will also visit rehabilitation centres at Majas and Pratap Nagar in Jogeshwari after reviewing work of Jogeshwari - Vikhroli Link Road and Santacruz-Chembur Link Road. WB's other projects like watershed development, rural water supply and MUTP's II nd phase will be elaborately discussed at the meeting.

The WB president is also likely to hold a meeting with Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh, Finance Minister Jayant Patil and a few other ministers at Varsha, CM's official residence. Prior to meeting the ministers, Zoellick is scheduled for talks with RB officials.