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A yr after crash, Laxmi Chhaya set for redevpt

Project Plan Awaits Clearance From Civic Body

Sukhada Tatke | TNN

Mumbai: Exactly a year after their building collapsed, residents of Laxmi Chhaya in Borivli are now all set to redevelop the property.

The project will be conducted by one of the society members and the plan is awaiting clearance from the BMC's building proposals department. "We applied for permission after all the residents agreed to it. We have two options. We can either build one tower or construct two wings as it was originally before it collapsed," said developer Vasanji Vora of DK Associates.

The A wing of Laxmi Chhaya, a six-storey building in Borivli, had crashed like a pack of cards on July 18, killing 29 people and injuring 18. Many of the survivors had lost two of their family members.

"Once the plan is finalised—we hope it will be within the next two months at the most—we will ask residents of Wing B to vacate and they will be shifted to a temporary accommodation," Vora said.

Rampant structural change in the shops at the basement of the building was identified as the preliminary reason for the collapse of the 30-year-old structure. Many of the shops had carried out major renovations without obtaining mandatory permission, a fact corroborated by residents. That rung the death knell for Laxmi Chhaya as the floors crumbled under the 10,000-litre water tank.

After the tragedy, the state had offered transit accommodation for the residents, but none of the survivors opted for it. Some have been camping at their relatives' homes ever since, while some others have been living on rent. "The alternative accommodation offered was too small, it was only



LIKE A PACK OF CARDS: The A wing of the Laxmi Chhaya building in Borivli collapsed last year, killing 29 people and injuring 18

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225 sq ft. We were used to living in 600 sq-ft homes. Now after the redevelopment comes through, we can move back into our homes," said resident Moolchand Chheda. "There are 48 resident members and 23 shop owners. Each one is going to get 8% more than the original space."

For many, memories of the

crash cannot be erased. "It is impossible to forget that day. I pass by the building almost every day and memories come rushing back to me. When I move into the new home, I will be alone," said Durgesh Kothari who lost his mother, father, sister and grandmother to the accident. He has been living with his uncle ever since.

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