



PIRATING UTOPIA:

Mumbai at the End of The Planning Era

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Mumbai-Style

Many things about planning in Mumbai have become clearer and more visible over the period of the current Development Plan (1996-2011). The relationship between the Development Control Regulations and the Development Plan, for example, has effectively been inverted during this period, with the former driving the latter. This inversion is especially evident in the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan. Although diverse factors drive change in different cities, the accelerated "urbanization of capital," to use David Harvey's phrase, plays a prominent role in determining the pace of change underway. An Asian belt of urbanization has been evident for at least a decade now and we can use some of the lessons from observations in others cities, to put our finger on the distinctive styles of erasure and destruction. What is happening could be characterized under several rubrics, including speed, currency, instruments and density. I take each one of these rubrics up separately below.

Speed

The most significant urban transformations in the Mumbai region under the current plan are not the various mega-infrastructure initiatives taking place through projects such as MUDP, MUIP and the Mithi River Redevelopment. While these projects are certainly significant, they become differently significant when juxtaposed with the massive redevelopment projects that have emerged after the infrastructure plans have been put into play. Projects such as the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan, for example, appear disconnected from the surrounding infrastructural capacity, even if this capacity is being enhanced and strengthened. This raises the question of the different speeds with which development is occurring. Given the green signal, private development today is capable of mobilizing astonishing speeds in reaching its targets. Historical discrepancy also seeps into the picture as infrastructural planning anticipates, and projects a very different city than the one that will eventually be realized in the current context of "planning privatization." Such

historical discrepancies also put different temporalities into play as the city struggles to reconcile different projections.

For easy visualization, these temporalities could be converted into different speeds to understand the tremendous fracturing of space that is ongoing. The space of the city as a product of planning is no longer homogeneous. But while this may always have been true, since the beginning of modern planning, a fundamental difference today is the loss of control over the plan as a visionary or strategic document. The splintered space of the city transforms the object of planning from a "convergence of productive forces to a disjunction of disparate forces," as Abdou Maliq Simone, the urban anthropologist, puts it (see Simone, 2008). How does one orchestrate convergence of these various forces? How does one bring the discrepant speeds of development into an alignment that will prevent collision? One consequence of these disjunctures is not just an actual splintering of the space of the city, as an object of planning and municipal intervention, but also a

splintering at the level of vision. While it was possible to ignore the splintering of the city into different sectors, operating at different speeds and with different senses of temporal orientation as long as the fiction of a homogeneous plan, imposed from above, was in operation, today it is no longer possible to do so. The ability to ignore such a splintering of urban space is exemplified by the classic Bombay images of informal settlements, existing right on top of infrastructural materials. The relationship between the speeds of infrastructure and that of urban development were entirely different in that scene. In a perverse way, infrastructure not only provided the spatial framework required for development but it also provided the materials for development. What we see today is development overtaking infrastructure in the sense that infrastructure no longer provides the organizational protocols followed by development. The discrepancy in the relationship between infrastructure and development has transformative effects on planning itself.





The dominant mode of operation vis-à-vis the plan during the current plan period appears akin to piracy. By piracy I refer to the creation of what Peter Lamborn Wilson calls “temporary autonomous zones,” rather than the more commonly understood meaning of unauthorized duplication and circulation (see Wilson 1995). In Wilson's account, these TAZs are positive forces often operating against unjust regulation and are therefore utopian spaces. However, we might repurpose this idea of the TAZ to signify not only less utopian but rather sinister zones of operation that are put into play in the privatization of development. A classic example is that of DCR 33, which has a number of sub-clauses specifying the circumstances under which exceptions can be granted to the uniform FSI rule.

These exceptions include 33(10) and 33(7), which have permitted higher FSI tied to the rehabilitation of slum settlements and of the cessed buildings of the island city, respectively. The process of redevelopment has resulted in the vertical expansion of the island city as also the spread of vertical development elsewhere as a result of new instruments such as TDR (transferable/tradable development rights). These exceptions have created autonomous zones of operation for private capital, practicing its own brand of development, at a speed that is entirely different from that of its surrounding infrastructural development. To reiterate the point made above, in the case of Dharavi, its redevelopment promises to expand the number of private vehicles on the roads many times more, than the capacity of the new arterial roads currently under construction. Another way to think about this disjuncture is to understand the relationship between speed, events or episodes of development and the suspension of time. The example of Beirut is particularly instructive here.

As is well known, the so-called civil war in Lebanon lasted over a decade, roughly from 1975 to 1991. The war left the centre of Beirut irrevocably damaged and the post-war reconstruction of Beirut's centre was, at one point, the biggest urban renewal project in the world. The war itself was episodic, with several points during which fighting was suspended. A number of studies have shown that during these periods, large scale and largely unnecessary demolitions of hundreds of buildings took place, literally creating a tabula rasa, which wasn't there before (see especially Makdisi 1997). This image of a space being wiped clean during the interludes between decision making, taking advantage of a certain ferment in the air about reconstruction is instructive for thinking about Mumbai as reconstruction zone in which a war of demolition competes for attention with a war of construction. Reconstructions



Source: Rajesh Vora

also raise the question of what exactly is being reconstructed. The form that many urban renewal projects take makes clear that what is presented as re-construction is often construction de novo, a concerted effort to wipe out the historical memory of the city that came before. Moreover, the metaphor of war is helpful to also understand the problem of re-construction as one of switching gears and changing speeds. The presentation of projects such as Dharavi under the rubric of urban renewal exhibits these temporal qualities.

The preceding crisis is imbued with a sense of inevitability, just as many wars are justified with the argument of necessity and lack of choice. The time of war entails a suspension of judgment about the reasons for war. It is precisely this sort of atmosphere of suspension of judgment that seems to accompany urban renewal whether it is war in the conventional sense in Beirut or it is war in the more metaphorical sense as we see in Mumbai where the state turns

against its citizens in the name of urban renewal. Lebbeus Woods' visionary pronouncement, "Architecture is War. War is Architecture," is a useful point of entry to understand this connection between war and urban renewal. In explaining his aphoristic equation, Woods writes, "the ideas commonly described as "construction" and "destruction" need to be examined in the context of the paradoxicality inherent in experience. Few thoughtful people would fail to acknowledge that in order to build, something must be destroyed. Building is by its very nature aggressive, even a warlike act" (1995: 50). As an example, he uses Marshall Berman's famous exposition of Robert Moses' war of construction that leveled so many neighbourhoods in New York during the Forties and the Fifties (Berman 1982) to make this point clearer.

Notions of war, understood as suspensions of time that enable the creation of autonomous zones for the operation of global finance capital are useful to analyze how different speeds of construction come to imbue the city also with qualitatively different notions of time. These episodes decisively interrupt the incremental and gradual quality of development practiced in the "kinetic city," to use Rahul Mehrotra's term. Viewed through the lens of speed, what becomes visible is the idea that "the paradigm of organicism, of an organic whole, is no longer possible as means to measure and interpret the city," as Anthony Vidler put it in a recent interview (Vidler 2007). Yet, urban planners continue to operate with a fiction of the city as an organic whole, treating the city as body, a coherent orchestration of functional and functioning parts. Plans and vision-statements have become commonplace strategies for harvesting value from existing city-space by re-imagining the terrain. Increasingly, planning itself is moving from the concrete operations of arranging infrastructure, determining finance and navigating public processes to an exercise in imagination and branding exchanging the idea of place for place itself. The different speeds that this exercise introduces into the body of the city leads increasingly to the production of territories that are delinked from one another and thus introduces non-aligned and autonomous densities.

Currency:

The analogy with war gives us a good sense of how to

think about the creation of opportunities for development, coded in the language of re-development. Yet these opportunities are also subject to constraints that have to be put in, in order to maintain the fiction of the master-plan as a document of good standard. Thus, we need to ask how autonomous zones have in fact been created in and through war-like situations. Again, the comparison with Beirut CDB reconstruction is instructive. As is well known, a company owned by the assassinated Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, known by its French acronym, Solidere was granted the rights to reconstruct the war-damaged the Beirut central district. One of the major problems for Solidere was dealing with property rights in the central district, which were diffused, disputed and fragmented over the long period of the war. The problem was how to carry out the plan for reconstruction without having control over these dispersed property rights. The eventual solution involved the expropriation of all the land by Solidere by issuing shares to the holders of property rights proportionate to the relative value of their property (see Makdisi 1997 among others). This solution had the advantage of turning these real ownership rights abstract and virtual, detached from place itself. The benefits of property ownership would then accrue to the owners of the shares as the underlying, redeveloped assets were sold on the market, at some point in the future while they themselves were displaced from those developments. That future has not yet come to pass for many owners.

In Mumbai, a similar move of abstraction has taken place, reshaping the relationship between property and citizenship. The pre-liberalization city was characterized by enormous inequality, increasing spatial stress and the seemingly organic spread of squatting as a sort of 'border' practice within the urban economy. In other words, it was a city where entitlements were generated through practices like squatting by a combination of forces, including local politicians, slum-lords and residents desperately in need of space. But post-liberalization Mumbai is characterized by the reorganization of existing urban space, through the 'magical' creation of rights on the part of the State itself through the conversion of these entitlements. Since the first round of populist reforms enacted by the Sena government in 1995, development, Mumbai-style, has

come to be characterized by rehabilitative interventions positioned as acts of restorative justice, providing "free" housing for people living in slums. But all this takes place against the backdrop of a history of evictions. As is well known, since the seventies, major urban demolitions have taken place in the name of urban beautification and under the threat of complete urban breakdown. What is new in the nineties is that while evictions and demolitions continue to take place, they do so within the dual context of infrastructure creation and rights-creation.

Thus, as new infrastructure allows for the growth of a "world class" city for the classes connected with the global economy at the entrepreneurial level, the residents of slums, previously suspended in a state of more or less permanent uncertainty and anticipation, are now repositioned as a form of currency, with their rights to the city being translated into spatial equivalents that serve as development instruments. Rehabilitation colonies, financed in large part by the sale of TDR (Transferable Development Rights) under the auspices of various kinds of infrastructure projects, are now proliferating in certain areas of Mumbai. These colonies are turning into new housing or, more accurately, warehousing facilities for urban residents of all classes and income levels, producing new kinds of heterogeneities. Thus, paradoxically, while evictions and demolitions are continuing apace, these displacements are routinely associated with creation of rights to residence and thus to urban opportunity. Simultaneously, such rights also give developers access to prime real-estate areas, within the city, while newly evicted slum-dwellers and others are increasingly herded into centralized holding areas.

Again, comparisons with other Asian cities show how "policies and interventions undertaken to substantiate the presence of low-income urban actions within the more central domains of the city have increasingly emphasized their right to the city," as Abdou Malq Simone puts it in his recent paper on urban strategies in Phnom Penh (Simone 2008). The dual cover of urban rights-creation and displacements provide the context for redevelopment and renewal in many Asian cities, seen to be entering new historical periods in their development. In Mumbai, this phase of development is characterized by the segregation of populations into two new kinds of developments, the rehabilitation

colonies on the one hand and new upper and middle class housing estates. Even casual visual research reveals the simultaneous spread of both types of communities. Increasingly homogenous communities typify the gated residential communities. These new forms of collectivity are characterized precisely by the privilege, on the part of the elites, to block the capacities inherent within city life for diverse actors, spaces, things and activities to interact in "ways that exceed any attempt to regulate them," as Simone argues (see Simone 2007). Informality, in Simone's view, arises from the kind of interaction that exceeds any attempt at regulation.

This seemingly counter-intuitive understanding of informality implies a certain view of regulation - "while the absence of regulation is commonly seen as a bad thing, one must first start with the understanding that no form of regulation can keep the city "in line" (Simone 2007). Thus, elites who block themselves off within certain kinds of enclaves, also lose the capacity to engage in a kind of witnessing of the ways in which networks of relations among people, events and space are typically forged in the contemporary metropolis. A fundamentally incomplete trajectory of constriction, securitization and consolidation of networks, that guarantee the stability and coherence of urban life everywhere characterizes the contemporary metropolis.

Planning today takes place in the context of this incomplete trajectory, and must therefore provide a way of indexing, even if virtually, the forces that are coming together to dictate the directions of the future. Yet, it appears that the process of planning Mumbai's future continues to take place in a normative bubble. New terrains carved out by the acts of "rehabilitative planning" described above - including both the vast rehabilitation colonies that are taking over areas like M Ward (E) as well as the new, upper-middle class developments directly connected to these rehabilitative schemes - are still "off the map" in a metaphoric sense. They will probably continue to remain off the map as the next Development Plan is being formulated, recording only the new infrastructural layers that are in the process of being added. Planning continues under its 'normal' future orientation and the normalized assumptions of the map as organizational document upon which future

growth can be inscribed. In temporal terms, therefore, the effects of the map are always deferred, because intervention is always imagined in terms of a future not yet here, which, in turn is the object of the map.

Instruments:

In the previous section I described the emergence of “people as currency” (see Rao 2006 and 2007) in the redevelopment process. In this section I dwell on the conversion of those currencies into financial instruments that are designed to speculate upon urban future itself. By instruments, we mean various development packages that are calculated to bring in funds for urban growth. What we witness in cities like Mumbai however, is the increasing orientation of these instruments toward speculative profits in the short run, leaving the question of the long-run wide open. Along with a number of other Asian cities, a large portion of Mumbai’s current economic growth is premised on the process of redevelopment itself and the ways in which it is structured.

The recent global tender for the redevelopment of Dharavi, issued by the Maharashtra government, is a good example of the various paradoxes of urban development, Mumbai-style. The global proclamation of this brand of development, involving the use of “people as currency” was met with incredulity by many activities and scholars. Yet, this kind of abstraction of people into equivalent spatial units of exchange, both for the removal of squatters and informal settlements from central areas of the city as well as for the expeditious development of new infrastructure such as roads and refurbishing of existing infrastructure such as the railways, has been embraced as a development strategy as long as residents are able to provide proof of bona fide domicile in the city over a designated period of time. As mentioned earlier, it is also linked to the development of upper class housing since developers are offered subsidies, in lieu of, participating in slum rehabilitation and resettlement schemes.

This strategy of displacement has put citizens on the edge, alert to punitive censuses with the capacity to label anyone an interloper, especially those residing in permanently ‘temporary’ accommodation. Both the definition and temporality of “temporary” are

ideologically linked to modernist ideas of the future, in particular, to ideas about the aesthetics and functionality of certain forms of dwelling, experiencing and inhabiting urban life. In this context, the slum becomes an ideologically charged label for identifying, ‘not-yet modern’, forms of spatial use that have, nevertheless, the potential for transformation into functional spaces. Of course, some activists have begun to argue that these are already functional spaces, hoping that such assertions will stop the wave of demolitions and calls for ‘renewal.’

Exploiting the potential of such spaces has become a major source of revenue generation for the city in recent times as real-estate development is both a high-stakes industry and an immensely profitable one. As the terrains for productivity have radically shifted in the recent past, and cities across the Global South have embraced speculative development as a major source of revenue generation, the links between urban demolitions and the global economy are becoming increasingly clear. Cities today compete with each other to become the platforms for the temporary stabilization of global flows of capital, which package real estate development, financial instruments, excess liquidity and varied forms of investments. These packages in turn, induce new forms of urban governance and urban politics, and the development of new and creative funding schemes designed to take advantage of these flows.

The particular bundling of urban redevelopment, involving the rehabilitation of residents from below-par urban situations (or rather, from various situations of infrastructure deprivation), the unlocking of parcels of land from arcane regulations, and the enormous profits from speculations based on these developments, are all



Source: Rajesh Vora

part of the exercise of reframing of Mumbai in terms attractive to global investment opportunities. At the same time as the promise of further investment drives the redevelopment of Mumbai, it is clear that redevelopment might itself be the vehicle for the institutionalization of a particular brand of global political economy. This, in turn, has direct repercussions for urban residency and the ways in which relations within the city are managed because in a city with Mumbai’s spatial and population characteristics, redevelopment is intimately connected to massive displacements and rearrangements of populations.

All this underlines the fluidity and the particular nature of the transformations that are currently underway and are likely to continue in the foreseeable future. Thus research directed toward creating a map of underlying conditions must be able to conceptualize this fluidity. In order to do so, I argue below that we may perhaps need to shift from the more traditional, place-based forms of analysis to a new way of thinking around densities as expressions of the intersections of movement, capital and information. As an example, we could return to the case of Dharavi. Recent efforts to engage the

redesigning of this district argue about the ‘functionality’ of the area, based on cost-benefit analyses that demonstrate the advantages of the existing, high-density, low-rise typologies and the intensely mixed use environments. Much of this work is based on research undertaken by students of architecture over the last decade, for whom Dharavi is an excellent case study.

While I have no quarrel with the efforts and aspirations of these kinds of analyses, to retain certain functional densities in place the main problem here is that, it is the process of pre-emptive planning, if one might use an analogy from the current war in Iraq, is clearly well advanced. This form of planning is well advanced precisely in its goals of securitizing (or turning into financial instruments) these densities of informal living and working conditions defined, following Simone as conditions that always already exceed regulation, and reconceptualizing these densities into speculative ones.

In other words, arrangements of urban form such as Dharavi are turned into financial instruments, designed to yield tremendous profits at enormous cost to those being displaced. Political gridlock of the form that we



Source: Rajesh Vora

are witnessing currently in the protests against the Dharavi Development Plan are the only available forms of insurance in this context. Yet, such insurance might only buy the deferral of the implementation of the plan. Thus the Development Plan, by its very existence, also turns into a form of temporal currency, which can be arbitrated and speculated upon. In other words, the very existence of this plan changes the valuation of urban land, even if the plan itself does not take effect. Simultaneously, new forms of connection and new ways of rethinking urban life are also emerging. The question then arises, how can the research underlying a new development plan take these rearticulations into account?

Density:

Urban informality indexes these transformations and fluidities in multiple ways, not always and necessarily place-based. The construction of massive rehabilitation colonies at several sites across Mumbai rearticulates these connections. As residents from different nodes across Mumbai are resettled into these concentrated pockets of developments, typically seven-storyed buildings containing about eighty units of 225 square feet each, new kinds of informational layers are added to the city. These informational layers are nested within new and evidently unbearable living conditions. In order to squeeze maximum value from the land, rehabilitation colonies, for example, are being constructed on smaller and smaller parcels, eschewing the traditional ratios of built forms to open space.

While recent architectural theory suggests the emergence of a “city beyond maps,” as a response to understanding the ways in which the workings of an economic plan “[obviates] the need for the architectural plan,” these theories would be enriched by including within their purview the emergent informational layers that move across urban domains that are being physically transformed in this manner (see Varnelis 2003). Such layers reconstitute the existing forms of density by detaching density from place and rendering it mobile. They do so by transforming place-based density itself into a physically absurd value, moving from the crowded conditions in the existing settlements to vertical conditions that render density invisible in a different way. What remains is the density that can be grasped as a function, of the underlying interactions between movement, capital and information.

While maps as such have perhaps lost their capacity to mirror reality, research processes must make some attempt to grasp at these mobile densities. In a previously published article, I argued that density should be treated, not merely as a measure or indicator of other urban conditions, including the lack of infrastructure but rather should be viewed as producing the phenomenological conditions through which urban life is experienced (see Rao 2007). This understanding of density also connects to an understanding of space as a function of movement, as a function of moving bodies and structuring pathways. My analysis of density sought to move away from a more traditional place-based analysis, one that takes place as a structuring principle,

by arguing that movement, capital and information of various kinds were no longer strictly connected to place, (understood as already existing urban locality) but that the combination of these three elements was creating new forms of spatiality.

Mapping densities in this manner is a necessary prelude to asking how material expressions in space are relevant to approaching political claims to the city. Treating density as a pathway for information exchanges rather than as a given pattern reflecting social relations thus puts us in the position of anticipating some of these claims and how they will be made in the future. Moving from ontology to phenomenology – that is, moving from density as functional, given and indicative to density as a historical and emergent spatial, temporal and subjective phenomenon, counters conventional assumptions of planning, that treat density as a functional expression of patterns of inequality, and therefore indicative of patterns of political claims to the city.

As information and capital become inextricably intertwined, they are producing new spatialities. But in the process, new forms of urbanism emerge, as well, that calculate and speculate upon these new spatialities. A politics of anticipation is based on these calculations. Such a politics cannot necessarily be discerned from the visible city, however joyously visible urban artifacts equate culture, high technology and capital. Instead, it is necessary to find ways of mapping the invisible and emergent structures of urban information focusing on the re-embedding of residents across diverse

geographical spaces and scales into new networks of exchange and interdependency.

The challenge for both planning and politics today might be the identification of new forms of general or common interest. For normative notions of urban planning take infrastructure as a point of departure and as terminus. Thus maps that form points of departure for development plans typically proceed by understanding underlying conditions in relation to existing infrastructure. In other words, infrastructure is always seen as providing the organizational glue for an automatically constituted public sphere and an accurate indication of existing conditions, including demographic conditions. Yet, it is necessary to rethink this approach fundamentally by creating maps that take a different view of demographic density in relation to infrastructure. As I indicated above, development maps that depend on the temporality and speed of infrastructure development, as, their underlying point of departure create problematic disjunctures of speed, failing to take into account the speed of the circulation of contemporary capital, both licit and illicit, though the real estate development industry. The invisibility of the displacements of people on the surface of development maps needs to be redressed with different kinds of urban design tools, tools that are fundamentally ethnographic in nature, that is, one that take people themselves as units of development rather than abstract conceptions of space.

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MUMBAI MAKEOVER MAGIC

Utopia Unlimited



Dolphin park in Aarey Colony. Wants to transform Taraporewala Aquarium into an oceanarium since it close to the sea

Anees Ahmed* Minister for Animal Husbandry & Dairy Development

Selling Open Spaces like the Mahalakshmi Race Course, Aarey Milk Colony and the mangrove-covered Godrej land at Vikhroli to pay off the state's debt

Ganesh Naik Environment Minister

Zoo of international standards in Goregaon & develop a flower auction centre like the ones in Amsterdam

Babansao Pachpute Forest Minister

Water sports along the Mumbai coastline to attract more tourists to the city

Vijaysinh Mohite-Patil** Rural Development & Tourism Minister

Artificial island off the Gateway of India on the lines Dubai's Palm project. Wants to scrap the Coastal Regulation Zones

Ganesh Naik Environment Minister

Operation Shanghai

The man who started it all. Was the first to dream of making Mumbai into Shanghai. The original makeover minister presides over all projects as urban development minister. Has been personally enamoured with the Metro Rail project, Dharavi redevelopment, and selling the dream of home-sweet-home to Mumbai's millions

Vilasrao Deshmukh Chief Minister

MUMBAI MAKEOVER seems to be the flavour of the season in Maharashtra. Every minister in the state wants to latch on to this bandwagon. An agenda that has long been associated with chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh now seems to have captured the imagination of his Cabinet colleagues. So much so that ministers with portfolios not even remotely related to Mumbai makeover, like animal husbandry, have also joined the race to help Mumbai transform into another Shanghai or Singapore or even Amsterdam. A lowdown on the city and the brainwaves of its guardians.

— Our Mumbai Bureau

* Got the idea on a personal visit to Singapore. ** Mohite-Patil and finance minister Jayant Patil went on an Africa safari to study sanctuaries there

Bombay Dreams: Another plan to remake the city

Self-Styled 'Remaking of Mumbai Federation' Plans To Raise Rs 60k Cr To Spruce Up Infrastructure

Rajesh Unnikrishnan & Girish Kuber
MUMBAI

THERE has been no dearth of lofty ideas and innovative schemes promising a Mumbai makeover. Remaking of Mumbai Federation (RoMF), the latest to join the bandwagon, claims to be an umbrella body of city-centric institutions and is out to raise a whopping Rs 60,000 crore to spruce up the city infrastructure.

The problem, however, is it hasn't been given the mandate to undertake such work either by the Maharashtra government or by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). "There are serious legal and administrative issues involved. We have not given any permission to any body for raising funds for the city," a top government official associated with the city's developmental projects told ET when asked about the new initiative.

Lalit Gandhi, the self-styled chairman of the RoMF, has announced that the newly-floated body comprises 50 agencies, including the BMC, the MHADA, the MMRDA, besides a motley group of builders. What's interesting here is the RoMF wants to undertake infrastructure development only in South Mumbai where infrastructure is relatively better. It ignores other areas which are in a bad shape and need urgent attention of powers that be.

The RoMF intends to 'redevelop' the southern part of Mumbai containing over 20,000 dilapidated buildings through public-private partnership (PPP). The PPP model would be executed through a professionally-run, but yet-to-be-floated company called City Planning and Monitoring Company (CPMC). The proposed entity would, in turn, float a fund to mop up Rs 60,000 crore. It also aims to sell the additional FSI. The government has made it clear that welfare of the tenants in old buildings is the state's responsibility. "We are undertaking various projects to reconstruct these buildings. So far, we have not authorised any private player for the job," another official said.

The RoMF has signed an MoU with the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat



TOO MANY COOKS...

Government bodies that run the city

- ▶ **BMC:** A body of elected representatives, it's for urban planning and infrastructure development
- ▶ **MMRDA:** Does more or less the same work as BMC, but it's a state govt entity
- ▶ **Mhada:** It has a mandate to meet housing needs
- ▶ **Mumbai Housing Board:** It also takes care of housing requirements
- ▶ **Building repairs and Reconstruction Board:** Also in charge of housing
- ▶ **MSRDC:** For road development
- ▶ **State PWD:** Partially responsible for upkeep of roads
- ▶ **MSRDC:** Builds bridges and flyovers
- ▶ **Slums Improvement Board:** As name suggests, for slums improvement
- ▶ **Slum Rehabilitation Authority:** Slum resettlement

(CTBUH), a US-based international non-profit organisation, which undertakes studies and prepares reports on all aspects of planning, design and construction of high-rises and their impact on the urban environment. According to the terms of the MoU, the RoMF and the CTBUH will collaborate on various activities related to the redevelopment of Mumbai. They will collectively formulate a new approach regarding the concept, design and implementation of the projects related to the redevelopment of the city.

RoMF has sector-wise plans to demolish these dilapidated buildings and raise skyscrapers while rehousing the tenants. It would generate enough funds by selling extra space to cross-subsidise the project cost.

Part of the proceeds of the sale would go to the government for creating a fund that will be used for infrastructure facilities, maintenance of houses and paying professional charges to global urban planners, engineers and consultants, Mr Gandhi said. He added that the RoMF and the CTBUH will hold consultations and discussions to popularise its scheme.

In addition, both the bodies would work in tandem in technology transfer across the frontiers. As per the current plan, the CPMC will undertake the survey and map the entire city of Mumbai, prepare plans based on certain parameters and would also work towards creating laws and rules related to tenancy.

'Grand projects don't make a great city'

Experts Criticise Mumbai Makeover Plan, Slum Demolitions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Not Shanghai but Mumbai. The government's vision to make the city into another gleaming, skyscrapered Asian tiger took a knocking at the Asiatic Society's seminar on 'Re-visioning Mumbai' on Thursday, where planners, architects and activists ridiculed the Mumbai makeover, criticised the slum demolitions and evoked the spirit of an older city.

"Too many current programmes are driven by the notion that grand projects make a great city, it is a mistake to believe that grand architectural gestures are a substitute for a living city," said urban planner Shirish Patel. "As soon as I hear Shanghai and Singapore, my hand reaches for the gun," quipped civic activist Gerson D'Cunha, adding that the character of the city, its extraordinary heritage "must be preserved at all costs".

While several seminars have recently obsessed about how to regain Mumbai's former glory this one, part of the Asiatic Society's bicentennial celebrations, was charged by the backdrop of two burning issues, the slum demolitions and the redevelopment of the mill lands.

Former Chief Justice of India Y V Chandrachud commented on the social effect of dis-housing. "If you lived somewhere for 10 years and your house was suddenly demolished where would you go?" he asked, adding that crime would now increase. Chandrachud blamed the politicians who let slums flourish in their own interests and said that allowing slums to stay on a piece of land for so many years was in the nature of a legal "promissory". Urban researcher Natej K B described the makeover as a "take over", noting that people wanted to wish the slum dwellers away while "covertly using their labour because it is criminally cheap, or using their votes".

Patel, describing the demolitions as "cruel and futile", pointed out the paradox of urban economic growth. It is jobs that attract people to the city, who then

live in slums because they have no access to housing. "I don't understand having a cut-off date for jobs?" he said, noting that in the past, employers like the railways or the textile mills provided their workers with housing. "Now, we have 4,413 policemen and 81 inspectors living in the slums," he said. Making Mumbai a Shanghai will create more jobs, increase population. "Making Mumbai the financial capital could also mean making it the slum capital."



Mumbai Manifesto

- ▶ A comprehensive cultural policy
- ▶ A datasystem to generate information on the city's economy
- ▶ Greater transparency
- ▶ Five year participatory review of development plans
- ▶ A Mumbai museum
- ▶ Tenure for slum dwellers
- ▶ An underground Churchgate-CST rail loop
- ▶ Modification of the rent act

ings. "The question is who is being destroyed," he said, adding that the unplanned construction of malls and offices creates demand for a service class which has no access to housing in the new consumption cores, but has to withdraw to the hinterland.

He also called for a shift from "technocratic planning" to "democratic planning", which would be more participatory and political. The failure of current planning processes was also touched upon by former city planning authority chief V K Phatak, who described how the city development plans of 1973 and 1991 failed not only to foresee economic changes like the growth of the informal sector, but also could not respond quickly enough to them. For this reason, more frequent reviews of the plan are necessary, he said.

Source: The Times of India