MISSION EVICTION IN THE PIPELINE

T HE Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), which started its eviction of slum dwellers living along the Thane main pipeline about two months ago, will still face strong opposition from locals.

The civic administration had begun the project of removing slum dwellers along the pipeline in a bid to reduce the water loss from pilferage and contamination. Under the project, slum dwellers living within 10 metres on either side of the pipeline have now been evicted.

Additional Municipal Commissioner Mayer Jaireddi and SIVIL.LAB, registering the issue have been filed by different groups. Unless they are resolved, the evic- tion process in certain slum pockets will be delayed. The BMC has so far created more than 234 slum dwellers in Malad’s Divar area of which 114 slum dwellers are eligible for alternative accommodation. Meanwhile, the civic administration is gearing up to finish the eviction process in other phases. In the first phase, it will evict slum dwellers living along the pipeline in two wards — Goregaon and Ward — which cover Dadar, Malad, Prabhadevi, Vileparle and Bhandup. In the second phase, the administration plans to carry out the drive in seven other wards, including Ghatkopar, Mulund, Chandivali, Andheri (East), Matunga, Dadar (East), Bandra (East), Santacruz (East) and South Mumbai.

The Bombay High Court on Monday refused to stay the project and even directed slum dwellers living along the water pipelines to immediately vacate the plots.

According to the initial survey conducted by the BMC, around 1,500 plots were raised illegally along the water main. Of these, people living in 7,800 plots are eligible for alternative accommodation as those structures were raised below the 100 feet zone.

The BMC had launched the project following a PIL filed by Jitin Mehta, claiming 20 per cent of the city’s water supply was lost due to theft, wastage or leaks. Later, the court had ordered the civic body to constitute a committee, comprising Chief Secretary, Director General of Police, Municipal Commissioner and others to look into the issue.

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