

# GHAR BACHAO GHAR BANAO ANDOLAN

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Mumbai Update

## 'Low-cost Housing' for High Ranking IAS-IPS Officials: Affordable Housing, Mumbai Style.

When we gave to ourselves our Constitution, we also installed government machinery which would be responsible for and committed towards ensuring a dignified life to all citizens of this country. This included housing for the economically weaker sections and low income groups of the society, who are unable to fend for themselves in the face of artificially inflated land prices. So far, the Government has answered this responsibility by coming out with policies that favour the poor – but only on paper. The actual implementation has bred a nexus of power and money which has thrown us in the midst of a vicious circle whereby affordable housing is increasingly being put out of reach of the poor. In the name of housing the poor, the elite are the one's who are benefiting by twisting the rules.

And all this is best exemplified in Mumbai, the 'financial' capital of this country, which now is on the path of being transformed into a Global Financial Hub and a 'world class city'. Though, as per the government records, about 50 % of city's children are malnourished and more than half of its population is forced to stay in in-human conditions devoid of any humane housing and basic services. On what basis can it be called a world class city, is the question remains unanswered.

### **Market subsidizing our Bureaucrats :** Mira CHS, Oshiwara

The Mira Cooperative Housing Society was formed in 2002 by the then BMC Municipal Commissioner P M Bayas, with over 50 bureaucrats. Land was allotted to the Society in Oshiwara, Lokhandwala by MHADA to construct a residential complex. However, the Society also constructed a shopping complex on this land and sold these shops. The money thus earned was used to subsidize the construction cost of the flats to be allotted to bureaucrats from around Rs.70 lakhs to Rs.23 lakhs. The construction undertaken has been in violation of the provisions of Development Control Regulations formulated under the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act 1966. BMC should have stopped the construction of the shopping complex as per law, but turned a blind eye.

The beneficiaries of these illegalities include high ranking IAS & IPS officers including Sh. Chandershekar who in the past headed MMRDA and ruthlessly implemented the World Bank funded Mumbai Urban Transport Project by evicting more than 1 lakh people, ironically he was awarded for 'Excellent Public Services' by our Prime Minister last year.

The other Beneficiaries of above mentioned illegalities include:

<b>IAS officers</b>	Apurva Chandra, Maninder Singh Gill, SVR Srinivas, SK Sharma, O P Gupta, Subrato Patil, V N More, Mahesh Khullar, Vinita Singhal, M N Kherkhetta, Sanjeev Kumar, Arvind Singh, K P Bakshi, Baldev Singh
<b>IPS officers</b>	DCP Naval Bajaj, V K Chaubey, Amitesh Kumar, V Kargaonkar, Prashant Burde, S B Sawarkar

### **IPS officers encroach plot reserved for Police Housing:** Vasundhara CHS, Juhu

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2001, the then Mumbai police chief M N Singh wrote to the state government about the de-reservation of Plot 194-A2 which had been reserved for police quarters since 1974. The rationale given was that this land had been unused for 26 years and was likely to be encroached, but there were a group of IPS officers who were willing to form a society to construct a residential complex for themselves. The land was de-reserved and was acquired by the officers from the JVPD scheme for development. However, the de-reservation was given the go-ahead with three conditions: upon completion of these flats the beneficiaries would vacate their government quarters and not use any official residence while in service in Mumbai; they would not sell/lease or rent out these residential premises; and 2000 sq yards of the total 6500 sq yards might be used for building police quarters to

address its shortage in north Mumbai. At least 34 IPS officers were allotted flats in two nine-story buildings of Vasundhara Cooperative Housing Society. In a blatant violation of the stipulated conditions mentioned above, some officers are yet to vacate their official staff quarters, and have also made lease agreements with private firms at commercial rates. Thus instead of vacating their official accommodation they continue to stay there only and the new houses have been leased or given on rent, earning 1-1.5 lakh per month. A swimming pool has been constructed on the 2000 sq yards plot. Two apartments have been converted into a club for the society members.

Flat No.	Belonging to	Leased to	Rent (Rs.)
1201	Sadanand Date	Ove Andre Alwin	39.6 lakh (12 months)
1202	Bipin Bihari	Saravi Senfuels	37.2 lakh (24 months)
1102	Deven Bharti	Morgan Stanley	36 lakh (36 months)
1201	Parambir Singh	Saravi Senfuels	37.2 lakh (24 months)
802	Sandip Bishnoi	Jecab Engg. P. Ltd.	33 lakh (36 months)
Basement Gr. Floor	Shreyas Home Management P. Ltd. (bought by a group of cops' family members)	Value Electronics Ltd. (Croma Electronics of TATA's)	18.6 lakh (monthly rent)

### ***Bureaucrats Encroach over Government Properties:***

There are a number of Class I officers who have yet to vacate their government quarters in the city, despite being served eviction notices repeatedly. These IAS, IPS and judicial officers continue to occupy sprawling government homes in plush South Mumbai, the rent of which is between a meagre amount of Rs.350 to Rs.1500 per month.

Name of Officials overstaying	Residing at
Anil Dhere (Police Commissioner, Thane)	Bandsmen Quarters, Malabar Hill
P K Jain (Special IG, Pune)	Yashodhan, Churchgate
Madhukar Shinde (Joint Commissioner of Police, Thane)	Avanti, Malabar Hill
Sanjay Deshmukh (Yavatmal Collector)	Sagar, Churchgate
Umesh Chandra Sarangi (NABARD Chairman)	Avanti, Malabar Hill
SK Jaiswal (Director, Cabinet Secretariat, Delhi)	Yashodhan, Churchgate
VM Lal (Retired IAS official)	Yashodhan, Churchgate
Vijay Nahata (Navi Mumbai Municipal Commissioner)	Kedar, Churchgate
Ramrao Wagh (Navi Mumbai Police Commissioner)	Ambar, Malabar Hill

The trend is unmistakable. The usurping of power and decision making by a few government officials has made such law breaking commonplace. Who has given them the authority to casually violate the very rules and laws that they create? Why are there no effective checks in place or is the government machinery kneeling to its own lords? Can we imagine a slum dweller with the same indifference to eviction notices? The job description of 'public servants' has been inversed – the general public has to fight a daily battle for survival in sub-human conditions, while its 'servants' continue to amass wealth and power in unnatural and unprecedented amounts by manipulation of the law of the land.

It is interesting to know that these very IAS officials order the demolitions of slums and protection to the demolition squads is provided under the supervision of these IPS officers only. And our Judiciary while deciding on cases related to slums rely upon affidavits submitted by these officials only and consider them as truth. What moral right then they have to carry eviction drives when they themselves are in no better position than the so called illegal slum dwellers, question needs to be asked to them. Does this then imply that we are actively putting in place two sets of laws – one for the rule makers and one for the masses – going against the principle of equality before the law which forms the basis of our access to any justice?

Our democratic space and access to justice is shrinking rapidly, as seen in the complete lack of accountability of the executive, legislature and judiciary to the common people. We need to ask, and ask aloud – who are these encroachers on our spaces?

Ruchi Kumar Simpreet Singh