

# THE PARSEE VOICE

---

## **Why is the BPP constructing a high-rise so close to our Dakhmas ?**

*Is it another sinister ruse to  
close down the Mumbai Dakhmas ?*

### **BPP Trustees Guilty of Wanton Vandalism In and Around Doongerwadi!**

**Rubble & rocks from the construction site at Godrej Baug being  
dumped at Doongerwadi, near Hodiwalla Bungli!**

After a report on the construction of a new high-rise building at Godrej Baug appeared in the Mumbai Mirror on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2008, your Editor made a special trip to Doongerwadi and Godrej Baug to check first hand what was happening there. He was shocked beyond belief at what he saw!

**At Doongerwadi :** The first stop was near the Hodiwalla Bungli. A little after 5 p.m., a bulldozer was frenziedly working, tossing and scattering the rubble, debris and mud brought by a fleet of dumpers from Godrej Baug. Old trees and saplings there were either bent or uprooted with all the mud and rubble being tossed around from the maw of the bulldozer. A confused peacock kept running around, not knowing where to go or what was happening on his ground. The supervisor there stated that the dumpers will make at least a thousand trips to Doongerwadi to dump the muck and rubble, including used toilet seats and other trash from Plot M, which is the construction site of the proposed 11 storey building at Godrej Baug.

**Mumbai Mirror Report :** In the report referred to earlier, when two correspondents, Manoj R. Nair and Sudhir Suryawanshi asked the BPP Trustees the details about the building that's to come up in Godrej Baug, the vague reply given was that the building plans were yet to be finalised, whereas the BMC officials told the Mumbai Mirror that permission has already been given for an 11-storeyed building!

The Mumbai Mirror report states further that a BPP trustee, D K Tamboly informed the paper that the time-limit granted for commencement of work was running out. Hence, the unholy haste for the construction. Readers can draw whatever conclusions they want from this cryptic statement.

Another Trustee, B K Antia said that the government could acquire the plot under the Urban Land Ceiling Act if it was left undeveloped. "The plans were sanctioned a long time ago," he said, "but we could not start construction because of shortage of funds."

Antia's statement raises two queries:

- 1) **The Urban Land Ceiling Act was repealed by the Government of Maharashtra on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007. So how come, more than four months later Antia still talks of a redundant Act?**
- 2) **If, for a long time, there was shortage of funds, how come suddenly funds have been pumped from an 'unknown' source to the tune of crores of rupees? *Dal mein zaroor kuch kala hai!***

**The question of questions is : Do the present six BPP trustees have a *locus standi* to start such a huge construction project.**

Four of the trustees (M/s Shroff, Mehta, Dadi Engineer and Antia) have been restricted by the Joint Charity Commissioner on 22-10-2007 from entering into any financial transactions with regard to the Trust. Also the judgement by the Division Bench of the High Court in regard to the resignation drama enacted by M/s Shroff, Tamboly, Maneck Engineer and Antia in June 2006, is still pending. **How then can all or any of these six trustees make a desperate bid to rush into constructing a high tower worth crores of rupees when for sanctioning a small amount, they bring in the excuse that their hands are tied?**

Godrej Baug was built more than 35 years ago. Till today, the 16 buildings there are all 4 storeyed ones. We reliably learn that from the terrace of certain buildings, one can see the solar panels operating in the Dakhmas. Even one or two storeys above that would mean that the insides of a Dakhma could be easily visible from a window or balcony !!

The former Chairman of the BPP, Mr Jamshed N Guzder had mentioned in 2001, in a Board Room Meeting with some of us that when 'Spenta' was coming up in the eighties, he had climbed a fireman's snorkel ladder to check upto what point one can go from where the Anjuman Dakhma won't be visible. It was found that the maximum height could be up to the 8th floor. That is why "Spenta" was not built above that level. The past BPP trustees were at least concerned about the safety of the Dakhmas.

**Banaji Dakhma:** This Dakhma was closed down more than 30 years ago, merely because a couple of flat-owners of Grand Paradi, had complained that they could see inside it. **In three decades, the trustees have not bothered to re-open it, except recently, with the stupid suggestion of building a "rain shelter" over it!**

**Plot M at Godrej Baug:** This plot, at present is being excavated at a hectic pace, which has led to hacking of trees, including an extremely rare Egyptian Palm tree. Two of these still stand there (see picture), awaiting their fate, as it were! **If the high-rise were allowed to come here, it would mean the ultimate closure of at least the Bisney Dakhma!!**

**Road Across Ambawadi?** If the sky-scraper comes along, with its 2-crore-plus apartments and car parks, a motorable road in the vicinity will be considered a necessity. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the passage across Ambawadi, close to the Dakhmas, which has been closed for vehicular traffic, all these years, will be converted into a motorable road!!

**In bringing out this flier, our purpose is only one: 97 to 98% of the Parsees of Mumbai, even today, consign the bodies of their departed to the three Dakhmas at Doongerwadi. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of each one of us to prevent the BPP trustees from constructing a building, anywhere in Godrej Baug, which is more than 4 storeys high. The collective will of the community can prevent this building from coming up. Arise, Awake and Stop Not, till the Goal is reached!**

Adi F.Doctor, Editor.

## At Godrej Baug

If the proposed high-rise were to come up here,  
it could result in the ultimate closure of at least the Bisney Dakhma!!



Last of the two sentinels? The construction site at Godrej Baug between Block A & Block E, where hectic excavation is being carried out for an 11 storey building. Seen here are two rare Egyptian palms. Will they also meet with the same fate as the one which was already hacked ?



Trucks being loaded with the excavated rubble and rocks  
from the construction site at Godrej Baug.

## At Doongerwadi



Trucks carrying excavated rubble and debris from the construction site at Godrej Baug and dumping it at Doongerwadi, next to the Hodiwalla Bungli

### The death of trees at Doongerwadi.



The callously dumped rubble and rocks are already uprooting the foliage and trees.