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More families shift from Kathputli Colony

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NEW DELHI: After being held up during the Lok Sabha elections, the process of shifting slum dwellers from Kathputli Colony in west Delhi to a transit camp in Anand Parbat has now picked up pace.

According to the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), more than 250 of the total 2,754 families have shifted. The DDA hopes all slum dwellers will shift soon.

The DDA plans to first relocate the slum dwellers to the transit camp and later rehabilitate them back in multi-storey buildings in Kathputli Colony.

Kathputli Colony is the first in situ redevelopment project of DDA, which is being carried out by a private builder. Once the slum dwellers shift, their shanties will be demolished to give way for multi-storey buildings where all families would get two-room dwelling units.

The developer will be allowed commercial development in parts of the colony.

While the shifting of the residents started a couple of months ago, the pace has been sluggish. The colony is overwhelmingly inhabited by puppeteers, singers and street artists who have been vocal against the project.

"Though some people have shifted to the camp, our stand remains the same and we don't want to go from here," said Dilip Bhat, who has been spearheading the protests. "DDA has been ordered that they cannot use force and they can't make us move from here. We plan to meet the new MP from our area, Meenakshi Lekhi and hope that she will do something for us," he said.

"We don't intend to use any force on the residents to shift to the transit camp. We want them to do it voluntarily," said a senior DDA official who didn't wish to be named. "A lot of families have already shifted and the process has picked up pace now. We expect the majority of residents to move out soon," the official said.

The project is expected to take two years.