

Some Kathputli Colony residents keen to move: 'I want a flat for my children'

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THE promise of his own house made him sign an agreement on Tuesday, which will make him and his family one of the first residents of Kathputli Colony to agree to shift to a transit camp in Anand Parbat. This will be a temporary residence for him and many others for two years before they are handed over flats at Kathputli Colony as part of the in-situ redevelopment plan for this slum cluster.

He sits with his wife and four children at the transit camp at Anand Parbat, eager to complete all the formalities, so he can go back to Kathputli Colony. "No one from the colony knows I am here," he says, requesting that his identity not be revealed.

While a group of residents is against the move, some families came forward on Tuesday, showing willingness to make the move to Anand Parbat.

The redevelopment of slum clusters at Kathputli Colony is a partnership between the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and real estate firm Raheja Developers, whereby residents of the colony are to be shifted to a temporary camp in Anand Parbat. They will shift back to the new complex at Kathputli Colony once redevelopment is complete. The colony is mainly home to performers, artists, etc.

"We have signed an agreement to shift to Anand Parbat, but some people are against this. If they find out we have signed this agreement, it may cause trouble for us. We will only shift when more people from the colony are willing to come here with us," he said, as his children played in the transit camp.

"We will go back to Kathputli Colony now," he said, adding that he works as a tailor in Rajender Nagar and is willing to bear with the inconvenience of shifting to the transit camp for two years. "I grew up in Kathputli Colony and used to go to an MCD school in the area. Now, my



THE COLONY

Kathputli Colony, a slum cluster near Shaheed Jai Prakash Singh Park, is home to hundreds of artists, who have represented India in several fairs and festivals abroad since independence. Magicians, acrobats, mime artists, puppeteers, jugglers, folk singers, snake charmers, bear handlers, monkey trainers and other street performers reside in the colony.



The transit camp at Anand Parbat. (Below) A resident of Kathputli Colony.

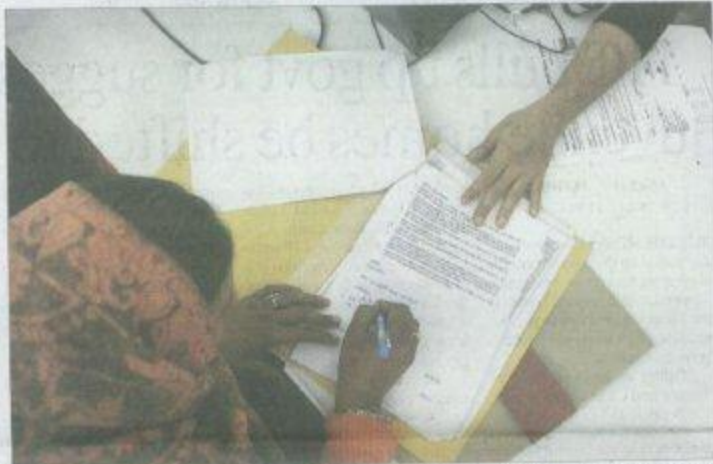
DNM/AVR

children go to the same school. But I want to leave behind a flat to them, which is why the move made sense to me," he said.

The transit camp has an all-purpose room, which is supposed to serve as the living and cooking area for the families. Separate bathrooms and wash areas have been provided with electricity and water connections.

Some residents said they might move in with their belongings by Wednesday. "All of us eventually want a permanent roof over our heads in the capital city. I can't afford it otherwise. I'm unemployed. I will shift with my belongings to Anand Parbat on Wednesday," a resident said.

Several countries have been set up at Anand Parbat for verification, where details of residents are matched with data from a DDA survey of 2010-2011. Each person is asked



to give an ID proof after which biometric verification of each family is carried out.

"A tripartite agreement is being signed between the slum-dweller, the DDA and Raheja Developers, so that the obligations of each party are defined," a DDA official said. The 2,800 flats should be ready for occupation in about two years.

Meanwhile, a group of residents from the colony, who are opposing the project, said they wanted plots in the area instead of flats. "On Tuesday, people from the DDA came to the colony and tried to issue tokens to people for relocating to Anand Parbat. This is despite the Lt-Governor's order of not using forceful means. We are not in favour of shifting. We want the

DDA to hand us plots instead," one of the pradhans of the area said.

The DDA claimed the tokens, mentioning the names and jhuggi numbers, were issued to 17 people, who were willing to relocate. "Transportation facilities will be provided to these people so that they can shift to Anand Parbat and complete the required registration formalities," an official said.