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A 'third party' audit of slums every 2 years

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Mumbai: Chief Minister Ashok Chavan today announced a survey and an audit of slums in Mumbai every two years to check their proliferation; barring that, he had little new to offer to address the growing woes of the city as he responded to his critics in the Assembly.

Migration cannot be stopped as it is guaranteed as a fundamental right in the Constitution, Chavan said. "We'll conduct a third-party audit of slums every two years. We'll survey the slums and go for satellite mapping. Local officials will be made accountable for proliferation of slums in the area under their jurisdiction...a special cell will be created in the housing department to monitor slums."

He reiterated the government would develop Koliwadass and merge the three categories of old buildings (those built before 1940; those between 1940 and 1950; and those between 1950 and 1969) and grant uniform FSI for their reconstruction.

When Shiv Sena members alleged the MMRDA, headed by the Chief Minister, was belittling the Sena-controlled BMC, Chavan said the latter was not equipped to tackle the needs arising out of the rapid urbanisation in and around Mumbai. "The BMC is facing a deficit of Rs

600 crore,” he said, “How can it handle development on such a large scale?”

He mentioned schemes undertaken by the MMRDA: a rental housing project with five lakh homes, and four new water projects: Shahi (estimated cost Rs 306 crore), Pinjal (Rs 267 crore), Poshir (Rs 520 crore) and Shalu (Rs 451 crore).

Chavan said the water distribution network is being improved by replacing old pipelines and creating three tunnels. The Centre has provided Rs 1,200 crore for the BRIMSTOWAD project. On concerns about mangrove destruction, he said committees headed by respective collectors would be formed for their protection.