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## Pre-2000 slums may be regularised

Sanjeev Shivadekar, TNN 30 July 2009, 01:35am IST

MUMBAI: Despite reservations expressed by a section of ministers, the state cabinet presided over by CM Ashok Chavan on Wednesday approved the controversial proposal to regularise slums constructed prior to January 1, 2000.

When the cabinet took up the proposal, a senior Congress minister obliquely opposed the proposal, saying, before taking a final decision on regularisation of slums, there should be wider debate on it. "Mumbai is already saturated. The urban infrastructure is on the verge of collapse. Under such circumstances, if we regularise the slums, it will be suicidal," a minister told TOI.

"Secondly," the minister asked, "If the government decides to regularise pre-January 2000 slums, what will happen to the slums that have come up between 2000 and 2009. Are we prepared to raze the slums that have come up after January 2000? Before taking any policy decision, we must draft a new policy or there will be chaos."

An official said, "Since the whole issue is pending before the

apex [court](#), the government will have to seek the SC's approval before issuing an official order."

"The move is clearly aimed at wooing slum voters who comprise more than 60% of Mumbai's total voters. However, the opposition may find it hard to criticise the decision for fear of alienating the voters," said a political observer.

Incidentally, the Congress and NCP has won all six parliamentary (Congress-5 and NCP-1) seats in Mumbai.

TOI was first to report that the state government is all set to move an ordinance to extend the cut-off date to regularise slums from January 1, 1995, to January 1, 2000.

In fact, since 1976, the cut-off dates for regularising slums have been extended on various occasions. In 1995, the Shiv Sena-BJP came to power and formed the Dinesh Afzulpurkar committee to look into the slum removal issue. In the same year in December, the saffron alliance amended the 1971 Act to provide for the creation of the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) and announced January 1, 1995, as the cut-off date.

Later, when the Congress came to power it filed an [affidavit](#) in court that it will not extend the 1995 cut-off date. But the Congress in its election manifesto of 2004 promised to regularise the slums till January 1, 2000, and filed a fresh affidavit in Bombay

[high](#)  
[court](#)

seeking extension of the cut-off deadline till 2000.

But with the court unwilling to extend the deadline, the state government has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court.