



Civic body all set to remove squatters along water pipes

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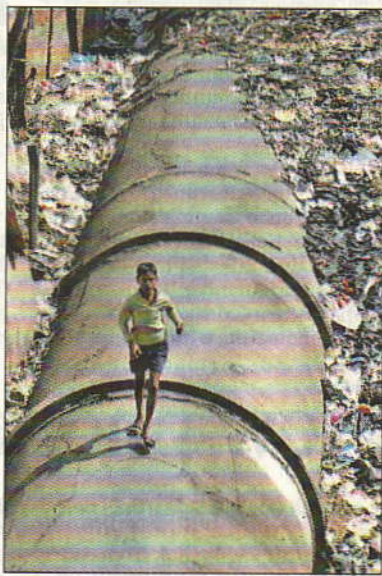
Mumbai: It seems the high court rap for not discouraging encroachments along the city's main water pipelines has at long last hurt the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). The civic body will start removing the squatters this month, the first phase of the work expected to end by March 31.

"We will carry out the work in four phases, and finish it by 2015," said hydraulic engineer Vinay Deshpande. "We carried out a survey of huts located within 10 metres on either side of the pipelines. We have already started sending notices to squatters, some of whom are eligible for rehabilitation."

The survey showed 15,789 huts, of which 6,687 came up before 1996, 2,103 between 1995 and 2000, and 6,193 after 2000. The status of 806 could not be verified since these were found to be locked. Occupants of huts that came up before 2000 are eligible for rehabilitation.

The first phase of the work will be in the S and G north wards, the second phase in the N, T and M west wards, the third phase in the K east and F north wards, and the fourth phase in the H east and L wards.

In the first phase—which will cover the Tendipada (Bhandup) and the Dhara-
vi anchor block pipelines, respectively 3-



Work on removing encroachments is to be carried out in four phases

Huts: **15,789**

Pre-1996: **6,687** | 1995-2000: **2,103**

Post-2000: **6,193** | Unclear status: **806**

Occupants of pre-2000 huts are eligible for rehabilitation

km and 250-metre long—1,878 huts will be removed, of which the occupants of 1,113 will be rehabilitated. In the second phase—for which the deadline is March 31, 2013—4,604 huts will be removed, of which the occupants of 1,437 will be rehabilitated. In the third phase—for which the deadline is March 31, 2014—3,489 huts will be removed, of which the occupants of 1,640 will be rehabilitated. In the fourth phase—for which the deadline is March 31, 2015—5,818 huts will be removed, of which the occupants of 4,600 will be rehabilitated.

The matter of encroachments along the pipelines was brought to the fore in 2006, when the NGO Janhit Manch filed a piece of public interest litigation in the high court, claiming that 20% of the city's water supply, or about 600 million litres, was lost in wastage, theft and leak because of squatters. The court gave an order on July 29, 2009 to constitute a committee comprising the chief secretary, the director-general of police, the municipal commissioner and the principal secretary to look into the problem.

About the 2015 deadline, Janhit Manch's Bhagvanji Raiyani said it will be difficult for the BMC to finish the work by 2015. "They are still looking for land for rehabilitation. The piece of land which has been selected is not big enough."