

Generals, officials & leaders in mega Mumbai land-grab

Appropriated Prime Plot In Colaba To Build Highrise

Josy Joseph | TNN

The Mumbai-headquartered Western Naval Command (WNC) has raised serious security concerns and sought action by the navy, army and government against a highrise apartment complex in the city's Colaba area, in which senior military leaders, politicians and bureaucrats own apartments. Among those allotted houses in the 31-storeyed Adarsh Housing Society are two ex-army chiefs, several other generals and admirals, and political leaders and senior bureaucrats.

A recent letter to the navy chief from Vice-Admiral Sanjeev Bhasin, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, WNC, and other documents with TOI reveal a conspiracy to appropriate, in the name of war widows and military veterans, a prime plot that was in the army's custody for years. In the process, the army even lied to the ministry of defence (MoD), which then misled Parliament, when a starred question regarding the ownership of the land came up in 2003.

Almost every army officer involved in misleading Parliament now owns a house in the complex. In his letter, Admiral

WHOSE LAND IS IT ANYWAY?



THE PLOT

A 31-storeyed highrise in Colaba, **Adarsh Housing Society** (left), is alleged to have been built on a prime plot belonging to the **government**. Among those allotted houses in the building are two former **army chiefs**, several **generals and admirals**, **political leaders** and **top bureaucrats**

THE ACCUSATION

Top military officers **appropriated** the plot meant for **war widows and military veterans**. They even **lied to the defence ministry**, which then **misled Parliament** in 2003 about the ownership of the land. The **100-metre-tall building** next to military installations has **violated coastal regulation zone norms**

THE COVER-UP

The housing society now **refuses to part with the list** of its members and the Maharashtra government too does not have the details of the building

AMONG THE FLAT-OWNERS ARE...



Bhasin says that the housing society is now refusing to part with the list of its members and the Maharashtra govern-

ment too does not have the details.

The building, immediately adjacent to a planned helipad

and other military installations, has violated the CRZ (coastal regulation zone) limit of a maximum height of 30 metres, and has now gone up to 100 metres, says Bhasin in his letter dated July 5 of this year. The Western Naval Command chief has suggested that the army be asked to institute a formal inquiry to find out duplicity, if any, by serving/retired officers in reappropriation of the ecological park managed and occupied by HQ MG&G (headquarters, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa) Area since 1996. He also wants the MoD to take up the issue with the Maharashtra government and ensure that further construction is stopped and occupancy permission is not given.

The controversy fundamentally hinges around whether the plot of land belonged to the army or not and in this matter, several senior army officials were more than cooperative in declaring that it did not. Crucial documents that prove the army's possession of the land and the Maharashtra government's past commitment to give the plot to the army have gone missing from the records of the concerned army offices in Mumbai and Pune. TOI now has many of those documents. When we sent a detailed questionnaire based on these undisclosed facts to the army headquarters a few weeks ago, the only reply was, "We are looking into all aspects brought out by you."

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