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Major realty projects to get environment nod in Mumbai

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MAJOR REAL estate projects in Mumbai will now get environment clearance (EC) in Mumbai itself. The newly set up environment cell of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will grant EC to real estate projects admeasuring 20,000 square metre to 1,50,000 square metres.

Prior to this, a State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), constituted by the Centre under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, was responsible for the environment impact assessment (EIA) notification and take decisions on ECs. Now, this will be manned by the BMC's environ-

ment cell, only for Mumbai.

No-objection certificates (NOCs) or clearances are required under environment impact notification (required for projects spanning over 20,000 square metres to 1,50,000 square metre), which takes around seven to nine months, and the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance that takes four to six months. The process will now be faster, claim BMC officials.

The Centre last year issued a notification allowing local bodies to process building proposals for environment clearances, as part of the 'ease of doing business' initiative. "The cell will assess and appraise environmental concerns of the area under its jurisdiction. It will monitor the environment audit process by

auditors and carry out random checks to verify compliance with environmental conditions," said Sanjay Darade, chief engineer, development Plan department.

Separate from an environment department which studied environmental problems — and was discarded by the BMC last year — this cell will only look at ECs. The cell consists of three BMC officers who are experts in waste management (solid and liquid), water conservation and management, and transport planning and management.

Three other members of the cell are former BMC officers. They will focus on fields such as environment planning including air quality management, energy efficiency, and resource efficiency including building materials.

