

## BMC MAY ALLOW PRIVATE HELIPADS ON HIGH-RISES

By Sanjeev Shivadekar, Mumbai Mirror | Feb 7, 2016, 12.31 AM IST

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Several high-rise buildings in Mumbai have sought permission for helipads

*The move comes after Bangalore allows 20 towers to construct helipads.*

After Bangalore, the civic administration in Mumbai may allow helipads on residential towers for commercial and personal use. The BMC has said that primarily, helipads on high-rises will help it tackle emergencies, especially fires, in a better way.

In fact, in 2014, the state Urban Development Department had launched the process of drafting a proposal that made it compulsory to construct helipads on buildings that are more than 150-200 metres high, after a Coast Guard chopper was

successfully deployed for rescue work in the Lotus Park fire that year.

Currently, Mumbai has three helipads for such use, located at the domestic airport (where rates are considered exorbitant even by corporate standards), the Juhu aerodrome, and the Mahalaxmi Racecourse (the latter two don't allow flying and landing at night).

The two helipads in south Mumbai that are out of bounds for citizens, are at the Raj Bhawan, and the Indian Naval Ship Shikara (Kunjali) at Colaba.

In March last year, the Karnataka government gave clearances to 20 high-rise buildings in Bangalore, including 10 residential towers, to build helipads for commercial and personal use.

Municipal commissioner Ajoy Mehta admitted that the BMC was a "divided house" on the issue. "A section of civic officials say that helipads on high-rises will be useful during emergencies such as fire. But then, there are security concerns. We will ask for feedback from all stake holders, the Defence experts, and citizens before forwarding a proposal," he said.

Even if such a proposal is accepted, the conditions will be stringent to say the least. Clearances will have

to be obtained from the Defence, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and the DGCA.

"Safety first will be our motto. We will not allow any threat to security, and if that means the proposal will not go through, then so be it," a senior civic official said.

Hospitals such as Asian Heart Institute at Bandra-Kurla Complex and the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Hospital in Andheri have applied to construct helipads, and so have several corporate houses, including the Reliance Industries Limited, the Tata Group, the Essar Group, and the Hindustan Construction Company.

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