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After Aaditya Thackeray, city BJP leaders protest against Metro-III

Some Want Car Shed Moved From Aarey, Others Want It Scrapped

Clara Lewis@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The future appears clouded for Metro-III with BJP leaders speaking out against the project soon after Aaditya Thackeray of the Shiv Sena, the junior partner in the state government, called for scrapping it.

On Monday, a delegation of city BJP MLAs and corporators led by city unit president Ashish Shelar met chief minister Devendra Fadnis, asking him to find an alternative to the proposed car shed at Aarey Colony.

At around the same time, party spokesperson and secretary Vivekanand Gupta in a letter to Fadnis asked him to scrap Metro-III and instead focus on the coastal road from Nariman Point to Malad. The Metro-III will go from Colaba to Bandra to Andheri SEEPZ.

BJP MLA from Colaba Raj Purohit, who is the party chief whip, told TOI that Metro-III is needed, but he is opposed to it as the project is not transparent. "Notices are being sent but people's queries are not being addressed. I am the local MLA, even I am not informed on the government's plans for displaced people. Several people will lose their homes and several others their shops. There is no clarity on where they will be shifted, compensation, what happens to their livelihoods, their children's education, when they will come back," he said.

The project was going ahead like the sanctioning of night life without any discussion with local residents who are the real stakeholders, Purohit added.

Shelar said the CM had agreed to set up a committee comprising the MMRDA commissioner, the BMC commissioner, the urban development principal secretary, environmentalists Rakesh Kumar of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Dr Rashmi Patil of the Centre for Science and Professor Ravi Sinha of IIT to look for an alternative site for the car shed. "If no alternative can be found, the committee will look at ways on how to save trees. In the meantime, the government has said it will plant 1,000 14-foot-high trees on a site within Aarey that belongs to the animal husbandry department," said Shelar.

Ashwini Bhidre, chief, MMRC, said the committee will again look at alternatives earlier suggested like the Mahabaleshwar course and Kalina university land. The Metro-III project should have started this year. It will now begin only in early 2016, said Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation officials.

"Today we held public consultations with people from Girgaum and Kalbadevi. This will continue for the next two days. Thereafter, we shall hold consultations with people from Churchgate and Colaba. We have decided to first hold consultations, build a consensus and only then begin work on Metro III," said Bhidre. Work on a compound wall and channelization of a drain at Aarey has been stopped till the committee gives its report in a month.

DISPLACEMENT, AAREY CAR SHED MAIN PEEVES

The Metro-III Project

PROBLEM IN THE NORTH

> Car shed in Aarey Colony to lead to cutting of 2,298 trees

PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTH

> Affects residential buildings, shops in Colaba, Churchgate, Girgaum and Kalbadevi
> About 26 buildings to be demolished
> Metro will pass close to heritage sites like CST (UNESCO site) | BMC HQ | Western Railway HQ | Lady Willington Building | Narutandas Bhau Jewellers, Lamington Road | Bhikha Behram, Hutatma Chowk



VOCAL OPPONENTS

> Save Aarey Movement

A band of local residents supported by NGO Vanashakti and environmentalist Rishi Agarwal in Aarey

> Shiv Sena youth leader Aaditya Thackeray

> Shiv Sena local MLA and minister of state for housing Ravindra Walker



Projected cost 23,136 crore

PROTESTS TO SAVE AAREY

SUNDAY'S MARCH

> 3,000 persons took to the streets at Aarey Colony to show their support for the Save Aarey campaign. Besides the march, song, dance and street plays was organized by members of the Aam Admi Party (AAP)



WHAT'S PLANNED FOR MARCH 7

> Cyclists from across Mumbai will ride together to press for the conservation of Aarey

Date | March 7 (Saturday)

Start Time | 7.30am

Start point | Goregaon

entrance to Aarey (and

End point | Metro car shed

site after picnic point at Aarey

THE TWITTER CAMPAIGN

Activists have taken to Twitter to convey to the CM and PM their anger against thousands of trees being cut for the Metro car shed and the BMC's proposal to develop the lion's share of the city's lung. Now they are turning their focus on various groups to garner support for their cause

After Twitter, activists reaching out to various groups for fight

Richa Pinto@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Members of the Save Aarey movement do not want to take their foot off the gas. After mobilizing 3,000 people for a protest march on Sunday, campaigners are working to spread the message to cyclists to ride together on March 7 (Saturday) to press for the conservation of Aarey.

A Twitter campaign, on March 1 to reach the chief minister and the Prime Minister on the development plans for Aarey worked, with the messages grabbing eyeballs of celebrities like director Shekhar Kapur, actor Javed Jafferi and music composer Vishal Dadlani who tweeted or retweeted about the cause. But the group feels they need to reach out to many more people through various groups to strengthen their cause.

"By getting cyclists together on Saturday, the campaign is getting a different kind of audience involved. There is a class of people who do not access social media frequently and therefore, we are targeting them through this event. Riding through Aarey is a unique experience amid



the cool weather in the mornings. When one enters Aarey either through the Western Express Highway or Marol, you feel the chill in the breeze. We believe people need to fall in love with the place for whose preservation they are fighting," said Rama Bishnoi, a Santa-

cruz resident who has been cycling since she was in school.

Another member Manish Sethi agreed that Twitter might not be popular with everyone. "There are large groups that go cycling in the city. So far we have got 300 people to sign up for the cycling event on Saturday. The cyclists will express solidarity towards the cause," said Sethi.

BMC tree authority officials said a decision on the proposal for transplant and cutting of trees for the Metro-III car shed was deferred after BMC assured a presentation by MMRDA authorities and a site visit.

"However, nothing has happened and we are almost due to have our next meeting. We want the authorities to give a thought to alternatives for the car shed," said Niranjan Shetty a member of the BMC tree authority

State C Chav

Narayan Ra Protests, S Not Consult

Prafulla Marpakwar@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Nearly months after the cr defeats in the Lok Sabha assembly elections, gress president Sonia hi on Monday appoint ok Chavan as state chief and Sanjay Niru head the Mumbai Con

Controversial chief minister Chav replaced Manikrao T while erstwhile Shiv leader Nirupam succ nardan Chandorkar.

Hours later, N Rane lodged a strong saying there should been wider consultat the state level in view ensing BMC electi am surprised and s over the appointm Chavan and Nirupam ress did not consult th leaders. Congress wi to pay a heavy price BMC polls for Nirupam's appointm is a known anti Marat



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