

MMRC and NGO continue to fight over Mumbai Metro-III car shed location

By A Correspondent | Posted 13-Jan-2016

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Both the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation and NGO Vanashakti are continuing to fight over the car depot being built in Aarey Milk Colony with claims and counter claims

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) has claimed that the National Green Tribunal has declared that the restriction on new project is limited to only 100 metres from the boundary of Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) and there are no restraining orders against the Metro car depot, but the NGO Vanashakti has refuted these claims.

On Wednesday, MMRC Managing Director Ashwin Bhide issued a statement, "National Green Tribunal during the hearing in Pune on Wednesday declared that restriction on new project is limited to 100 metres only from the boundary of Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) and there are no restraining orders against metro car depot. This is positive development for Metro-3 project. NGT has further asked MMRC to present a compilation of areas consumed in depots of Delhi, Kolkata and other Metros. MMRC will provide all necessary details asked by NGT before the next hearing scheduled on January 19, 2016."

Replying to MMRC's statement, a member from the Save Aarey Conservation Group said, "MMRC is spreading the news that the NGT has cleared the way for Metro 3. We would like to clarify that no such order has been passed and the matter is being heard. The next hearing is on January 19."



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The proposed site for the Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ Metro III car depot inside Aarey Milk Colony.

Vanashakti's Stalin Dayanand on Wednesday filed an affidavit with the NGT in Sur-Rejoinder to an Affidavit in Rejoinder filed by the Intervener Corporation affirmed by CM Jadhav, General Manager of the Intervener Corporation.

The copy of affidavit filed by Vanashakti before the NGT, which is with mid-day, states, "I deny that the Aarey colony site is the most suitable and viable site for a car shed. I say that the Intervener Corporation has erred in understanding the significance of ecology of the area as can be seen from the sweeping and unsubstantiated statements like 'repairable loss of trees' in the area. It is of utmost significance to reiterate that the issue is not only about trees but the existence of forest land in the catchment area of Mithi River which has now become a vital habitat and an important leopard range as evidenced through its frequent sightings. I further deny that the relevance of Sanjay Gandhi National Park is irrelevant as the Aarey land falls under the ESZ of Sanjay Gandhi National Park and as stated before, boasts of flora and fauna (including wild leopards) that are similar to the National Park. I repeat that the issue before this Hon'ble Tribunal is not whether the Metro Corridor 3 is eco-friendly or not but whether locating the car shed of Metro Corridor 3 inside the Ecologically Sensitive Zone of Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Aarey is environmentally desirable or not. With such frequent leopard sightings and documented rich biodiversity existing in Aarey that includes Indian civets, monitor lizards and other reptiles, it is of prime importance to keep Aarey protected. Therefore, the baseless statements that leopards have stopped coming out of the National Park deserve to be dismissed. Further, I say that it is an admitted fact that there are leopard traps permanently set up inside Aarey alongwith leopard warnings to the public put up by the state forest department which in itself confirms the fact that the Aarey, abutting the National Park, is frequently visited by leopards. Attached hereto as ANNEXURE R-1 is the newspaper report dated 25.12.2015 that shows another leopard at Aarey colony having been sighted and her movements recorded."

Tags: # Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation # MMRC # National Green Tribunal # Sanjay Gandhi National Park # SGNP # Metro car depot # Metro III # NGO Vanashakti # MMRC Managing Director # Ashwin Bhide # Metro-3 project # Save Aarey Conservation Group