

Bigger homes for Metro 3 PAP: CM

TO PLACATE PROTESTERS Fadnavis announces houses to be in the same area, no evictions till rehabilitation plan prepared

HT Correspondent

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MUMBAI: To appease people protesting against the Metro 3, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis announced bigger houses for those displaced by the project.

Speaking in the legislative Assembly on Monday, Fadnavis said those living in less than 300 sqft homes will get flats double the size after their houses are taken over for building the Metro. Those with homes bigger than 300 sqft will get at least 30% bigger houses.

The new houses will be in the same area as the tenants' existing homes. Fadnavis also assured no tenant will be evicted until the draft plan for their rehabilitation is prepared.

Protests by project affected people (PAP) have emerged as a major hurdle in the path of the Metro 3.

By this announcement, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also sent out the message that it is looking out for the interests of Maharashtrians, who will be displaced in large numbers in areas such as Girgaum, and which has been taken up as a political issue by Shiv Sena and the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena.

"The benefits of FSI availed under the development control rule for the project will be passed onto the PAP in the form of bigger homes," said Fadnavis.

The tenants will be offered houses in Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (Mhada) buildings in nearby areas as temporary accommodation. Those who do not wish to shift to these buildings will be paid some amount as monthly rent by the government, the chief minister said.

About 15 BJP legislators from the city had met Fadnavis and demanded bigger houses for PAP, in the wake of widespread protests by residents.

"As many as 70% of the tenements in these buildings are less than 300 sqft in the area, while 20% of them are 500 sqft. Only about 10% are about 1,000sqft. We have demanded the state cabinet approves the rehabilitation package before the bhoomipujan of the project," said Raj Purohit, BJP's MLA from Colaba.

The MPs have also demanded gardens and grounds in the area to be protected, Purohit said.

SMOOTHENING THE METRO'S PATH

777 Families will be displaced

28 Buildings in Girgaum, Kalbadevi and Mahim are in the project's path

18 Buildings in way of the Kalbadevi stn

8 In way of Girgaum station

MANY DIFFICULTIES IN PROJECT'S WAY

Residents of Aarey Colony and environmentalists have opposed the construction of a car depot in the colony

Political parties have also jumped into the fray, opposing any development activity in the green space

Residents of Chirabazar, Kalbadevi and Girgaum have opposed demolition of their homes for construction of entry/exit points

Parties such as Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and the Shiv Sena have made it a political issue, claiming the project seeks to displace Maharashtrians from their homes.

THE BENEFITS OF FSI AVAILED UNDER THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL RULES FOR THE PROJECT WILL BE PASSED ONTO THE PAP, IN THE FORM OF BIGGER HOMES.

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS, chief minister

THE ORIGINAL PLAN HAS 27 STATIONS



33.5 km corridor has been planned from Colaba to Seepz via Bandra, and is scheduled to be operational by 2020



■ MNS chief Raj Thackeray with party workers at the Aarey Colony on Monday.

SANJAY SOLANKI

Won't let Aarey be destroyed, says Raj

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MUMBAI: Reiterating his opposition to the construction of a metro car shed in the Aarey Colony, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray on Monday demanded the depot be moved to Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) land.

"A nexus of politicians, builders and businessmen want to grab land in Aarey Colony. In the metro's name, they are making inroads in the colony. However, we will not allow them to destroy its rich biodiversity. Why does not the MMRC shift the depot to the MbPT, which is along the metro corridor and can be built easily?"

POLITICIANS, BUILDERS AND BUSINESSMEN WANT TO GRAB LAND IN AAREY. WE WON'T LET THEM DESTROY ITS RICH BIODIVERSITY.

RAJ THACKERAY, MNS chief

Thackeray said.

He also said an underground depot can be built at the Racecourse land, where Shiv Sena wants a theme garden.

Thackeray, along with about 300 party workers, visited the proposed depot site in Aarey and

reviewed the green cover that the project will destroy.

He alleged the new development plan (DP) was prepared keeping builders and businessmen in mind.

"It seems the DP is aimed at repaying the expenditure made during elections."

He also pulled up the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) for allegedly providing incorrect information about the consequences of the project to the public and the Japanese Bank, which is funding the metro.

Taking a dig at civic chief Sitaram Kunte, he said: "Instead of checking proliferation of slums, he expresses fears Aarey will turn into Dharavi."

'The project must not harm heritage structures'

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MUMBAI: The obstacle-ridden Metro 3 has come up against one more hurdle - the heritage status of some of the areas the project is to pass through.

The Mumbai Heritage Conservation Committee (MHCC) has made the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) sign an undertaking that its activities will not harm the heritage structures on the plots where entry and exit points for Metro 3 stations will

be built.

SIX OUT OF 18 HAVE HERITAGE TAGS

■ Six of the 18 plots the MMRC wants have heritage tags

■ A garden at Hutatma Chowk, a pay-and-park at the chowk, Bhatia Baug garden on Dr DN Road and a playground behind

the Siddhivinayak temple are grade I heritage structures

■ The junction of Senapati Bapat and E Moses road and the BMC's office building at Worli are grade II B structures.

be built.

MMRC spokesperson Dilip Kawathkar said while he was not aware of the undertaking, the heritage status of buildings will be given utmost priority during

the construction.

The committee has suggested the MMRC shift these points away from heritage structures, to nearby areas.

Out of the 18 plots that MMRC

wants from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) permanently, six have heritage tags attached to them.

Four of them are grade I heritage structures, where no development is allowed.

Two - the junction of Senapati Bapat and E Moses road and the BMC's office building at Worli - have grade II B heritage tags, where development is permitted.

Sources in the MMRC have said its activities will not violate the structures' heritage tag, as the construction will be done through

the tunnelling method, which is carried out underground.

The heritage committee suggested the entry and exit points be shifted from Dr DN road - it falls under heritage grade I category - to areas like Somani Marg.

"We have an undertaking signed from the MMRC that no digging will take place and the work will be underground. They have also promised to take utmost care of heritage structure," said V Ranganathan, chairman, MHCC.

MMRC MD Ashwini Bhide could not be reached.