



**METRO 3 TRIAL RUN  
BEGINS AT AAREY**

# Metro line 3 trial run begins at Aarey

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THE TRIAL run of Mumbai's first underground Metro line 3 – also known as the Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ corridor – which has been under construction since 2016, was flagged off by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis at Sariput Nagar in Aarey Colony on Tuesday.

The trial run of the first prototype train was held inside a 3-km tunnel between Sariput Nagar and Marol Naka station.

Speaking at the event, Shinde said the government has attempted to complete the much-delayed project by removing all obstacles. Listing various benefits of the project, like reducing the burden on suburban locals, cars on roads and bring down pollution, he said the Metro project has stopped "political pollution" as well. He also announced that the first phase of Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Mahamarg (Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway) between Shirdi and Nagpur will be inaugurated soon.

MMRCL Managing Director Ashwini Bhide, along with Shinde and Fadnavis, inspected the first prototype rake that has come from Sri City in Andhra Pradesh last year.

The trial run marks an important development in the realisation of the Metro track shrouded in controversy over the construction of its car shed.



**Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis flag off trial run of Metro 3 corridor; (top) new rake at Aarey site.** Amit Chakravarty

Alleging that the project was politicised by the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, Fadnavis said work was delayed owing to the controversies over the Metro 3 car shed coming up at Aarey.

He termed the commencement of trial run as a historic mo-

ment. Calling Metro line 3 as the new lifeline of Mumbai, Fadnavis said that the first phase of the corridor could have become operational in March itself. "However, due to the earlier (MVA) government, the project was delayed and now it will open for public use only after

the car shed there. "...As per a report by a committee of additional chief secretary Manoj Saunik, the project cost was to go up by Rs 15,000-20,000 crore and four more years were required to complete it."

"Even if the depot was taken to Kanjurmarg, there would have been a need to build 16 stabilising lines at this (Aarey) place. The ramp needs to be built at this place," said Fadnavis.

He added that for the current government, the decision of having the car shed at Aarey was not an ego issue but was taken to benefit Mumbaiers. "Nearly 17 lakh people will travel daily on this line once it is operational. With the commencement of this line, nearly seven lakh vehicles will go off road. It will definitely support the environmental cause," he said, adding, 2.5 lakh tonnes of carbon emission will stop.

The Metro 3 car shed was initially proposed at Aarey Colony during the Fadnavis-led BJP-Shiv Sena government. While it saw opposition from environmental activists, after the formation of the MVA government in November 2019, Thackeray announced that it would be shifted to Kanjurmarg.

The construction of the car shed at Aarey, a forested land adjoining the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, was one of the first decisions reversed by the Shinde-Fadnavis government formed on June 30.

December 23... and the second phase will become functional after six months," he added.

"The earlier government delayed the project. But I am thankful to CM Shinde. Had he not decided (to build the car shed at Aarey), Rs 20,000 crore of investment would have been wasted and the cost would have escalated further, putting burden on the common public," Fadnavis said.

Without naming the Shiv Sena or Uddhav Thackeray, Fadnavis said that the opposition to the car shed was more political than environmental. The opposition was voiced even after the Supreme Court had cleared the project and given a go-ahead, he added.

Stating that Kanjurmarg land – where the MVA wanted to relocate the car shed from Aarey – was not feasible for the project as it was a marshy land, Fadnavis said it would have taken two more years to build