Move to counter the hashtag handles that have cropped up against the Rs 23,136-crore Metro project

MMRC to tap social media, get image makeover

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AFTER FLAK from the public, activists and political parties on the proposed Colaba-Bandra-Seepz Metro, especially on social media platforms, the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) is attempting an image makeover with a counter campaign.

The corporation has decided to engage a content creation firm to spin its image, especially on social media, to counter the 'Save Aarey,' 'Save Colaba Woods', 'Save Girgaum' and other hashtag handles that have cropped up against the Rs 23,136-crore Metro project.

Ashwini Bhide, MMRC managing director, said, "We want to reach out to people and keep them updated about the status of the project. There are limitations in reaching out to people through traditional media. We share information, but whether it is published or not is not in our hands. So, we are tapping social media and trying to rope in a content management agency to help us develop a strategy."

The MMRC has met with of the few green places in Mumbai, cutting trees for the fully-underground corridor, and moving residents from Kalbadevi and Girgaum - the oldest parts of Mumbai - to make way for Metro stations.

So far, MMRC's response has been limited to publishing notices and clarifying that not thousands but just 28 buildings and 1,750 huts will be demolished for the project. It has also tried to pacify detractors by conducting public hearings with residents who will be affected by the project, holding meets with environment activists concerned about the city's greenery and open spaces, and mollifying politicians. With dialogue helping the corporation only to a certain extent, MMRC has now decided to embrace the social media.

"This will be more crucial once actual work on the Metro begins. We have to keep updating citizens. We are also appointing a full-time public relations executive," Bhide said.

The agency to be appointed will be entrusted with creating content, updating and monitoring social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and