

MMRC to award work order by mid-Sept

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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THE Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) will award work orders for constructing the 33.5-km Colaba-Bandra-Seepz Metro by mid-September, expecting to begin work by early next year.

The corporation, which has received bids from nine consortia, has nearly concluded the technical evaluation process.

Ashwini Bhide, Managing Director of MMRC, said, "Evaluating tenders and issuing work orders is currently the immediate priority for the project. We will finalise the technical evaluation after seeking internal consent and approval from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). After that, we will need about a month for evaluation of the financial bids."

The MMRC had invited tenders for the 33.5-km fully-underground Metro in seven con-

tract packages, each involving about 4-5 kms of tunneling and 3-5 underground stations. The Colaba-Bandra-Seepz Metro is proposed to have 27 stations. In all, the MMRC has received 31 bids from the nine consortia.

"If we give work orders in September, it will take the contractors another 2-3 months to finalise designs and get in a state of readiness to start actual work. By then, most long-standing issues for the project should be sorted," Bhide said.

Displacement of residents from Mumbai's oldest areas of Girgaum, Kalbadevi and Dadar, and the proposed construction of the Metro car-shed at Goregaon's Aarey Colony, one of the few green lungs in the city, are the major bones of contention for the Rs 23,136-crore project. Residents, activists and political parties have been protesting against the project over the two issues.

"For Girgaum and Kalbadevi, we have received bids from three consultants. We hope to have a comprehensive rehabilitation



MMRC Managing Director Ashwini Bhide, along with MMRDA chief Urvinder Pal Singh Madan, unveiled a new logo for the corporation on Monday. Amit Chakravarty

plan ready for these residents in about four months after finalising the consultant," Bhide said. The consultant will help MMRC prepare a plan for on-site rehabilitation of about 650 families in the congested locality.

Bhide added that the problem in Dadar is not as acute, as

the project is set to temporarily displace only eight families there, and the building in question is already in the process of going into redevelopment.

For the car-shed, the chief minister had constituted a committee under the Mumbai Metropolitan Region

Development Authority (MMRDA) chief UPS Madan to look for alternative sites or minimise loss to the environment at the current earmarked site. Madan said the committee is yet to submit its report to the state government.