

From court to courting citizens, largest Metro project is on track

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Dispelling the controversy of tree cutting, Ashwini Bhide, the Managing Director of Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd emphasised on the magnitude of the Metro-II project, which is the first of its kind in Mumbai city. Bhide spoke to selective media for clearing the air regarding the project and it being on target despite the litigation for cutting the trees.

“The magnitude and size is first of its kind and unprecedented, as the project itself costs Rs. 23,000 crores. Unfortunately people associate grandeur to the Sea Link, however this underground Metro project is the largest currently,” said Bhide.

The project work also entails a lot of traffic diversions, change of routes and as many commuters plying around the South Mumbai region have complained of ‘harrowing travel due to traffic jams.’ “Unlike Delhi Mumbai is already congested

and has huge traffic issues. It is disruptive and as I call it creative disruptive. We will be able to give a modern and developed mode of transport to the citizens,” said Bhide.

Meanwhile, the MMRC has asked the contractors to involve the local residents at the various working sites to suggest diversion of routes, controlling of traffic and employing residents as traffic marshals. “The local youth have been employed by our contractors and are being paid salaries. They are trained by traffic police of our city and they control the traffic diversions,” said Bhide.

Highlighting the important factors of the project, she admitted that the organisation needs to make citizens aware of the feasibility and modern travel that will be provided once the Mumbai Metro III from Cuffe Parade to SEEPZ is completed. Bhide said this is underground tunnel is the first of its kind in India and on par with the top international countries. “This is a 33.5

kilometres tunnelling project, first of its kind in India. The Cuffe Parade to SEEPZ underground tunnel will be the fifth largest in the world,” said Bhide.

The project has been marred by the controversy over felling of trees for the project. Bhide chalked out the plan MMRC has committed to including undertaking planting of trees under the Corporate Social Responsibility project. The MMRC stated about 2800 trees at station are affected and 3130 trees at the deport site would be affected. As per the tree authority the tree count is 3891 for stations. ‘1090 trees will be retained, 1074 trees will be cut and 1727 trees will be transplanted.’

“We will transplant 10,000 trees Aarey, Airports Authority of India lands and at the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. We will compensate by planting three times the number of trees cut and restore tree cover at the station location after completion of station work,” Bhide committed.