

# MMRC plans to start tunnelling work for Metro line 3 by October

Mumbai

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) hopes to begin the tunnelling work for the 33.5-km Metro 3 corridor from October this year.

"As per the contracts awarded for constructing the Metro stations, the contractor will have to procure the tunnel boring machines. An order for 17 machines has been already placed and by October we hope to start the actual tunnelling work," MMRC's Managing Director Ashwini Bhide told PTI.

She said the machines, which are being imported, will start coming in from July. The tunnel boring machines are being imported from Germany, Austria, Canada among others. But all these machines are China made.

The machines will dig twin tunnels for the entire stretch of the Rs 23,136 crore Metro line from Colaba in the southern tip of the megapolis to Seepz (Andheri) in the north. The MMRC hopes build 200 metres of tunnels every day.

The corporation has fabricated the first tunnel ring for the underground Metro

at its Wadala casting yard. These segment rings will help strengthen the tunnel after being bored into by the TBMs.

According to MMRC's project director S K Gupta, the initial tunnelling may begin from locations like Cuffe Parade, Pali Naka and Naya Nagar.

"Two shafts are getting ready near Pali Naka (in Bandra) and Naya Nagar (in Mahim), so we can start the work from these areas," he said.

"The shafts at other locations are also getting ready but they may take some time as the tree felling issue is still getting resolved. But we are confident of starting tunnelling at least at these three locations," he said.

The Bombay High Court had last week issued a notice to Union Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) seeking its response on whether it had granted clearance to the MMRC to construct nine stations under the Metro Line-3 project.

The HC was hearing a petition filed by residents of Churchgate in South Mumbai against the proposed cutting of 5,000 trees to pave way for the Seepz-Co-



**The 33.5-km long Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ line will be the first underground metro line in Mumbai. It will connect Cuffe Parade business district in the extreme south of the city to SEEPZ in the north-central**

laba Metro project.

The petitioners had claimed that nine stations in the line fall in Coastal Regulation Zone and the MoEF has refused permission to MMRC to carry out construction in those areas.

MMRC counsel Aspi Chinnoy had said the authority was incurring heavy monetary loss due to the pendency of the petition as the high court had earlier restricted them from cutting any trees till further orders.

-PTI