

Metro 3 tunnelling may start in Oct.

Seventeen imported tunnel boring machines to start coming in from July

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

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

She said the machines, which are being imported from Germany, Austria, Canada and other countries, will start coming in from July. Though imported, all the machines have been manufactured in China.

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

The corporation has fab-



In full swing: The MMRC is fabricating tunnel rings, which will strengthen the underground corridor, at its Wadala casting yard. ■ FILE PHOTO

ricated the first tunnel ring for the underground Metro at its Wadala casting yard. These segment rings will help strengthen the tunnels.

According to MMRC pro-

ject director S.K. Gupta, the initial tunnelling may begin from locations like Cuffe Parade, Pali Naka in Bandra and Naya Nagar in Mahim.

"Two shafts are getting ready

near Pali Naka and Naya Nagar, 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 the 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 3 project. The High Court was hearing a petition filed by residents of Churchgate against the proposed cutting of 5,000 trees for the corridor.

The petitioners said that nine stations on the route fall in the Coastal Regulation Zone, and that the MoEF has refused permission to MMRC to carry out construction in those areas.

MMRC counsel Aspi Chinoy said the rail corporation was incurring heavy monetary losses due to the pendency of the petition, as the High Court had earlier restricted the authority from cutting any trees till further orders from the court.