

No restraining orders from NGT on Aarey car depot: MMRC

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THE MUMBAI Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) on Wednesday said that there are no restraining orders by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on constructing a Metro car depot inside Goregaon's Aarey, one of Mumbai's largest green lungs.

"The NGT during a hearing in Pune on Wednesday declared that restriction on new projects is limited to 100 metres only from the boundary of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, and there are no restraining orders against the Metro car depot," MMRC Managing Director Ashwini Bhide said. The MMRC has proposed to construct a car depot at Aarey for the 33.5-km Colaba-Bandra-Seepz Metro, touted to be the city's costliest infrastructure project. The NGT had last year directed the BMC to not issue any no-objection certificate for construction within the eco-sensitive area in Aarey Colony. In May, the chief conservator of forests had sent a proposal to the

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Union environment ministry to increase the eco-sensitive area around the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) to a four-km radius, covering 4,961 hectare, including Aarey Colony.

The proposal for a car depot in Aarey has been mired in controversy with environmentalists and activists having vociferously opposed it, prompting the chief minister to constitute a committee to rethink it. The committee had recommended constructing a car depot at Kanjurmarg, but also said that a double-deck depot at Aarey would be a viable option in case the state government was unable to free the Kanjurmarg land, currently under litigation.