

With no legal hassles, Kanjurmarg may be finalised for Metro-3 depot

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MUMBAI: After a year-long controversy and legal tussle, the dispute over the plot for Metro-3 may be resolved soon.

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) has found the land earmarked for the Metro depot at Kanjurmarg is different from the one that is stuck in a legal tangle. So, the authority now plans to seek permission of the Bombay high court to acquire the 45-hectares at Kanjurmarg in the next hearing on January 13.

If the Kanjurmarg land is not available, the MMRC would have developed a double-decker depot on a 20-hectare plot at Aarey Colony which would have led to cutting of 500 trees. The development effectively means that no construction activity will take place on a major portion of the 30-hectare Aarey plot.

The MMRC will need only eight to ten hectares with sparse vegetation to build 16 stabling lines.

Ashwini Bhide, managing director, MMRC, said, "After a few hearings, we found the

NO TO AAREY

Residents of Aarey Colony and nature lovers had objected to construction of Metro depot at Aarey Colony on grounds that it would lead to destruction of greenery and wildlife

Political parties had also jumped into the fray opposing any construction activity on the plot

Green activists had suggested shifting of the car depot to Kanjurmarg, Mumbai Port trust or Colaba



complainant has not made any claim on the land parcel that we need for the depot. We are going to apprise the court of the fact during the hearing. We expect the issue to be resolved soon."

Taking note of citizens' objection to the cutting of 2,298 trees in Aarey Colony to make space for the depot, the state had formed a six-member expert committee comprising bureaucrats and environmental experts.

The panel recommended Kanjurmarg land as the first preference for the depot for

the 33.5-km Colaba-Bandra-Seepz (CBS) Metro line, which will be connected to the Jogeshwari-Kanjurmarg Metro-6 at Seepz.

With a legal dispute dating back to 1953, the court had, in 1996, restrained the government from allotting a 650-hectare land at Kanjurmarg. The plot covers roads, mangroves and dumping ground, of which 150 hectares can be used for commercial activities.

The MMRC had requested the state to file an application to get possession of the plot.