

# A year before BMC elections, state chases deadlines for showpiece infra projects

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AHEAD OF the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections next year, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led (BJP) is trying to meet ambitious deadlines for several showpiece projects.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis chaired a meeting of his war room, a forum to fast-track infrastructure projects, carrying

out a review of various projects such as the Sewri-Nhava Sheva Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), the Colaba-Bandra-Seepz underground Metro, two more elevated Metro corridors in the city and the Navi Mumbai International Airport.

An official who did not wish to be named said, "We are aiming at conducting a bhoomipujan for the MTHL in October this year before the government completes two years."

Simultaneously, the state government is also in talks with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to firm up details such as signing a loan agreement for the Rs 11,000-crore project, inviting bids for construction on a cash contract model and related details.

Government agencies such as the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) and the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC)

are also chasing deadlines to speed up work on new Metro lines in the city.

The MMRC informed the chief minister that it would try to begin civil work on the 33.5-km Colaba-Bandra-Seepz Metro corridor by May this year. The corporation is currently in the process of revising cost estimates for the project after bidders quoted amounts that were much higher than expected.

"The government expects to

award work orders for two other elevated Metro corridors, one from Dahisar East to Andheri East and the second from Dahisar to DN Nagar, by March this year," a government official said.

The MMRDA is in the process of tendering the 16.5-km Dahisar East-Andheri East elevated Metro, while the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has been put in charge as nodal agency for the 18-km Dahisar-DN Nagar Metro.