

In blow to greens, SC OKs infra, bldg plans on 407 acres in Aarey

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Mumbai: A total of 407 acres in the green Aarey Colony in suburban Mumbai, roughly the size of 18 Oval Maidans, can now be used for infrastructure and building construction projects.

In a setback to city environmentalists, the Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed an appeal by NGO Vanashakti and its director Stalin Dayanand against a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order.

In January, the tribunal had upheld a 2016 order of the environment ministry (MoEF) to exclude 407 acres of over 15,000 acres notified as an Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP).

In its appeal before the apex court, Vanashakti said on January 24, 2020 that the NGT bench disposed of its case without hearing the two parties and in their absence.

The environment ministry, while justifying the reduced ESZ, had informed the NGT that the state government had proposed the Metro rail shed in the excluded Aarey land and some

METRO: WHAT NOW?



15,000 acres around SGNP notified as Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ)

407 acres within Aarey Colony now exempted from ESZ

3,167 acres was Aarey Colony's original size in 1949

Key Plans For Exempted Plot

- Metro car shed ➤ Temples
- A slum rehab project for up to 80,000 people

slums and highrises exist on the boundary with SGNP.

Last year, trees were cut on land earmarked for the Metro car shed causing an uproar, and the new government is yet to take a final call on the car shed.

Challenging the tribunal's order before the SC, the NGO said the NGT had "failed to consider that the excluded plot is a heavily forested land that boasts of trees of indigenous forest species and has varied flora and fauna."