

Be practical, Bombay High Court tells tree activists

Metro 3: judges say city traffic deteriorating, call for pragmatism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday censured activists opposing the cutting of trees for the Colaba-Bandra-Seepez Metro 3 line, saying a pragmatic view must be taken, considering ground realities.

A Division Bench comprising Justices V.M. Kanade and A.M. Badar was hearing an application by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL) seeking permission to cut 108 mangroves for the Bandra Kurla Complex Metro station. The permission was required as the HC had made its permission mandatory for any activity connected to mangroves while hearing a PIL filed by the Bombay Environmental Action Group (BEAG).



Unkindest cut: A worker with the Metro 3 project works on a felled tree in Churchgate.

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"We need the Metro...traffic in the city is going from bad to worse...a pragmatic view has to be taken considering the ground realities," Justice Kanade said. The Bench was informed by MM-

RCL advocate Kiran Bagalia that the corporation has given an undertaking to restore green cover removed for building stations. "We will be replanting trees and will also do compensatory mangrove replantation," she said. Ms. Bagalia also told the court that a loan has been taken from Japan, and delays have huge cost repercussions.

Advocate Robin Jaisinghani, who had appeared for a petitioner in the earlier PIL, said no underground construction can be carried out in a CRZ-III area, where the BKC station will come up. The court said there is no need for activists and residents to take an adversarial stand and they must consider the situation in Mumbai. The matter will be heard again on June 24.