

# Revise Navi Mumbai transport hub plan to save mangroves, says MCZMA

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**MUMBAI:** Upholding the Bombay high court's (HC) September 2018 order to protect mangroves, the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) has asked the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) to revise its plan for a major transport corridor passing through Navi Mumbai.

The coastal body directed MMRDA to "explore a different alignment" for the proposed 18-km multimodal corridor, extending from Chirner village in Uran to Balavali on national highway (NH) 17. The details were released after MCZMA published the minutes of its 135th meeting on Tuesday. "The project passes through mangroves and their 50m buffer zone near Karanja creek," said a senior MCZMA official.

Sanjay Khandare, MMRDA's additional metropolitan commissioner, said, "We will take some time to examine the matter since the minutes have been published recently. As of now, the Vashi Bridge is the only route to go from Mumbai to Pune or Goa. With this project, people can move directly from south Mumbai using MTHL saving 55 minutes to an hour of commute." "MMRDA needs to consult the mangrove cell... An environment impact assessment (EIA) report for the entire stretch of the project needs to be submitted... MMRDA needs to clarify whether the project involves reclamation of coastal water bodies. It has not carried out public hearing for the project," read the minutes of the meeting.

## WORK WILL REQUIRE DESTRUCTION OF 19.95-HA MANGROVES

- A multimodal corridor is a single corridor, which facilitates multiple modes of transport, including buses (through a bus rapid transit system), Metro rail and cars. It also includes utilities such as water, sewage and gas pipeline
- The 18-km proposed corridor in Navi Mumbai will extend from Chirner village in Uran (under the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust area) to Balavali on the national

highway (NH) 17

- It will have six flyovers, three vehicular underpasses, two overpasses, eight bridges and a 0.8-km long tunnel

- According to Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, the corridor will act as a connector between the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) and NH4B, connecting Mumbai to Goa on one end and the Mumbai-Pune Expressway with NH 17 on the other end

- This is expected to reduce travel time by an hour

- The entire project will span across 220.39 hectare including forests, mangroves, and agricultural areas. It will pass 2.3 km east of Karnala Bird Sanctuary

- Experts say work will require destruction of 19.95 hectares of mangrove forests located close to Patalganga river and Karanja creek in Raigad.

# BMC to plant 1K mangroves along Mithi river in Mahim

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**MUMBAI:** The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will start planting 1,000 mangroves at the mouth of Mithi river at Mahim Causeway on Friday. This is part of the civic body's plan to build a joggers' track and a walkway along the river.

Over the last one month, BMC cleared a total of 4,124 tonnes of waste and debris from the area for the project. On July 16, Hindustan Times reported the civic body's plan to create the track, along with a viewing gallery overlooking the sea at one end.

On Wednesday, Sharad Ughade, assistant commissioner of H West ward (which covers this area), said, "We have received



■ The civic body cleared 4,124 tonnes of waste from the area over one month. HT PHOTO

mangroves from the forest department and will start planting them in two days. We have already cleared out the garbage." The mangroves will be planted across a two-acre stretch.

N Vasudevan, chief conservator of forest, said, "The mangroves will be planted in two stages. In the first phase, we will plant true mangroves near the creek water. On the landward side, we will plant mangrove associates." Mangrove associates refer to saplings that are planted alongside mangroves to help them grow. They look exactly like mangroves, but can't withstand salinity and grow on the landward side of a mangrove patch.

"We are going to plant three types of species. There is a denotified forest area near the mouth of the Mithi, where we will plant two species of true mangroves. Further away from the forest area, the soil is not fit for true mangroves. Here, we will plant the associates," Vasudevan said.