

# 104 trees likely to be removed for Versova-Bandra Sea Link project

MSRDC submits proposal to BMC's tree authority; people can raise objections before May 16

TANVI DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

As many as 104 trees will have to be felled to make way for the Versova-Bandra Sea Link (VBSL) project. The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), which is executing the project, has submitted a proposal to the tree authority of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). The tree authority has invited suggestions and objections.

The VBSL project is already embroiled in controversy as it requires the removal of around 1,500 trees in mangroves. Besides, the Supreme Court recently dismissed an MSRDC petition seeking permission to set up a casting yard at Juhu beach.

Of the 104 trees, the MSRDC proposal calls for cutting 58 trees and transplanting the rest. The trees are in Bandra Carter Road, Seven Bungalows (near Nana Nani Park) in Versova, and Juhu Koliwada, near Sunil Dutt garden, Santacruz (W). These three sites are where the sea link will join the main land through connectors. The trees need to be removed for building these connectors.

Environmentalist Zoru Bhatena, who has been fighting against destruction of these mangroves, has also appealed to people to submit objections to the proposal. "The MSRDC's environmental clearance had only mentioned the removal of mangroves. There was no mention of tree cutting. We will oppose the proposal in court if passed by the tree authority," Mr. Bhatena said.

Shankar Dhote, chief engineer and project in-charge of the MSRDC, said, "The trees are located either on private premises or in the BMC land. They are not in forest land. Then why should we take permission of the forest de-

partment? As per rules, we will take permission of the tree authority." Those who want to submit suggestions or objections can do so before May 16. They can send them to 'Superintendent of Gardens and Tree Officer, VJB Udyan, Dr. Ambedkar Road, Byculla (East), or email to sg.gardens@mcgm.gov.in. A public hearing will be held on May 21.

However, the constitution of the tree authority itself is on hold, following litigation. The HC had prohibited the authority from taking decisions until it appoints experts to its panel. The BMC has finalised four experts to be part of the authority, but their appointment needs to be ratified by the court and the HC needs to formally allow the tree authority to undertake operations before any decision is made.



**Low shelf life:** Trees near Nana Nani Park in Seven Bungalows, Versova, will be felled for constructing connectors for the project. • PRASHANT WAYDANDE

## Road widening not required: Sanpada residents

### Protest NMMC's move to relocate 81 trees

RAINA ASSAINAR  
NAVI MUMBAI

Residents of Sanpada have objected to the relocation of 81 trees for widening of an internal road in Sector 8 and planned a protest against the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) for the move.

The NMMC notices pasted on the trees said the trees would have to be transplanted for the road-widening work. But the residents claimed they had planted the trees in 2004. The trees include 79 pheltophorum trees, one Indian almond, and one alstonia tree.

"When we had shifted here in 2004, there was not



**Keeping cool:** Residents claim they had planted the trees on this internal road in 2004. • YOGESH MHATRE

a single tree. Children from our society have watered and nurtured the trees over the years," Nayana Chikane, a resident of Suyog housing society, said.

Various associations and political parties along with individuals have sent objec-

tion letters to the NMMC. "Close to 15 objection letters have been sent. This internal road doesn't have any traffic issues," Ajay Pawar, joint secretary, Akhil Sanpada Sanskritik Pratishtan, said.

The road, which extends

from plot number 12 to 21 in Sector 8, is 11 metres wide. "How can the government think of removing 81 trees just to increase the width of the road by four metres? The NMMC pledges to plant one lakh trees every year, then why uproot the fully-grown trees? We have been called for a meeting at the NMMC on Monday and depending on the outcome of the meeting, we will take a call," Ghanshyam Pate, secretary of the pratishtan, said.

Prakash Giri, superintendent, NMMC's garden department, said the proposal came from the CIDCO as it is planning to widen the road. "We have put up notices and have received many objection letters. A hearing has been scheduled after which the final call will be taken," he said.

## Museum lift crash: eyes, skin of Parsi dentist donated

JYOTI SHELAR  
MUMBAI

The family of Parsi dentist Arnavaz Havewalla, who succumbed to injuries she suffered in Byculla's Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum lift crash, has donated her skin and corneas.

Havewalla had always wished to do the noble deed, and on May 9, when doctors

broke the news of her death, her kin conveyed her wish to them.

Her corneas were sent to Eye Bank Coordination and Research Centre at KBH Bachooali Hospital, Parel, and the skin was sent to the National Burns Centre, Airoli.

Dr. Ardeshir Jagose, a friend of Havewalla, said she had always expressed her

wish of donating her skin and eyes.

"She had conveyed that her skin should be donated to the National Burns Centre. Thus, even when Masina Hospital had a skin bank, a team from the NBC was called in as per her wish," Dr. Jagose told *The Hindu*. Havewalla's last rites were performed at Doonger-

wadi in Kemps Corner on Saturday morning.

On April 28, Havewalla and her daughter Hera were taking a tour of the museum when they were injured in the lift crash. The hydraulic lift, meant for senior citizens and differently abled, was installed in 2008 when the museum was restored. The mother and daughter were

rushed to Masina Hospital with multiple injuries and fractures. Havewalla had a severe pelvic fracture and Hera had a fracture in the leg. While Hera was discharged from the hospital a few days later, Havewalla's condition deteriorated on May 9 after she developed pulmonary thromboembolism and died.