

## **Government's decision on Aarey forest lands**

### **What is the issue?**

\n\n

\n

- Maharashtra government is firm in ceding the Aarey forest land for metro projects.

\n

- This has aggravated distress among civil society as the forest area falls under eco sensitive zone.

\n

\n\n

### **What is the significance of Aarey forest?**

\n\n

\n

- It is considered to be Mumbai's green lung which spreads over 1,300 hectare in the city's northern suburb.

\n

- It is home to several species of birds, insects and leopards, and was once part of the adjoining Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

\n

- This forest was once used to be over 3,000 acres in north Mumbai has been reduced to around 1,300 acres.

\n

\n\n

### **What are the threats faced by the Aarey forest?**

\n\n

\n

- In 1949, 3,160 acres were pencilled off for the Aarey Milk Colony, which comprised a milk factory, pastures for cattle grazing and residential units for labourers.

\n

- The land was handed over to Aarey Milk Colony, an autonomous body, and was declared a No-Development Zone.

- \n
- That changed in 2014, when the State government converted it into a Development Zone.
- \n
- Recently the Maharashtra government has decided to provide 3% (which will around 21 sq. kms) of this ecologically sensitive zone for a Metro car shed.
- \n
- Government is firm in its decision even after the recommendations of a technical committee appointed by Bombay HC to relocate the car shed.
- \n
- Apart from the Metro car shed, the Goregaon-Mulund Link Road, now in its planning phase, will eat into the forest area.
- \n

\n\n



\n\n

### **What will be the consequences of government's move?**

\n\n

- \n
- The developments in this area have consequences of the felling of over 2,000 trees.
- \n
- The car shed construction is expected to be declared as a high security area which will rob enthusiasts of one of their favourite cycling or trekking venues.
- \n
- There are also concerns related to tribals who stay in Aarey and their rehabilitation.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n