

## **Maharashtra: 600-acre Aarey land near national park earmarked as forest**

02 September 2020



The area to be excluded from the forest will be ascertained after seeking suggestions and objections from citizens, the statement said.

The Maharashtra government on Wednesday decided to reserve 600-acre Aarey land near the [Sanjay Gandhi](#) National Park (SGNP) in suburban Mumbai as a forest and conserve the same.

The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who said, the forest would be the first example of a “huge jungle” being conserved at the centre of a megapolis, an official statement said.

Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray, Forest Minister Sanjay Rathod, Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde, Chief Secretary Sanjay Kumar and others were present for the meeting, the statement said. The chief minister instructed during the meeting to safeguard the rights of adivasis (tribals) while the area is reserved as forest.

The area to be excluded from the forest will be ascertained after seeking suggestions and objections from citizens, the statement said. Constructions of all types, roads, slums, adivasi pockets and government facilities will be excluded from the first phase of the initiative, the statement said.

The slums within the area will be rehabilitated immediately, the statement said. In a series of tweets after the meeting, Aaditya Thackeray said, Approx 600 acres of open land being declared as forest while all rights of Adivasi communities will stand protected.

“Rehabilitation of slums within the area would be expedited. This wld be phase 1 for which the Forest Dept will move a proposal. Phase 2 survey for additional open/forest land in Aarey, post Phase 1 will begin soon. “This would help the State protect the flora & fauna existent in SGNP and Aarey, Aaditya Thackeray added. The forested Aarey Colony in suburban Goregaon is a prominent green lung of Mumbai.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/maharashtra-600-acre-aarey-land-near-national-park-earmarked-as-forest-6580615/>