

SGNP gets 800 acres from Aarey colony as forest department agrees to add another 200 acres to what CM Thackeray sought

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Green breather: Forest Dept expands the 600 acres in Aarey CM declared forest to 800 acres and links it to Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

The Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), shrinking over the years because of encroachments, will now expand by 800 acres.

Just weeks after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray proposed to designate 600 acres of land in Aarey Colony as forest, the state government's Forest Department has not only agreed to add another 200 acres to what the CM sought, but also link the entire land parcel to the neighbouring SGNP

With the additional 800 acres, SGNP will now spread over an area of around 106 sq km, up 3 km from the existing 103 sq km – a gain of almost an entire Central Park in New York.

Mumbai Mirror

[State fixes price of plasma for COVID treatment at Rs 5,500, 64 slices CT scans at Rs 2,500](#)

A statement issued by the health department says hospitals that are overcharging must issue immediate refunds.

SGNP, one of the few national parks in the world located within a bustling city, is home to over 40 leopards. While SGNP leopards often strayed into Aarey, with the addition of 800 acres, it will become their legitimate stomping ground.

Confirming the development, SGNP Director G Mallikarjun said the land will be first taken over from Aarey by the Revenue Department and then declared reserve forest. "The 800 acre is spread over Goregaon village, Aarey village and Marol Maroshi village in revenue records," he said.

A senior cabinet minister said that around 825 acres will be declared as a reserve forest. It will include the Aarey Colony but not the site of the Metro 3 car shed since no formal decision to shift the car shed has been taken so far.

Mumbai Mirror

The reserve forest will include Aarey but not the Metro-3 car shed site

While Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray has been pushing for saving Aarey Colony, Forest Minister Sunil Kedar took the lead in connecting it to SGNP.

“There will be a process of suggestions and objections. This will take around nine months. There are several tribal hamlets here and the residents have legacy rights over the forest. So, we are expecting around 50 acres to remain outside the reserve forest area,” said the minister.

While the previous Devendra Fadnavis government was hell bent on building a Metro car shed at Aarey and had ordered cutting of trees in the middle of the night after a favourable court order, Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA is pushing for relocation of the car shed site and preservation of Aarey land as a forest.

Mumbai Mirror

[Now, get COVID test results in 13 minutes, devices to be officially inaugurated by Dy.CM Ajit Pawar](#)

Pune is all set to begin 'Covid-19 molecular testing' that promises results in just 13 minutes. The city has received the first-of-its-kind testing device in the country that is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and Drugs Controller General of India. The devices, brought by Krsnaa Diagnostics Pvt Ltd,

Principal Secretary, Forest, Milind Mhaikar, who visited Aarey last week, said a slum rehabilitation site located within Aarey has also been moved out freeing up a large land parcel. "Besides, to have a zoo within Aarey is not a great concept. SGNP is a proper forest and we already have a zoo in Byculla. So, the 100 acres reserved for zoo also comes back," he said.

Mhaikar said roads within Aarey will be improved and new forest trails will be created. "SGNP's leopard population density is highest in the world. We are planning to add a total of 800 acres to SGNP," he said.