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Fisher folk allege land acquisition plan, stage protest

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Fisher folk from Shivshastri Machhimar Nagar staging a protest, alleging a move to acquire land for the Metro III project.— Photo: Vivek Bendre

MMRC says no decision has been taken

Fearing acquisition of a plot from a colony of fisher folk in South Mumbai for the upcoming Metro III project, residents of the area on Wednesday held a demonstration protesting against any such move. Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRC), however, clarified that no such decision had been taken.

“We have been told by government officials that a plot in our colony is going to be acquired for the upcoming metro project. We have been earning our livelihood from this land for ages now, which we cannot afford to lose,” said Mahesh Tandel, president, Maharashtra Macchimar Sanghatana and a resident of Shivshastri Machhimar Nagar. Mr Tandel said instead of using the adjacent vacant plot for the metro work, the government was attempting to snatch away their land. “They may even eye our huts. We have decided not to give an inch of it,” he said.

According to the residents of colony, the plot is being used for repairing of boats, drying fish and weaving nets. “The affluent residents of the Cuffe Parade area do not want our colony and it seems to be an attempt to throw us out,” said Mr Tandel. The residents of the colony gathered in large numbers on Wednesday morning anticipating a government bid to acquire the land. “We have been receiving calls and MMRDA officials wanted to have meetings with us. But how can they do it without serving any notice,” said one of the protesters.

When contacted, Ashwini Bhide, managing director of the MMRC, said she did not hear of any protest at Cuffe Parade.

“As far as I know we have not sent any notice for such acquisition. But in case there has been protest anywhere, I will surely look in to the matter,” she told *The Hindu*.

Managing director of MMRC says no notice has been sent for land acquisition