

School Children Protest Aarey Metro Shed!

Mumbai: In a surprise move, schools are taking out protests march to oppose the civic authority's decision to make metro car sheds in Aarey Colony. Recently, Malad west based convent school Infant Jesus school children took out protest march in their uniforms. Infant Jesus is an government aided school and they taking out march against government is quite a daring move to try to save Aarey Green patch.

On Tuesday, around 200 children took out protest march against civic authority's decision to destroy Aarey greenery and other natural areas for Metro car sheds. The civic authority had released its revised draft development plan recently where it put metro car shed reservation on Aarey Colony and mangroves at western coast of the city.

Inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1951, the Aarey dairy saw a parade of high-profile state guests in its early years including USSR's Leonid Brezhnev and Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito. Queen Elizabeth planted a sapling at the New Zealand Hostel, so called to honour the country's gift of cows.

It's a far cry from the late 1940s when Aarey Colony was set up on land cleared from jungle as part of the Bombay Milk Scheme, introduced to ensure quality milk supply for the metropolis.

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For decades, the dairy produced much of the city's milk. But as private milk companies have grown in recent years, Aarey's production has fallen—deliberately. Dairy officials seem indifferent. They have no information on the dairy's functioning and to be unaware of encroachments in Aarey colony. An estimated one lakh people officially live in Aarey—there are around 30,000 registered voters—with slums at 46 places, say local activists.

Authorities have also allowed Chhota Kashmir, once a popular tourist attraction and setting for Hindi film songs, to fall into disrepair. The operator, who has been served an eviction notice, claims irregular water supply makes it difficult to maintain the plants. The park no longer figures on the state tourism agency website.