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## Supreme Court Allows Removal Of Make-Shift Fire Engine Shed From Priyadarshini Park

Jan 09, 2018, 08:47 IST | Hemal Ashar

**Supreme Court Refuses To Entertain Civic Body's Special Leave Petition Against The Bombay High Court Ruling Asking For Temporary Fire Shed To Be Removed**

*The fire engine that had been brought inside Priyadarshini Park. File pic*

It is all smiles, champagne and celebration time for a swathe of Nepean Sea Road and Malabar Hill residents. Yesterday, the Supreme Court did not entertain the Special Leave Petition filed by the BMC in response to a Bombay High Court order of October 2017, wherein a bench of Chief Justice Manjula Chellur and Justice M S Sonak had directed the civic body to remove a fire engine and temporary shed covering it constructed inside Priyadarshini Park.

*Authorities had not only brought in the fire engine but also built a shed over it*

An elated Susie Shah, secretary of Malabar Hill Citizens Forum (MHCF), which takes care of Priyadarshini Park (PDP), said, "I think the matter has been rested. We are delighted that the fire engine stays out of the park. Some months ago, the MHCF along with a group of residents had taken a delegation to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who himself had suggested a place near Kamala Nehru Park as an alternative site for a fire engine and fire station. This is such good news, and the win vindicates our stand that a park is no place for a fire engine and fire station. We maintain though that a fire station is necessary and there are other plots that need to be looked at."

### Other locations

MHCF has been telling the authorities to look at a huge, vacant plot adjacent to the Park, belonging to the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation Limited (MSRDC), which is currently vacant.

For Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant, who inaugurated a children's corner within the PDP complex in January 2017, way before the fire engine fracas, the Supreme Court decision is good news "with a capital G". "Very, very good," said Sawant, as he heard the verdict.

"There was no need for a fire engine in the park. There are other, in fact, ample spaces where the engine can be stationed. This (parking the engine at PDP) has

been a deliberate act. There is an MSRDC plot adjacent that is vacant. Why was it not looked at? What nonsense was going on here? I am with you, I am with you," finished the angry though now relieved MP.

BJP MLA Mangal Prabhat Lodha was more restrained in his reaction to the PDP news. Lodha said, "I think it is good that Priyadarshini Park will be used for the public. The BMC will have to look for alternative spaces in D ward. There is the MSRDC plot and there is space near the Hanging Gardens too."

### Celebration time

Residents, many of whom had been alarmed at the sight of a fire engine in the park in June, then relieved at the HC order, only to be on tenterhooks again as they heard the BMC had gone to Supreme Court, are over the moon. Malabar Hill resident Prakash Munshi, a well-known anti-mobile tower radiation activist, said, "This is excellent news. It is hugely inspirational for ordinary people when a citizens' movement bears fruit."

A local, Kumar Jain, who lives opposite the park and says PDP is part of the ecosystem of the Nepean Sea Road community, said, "Hurrah! Victory is ours. More significantly, this is a win according to the law, with the help of the law. We were planning rasta rokos and andolans (protests), but we have won in court. This 'yudh' started sometime ago and has reached an end today. This has proved to be a victory for truth."

Another Malabar Hill resident, however, said, "It is imperative that we have a fire station in the area. It is an absolute necessity, and I hope things are speeded up. One fire engine does not make sense; we need a full-fledged fire station to prevent loss of lives."

### Case history

In June 2017, locals were shocked to see a fire engine stationed on the walking track, right next to the kids' play area, opposite Jal Darshan buildings. The MHCF had then accused fire department's workers of damaging the arch over gate number 2 from where the engine entered and of hacking several tree branches to make way for the truck. A temporary shed was built to cover the fire engine to protect it during rains. The BMC had brought the fire engine inside the park days after a HC bench in June had dismissed a 2006 PIL filed by the MHCF, challenging plans to set up a fire station on the premises.

**05**  
Number of months the fire engine was in the park

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