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BMC CAN'T KEEP FIRE ENGINE IN PARK: HC

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The Bombay High Court said on Wednesday that the BMC's decision to keep a fire engine inside a public park in South Mumbai was "completely illegal."

A bench of justices AS Oka and PN Deshmukh dismissed the civic body's argument that it was the original owner of the said land and hence could use it for any suitable purpose. The bench was hearing a plea filed by Malabar Hill Citizens Forum (MHCF) against the BMC's decision to station a fire engine inside the sprawling Priyadarshini Park in Malabar Hill by erecting a shed.

Residents had told the high court that several trees had been damaged and the park's entrance was demolished to make way for the fire engine and the parking shed. They had also said the gates of the park had to be kept open at night for the free movement of the fire engine. The BMC, on its part, had argued that the fire engine occupied only a 10-sqm area in the park, which was spread over 6,000 sqm, and that it was stationed there for residents' safety.

The civic body had argued that the park had been leased to the citizens' forum for use and maintenance and that, as per the original development plan, some area inside the park was reserved in 1987 for construction of a fire station.

The bench, however, dismissed BMC's argument and said: "The corporation's previous decision to encroach upon a public park was completely illegal and showed high-handedness."



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