

NAVI MUMBAI AIRPORT MAY GET CRZ EXEMPTIONS

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The environment ministry might clear the Navi Mumbai airport project. The prime minister's office (PMO) has asked the ministry to exclude the project from Coastal Regulatory Zone restrictions.

Chief minister Ashok Chavan had discussed the matter with the prime minister at least twice in the past one month. Also, there were a couple of meetings at the secretary level between the state and centre.

The PMO will also write to the law and judiciary ministry. And the judiciary will decide whether Navi Mumbai airport should be treated as a special case or other projects too should be exempted from CRZ rules.

An officer from the urban development department said environment was a big hurdle.

"We requested them to consider the Navi Mumbai project on the lines of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands," he said.

The proposed Coastal Management Zone (CMZ), which will replace CRZ, excludes airports from such restrictions.

"It will take some time for the actual implementation. But we cannot wait because the Mumbai airport is congested," the official said.

The proposed airport will come up on 2,053 hectares. The airport will be developed in four phases. The first phase is expected to be completed by 2012 and the entire project by 2028. By 2035 the air traffic is expected to go up to 50 million every year. The present capacity of the Mumbai airport is 20 million passengers.

Source: DNA India dated 23/01/2009