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BMC panel passes plan for dumping site closure

MUMBAI: The BMC standing committee may have managed to escape the Bombay high court's ire by clearing a crucial Rs 4,408-crore proposal on Monday for the Deonar dumping ground's scientific closure. The same panel had earlier ignored repeated warnings from the judiciary for failure to come up with concrete steps for the dump site's development.

Pointing to the repercussions of yet another denial, committee members said they did not want to take any chances. "We will be implicated for contempt of court if we don't pass this proposal. The court is very clear in holding both bureaucrats and elected representatives responsible for playing with citizens' lives," said BJP corporator Ashish Shelar.

The committee had rejected the proposal, which was first tabled late last year. Fearing the high court's contempt proceedings against the BMC, the civic administration re-submitted the proposal last week. The court had slammed both the administration and the [corporation](#) for hampering citizens' "freedom to life" by not doing their best to ease the woes of lakhs.

The court has initiated contempt proceedings against civic chief Jairaj Phatak for the BMC's failure to reduce pollution in and around Deonar. The Smoke Affected Residents' Forum had filed a PIL in 1996 demanding its closure. On June 7, an angry high court said the court had given numerous opportunities to the [civic](#) administration to rectify the situation, but it had repeatedly failed.

"Prima facie, it appears that apart from taking some superficial steps, the BMC has not made any concrete efforts. This is the last opportunity to the administration and related civic

committees to bring about improvement. It is a matter of public health and we will not tolerate any further delay," the high court order read.

Mumbai generates 10,000 tonnes of waste a day, 70% of which is dumped on the saturated Deonar ground. The project would scientifically close half the ground and make the other half a sanitary landfill. The same public-private partnership model is to be repeated at Mulund and Kanjurmarg, helping ease the city's garbage woes