

Chinese to go underground in Chennai

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CHENNAI: The ongoing construction of the Metro Rail network in the city is set to go truly international, with nearly 60 labourers from Shanghai arriving soon.

According to Chief Occupation Health Safety and Environment Manager of Larsen and Toubro N. Radhakrishnan, they were coming to Chennai as part of a Memorandum of Understanding, signed among Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) and joint venture partners, Larsen & Toubro (L&T) India and the China-based Shanghai Urban Construction Group (SUCG) in December 2010.

The Chinese labourers specialise in operating Tunnel Boring Machines (TBM).



They will work predominantly at construction sites in Nehru Park, Kilpauk Medical College and Pachaiyappas College, where underground stations are being built.

The Chinese workforce is expected to arrive by the end of June and will stay in Chennai for at least two years.

According to Mr. Radhakrishnan, L&T will accommo-

date them at a quarters coming up in Vayalanallur near Pattabiram. "They will stay in air-conditioned rooms with an area of 387 square feet each. Buses and cars will be arranged to ferry them to different construction sites," he told *The Hindu*. According to senior officials of CMRL, each of the contractors carrying out the construction of Metro Rail in Chennai was hiring some tunnel boring machine experts from different countries they engage with. "Some from Russia and Germany are already here. And those from China are about to arrive soon," he said.

Observing that India did not have too many experts who can handle tunnel boring machines, the official said it was only logical that

labourers who were trained in the area were roped in.

"They have the experience and that becomes very important while carrying out such an important project," he said.

According to CMRL officials, a total of eleven TBMs will be used to tunnel passages connecting the underground stations. The machines are being sourced from China.

Of the 11, four will be used for the seven underground stations along Anna Salai. Two of the machines will be used at the construction sites of stations at Saidapet, Chamiers Road, Teynampet and Gemini.

Two others will be used at the stations coming up at Thousand Lights, LIC and Government Estate.