

Metro, mono rail projects stuck owing to model code

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Pic: A.Prathap

Road infrastructure projects in the state have been delayed and the enforcement of model code of conduct is going to add more days to them. Several projects have been put on hold for at least three months, till the elections finish by the end of May. According to the code, no new project or scheme can be announced and all pending tender processes must be frozen till the elections are done.

The worst affected perhaps is chief minister J Jayalalithaa's pet project, monorail for Chennai. The state transport corporation envisioned completing it by March 2017. The due date for receiving applications from potential bidders was March 3, the corporation planned to sell bid documents to shortlisted companies on April 2 and open bids for scrutiny on May 5. They have no explanation for how they planned the project in the midst of elections. An official said, "The opening of bids may not happen till the model code of conduct is lifted."

Chennai metro rail's first



NO MOVEMENT: Metro rail officials say they will get special permission to continue the tender process

phase, stuck owing to termination of a contract for construction of 10 stations, is another cause for concern. Completion of seven stations is crucial for inauguration of the first phase between Koyambedu and Alandur by the end of the year. So far, an alternative contractor has not been identified. Officials claim they may get special permission from the Election Commission to finalise the contract. "The model code of conduct may not affect us because tenders have been floated. We can take permission from EC and award the contract," said an official.

Work on two grade separators at Red Hills and Tambaram will be held up owing to delay in finalising bids. "We called for tenders for a four-lane grade separator at Red Hills-Kolathur junction on February 28," said an official.

The highways' plan to widen GST Road between Tambaram and Irumbaliyur—a distance of 1km—is also stuck. Last year, the government had sanctioned Rs 43 crore for the work. "Initially we had planned to open the tenders by end of March. Now, we will have to wait," said another official.