

# Rains will not throw Metro work off rail, say officials

‘Machines have been programmed anticipating weather’

Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI:** Residents of the city may be eagerly looking forward to the monsoon next month, but for Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), it would mean getting equipped on various fronts so that the project proceeds smoothly during the rains.

With construction work on some metro stations having plunged underground, one would think the work site would transform into little ponds with a lot of muddy water and slush. However, CMRL officials say nothing would stop, particularly at the sites where tunnel boring machines (TBMs) are being operated.

“The TBMs are fully automated. Its entire functioning has been pre-programmed anticipating different weather conditions,” said an official. Tunnelling work is currently proceeding apace at the Nehru Park site. The tunnelling segment from Nehru Park station to Egmore station will be the first to be completed, covering a distance of 939 metres in five months.

The TBM, said to be one of the most advanced technologies in underground construction work, will have two operators manning it in different shifts, 24x7. “It

doesn't matter if it rains, the operators will be seated in air-conditioned cabins set up at ground level. The entire operation is set and will proceed systematically,” the official explained.

In many other sites where underground stations are being built, work will not be disrupted due to rains, officials said.

Flooded roads, inundated pockets and chaotic traffic are annual features, if the city's memory of monsoons

is anything to go by. But CMRL seems confident about handling such situations. “Nothing changes within the construction site,” an official emphasised.

Asked what precautions would be taken to ensure workers' safety, officials said each of them would be provided with raincoats, umbrellas and gum boots. “But if the rain is too heavy, we might have to suspend work. Those decisions would be taken on a day-to-day basis,”

the official said.

Each station would require a maximum of 200 workers when construction work is at its peak.

With regard to elevated stations, where construction has progressed considerably, mechanisms are in place to ensure that the rain water is pumped and drained out automatically every day.

Officials said track-laying work was nearly complete in Vadapalani, which is part of the elevated corridor.

