

Afcons keen on drilling for metro phase-II

'Innovation helped Finish Anna Salai Tunnelling'

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Chennai: After successfully completing tunnelling under Anna Salai for metro rail's 45-m phase-I, Afcons Infrastructure is keen on collaborating for the 105-km phase-II as well.

"Wherever their projects are, for CMRL, we would definitely be one of the preferred contractors," said K Subrahmanian, vice-chairman and managing director, Afcons Infrastructure Limited, who was



R Ramesh Shankar

SEEKING NEW CHALLENGES: K Subrahmanian, vice-chairman and managing director, said Afcons Infrastructure Limited was one of CMRL's preferred contractors

in the city earlier this week.

The company that is also building three-level underground station at Central, took over tunnelling under Anna Salai in June 2016, a year after a Russian contractor abandoned work citing financial cri-

sis. Having worked in a complex soil condition under a tight deadline, Afcons is set to hand over the 4.1km line from May Day Park to AG-DMS to CMRL in January 2018. "We faced a mixed soil strata, with both soil and rock in the same cross

section, a condition that can slow down a project substantially and that is what we encountered in Chennai. But we took it as a challenge and completed it one month ahead of our deadline in February 2018," he said.

Part of Central Metro will be ready for operations in March 2018 and the rest, built completely on rock, will be handed over to CMRL by mid-2018, he said. As the soil conditions made construction difficult and even slowed it down, the Afcons team used a few innovative methods to complete the job on time.

On the May Day Park-AG-DMS stretch alone, they built the tunnels and the cross passages simultaneously. "We devised a new method to do that and are thinking of patenting it. Traditionally, cross passa-

ges are built after tunnels are constructed..." Subrahmanian said.

At Central, a stitch wall involving 'tying up' a reinforced concrete wall to the station diaphragm wall was built to save time cutting through the hard rock. "The tunnel boring machine was refurbished in the tunnel itself after we took over the May Day Park-AG-DMS stretch. We changed from conveyor belt system, which the previous contractor used, to loco to carry muck from the cutter..." he said.

"We are going to give CMRL inputs on certain good practices they can adopt whether in the form of contract documents, or in the form of early investigations, or in the way the projects are going to be packaged, or how they can do pre-qualifications," he said.