

Metro yet to operate all trains in automatic mode

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Chennai: It has been three years since metro trains started operating in the city but Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is yet to operate all the services in automatic mode.

Metro trains have two modes of operation – automatic train operation (ATO) and automatic train protection (ATP). When the trains are in ATO mode, all that the operator must do is – close the door. The rest of the train operations is automatic and is managed from a centralized operations control centre.

In ATP mode, the trains are operated manually but the system will take over only in case of an error or emergency. Train operators here still use the master console and control the brakes and traction systems during non-peak hours, while the personnel at the operations control centre only monitor. CMRL



In automatic train protection mode, the metro services are operated manually

says it's running the trains manually to train the operators.

"We still use ATP mode during non-peak hours because the train operators have to learn to use the master controller (the console of the train) in case of an emergency," a metro rail official said. "We use automatic mode during peak hours to maintain the frequency of trains, which is fed into the system." Metro rail has a strength of 88

train operators, who are trained and certified by CMRL.

However, manual operation of trains has been leading to glitches like non-syncing of platform screen doors (PSD) with the train doors at underground stations. Trains either stop much ahead or behind the intended stoppage area when they arrive at a station leading to non-syncing of doors. As a result, operators are found to move the train again to sync with the doors.

CMRL officials, however, deny that non-syncing of doors has anything to do with the skill of the train operator. "It depends on the signalling system. Also, when the operator applies more traction or brake than required in ATP mode, the train system will take care of it because it is in the protection mode. So, there is no chance of error," an official said.

CMRL is planning to operate driverless trains for the 107.55km phase-2 project.