

Signal software delay may hit metro Phase 1

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Chennai: A delay in supply of signal software for metro rail operations may hold up completion of the rest of Phase 1 including Anna Salai line, fear Chennai Metro Rail Limited officials. CMRL is gearing for trial runs on the 11km Washermenpet-AG-DMS stretch by September-end to get the line ready for operations by December.

A Germany-based company which holds the contract for developing software is yet to give the technology and has not been responding to requests either, CMRL managing director Pankaj Kumar Bansal said. "Everything else is done. Only the signal software is pending. The company is non-committal and seems to be pushing it till the last minute, so it can negotiate. It does not seem to be concerned about the fact that it is a public utility."

Signal software is the key to controlling train speed, communication within the train and stoppage at stations. CMRL will conduct trial runs before and after installing signalling systems before RDSO and CMRS inspections are undertaken.

"Signal software is a copyright issue. We are dependent on them and so they are trying to arm-twist. They have committed on paper to give us the software by March-April 2019 and are trying to charge us for expediting. But we are tough. Our target is December 15 and they



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can meet this target. Discussions are going on," Bansal said.

Electrification of the Washermenpet, High Court and Mannadi stations will be completed this week, and OHE installation and electrification of Anna Salai line between Government Estate and AG-DMS is also on. The trouble with the contractor is also causing uncertainty over the 9km Phase 1 extension from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar, which will link a part of North Chennai to the rest of the city through metro trains.

"I have finalised all tenders with existing contractors, including rolling stock, ventilation, lifts and escalators, except for signalling. They haven't submitted a commercial proposal to us," Bansal said.