Phase II Partly Funded by JICA, Construction To Begin By Yr End

Chennai: The loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has kick-started work on a portion of the 20.5 km phase II and Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) will soon hold discussions with four international banks as they are keen on financing the remaining portion of phase II and its extension around 20 km.

Tenders for construction for the phase II will be invited by June 2019 and the construction is likely to start before the end of this year.

CMRL managing director Pradeep Kumar Banumathy said the ministry of economic affairs has given in principle approval and letters from four banks—Asian Development Bank, New Development Bank, European Investment Bank and World Bank—will be visiting next week to get approval of the project.

"Ministry of economic affairs and ministry of finance deal with external financing for all projects. We have already signed agreement with JICA and now four other banks have given in principle approval. We will be meeting about the project in their teams, who will be visiting us," said Banumathy during a press meet ahead of an inspection by commissioners of metro rail safety on the last stretch between Washermena pet and AG Centre.

JICA signed an agreement in December 2018 to fund Rs 4,350.05 crores, which is nearly 60% of the total Rs 7,241.44 crores to build the 20.5 km priority corridor in phase II. It also sanctioned the first tranche of Rs 750.05 crores. The Rs 750.05 crores are estimated to cost Rs 850,000 crores. The Rs 850.00 is the first tranche.

Two-way traffic on Anna Salai by March

Chennai: Vehicular commuters can look forward to travelling on the Washermanpet to AG Centre stretch, the last leg of metro rail phase II, before the end of this month, motorists may have to wait a bit longer for two-way traffic to be restored on Anna Salai. CMRL officials said that both the sections linking AG Centre and Thousand Lights, which were made one-way last year, will be restored by March, as contractors will need time to complete work in the stations.

"The entry points for the stations may be ready, but our contractor will need time to complete the rest of the works," a metro rail official said.

On Saturday, the commissioner for metro rail safety began the three-day inspection on the 1.5 km Washermanpet to AG Centre stretch. In a press meet ahead of the inspection, responding to a question on several incidents of metro services affected due to technical glitches, case of glass panels breaking and false ceiling falling, the CMRLA Anandavel said they had not come to his notice.

"But it has to be part of routine maintenance and CMRL will take care. Such issues should instil a sense," he said.

In a meet to outline the projects, the commission said that it had taken over the 1.5 km stretch and other sections of the ongoing project will be implemented in due course.

Buses and small trucks, detailed design and rigid acquisition for the priority corridor are under way and it has been decided to build the 10-km stretch of the corridor before the end of the year. The PWD also said that it has been able to get funds from the Central government for the project. State government has taken care of everything. They said they have made a plan for 10 years for implementation of the plan. So, state government has approved it," he added.