

Metro starts trial run of north line

Washermentpet-Wimco Nagar stretch is likely to open by the end of January

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

Chennai Metro Rail on Sunday began a trial run of trains along the 9 km stretch of the phase I extension project between Washermentpet and Wimco Nagar in north Chennai.

This is the first time that the trains are being run on this stretch; on Saturday, a locomotive engine was operated. This stretch may be thrown open to the public by the end of January next.

According to officials of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), the trains will be running on this stretch for a few hours every day. "Such trial runs are essential to know the technical problems that mushroom at this stage; so, when we inspect continuously during these runs, we can fix them immediately," an official said.

The signalling test, too, was expected to be conduct-



Chugging forward: Trains will be operated on this stretch for a few hours every day as part of the trial. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

ed on Sunday but it was postponed, sources said.

"With the tunnels in the underground corridors and the elevated viaducts proving ready for operations on this 9.051 km stretch, the work on finishes and fit-outs are being done day and night to achieve early commission-

ing. Also, the surface restoration work is going on in parallel," according to a release.

The sources said that though trial runs had started, the construction of stations was not being done fast enough for them to be ready by January-end. One or two

stations were behind schedule, and it might be very difficult to complete them in another month, they said.

"Also, during the trial run with the locomotive engine, we found infringement [of a few structures] at two stations. Such issues should not have been there. It has been

corrected now," another source said.

Before beginning operations, CMRL needs to get signalling software and the final approval certificate from the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety. It is not clear how these processes will be completed in a month.