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Press Release

TBM “PELICAN” ACHIEVES BREAKTHROUGH – COMPLETION OF TWIN TUNNEL DRIVE IN CMRL PHASE-II

Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) proudly announces the successful breakthrough of Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) S1075B “PELICAN”, marking the completion of the twin tunnel drive between Panagal Park Station and Kodambakkam Ramp near Meenakshi College under Corridor-4, Package UG-2 of the Chennai Metro Rail Project, Phase-II. This remarkable milestone follows the earlier breakthrough of the parallel tunnel drive by TBM Peacock completed on July 23, 2025, signifying the full completion of both up and down tunnels along this important stretch.

TBM “PELICAN” commenced its initial drive on 1st March 2024 and transitioned into the main drive from 14th May 2024, completing a total tunnel length of 2076 m over duration of 594 days. This is the longest tunnel to be completed in Phase 2 Project as on date for a tunnel length of 2076 m. The machine achieved its final breakthrough today, 15th October 2025, after successfully navigating some of the most challenging underground conditions in Chennai. The alignment, extending from chainage 7266.09 to 9342.29, reached a maximum invert depth of –31.40 metres beneath the Indian Railways track at Kodambakkam, one of the deepest points along the corridor.

The breakthrough was witnessed by Thiru. T. Archunan, Director (Projects), CMRL, in the presence of Thiru. R. Ranganathan, General Manager, CMRL, and Thiru. Murugamoorthy, Team Leader, General Consultant, and other officials and staff of CMRL, Contractors and General Consultants were present during the event.

The tunnelling operation presented several engineering challenges, including excavation through mixed and fractured geological strata, passage below a densely built urban environment with multi-storey structures, and critical crossings beneath Indian Railways at Kodambakkam Station and two active flyovers. The drive also involved negotiating a tight S-curve with a 206-metre radius and executing the steepest tunnel gradient of +2.581% in the entire project. Despite these complexities, the project team demonstrated exceptional technical proficiency, planning, and coordination to achieve this milestone safely and successfully.

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