

Metro Man: BMRCL might be losing ₹50 lakh a day

E Sreedharan calculates the amount of loss Bangalore Metro would incur with every day of delay in Phase One



E Sreedharan

The Reach One of Bangalore Metro was initially scheduled to be opened for public use in December 2010. That's long gone. Then the launch was rescheduled to happen on April 4. That deadline, too, has passed. Now, it's expected to happen in August, 2011.

The Phase One of the Bangalore Metro was supposed to be competed by June 2012, but the deadline has been extended till mid-2013. Delay in Reach 1 would have a cascading effect on the other projects like tunnelling in Phase One, creating a huge loss to the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), which eventually the common man would have to pay for. This gives an uneasy feeling about Bangalore Metro to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Limited (DMRCL) MD **E Sreedharan**, the Metro Man of India. Sreedharan speaks to **Aparajita Ray** on the delay, loss and problems facing the Bangalore Metro.

What do you think is causing the delay in Bangalore Metro?

Each metro faces problems during the initial stages of the launch. Bangalore Metro can't be an exception. Having said that, you have a peculiar problem. The Commissioner for Railways Safety (CRS) retired at a crucial time and the Union ministry of civil aviation is yet to fill the vacant post. And it's manda-

tory for the BMRCL to get safety clearances from the Union government and the railways.

Are the four rules that are yet to be gazetted by the Centre crucial for the launch of Bangalore Metro?

I do not think the Bangalore Metro needs any more rules for its launch. The existing ones are the same that were applied to the Delhi Metro and more than enough for the launch.

Metro gets safety clearances from the railways and CRS. Can't there be a single authority, making the process simple?

Safety is a crucial matter, especially for the Metro. So, the railways would inspect certain aspects, while the CRS would look into the rest.

What are the challenges that the tunnelling project would face?

Underground Metro, for which tunnelling has to be done, costs five to six times the construction cost of elevated tracks. Tunnelling turns out to be a task for mixed-soil conditions like in Bangalore. Moreover, the choice of the tunnel-boring machine TBM matters a lot, since different kinds of TBMs are used for different soil conditions. So, the BMRCL has to plan the tunnelling project well and maintain the pace as time is money. I did my own calculation and found out that with every day of delay in the Phase One project, the BMRCL would lose ₹50 lakh.