



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • APRIL 08, 2019 • ₹6.00 • PAGES 38 • LATE CITY EDITION

LIFE IN A METRO: GROWTH AND CONCERNS

Yelahanka rail wheel factory may power Metro trains too

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METRO corporations across the country are looking at procuring wheels and axles from the Rail Wheel Factory (RWF) at Yelahanka rather than importing them. A high-level delegation from New Delhi along with top Metro officials of the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRL) visited the factory to explore the possibility.

Union Urban and Housing Affairs Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra, who is also the Chairman of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, accompanied by Ajay Seth, Managing Director of BMRL, held extensive talks in this connection with top RWF officials on Friday.

The RWF presently supplies wheels and axles for all coaches manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai, which supplies the entire Indian Railways.

Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer at RWF, Sanjeev Kishore expressed confidence that the factory had the technical expertise to meet the requirements of Metro trains. "There needs to be some technical changes incorporated but the wheels and axles used are similar to those used in Electric Multiple Unit trains

across the country. We are also putting in place a new Axle Forging Line which will help in increasing our capacity," Kishore told *TNIE*.

The 24x7 factory had produced 1,31,000 wheels and 64,000 axles for the previous financial year. "We have now set our sights at boosting it to 1,71,000 wheels and 70,000 axles for April 2019-March 2020," he added.

Mishra told *TNIE* that the Centre was not looking at procuring the wheels for any specific Metro Corporation. "We are looking at getting them in house for all Metro Corporations in the country," he said.

"Though the manufacturing price, whether we import it or manufacture it within the country is roughly the same, it will help further the 'Make in India' concept," he said.

BMRL Chief Public Relations Officer Y L Chavan said that Czechoslovakia-based Bonatrans Group Inc was supplying the rolling stock for Bangalore Metro presently. "BMRL would roughly require 2400 wheels and 1200 axles in the case of 50 six-car trains. However, the number of trains to be deployed for Phase-II is set to be much higher," he said.

Phase-II is set to cover a distance of 72.1 km and work is on to meet the 2023 deadline.



The factory presently supplies wheels and axles for all coaches manufactured in Chennai | EXPRESS

Metro line: 186 trees under threat on All Saint's Church premises



Members of All Saint's Church, which is a heritage building, just cannot imagine the premises without the huge green canopy. For several years, they have been coming here to pray, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Most of the trees that are likely to face the axe are over 100 years old, they say | PRADEEPANATH

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ALL Saint's Church, which will be celebrating its 150th year this November, may lose its green canopy in near future. As many as 186 trees on its premises will be felled to make way for the underground section of the Gattigeri-Nagawara Metro line, allege green activists. On Saturday morning, activists along with members of the church counted the number of trees which will face the BMRL's axe. Most of the trees that are under threat are over 100 years old, they told *The New Indian Express*.

"The part which is going to be acquired by Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRL) has many lush green trees. The city has already lost a lot of greenery due to Metro work, and we can't let it continue. Here at risk we have both the green canopy and the church which stands as a heritage building. Development should not be at the cost of environment," said Arun Prasad, an activist.

Ebenezer, an office-bearer of the Church committee, said, "How can we let such a huge canopy get destroyed. We have many trees, including sandalwood, banyan, mango, bamboo and oak, here. Children play and senior citizens take a walk inside the church's green premises. If this place is demolished, we will lose one of our heritage sites."

"I have been visiting the church for the past 23 years. During the weekends I come and spend my whole day here because of the shade and cool breeze. If the greenery is gone, the campus will lose its charm," said Keerthana Tulip.

Christopher HD, who has started an online petition to save the All Saint's Church, said, "If BMRL goes ahead with the plan, both the gates of the premises will be closed. People might even stop coming here then."

Another member of the church said that they will even lose the school for special children and a pavilion hall where many wedding ceremonies take place.