

City gets first metro tunnel

In a major relief to the engineers working day and night to bring the metro network to life, yesterday afternoon, city's first tunnel successfully came to life near the international airport.

In an event attended by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Wainganga, one of the 14 Tunnel Boring Machines (TBM) working beneath the ground, made a breakthrough and saw the light of day after 259 days.

"When I learned that the STEC (Shanghai Tunnel Engineering Company) has six sophisticated high-tech boring machines, of which three are presently in use in Mumbai, I asked them to bring the other three as well to expedite the work," said a cheerful Fadnavis to the media and dignitaries, even as engineers continued merrily clicking pictures with the boring machine inside a huge pit.

Nearly 250 engineers, technical and mechanical workers worked in tandem on the project to ensure that the 1.26-km long tunnel was dug to perfection. Happiness was in the air as every person with a yellow or green headgear and green or blue vests looked on enthusiastically, watching one of them unfurling first the Indian flag and



LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL: Engineers and workers rejoice as the TBM sees the light of the day after successfully completing boring an underground tunnel for 259 days

then a blue STEC flag at the machine, as their hard work paid off.

The mood was mirrored by Ashwini Bhide, Managing Director, Mumbai Metro Rail

Corporation (MMRC) as she congratulated her team and the engineers of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and STEC, the two companies who worked on the tunnelling work of

Package 7 (Marol Naka, MIDC, SEEPZ) as a joint venture. "Around 25 to 30 per cent of the work is now complete," she said.

Along with congratulating

the team, she asked them to work harder as the road ahead is really long. "I must ask you all to work harder than before as the people of the city is desperate to get more modes of transports," said Bhide. "This is a mere beginning and we need to keep doing more and more and in a better way. Mumbai's face is going to change in the next 2-3 years," said Fadnavis.

"The Trans-Harbour Link, Coastal Road, International Airport, Bandra-Versova Sealink and an Integrated Ticketing System will all help in creating an integrated public transport," said the chief minister, adding that metro, especially Metro-3 will play an important role in providing end-to-end connectivity by joining the suburban railway network to other disconnected sections of the city.

Essentially, yesterday the city got its first tunnel through which a metro will pass through in the next few years. The TBM that did the work to make this happen was commissioned on January 8, 2018 from Pali ground at Marol village in Andheri

East. It marked an important milestone towards the coherent completion of the 33.5-km long Metro-3 corridor (Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ).

Highlights of Metro-3 corridor:

- Connects areas not falling under the suburban railway network
- Make commute easier to business districts like Nariman Point, Worli and SEEPZ
- Will pass from near to CSMT, Churchgate and Mumbai Central local stations
- Be the connect between domestic and international airports in the city
- Expected to cater to more than 20 lakh commuters daily

About Metro-3:

A Metro-3 train will have a capacity of 2,500 persons and will be able to run at a speed of 34 kmph. The train as well as the stations will be air-conditioned. The line is expected to reduce travel time for commuters and the burden on the suburban railway network in the city. The corridor was first reflected in the Development Plan of the city in 1969. It will include 27 stations and will be made at an approximate cost of Rs 23,136 crore.