

For workers' safety, gas detectors de-watering pumps in place

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TO COMBAT risks faced underground by labourers working on construction of the Metro 3 tunnels, the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) has taken several precautions including dewatering pumps and gas detectors.

"Any construction site has its share of risks and there are more risks while working underground. It is an unknown terrain but we are taking all safety measures to prevent any untoward incidents," said SK Gupta, Director (Projects), MMRC, at a press conference on Friday.

Among the risks faced by labourers during the construction of the 33.5-km underground Metro are external environmental risks such as fire or explosion, operations-related risks such as exposure to high decibel sounds and equipment failure risks such as loss of lighting, communication or ventilation.

"There are at least 14 kinds of gases present inside the tun-



SK Gupta of MMRC shows the safety instruments being used in the tunneling operations of Metro 3 in Mumbai. *Amit Chakravarty*

nel and we are constantly monitoring them," he added.

To safeguard their manpower of 7,600 people, including skilled and unskilled labourers, MMRC has put in place some special safety precautions. Among them are dewatering pumps to tackle flooding, gas detectors at cutter heads to monitor presence of toxic gases at the face of the TBM and fire points and extinguishers every 15-30 metres apart from other rescue measures.

The staff have also been given training before entering the tunnel and only 25 workmen are allowed to be inside at a time. Emergency ladders and rescue baskets are also at hand, said officials.

"Accidents are possible on high risk sites like ours but so far we have had none. There will not be any accidents as we have taken all the precautions. In case of any untoward incident, the labourer will be rushed to a good hospital and the contractor will provide him compensation. We do not have a fund for them but all their needs will be taken care of in case of any eventuality," he said.