

CMH Road traders, residents divided over Metro rail project

DH NEWS SERVICE

BANGALORE: Shop owners on CMH Road on Monday protested the metro rail work, even as officials of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation (BMRCL) conducted a survey of location of power utilities which will be shifted.

Shop owners, led by Imtiaz Ahmed, the President of CMH Shop Owner's Association, raised objections to the survey work. "We do not accept the recent Government Order on not changing the alignment. It is bogus and it has been issued without the consent of the Chief Minister," Mr Ahmed told *Deccan Herald*.

Heated argument ensued between shop owners and BMRCL officials for some time. But the presence of police prevented any untoward incidents.

As many as 41 shops on

CMH Road are identified for acquisition, to pave the way for Namma Metro. But owners of these shops are dead against giving away their properties.

They demanded the alignment to be changed, while the Government flatly rejected it and showed a green signal to BMRCL.

In fact, Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB), which is entrusted with the responsibility of acquiring land, has already issued final notices on land acquisition to all property owners on CMH Road.

"We don't accept final notices either. Our problems are genuine and hundreds of shops will be displaced if project is implemented. We plan to approach court for justice," he warned.

On the other end, a team of officials led by BMRCL Super-

intendent Engineer (Electrical) Yashwanth Chavan conducted location survey of power utilities on the road. "We are armed with Government Order, nobody can stop us," BMRCL Managing Director V Madhu said.

Action plan

Based on survey findings, an action plan will be prepared on shifting utility lines on the road. "We'll start work to shift the lines by the end of this month," officials said.

BMRCL has to complete all preliminary work, including shifting of utility lines and Geo Technical Survey, by December end, when physical work on 'Reach 1,' a seven km line of metro between B R V Parade Grounds and Byappanahalli, will be taken up. 'Reach 1' passes through CMH Road. As far as other roads are concerned, BMRCL has al-

most completed survey of utility lines and utility providers - Bescom, BWSSB and BSNL - will shortly start shifting respective lines, officials said.

Residents welcome

Indiranagar residents have alleged that protesting shop owners on CMH Road have vested interest in opposing project and they aren't residents of the area at all. The residents have also welcomed the Government Order which has said no for any change in alignment.

CMH Road, being one of the busiest roads, will benefit large majority of people in the area. Moreover, if Government succumbs to pressure in one place, similar demands may crop up from other areas. Hence, in larger interest, government should go ahead with project without any change, they said.