

# Kilambakkam bus terminus work begins before green nod in Chennai

CHENNAI: Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) started work at Kilambakkam to build a new bus terminus before environmental clearance was given, a move that has drawn flak from urban planners. The work started in February but the state's environment impact assessment body gave its nod only seven months later, in September.



only seven months later, in September.

In a public notice on Sunday, CMDA said environmental clearance for the bus terminus at Kilambakkam village in Chengalpet taluk, Kancheepuram district, has been accorded by the state-level environmental impact assessment authority (SEIAA) on September 17. The planning authority also released the list of 25 survey numbers of the land on which the bus terminus would be constructed.

However, CMDA began digging to lay the foundations for the massive facility coming up at a cost of Rs 393.74 crore on 44.74 acres on GST Road soon after the foundation stone was laid in February. Mounds of earth created by drilling the surface could be found at the construction site in Kilambakkam, about 35 kilometres south of Chennai.

CMDA member-secretary D Karthikeyan refused to comment when asked how CMDA began work without environment clearance.

Urban planners have questioned CMDA's move to start the work without the clearance. Retired professor of urban engineering at Anna University K P Subramanian said the development was legally and morally incorrect. "When government agencies are setting such wrong precedents, how can they enforce regulations on individuals," he asked. He further added that even excavation work cannot be started in the absence of environmental clearance.

This is not the first time the move to shift the terminus, to operate buses to southern districts, from CMBT at Koyambedu is stoking a controversy. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had refused to give nod for the project as a portion of a site it has notified is in the vicinity of the terminus construction site. Later, the National Monuments Authority granted permission, after CMDA revised the plan by shrinking the size of the bus terminus.