

Kochi, Monsoon, Roads Damaged

DMRC roads fare better than PWD, RBDCCK ones in Kochi

Had The Contractors Done The Relaying Of Roads Before Monsoon, Then The Damage Wouldn't Have Been Massive

TAMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: This is a tale of contrast. While Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (DMRC) roads have withstood the heavy rains, many of public works department (PWD) roads and some of Roads and Bridges Development Corporation of Kerala Ltd (RBDCCK) roads and flyovers in the city are in bad shape.

DMRC has done works on Aluva to Mahara's College Road on the Metro stretch, while Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL) has relayed interior roads using high quality bitumen macadam and dense bitumen macadam (BMDMB). Almost all the roads are in good condition even after two-three years. In contrast, the condition of roads constructed or relayed by PWD and RBDCCK using the same material are in sorry shape.

The best example is of the Edappally flyover built at a cost of Rs 38 crore and the one at Palarivattom constructed at a cost of Rs 39 crore. While the one built by DMRC is intact, Palarivattom flyover built by RBDCCK is full of potholes. These flyovers were thrown open to the public almost around the same time and built using "high quality" BMBC and BMDMB in 2016. Within 12 days of its inauguration, the Palarivattom flyover developed potholes. Due to incessant rains over the past few months, the Palarivattom flyover is now dotted with potholes and uneven surfaces. In contrast, Edappally flyover is intact," said Mani Lal Jacob, a banking professional based in Palarivattom.

M L A P T Thomas said that the Palarivattom flyover's defect liability period has not expired and the contractors and RBDCCK have the responsibility to relay and monitor it. "If the contractors had done the relaying of the roads before monsoon, then the damage wouldn't have been so big," he said.

Sources with RBDCCK said that they would take steps to relay the roads once the rain subsides. "The defect liability period (minimum three to five years) has not expired. The persistent problem is due to some technical issues that has come to the notice over time and needs to be urgently considered," said a RBDCCK official. Road experts said that though BMBC roads generally last for minimum three to five years and in some cases even up to 10 years, the lifespan



TALE OF CONTRAST: (LEFT) The Edappally flyover built by DMRC is intact, while the Palarivattom flyover constructed by RBDCCK is full of potholes. Both the flyovers were built using "high quality" bitumen macadam and dense bitumen macadam in 2016

of roads depends on various other factors.

Yasub Mohan George, technical director of Esteeem Developers, who carried out the supervision and quality control check for DMRC and KMRL roads, said that constructing or relaying roads using BMBC is effective only when it is done as per the Indian Road Congress standard design, strict supervision and quality control.

Before constructing the DMRC and KMRL road stretches in Kochi, the agency was asked to study and analyze the existing structure of the road and the soil. They also did a traffic survey to understand the type of vehicles plying through each road, besides a million standard axes (MSA) test to determine the thickness required for each road. Quality check for each material used for constructing roads was ensured.

"These roads were constructed after taking into consideration the requirements of the place. Quality control check, constant supervision and monitoring as well as road and safety audit has ensured that even now the roads remain in good shape," said George. Meanwhile, PWD officials said most of the roads have been built without proper study (except in a few NH stretches maintained by it). "The problem is that we carry out road relaying works based on the funds allotted and we ignore the fact that what are the requirements," said a PWD official.

Over 1,000-km road stretch in dist damaged in incessant rains: PWD

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Kochi: Officials with public works department (PWD) said that 928-km road stretch in Ernakulam division and 236-km road under Muvattupuzha division have been damaged since onset of monsoon this year.

In a report - handed over by PWD and district administration to the representatives of the central team that visited the flood-affected areas two days ago - it was stated that 1,156-km road stretch owned by PWD alone was damaged due to the heavy downpour. According to PWD officials, the department has incurred a loss of Rs 27.56 lakh in the damages.

"The damage is huge this time compared to previous years and it is going to cost a lot to repair the roads. The allegation that we didn't take necessary precaution before the onset of monsoon is baseless. We had done patchwork of potholed roads but it was washed away due to heavy showers," said a PWD official. Palarivat-



SUMPY RIDER: A damaged service road near Vyttila Junction

tom-Kakkanad Road, Seaport-Airport Road, Thammannampulappady Road, SN Junction-Error Road, Status Junction at Tripunithura and Puthiya Road at Trumbanam are some of the major road stretches that have been severely damaged during the incessant rains.

Meanwhile, representatives of various residents' associations have stated that even before the onset of monsoon, majority of roads in district were lying in a bad condition

and incessant rains have further worsened and resulted in destruction of roads.

M S Anilkumar, president of Thrikkakara residents' association apex council, said that blaming rains alone for the bad condition of roads is not justifiable.

"PWD failed to carry out the maintenance of roads prior to the onset of monsoon. So, during heavy rains, the already existing potholes and uneven surfaces on roads became worse. Roads can get da-

Bad roads make you spend extra on repair

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Kochi: The bad condition of roads not only results in traffic chaos but also burns a hole in the pocket of common man, with the durability and efficiency of vehicles being affected. The result is that motorists, taxi and bus drivers are forced to shell out more money for repairing and maintenance.

K B Suresh, general secretary of Ernakulam district private bus operators' association, said that poor condition of roads along with bumper-to-bumper traffic are forcing them to cancel their trips these days.

"Bad roads cause severe damages to the vehicles, potholes on major roads are breaking the leaf springs, axles of the buses and causing flat tyres. For repairs alone, we spend Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 in a month. The damage to vehicles happens, when it falls into gutters, filled with water. Tyres get punctured and it increases the wear and tear. Maintenance cost have gone up along with fuel consumption. We are forced to spend extra money for repairing and it is taking a toll on our budget. Government is collecting craves from vehicle owners as road tax and are not doing much to maintain roads in a motorable condition," said Suresh. "Two-wheelers, three-wheelers and four-wheelers are also on the receiving end due to the pathetic condition of roads. Heavy vehicle drivers are also affected. Dhani Jayan, a truck driver, said, "In the past two months, I had to replace damaged leaf springs twice. For replacing one leaf spring, I had to spend Rs 1,000," he said.

Richu Goenvarghese, a taxi driver, said that potholes can create cut or rissus in tyres, which will lead to punctures. "For replacing a car tyre alone, I have to spend around Rs 2,500. Aluminium rims too get damaged while navigating bumpy roads. It also scales down the fuel efficiency of vehicles around 50%," he added.