

## **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation**

### **Background & Problem:**

DMRC was incorporated in May 1995 with the sole purpose of building a mass transit system for Delhi. The multi – billion dollar project kicked off in 1998, at which time it was the largest public infrastructure project ever to be undertaken by the Government of India (GoI). With a reputation of delivering on time and within cost, not only had several institutions like the Project Management Institute and the Indian Institute of Bridge Engineers lauded DMRC for its excellence in infrastructure project management; it had also earned significant support from the residents of Delhi during the construction of the first phase of the metro network. However, on June 12, 2009, six people had died with 15 more sustaining injuries when a portion of the bridge under construction on the Central Secretariat–Badarpur line collapsed at Zamrudpur, a locality in South Delhi. Public criticism had mounted over the accident at Zamrudpur, with the media lashing out at DMRC for its negligence caused by haste to meet deadlines. There was also increasing bureaucratic pressure from within the Government to cancel the contract with Gammon, the company engaged in the construction at Zamrudpur and to fire the DMRC engineers managing and supervising the site. Firing Gammon was not an option Dr. Sreedharan wanted to consider. Not only would DMRC lose precious time in trying to re–appoint a contractor, but with all of the experienced contractors tied up in other projects for the up-coming Commonwealth Games, he felt it would also be impossible to find a suitable replacement in time for construction to be completed before the Games. It was crucial to finish on time as the Central Secretariat–Badarpur corridor linked the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, the primary venue for the Commonwealth Games, with both Central and South Delhi. Moreover, employee morale was already low as the workforce felt let down by the manner in which the media and public had reacted to the accident, completely ignoring their efforts over the last decade. In this situation, firing the already suspended engineers would only serve to demotivate the workforce further and would not necessarily deflect the negative media attention.

### **Translate to the aftermath:**

A four-member committee, comprising of Prof. A.K. Nagpal from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, Prof. B.R. Bose from the Delhi College of Engineering, Steven Lowry, Project Director, General Consultants, DMRC and Rajan Kataria, Chief Engineer (Design), DMRC,<sup>7</sup> had been set up on the day of the accident to inquire into the probable causes of the accident.

### **The Leader:**

Dr. Ellatuvalapil Sreedharan, the Managing Director (MD) of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).



**Problems:**

As he waited for the Committee's final report, Dr. Sreedharan (managing director of DMRC) faced a difficult choice. Should he bow to bureaucratic pressure and fire Gammon in order to undo the damage to DMRC's reputation? Would DMRC be able to find a competent replacement in time to open the remaining metro lines for the Commonwealth Games? Was it worth risking the delay, given their record of delivering on time? Pinning responsibility on the four engineers seemed unfair. However, with the media baying for someone's blood, would he be able to save their jobs? In another five minutes, his team of directors and department heads would make an appearance for their weekly meeting, as they had every Monday over the last 12 years. Only today, he did not have a list of discussion points, but a fullblown crisis to manage.

**Delegate Toolbox:**

Delegates will have the chance to portray some of the most powerful and dominant characters relating to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, The Government of India, and non-profit organizations. In order to properly simulate and achieve an active and constructive crisis committee delegates will be expected to properly research each characters personality, qualities, and foreign economic policies. The goal will be to establish an innovative and insightful crisis room where discussion and collectivism will prevail into perceptive working papers. The ultimate goal is for delegates to understand the current state and what needs to be done in order to overcome such a complicated issue, as a crisis can hurt the entire brand and reputation of India. Furthermore, delegates will need to research their character's history and their current stance on the situation at hand. Not only will this, provide for an authentic debate, but will surely engage them in a thought-provoking discussion in which they will learn to collaborate, defend their ideas, and work together to overcome obstacles.