

ON FAST TRACK

Metro rail tunnel boring picks pace

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Works on the underground corridor of the Chennai metro rail gained momentum with authorities launching the second tunnel-boring machine (TBM) from Washermanpet last week.

Within a week, they have achieved nine rings (each ring measuring 1.4 meters) at Washermanpet, wherefrom tunnelling will proceed towards Chennai Central for a length of 1,349 meters. The next TBM will be launched from May Day Park in 10 days and Shenoy Nagar will follow suit, senior CMRL officials added.

Meanwhile, the TBM at Nehru Park, first to be launched in Chennai for the project and stopped briefly after the cutting

blades blunted owing to continuous dredging of the rocky surface, has been put back into action. The tunnel length has progressed to 96 rings (1.2 meters per ring) on the 939 meter-long stretch extending from Nehru Park to Egmore. In a few months, all 11 TBMs will be operating across the length of the city.

Sources pointed out that TBMs would be running directly beneath 240 buildings in George Town/Mannadi, 110 in Chintadripet and 53 in Shenoy Nagar during the tunnelling of the underground corridor. As many as 400 borewells and 57 open wells that fall within metro's route have already been closed in the city to make way for the tunnels. CMRL has begun either paying ₹1 lakh or digging borewells for residents.