

# IS CHENNAI METRO

## the answer to city's traffic woes?

Not unless it is supplemented by integration of various modes of transport, says Sunitha Sekar

Today, a bus commute from Koyambedu to St. Thomas Mount is a long journey lasting at least an hour. Fast forward one year, you may hop on to the Metro, and be able to cover the stretch in less than 20 minutes.

A dedicated coach for women, disabled-friendly stations, reduced fuel consumption, and as much as 50-75 per cent reduction in travel time — the Chennai Metro promises city commuters all of this, and more.

Chief general manager (construction) of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), S. Somasundaram, said, "We are integrating several modes of transport at key stations to enhance passenger connectivity. For instance, at Central station where Southern Railway, suburban rail and Metro Rail converge, we will ensure pedestrians can move from one line to another without hassles. We plan to build subways which will be maintained and guarded well. Also, they will be abuzz with activity owing to dedicated commercial space."

With the travel needs of the city and vehicular population increasing by the day, Chennai Metro is expected provide commuters some relief from traffic congestion.

According to a study done in 2008 by the Rail India Technical and Economic Services, the share of public transport in a population of a million should stand at 40-45 per cent. Though the population in Chennai metropolitan

area has crossed 8.65 million, the share of public transport stands at a mere 50 per cent. CMRL expects to attract nearly seven per cent of the city's population by 2016.

"Hong Kong may be a good example to learn from, it being an equally populated city. The Metro Rail service there has greatly improved connectivity," said S. Santhanam, former member chief urban planner, CMDA.

A study by Central Road Research Institute in 2007 found commuters saved 66 minutes on an average every day, and there had been consistent decrease in vehicular demand since 2002, when people began using the Delhi Metro. But, like Delhi, Chennai Metro too must expand and look at construction of phase-II, said experts.

"The larger the network, better the connectivity and improved access for commuters. In addition, we should develop the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) after work on phase-I of Metro Rail ends," said B.G. Sreedevi, director of National Transportation Planning and Research Centre.

Shreya Gadepalli of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy said, "Delhi Metro helped commuters but the system did not greatly reduce traffic congestion. Initially, when it began operations, there wasn't a feeder service. Even now, the feeder service is given a step-

CHENNAI METRO RAIL WILL BRING DOWN TRAVEL TIME BY AS MUCH AS 50-75 PER CENT

### COMMUTE OF THE FUTURE

#### TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

(trips/day in Chennai as of 2011)

(in 2016)

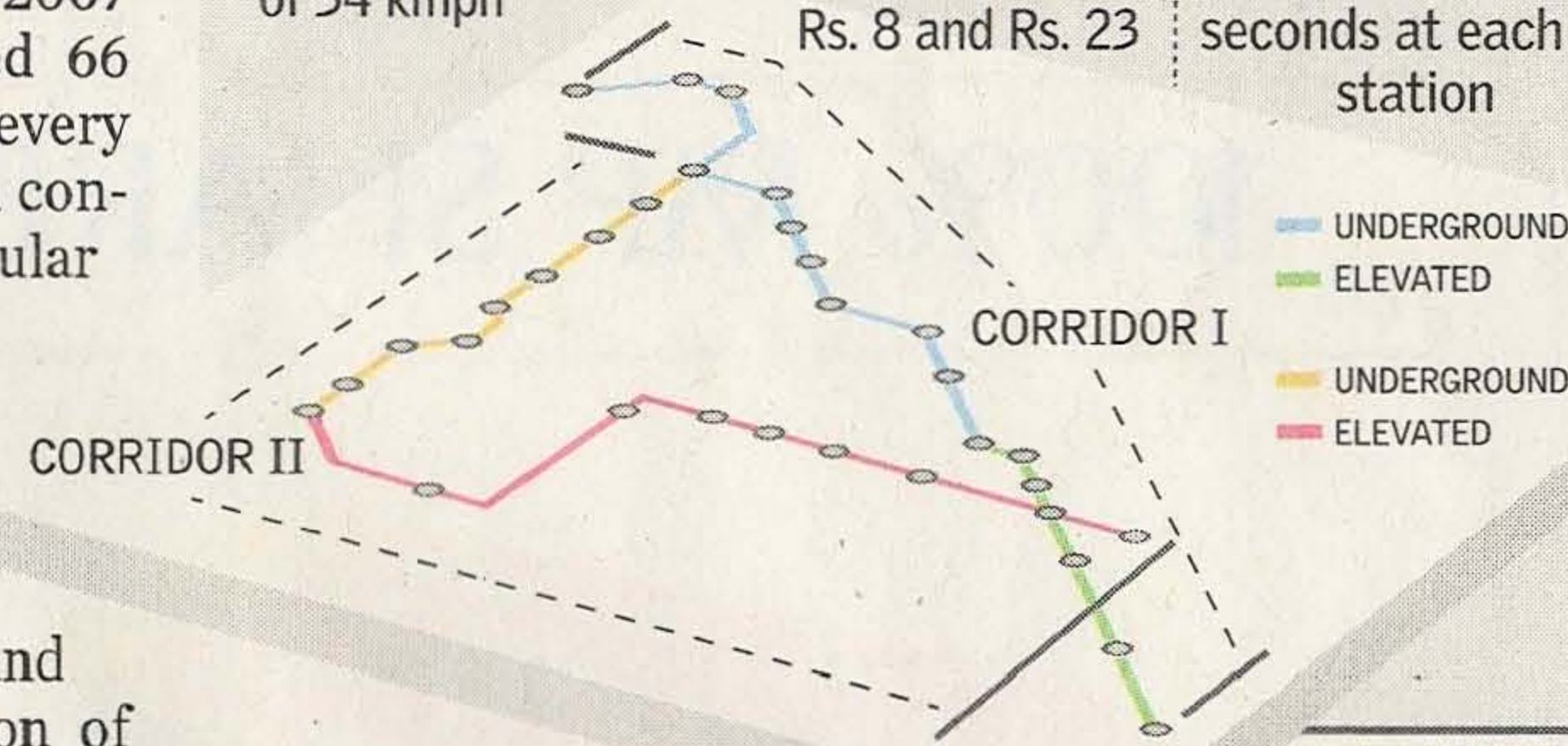


- Metro trains are designed for operating speeds of up to 80 kmph with an average of 34 kmph

- The service will be operational from 5 a.m. to midnight every day

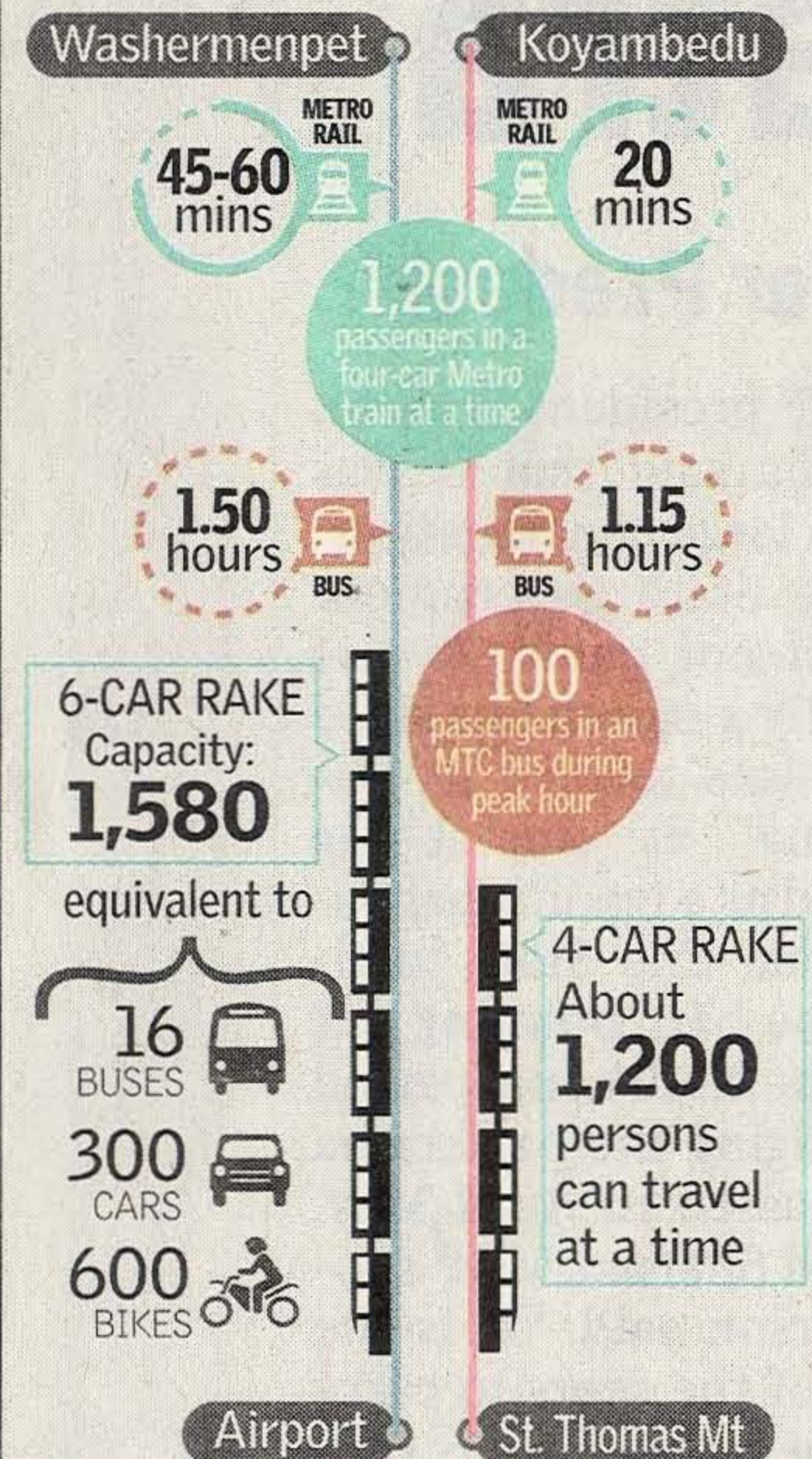
- Tickets will be priced between Rs. 8 and Rs. 23

- The trains will halt for 30 seconds at each station



Source: CMRL and CMDA; Infographic: Prathap Ravishankar

#### TRAVEL TIME



motherly treatment. Integration with other modes of public transport is poor."

Chennai Metro must ensure feeder service is in place,

right from day 1 of its service, said Ms. Gadepalli. Strong measures that dissuaded the use of personal vehicles are the way forward.

Parking supply restrictions, market-based parking fee and congestion pricing were some measures that could be adopted, Ms. Gadepalli said.