

Metro to plant 10 saplings for each tree axed

4-Month Drive Begins In Sept

Julie Mariappan | TNN

Chennai: In a bid to offset the loss of trees being felled for the metro rail network, the Chennai Metro Rail Limited has decided to plant 10,000 saplings across the city in an intense, four-month drive beginning September.

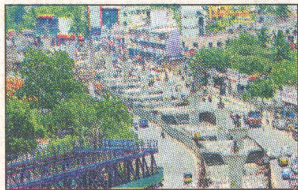
The rail agency plans to raise from its own funds nearly 20 species, including puravasa (*Thespesia populnea*), magizham (*Mimusops elengi*), pungan (*Pongamia pinnata*), mandarai (*Bauhinia racemo-*

said CMRL chief general manager (public relations) S Krishnamoorthy. All trees along the viaduct alignment, underground and elevated stations will be enumerated and details, including girth, height and location, recorded. Priority was being given to pruning the branches rather than felling and not a single tree had been felled unnecessarily, the agency claimed.

For each tree brought down, 10 saplings are being planted as per norms, a CMRL official said. As sought by the Kilpauk Medical College Hospital and Rajiv Gandhi General Hospital, saplings would soon be planted at the two places. About 30 acres at the Metrowater's sewerage treatment plant in Kodungaiyur have been allocated to each of the three contractors concerned to plant saplings, he said. The CMRL has already paid money to purchase saplings from the forest department's nurseries at Anna Nagar and Velachery, he said.

The felling of trees has, however, not gone down well among environmentalists. Says KVRK Thirunaranan of Nature Trust: "Losing trees will cause irreparable damage to the environment. Agencies should transplant as many trees as possible. Tree canopy is more important for nesting and roosting of birds. Saplings need utmost care till the end."

Of the 328 trees in Thiru Vi Ka Nagar Park in Shenoy Nagar, where the CMRL is building an underground station, many trees have already been felled.



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sa), sarakonnai (*Cassia fistula*), naval (*Syzygium cumini*), arasu (*Ficus religiosa*), atthu puvarasu (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) and mahogany (*Swietenia mahogani*).

"We have planted 5,000 saplings in the last one year and the drive to plant 10,000 saplings will begin in September and be completed by December-end,"