

First consignment of Metro Rail tracks arrives at port today

Rails, shipped from France, to be used for Koyambedu-St. Thomas Mount elevated stretch

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CHENNAI: Metro Rail will start laying tracks for the Koyambedu to St. Thomas Mount stretch this month, marking significant progress in phase I of the project that will connect Chennai Central with St. Thomas Mount.

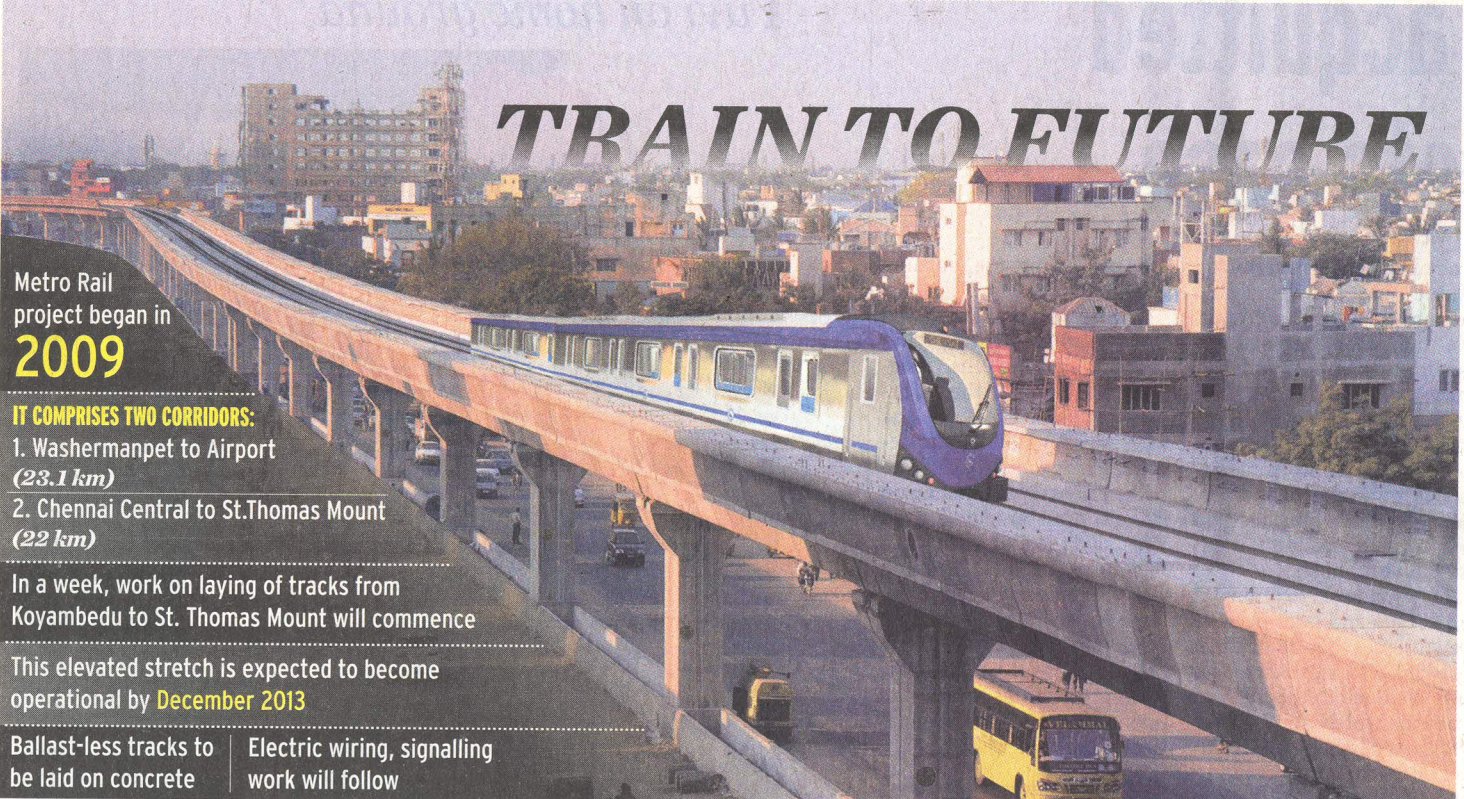
The rails are on their way from France to Chennai, by sea. They weigh a total of 3,500 tonnes and will arrive at the port on Tuesday. These tracks will be used on the elevated section from Koyambedu to St. Thomas Mount — the section that is expected to go operational by December 2013. The remainder of the 22 km-long corridor, which will run mostly underground, will require rails of a different kind.

According Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) officials, this is the first of four shipments arriving for the track work.

Each rail segment will be about 18m long. Fastenings to be used along the tracks are being sourced from the United Kingdom and China.

The very first consignment will be used in laying the stretch from Koyambedu to Vadapalani, and the rest for the depot coming up in Koyambedu.

CMRL officials say they want the work from Koyambedu to St. Thomas Mount to progress swiftly as its completion will help commence trial runs by the end of 2013. Residents of the city are



TRAIN TO FUTURE

Metro Rail project began in **2009**

IT COMPRISES TWO CORRIDORS:

1. Washermanpet to Airport (23.1 km)
2. Chennai Central to St. Thomas Mount (22 km)

In a week, work on laying of tracks from Koyambedu to St. Thomas Mount will commence

This elevated stretch is expected to become operational by **December 2013**

Ballast-less tracks to be laid on concrete	Electric wiring, signalling work will follow
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PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI | GRAPHIC: PRATHAP RAVISHANKAR

presently enduring traffic diversions and prolonged commutes necessitated by Metro Rail work.

The Metro Rail project, coming up at a total cost of Rs.14,600 crore, seeks to initiate a radical shift towards public transportation by integrating other modes of

public transport in the city. In that context, the CMRL initiated a multi-modal study in August 2011, and is about to finalise its report based on feedback from different government agencies who are stakeholders in this initiative.

Once put together, the report is

expected to serve as a valuable document that will project Metro Rail as a public transportation system that integrates MRTS, suburban EMU service and MTC bus service.

This integration ought to be not just physical, but also financial

and operational, a senior CMRL official told *The Hindu*. The agency envisions a system where a commuter taking the metro could find a connecting bus right at the metro station itself and possibly use the same smart card for the entire commute.