

# Metro on fast track as rails arrive

Consignment stacked in Poonamallee yard; to be shipped to Koyambedu soon

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**CHENNAI:** All the way from France to the stacking yard in Parivakkam in Poonamallee here, it has been a remarkably long journey for the rails that will soon crown the tall beams standing in Koyambedu.

In the next few days, the rails will be shifted to the construction site in Koyambedu. "Since the rails are 18 metres long, we have to use giant trailers, which can ply on city roads only at night," a senior official of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) told *The Hindu*.

It has taken about two weeks to transport rails weighing 3,500 tonnes from the port to the yard in Parivakkam. The rails would be shifted to Koyambedu in lots weighing 500 tonnes each.



**TAKING OFF** The rails, each 18 metres long, will be carried to the site at nights.

— PHOTO: K. V. SRINIVASAN.

"The entire load will reach the spot in the next couple of days, and cranes will be used to place them at that

height. Meanwhile, welding and concrete-laying work along the tracks will be taken up," the official said.

The rails being imported from France are said to be durable, with a life of over 30 to 40 years. While similar

head-hardened steel was used in Delhi metro, Indian Railways have seldom imported rails, the KK line (Kottavalasa-Kirandul line) being one instance when they did.

This nearly 450-km line, which runs between Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, is used largely to carry iron ore shipments. It includes a sharp curve which warranted high-quality steel rails. That was decades ago.

Now, the CMRL is importing all the rails for the Chennai Metro project. The entire project requires rails weighing 11,000 tonnes. Of this, 1,650 tonnes would be used at the depot coming up in Koyambedu. These tracks would be laid first along the elevated section from Koyambedu to St. Thomas Mount, which is to go operational by December 2013.