

Metro tunnelling touches deepest point under Cooum

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: About 30 metres beneath the murky Cooum river, a machine is quietly burrowing a tunnel to the place where the Central metro rail station will come up on Poonamallee High Road. This is the deepest point and considered one of the toughest stretches to build along the underground path of the metro rail network.

The machine, which started boring from under May Day Park in Chintadripet a few months ago and covered 750m, is now underneath the river to build a stretch of tunnel that will be part of the Washermenpet-Airport line, said a se-

nior Chennai Metro Rail Limited official.

Boring under a river is a painstakingly slow process as engineers have to be careful to prevent water seepage. The tunnel, when complete, will be an engineering marvel. Being taken up in the city for the first time, it will soon see Chennai joining cities like New York, Melbourne, Istanbul and others with such facilities. More than 60% of the 1.04km single tunnel is complete and work on a parallel tunnel is expected to begin shortly.

CMRL officials decided to go to a depth of 30m below the river to ensure the tunnel is built in hard soil. It will tra-

verse the ground underneath the river and the suburban railway lines opposite Ripon Buildings. Before the boring machines reached the spot, metro rail tunnel engineers surveyed the river and the railway line a month ago.

Rocks are found about 20m below Poonamallee High Road and the Cooum near Central station and machines capable of cutting through the rocks are being used to bore tunnels, said an official.

Tunnels on the stretch from Washermenpet to the Madras high court are ready, while boring is going on towards Central. The underground line that comes from



A Prathap

DOWN UNDER: The tunnels will be 30m below the Cooum river and suburban lines opposite Ripon Buildings

the high court area will reach the Central metro rail station in front of Ripon Buildings,

turn left, cross the railway line and the river and pass underneath the neighbourhood of

Chintadripet to reach the underground station at the new secretariat on Anna Salai.

Tunnels are being bored in different segments. May Day Park is the base from where boring machines were launched to build tunnels towards Central on Poonamallee High Road and towards the new secretariat on Anna Salai.

Work on the underground stretch is progressing across the city as metro rail gears to open its first underground section between Shenoy Nagar and Koyambedu next year. Of the 36.3km of tunnels required for the project, more than 14km has been built.