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Metro Rail to begin tapping solar energy at Saidapet

Bus station to be integrated with underground Metro; solar panels will be installed on the roof of both structures

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Chennai Metro Rail will tap solar energy for all underground stations and select elevated stations in the coming months. Initially, they estimate to generate about 1.25 MW from this project and it will partially help in supplementing the power requirements of the station. However, officials did not disclose the estimated cost of the project.

For a start, the Saidapet bus station will be integrated with the underground Metro Rail station and solar panels will be installed on the roof of both structures.

According to a Chennai Metro Rail Limited official, the work to integrate the bus and rail stations and installation of solar panels will begin in 10-15 days. "We will integrate it in such a way that commuters exiting the Saidapet station can easily get to the bus station. Since it is a functional bus stop, it may take a few months to complete the work," an official said.

400 KW panels

At this station, they will install panels for 400 KW, he added.



An aerial view of the Saidapet Metro Rail station. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

"It will not provide the full electricity supply for the station. But we can use it to operate lifts, escalators and lights," he said. After Saidapet, CMRL will start work on installing solar panels at the Chennai Central Metro Rail station as well. Since it is the

largest underground station in the city, officials say they may be able to get quite a good amount of solar power here. This apart, CMRL has started tapping 6 MW of solar power from the roofs of elevated stations.

But officials said it may

take sometime to complete the project. Also, they have begun work on putting up solar streetlights at some stations such as Koyambedu, Alandur and Arumbakkam. It will be a 50W solar light with a lithium-iron battery backup.

Share autos for last mile connectivity

STAFF REPORTER
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In a few months, the Chennai Metro Rail will run share autos along its network. On payment of a fee, commuters will be able to get off close to their destinations.

According to sources in the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), they would soon call for tenders for the project.

"We plan to give a contract to the lowest bidding firm and it would have to ply share autos along the elevated and underground stretches. Most likely Tata Magic vans would be operated through our network," an official said.

Small buses

At present, small buses were being operated on some stretches of the Chennai Metro Rail, but passengers said there weren't enough buses and more areas need to be covered.

It was not decided whether share autos would

Metro Rail will most likely operate Tata Magic vans on stretches where services are now available

CMRL OFFICIAL

ply in the same routes as the small buses or would extend to other areas.

Regulation needed

Experts said share autos would greatly benefit the commuters, but they needed to be regulated.

J. Krishnamoorthy, former joint director of the Institute of Road Transport, said if the CMRL planned to ply share autos, it should ensure the safety of passengers.

"Many of the share autos that are running in the city now are illegal. So if the CMRL wants to do it, it should be well-regulated," he said.

Aswathy Dilip of the Institute of Transportation and Development Policy said the last mile connec-

tivity was critical to the success of any mass rapid system.

She noted that the Kochi Metro Rail Limited was creating a cooperative society for the existing autos in the city as a part of 'Seamless Transportation for Kochi' project.

The three services provided are: Hire an Auto, Smart Auto, and Feeder Auto.

"Share auto routes and fares are developed in consultation with the drivers. The autos will be regulated and will also have GPS tracking and a mobile journey planner. Smart card ticketing will also be introduced," she said.

Ms. Dilip noted it was important to revive the CUMTA.

"Coordination between the key departments - MTC, CMRL, GCC, Highways, Transport Commissionerate and the police - is essential to ensure a safe, comfortable and convenient travel for the city residents," she added.