

TIMES CITY

Metro rail phase 2 to have driverless trains

Project To Turn A Reality In 10 Years

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Chennai: In less than 10 years, metro rail commuters will be able to enjoy a driver's view from a metro train as Cmrl is planning to introduce driverless trains in the city along the lines that will be built under phase 2. The trains will operate completely on automatic mode while personnel from the operations control centre (OCC) monitor overall operations.

A metro rail official said the ministry of housing and urban affairs was in the process of finalising a policy that would give metro rail operators in the country operational guidelines for driverless trains. The policy will include the procedure for safety certifications and the list of documents required to be submitted for operating such trains. Cmrl will lay down operational procedure for mitigation during emergencies and provide train specifications. "These trains will not have driver's cabin. Instead, passengers will be able to stand at the end of the train," the official said.

Officials said driverless trains will reduce human error. "Driverless trains will be

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NEW FEATURES

> CCTV cameras to monitor critical systems like over-head electric cables and coaches

> Improved communication systems for commuters to contact the

operations control centre

> Centralised Traffic Control signalling system to replace Block signalling system

> Additional computer systems as backup if any system fails

safe and reliable. In case of emergencies, OCC will immediately take over," the official said.

Phase-2 of the project will cover a distance of 108km with 104 stations in three corridors at a cost of ₹44,000 crores. Cmrl has submitted a de-

tailed project report to the Centre for approval and is likely to sign an agreement with Japan International Cooperation Agency for funding in the first quarter of 2018. The phase is expected to be completely operational in 10 years.

Metro rail officials said



Commuters look through the window of what used to be an operator's cabin in the driverless train in Dubai

the absence of an operator will be replaced by a number of safety features that ensure smooth running of the trains. Basic features may include CCTV cameras to monitor critical systems in and out of the trains including the over-head electric (OHE) cables,

improved communication systems for commuters to directly talk to staff in OCC, centralized traffic control signalling systems instead of block signalling system that is in use currently.

Officials said even in phase-1, train operators have little work to do, as operations are mostly controlled from OCC. "At present, the train operator only operates the doors of the train and clicks a 'start' button for the train to move. These are minor parts of the operations that can be done from the OCC," an official said. "During non-peak hours, we make the operators run the trains on manual mode because we want them to be trained," the official added.