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Central Metro to be first station to use solar power

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Central Metro, will not only be the city's largest underground transit hub but also a model for green energy use as solar panels will be installed to power some of the facilities at the station, as well as for maintenance of trains.

CMRL has called for companies to install solar rooftop panels at the entry points of Central Metro. A part of the station, which will connect Central to Koyambedu via Poonamallee High Road, is expected to be thrown open to the public soon.

According to metro rail officials, photovoltaic panels with a capacity of around 1MW will be installed at the station's entry points on either side of Poonamallee High Road on trial basis. The power generated by these panels will be used for lighting, escalators, elevators, airconditioning and electrical items used for public convenience and maintenance of the station. The use of green energy will not just help CMRL bring down pollution levels, it is also expected to save expenses.

CMRL

BASKING IN THE SUN: An aerial view of the solar panels installed at the CMRL depot in Koyambedu

Central Metro, built at a depth of 28m, is a three-level transit hub that will connect the two corridors of phase-1. While commuters can head to Koyambedu via Poonamallee High Road from the upper track, the lower tracks will take them to Airport through Anna Salai. A direct service from Central will take riders to both Koyambedu bus terminus and the airport.

Central Metro may be the first underground metro station in the city to use clean energy. Last year, CMRL signed a contract with a Mumbai-based private company to install solar panels with a capacity of 6MW in all its existing elevated stations including Koyambedu and Alandur. The rooftop solar system is expected to meet 90% of the annual energy requirements depending on the area. The remaining energy requirement will be met by drawing power from the general grid.

CMRL identified about 25 locations spread over more than 1.4 lakh sqm. The contractor was expected to design, manufacture, supply, install, test and commission the solar PV panels.

Metro rail first began using clean energy when it installed solar panels with a capacity of 1MW at its administrative building in Koyambedu in 2016. Around 5,000 units generated per day from the 1MW grid power the administrative office and for maintenance of trains at the depot. That installation, it was expected, would help CMRL save more than ₹1.12 crore every year.