

# Metro emergency exit is a walk through the park

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**P**icture this: A summer evening in a park where cries of children playing rent the air, elderly walk down the pathways to complete their quota of exercise, and young couples are engrossed in conversation. Intruding on this languid scene, a group of panic-stricken people storms in through a door in the middle of the park.

It might read like a script of a film, but some day it could happen in city, at May Day Park in Chintadripet where Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has built an egress shaft to evacuate passengers during an emergency. The shaft linking the twin tunnels with the road is between Central Metro and Government Estate stations. Afcons Infrastructure, which constructed the tunnels, will be covering the shaft opening on to the park with a rectangular structure and a door for commuters to exit.

A senior metro rail official said they built the shaft in May Day Park as an alternate option for passenger evacuation as the Central Metro and Government Estate stations located on either side of the park, are 1.8km from each other — a long distance to cover in an emergency, such as a power outage, fire accident or a technical glitch. Passengers can climb out of the shaft through the flight of stairs and reach the road.

Underground stations have been planned in a

way so that they are not more than a kilometre away, to make it easy for evacuation measures. Along the corridor if the train stops, passengers can get off, take a cross passage linking the two tunnels through the walkway and reach the nearest station. But if they get stuck in the tunnels that run below the Cooum River to link Central Metro and Government Estate, it may be difficult to walk to the nearest station.

Further, there is also no cross passage in the tunnels that bend towards Anna Salai from May Day Park to connect Government Estate station in front of TN Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital. So, the shaft has been provided, about 460m from Government Estate. It is the only one on corridor 1 between Washermenpet and Airport. The other shaft is on corridor 2, in the ramp linking underground Tirumangalam station with the elevated Koyambedu metro station.

“The shaft constructed for lowering the underground tunnel boring machines has been converted into the egress shaft. Usually, the shaft for installing the tunnel boring machines is closed. But we decided to use it as an emergency exit,” said the official, adding that it has been constructed as per the requirement of National Fire Protection Association.

“Though the construction methodology is the same, an egress shaft is different from a ventilation shaft. The second type of shaft built in every underground station cater only to the ventilation of the tunnels and stations,” the official said.

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SENIOR METRO RAIL OFFICIAL

## FASTEST WAY OUT

**EGRESS SHAFT**  
A vertical shaft between underground metro stations for emergency evacuation of passengers

**LOCATION**  
On corridor 1 between Central Metro and Government Estate stations

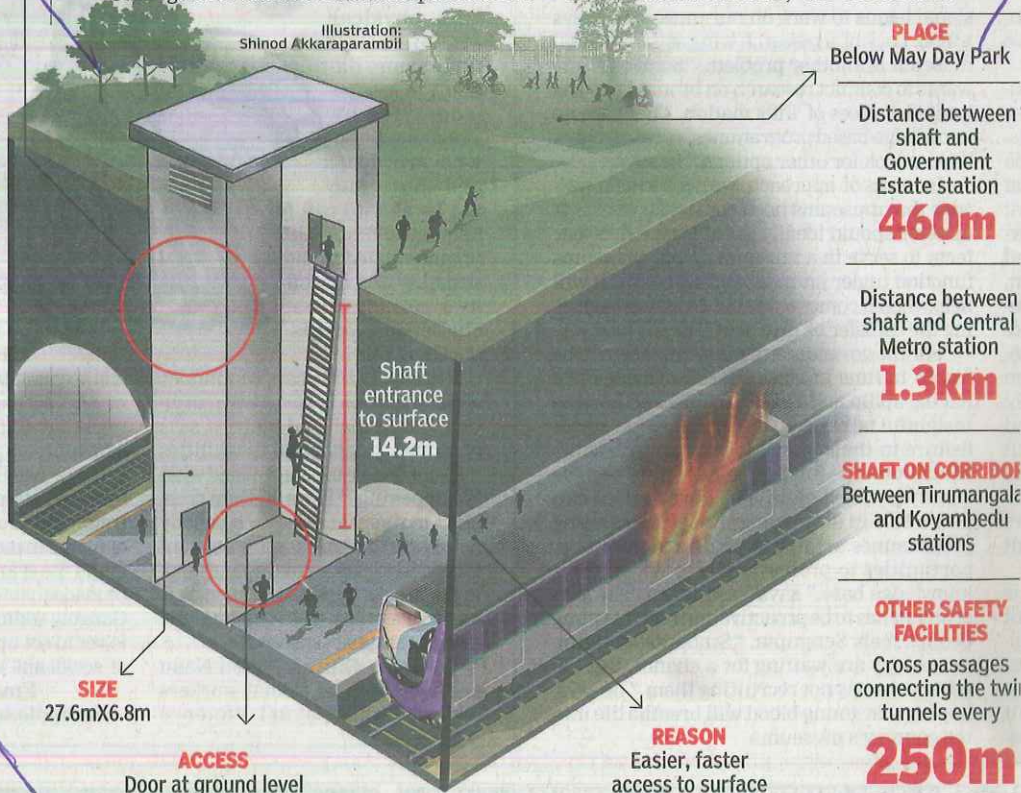
Distance between two stations  
**1.8km**

- ESCAPE ROUTE**
- Get off the train to the walkway built on one side of the tunnel
  - Reach shaft separated by fire rated doors at each end of the tunnel
  - Open the door on one side of the tunnel
  - Climb the stairs to reach ground level
  - At ground level, a shaft will jut out from the ground through a door on one side

**SIZE**  
27.6mX6.8m

**ACCESS**  
Door at ground level

Illustration:  
Shinod Akkaraparambil



**PLACE**  
Below May Day Park

Distance between shaft and Government Estate station  
**460m**

Distance between shaft and Central Metro station  
**1.3km**

**SHAFT ON CORRIDOR 1**  
Between Tirumangalam and Koyambedu stations

**OTHER SAFETY FACILITIES**  
Cross passages connecting the two tunnels every  
**250m**

**REASON**  
Easier, faster access to surface