

METRO GOES NORTH

Chennai Metro is likely to open the north Chennai link in the last weekend of this month

On schedule

Governor Banwarilal Purohit announced in the state assembly that the phase-I extension from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar at an estimated cost of ₹3,770 crore will be ready for inauguration by June 2020 as scheduled.

JAN 10 or 11

THE METRO LINE TO NORTH CHENNAI WILL GO IN FOR INSPECTION

● C Shivakumar

The year 2018 was a great one for the Chennai Metro Rail (CMRL) as the Green line (Chennai Central to St Thomas Mount) and Blue line (AG-DMS to Chennai international airport) became fully functional. Before the month end, CMRL is likely to open the North Chennai link from Washermanpet to Chennai Central and also from Chennai Central to AG DMS.

It is learned that PM Narendra Modi has been requested to inaugurate the stretch, which is likely to go in for inspection next week — possibly around January 10 or January 11 — by Commissioner of Metro Railways Safety. This comes after Governor Banwarilal Purohit announced in the state assembly that the entire first phase of Chennai Metro will be put into operation by this month.

He also said that the phase-I extension from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar at an estimated cost of ₹3,770 crore will be ready for inauguration by June

2020 as scheduled.

The upcoming Metro link comes as an effective solution to deal with road congestion and ensure a better commuting experience in north Chennai, where the roads are narrow. The area known for housing many thickly populated localities is dotted with several commercial hubs and buildings of historical importance.

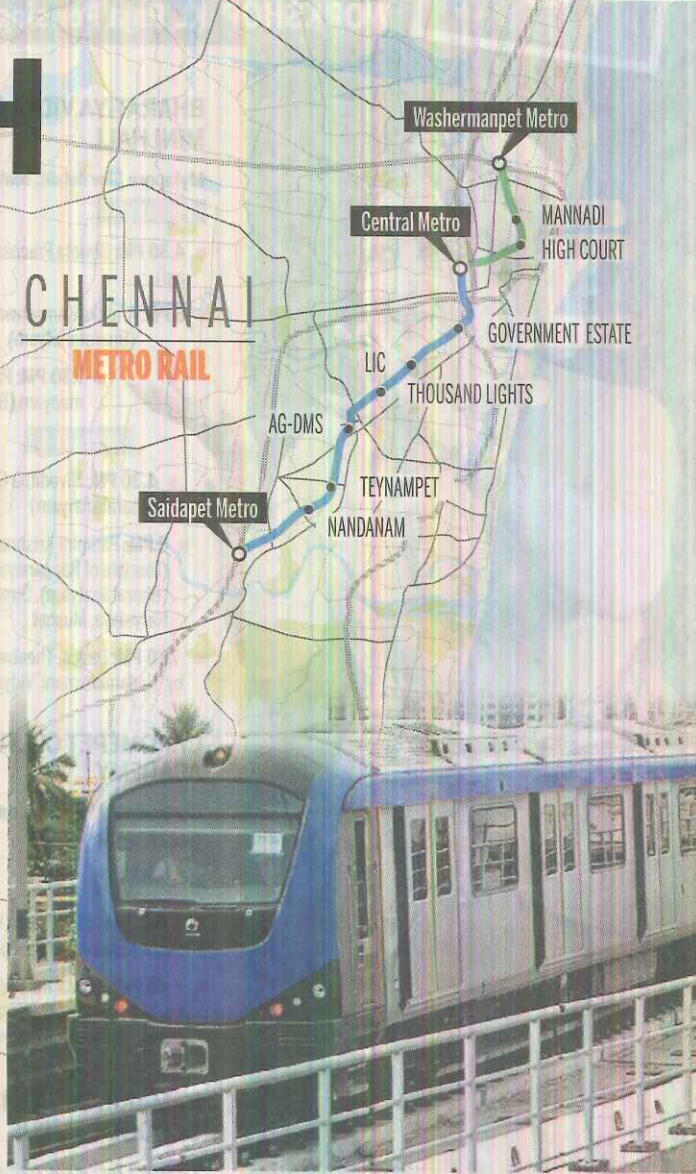
A Shankar, COO, Strategic Consulting, India & Sri Lanka, Jones Lang LaSalle, told *Express* that the opening of the link will be a game-changer for north Chennai as it will unlock the potential of the area whose value was down as there has been a lot of migration to south Chennai due to connectivity issues.

There will be redevelopment of areas around the Metro stations in north Chennai where transit-oriented development will take place. This will also result in an increase in real estate prices. Shankar also hopes that phase-II stretch from Madhavaram to Sholinganallur would benefit entire Chennai.

It is also learned that CMRL is preparing 'Special Plan for the Development of Backward Areas of North Chennai'.

This also comes in the wake of state government working on transit-oriented development, a type of community development that includes a mixture of housing, office, retail or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighbourhood, and located within a half-mile along the Chennai Metro corridors. The areas which are being targeted under the project include Madhavaram, Manali, Thiruvottiyur, Tondiarpet and Royapuram zones. The study will bring out strategies to make north Chennai attractive for investment and focus on reducing pollution in the areas.

The state government has already accorded in-principle approval for the implementation of phase-II of Chennai Metro Rail Project covering 107.55 km in three corridors. The governor informed that the Japan International Cooperation Agency has now approved the funding of ₹20,196 crore for the priority stretches totalling 52 km from Madhavaram to Sholinganallur and Madhavaram to Chennai Mofussil Bus Terminus. The loan agreement for the first tranche of approximately ₹4,770 crore was signed on December 21, 2018 and work is likely to commence shortly.



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