

Metro to build elevated stations to cut costs

U.Tejonmayam
@timesgroup.com



KEEPING IT STRAIGHT: Metro rail has plans to 'convert' some underground stations, planned for phase 2, into elevated ones to cut costs

Chennai: It will be a roller coaster ride for commuters when a part of phase-2 line opens in a few years as a few underground stations being planned will be elevated to cut cost while a few stations will go underground well below the existing tunnels at a depth of 29m.

Chennai Metro Rail Ltd. (CMRL) has planned to begin construction for a 52km stretch—considered a priority corridor with 57 stations—before the end of 2019.

Three underground stations that may be built parallel to the existing stations on phase-1 may be at a depth of 29m. This means tunnels linking the stations may be

under the existing ones.

Metro rail officials said Thousand Lights, Kilpauk Medical College and Nandanam—built at a depth of 18m—would have another station in phase-2. “But the alignment in phase-2 is such that these new stations will not be built under the same road

where the existing stations are functioning,” an official said.

For instance, Kilpauk—whose station is now built under Poonamallee High Road—may have another station under Barnaby Road nearby. Tunnels of both the stations will be one below the other.

While Kilpauk station’s tunnels may be at 18m depth, KMC station in phase-2 will be at a depth of 29m, which is as deep as Central Metro. The stations on phase-1 and 2 that run parallel will be linked through a walkway to make it convenient for commuters to switch corridors,” an official said.

The 52km priority corridor estimated to cost Rs 40,000 crore got a shot in the arm when Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed an agreement to fund nearly 50% of the cost and released the first tranche of around Rs 4,000 crore.

With lessons on escalating cost and delayed construction learnt from phase-1, CMRL is treading carefully on the ambitious phase-2 pro-

ject. One of the efforts to bring down the cost and speed up construction in this phase is to change a few underground stations to elevated depending on the availability of space.

As of now, experts have identified Tirumangalam metro station, which is part of corridor-3 from Madhavaram to Sholinganallur, to be built as an elevated station on the 100 Feet Road. “We are planning to link the elevated station with the entry point of the underground station on third avenue road,” an official said. “However, nothing is confirmed, and everything will be finalised in our detailed design for which three consultants are working. We are expecting it to be ready by the first quarter of 2019.”