

# CMRL begins restoration of May Day Park, Lone Square

## Both Facilities To Be Opened In A Month

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**Chennai:** Metro rail is taking forever to restore the city's green spaces which it had taken over for construction almost a decade ago. And they are not being restored as they were, for, there are plans to have more facilities for commuters in the space.

Trees were cut and green spaces turned into construction sites or storage areas and closed for the public for nearly a decade as the metro rail project was rolled out in phases.

Three months after the final leg of metro network began operations, Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has begun restoring two of the three parks, which are under its control. Lone Square at Broadway and May Day Park in Chintadripet, which were shut for metro rail construction, are being restored now. According to CMRL, both facilities will be opened in a month. However, restoration of Thiru Vi Ka Park in Shenoy Nagar, one of the biggest that CMRL took over for construction, may not happen before mid-2020.

Lone Square Park has remained closed for nearly a decade. Located on the congested Prakasam Road opposite the Madras High Court, the



Pics: A Prathap

**BREATHE EASY:** Restoration work on at a playground in May Day Park and Lone Square (below)

park, with around 15 trees along its periphery, has been a rather convenient spot for storing construction material, as it is located between High Court metro and Manadi Metro stations. "Many locals and even those who come to the high court visit the park," said Kumaresan, a juice shop owner.

Residents and shopkeepers said shanties came up around the periphery of the park, which was the only lung space in the crammed neighbourhood, after CMRL closed it. "We heard the encroachments around the park will be removed before it opens," said S Payal, a resident.

Restoration work at May Day Park, one of the oldest in the city, at Chintadripet, is also under way. While a small area of the park is open, CMRL closed a major portion that housed a playground and other play areas for the residents of one of the city's ol-



dest localities. CMRL stored construction material and built an emergency exit inside the park. The exit, in the form of a shaft, links the tunnels between Central Metro and Government Metro stations, as the line between the two stations was more than a kilometre long. "The area around the emergency exit is being levelled with mud. It will be ready in two weeks," said a worker at the site.

However, Thiru Vi Ka Park may not be opened anytime soon, since CMRL is bu-

ilding an underground passenger amenities centre, including a parking facility. Under the construction contract, the work has to be completed by mid-2020. According to Shenoy Nagar residents, the 8.8-acre park was to be restored and opened after Shenoy Nagar Metro station was opened in 2017. But, CMRL said it will be building the underground centre and began excavating soil in the park. Locals, who approached the Madras high court, are awaiting relief.