

Metro Phase I extension to be ready by June' 20

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CHENNAI: With the opening of Phase I of Chennai Metro Rail, the officials of the Metro are focused on completing the 9-km Phase I extension that links Washermanpet with Wimco Nagar by June next year. The Phase I extension would provide the people of North Chennai with a fast mode of connectivity to reach various parts of the city including Airport and Koyambedu.

The plan is to benefit commuters from northern parts of the city with nine stations at Washermanpet, Korukkupet, Sir Theagaraya College, Tondiarpet, Toll Gate, Thangal, Gowri Ashram, Tiruvottiyur and Wimco Nagar. From Washermanpet to Korukkupet the trains would run underground for 1.8 km and beyond that, it would be an elevated corridor.

"The work is in progress and expected to be completed in the middle of next year," said a Metro rail official, adding that the works are underway simultaneously in both the underground and the elevated stretches to complete the project on time.

CMRL awarded the contract to Afcons Infrastructure in June 2016 to build 1.8 km tunnel of the 2.4 km underground section from Washermanpet - Korrukupet. For the downline tunnel, the tunnel boring machine was commissioned on April 25, 2017, from the Washermanpet station and completed the tunnel excavation five months in September 2017 while the work on the upline tunnel commenced on March 27, 2017, was completed in October 2017. With the help of North Chennai's favourable soil profile, the tunnel excavation was completed ahead of schedule in both the down line and the up line of the underground section.

After the completion of the underground tunnel in the underground section in April last year, the official

Photo: V Naresh Kumar



The Metro Phase I extension works being carried out at Tondiarpet on Sunday

said they had taken up work on the construction of two underground stations and track laying work.

Even as the tunnelling work was in progress, the Metro took up the construction of piers for the elevated stretch on the narrow Thiruvottiyur High road. The CMRL said that the viaduct laying works over the column on the elevated stretch is in the progress.

"The leftover work of viaduct is about 1.5 km which is expected to be completed by end of this year," the official said, adding that the work on laying tracks on the elevated section would start from August this year.

The CMRL has commissioned the Phase I corridors - Central to St Thomas Mount and Washermanpet to Airport in February this year. It

has taken steps to commence work on Phase II in three corridors - running 118.9 km by early next year.

The CMRL has also adopted changes and new technologies in the construction of the Phase I extension works.

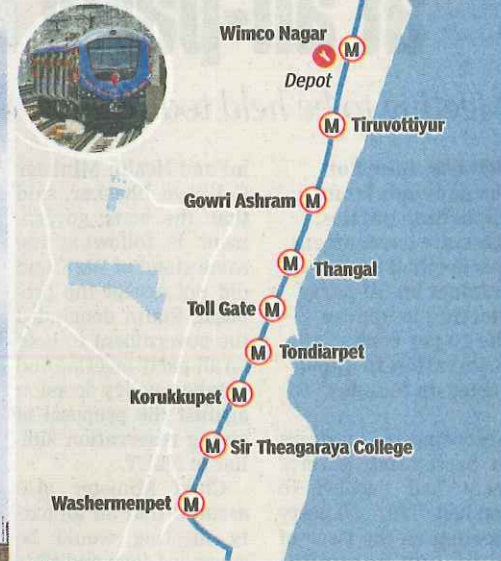
"We have reduced the underground station length by 33 per cent when compared to the stations in Phase I," the official said, adding that they also used U girders in the elevated section for the first time. "Normally, between two piers in the elevated section, you might have seen the structures on which the cranes are running. So, in our Phase I, we used the segmental lining that is small precast pieces. But the U-girders is one piece of the full length from one pier to another. It reduces the time

taken for construction," the official said, adding that using u-girders, they were able to complete construction between two piers in a day when compared four to five days taken for construction using segmental lining. Besides, the official said that Wimco Nagar depot would be an elevated depot.

Construction of the extension project which is estimated to cost Rs 3,770 crore was delayed by five years as the Centre gave its approval only by 2016. Tamil Nadu government decided to extend the metro services to Wimco Nagar from Washermanpet according to the demand of the North Chennai people. The government agreed to extend the Metro rail and made an announcement in the Governor's address in 2010. "When the Metro was

EXTENDED ROUTE

Network to connect Washermanpet with Wimco



proposed first, the original alignment from the Airport ended at Wimco Nagar but it was dropped while preparing the detailed project report much to the anguish of the North Chennai residents. We led a movement to seek Metro rail to be extended till Wimco Nagar through North Chennai People's Right Federation (NCPRF). The issue got the support of all the people cutting across the political barriers and it became a major demand of all the candidates in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls in North Chennai constituency," T Rajkumar, one of the office bearers of NCPRF said.

Rajkumar, however, said that the success of the Metro depends on the patronage. "Considering the fact that the 32 km long Airport and the Wimco Nagar corridor connects two ends of the city, the people living in the poorer neighbourhood of the North Chennai will benefit if the Metro reduces tariff," he said.