

Metro to get 10 new trains; line in North Chennai may open in June

U.Tejonmayam@timesgroup.com

Come October, Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) will start getting new trains for the extended phase-1 corridor that could change the face of north Chennai. The 10 new trains, to be used on the 9km line from Wimco Nagar to Washermenpet, which may open in June 2020, will join the existing fleet of 42 trains when CMRL increases train frequency of services to 2.5 minutes.

"Though procured for the north Chennai line, the new trains will be operated across the entire corridor from Wimco Nagar to Airport via Washermenpet. They will be used when we operate at 2.5-minute frequency in the future. We will keep these trains ready and move them to the mainline when the footfall increases," an official said.

First of the 10 new trains will roll out of Alstom's factory in SriCity, Andhra Pradesh, next month. After arrival, the trains will be readied at the depots and will be operated when the new line opens. The last train is expected to arrive in June next year.

In August, CMRL increased the train frequency between Washermenpet and Airport to five minutes from seven minutes during peak hours due to popular demand. Thirty-five trains are operated during peak hours and 25 during non-peak hours.

However, officials said the addition of 10 trains to the current fleet will not be enough to operate services every 2.5 minutes on both the corridors simultaneously.

"We will need 33 trains in each corridor to operate in that frequency. The new trains could still be used if we want to operate every 2.5 minutes in one corridor for a specific duration of a day," an official said.

Further, operating the fleet at 2.5 minutes frequency will be profitable only when daily footfalls cross four lakh, an official said, adding that the north Chennai line will bring in more commuters. At present, about 1 lakh use the services as against the estimated 7.76 lakh. The new line will take a modern transit facility to the city's oldest localities and change the way residents travel. Metro trains will give commuters easier and faster access to major transit hubs, which are not directly connected by other public transport services such as MTC.

When the metro corridor is thrown open, commuters could travel nearly 32km from Wimco Nagar near Thiruvottiur to the airport.

Alain Spohr, MD, India and South Asia, Alstom, said the trainsets comprising four cars were designed to meet the future demands when the ridership spikes. "Every coach is customised to suit commuter requirements. Metro cars are designed as per climatic and urban requirements. CMRL lines have been planned with a capacity to carry more than five lakh people daily at a 2.5-minute frequency," he said.



TAKING SHAPE: The ramp (above) that will link the underground section to the elevated corridor near Tondiarpet will be completed by June next year. The elevated corridor being built near Tiruvottiur

PHASE-1

45 - K M - L O N G P H A S E - 1



FROM FACTORY TO TRACK

- 1 Cars delivered after inspection and tests at factory
- 2 Arrival inspection done at metro rail depot
- 3 Mechanical and electrical coupling of cars
- 4 Routine static test in the bay line
- 5 Train moved to test track and operated at 40kmph-50kmph, critical parameters tested
- 6 Train moved to mainline for full dynamic test, safety and other parameters
- 7 Signaling and telecommunication instruments tested
- 8 Dynamic testing of signaling to check integration between signal systems and rolling stock
- 9 Joint test to check integration between rolling stock, signal and telecom
- 10 Trains will be operated after service hours and are expected to complete 2,000km without any critical failure
- 11 Once complete, train is considered fit for commercial run
- 12 After final inspection for damage, fitness certificate is taken and put into service
- 13 The entire process takes almost a month



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Metro rail will give us easy access to other localities and ease traffic. But residents will use it regularly if the fares are less

B S Ramya | LAW STUDENT, TONDIARPET



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Metro rail will provide safe and faster commute. Ticket fares don't matter. There are people who are ready to spend

G Venkatesh | BUSINESSMAN, MKB NAGAR

