

Metro rail phase 2 may offer 'Monroe' moments

Shinod Akkararambali

Underground Stns To Have Floor-level Ventilation

U.Tejonmayam
@timesgroup.com

Chennai: You could find yourself having a Marilyn Monroe moment in the underground metro stations that are to be built in phase-2 as ventilation shafts in the premises could blow up your skirts or dhotis.

CMRL will be building ventilation shafts closer to the ground level, instead of tall concrete structures like those in phase-1 stations. For commuters and pedestrians, these road level shafts could be good selfie spots. For CMRL, building smaller shafts is one of the design changes to be introduced in phase-2 stations to save space and reduce construction cost and time. It means much of the structures that are jutting out of the phase-1 underground stations will disappear in phase-2.

A metro rail official said the shafts may either be louver grates made of iron grills or as a slightly raised platform covered with a glass panel with provisions given on the sides for air circulation. Since it will be on the street level, walkers or vehicles could pass over it.

"We have already attempted one at Central Metro on top of which we have laid a glass panel. Though people can



STRIKE THE POSE: CMRL will be making ventilation shafts at floor-level for saving the space, cost and time required for the project. The shafts could blow up your skirts or dhotis though, giving you a chance to copy Marilyn Monroe's iconic 'skirt-blowing' photograph from 1954

walk on top of it, we do not allow that right now as passengers walking under the glass pane could see those walking above and we do not want to cause any inconvenience," a metro rail official said. "But the tall shafts will not be there in phase-2 stations," the official added.

In phase-1 underground stations, CMRL has built tall concrete structures with louver type grill on all four sides for ventilation. These structures are 14m tall and stations have exhaust fans for air circulation.

Metro rail and subway networks in Seoul, Los Angeles and London have ventilation shafts on the footpath that blow out air every time a train passes by.

In addition to the changes planned for design of the shaft, there will be fewer

shafts for each station. Compared to eight ventilation shafts for each station in phase-1, there will be only three shafts linking the tunnels and the two levels of the station in phase-2.

In phase-1, shafts are built on either side of an underground station closer to large exhaust fans to allow air circulation in the tunnels, platform and concourse levels of the stations and the mechanical equipment room of the stations. An emergency shaft also has been built with doors in the tunnels between Central Metro and Government Estate station as the stations are nearly 2km away instead of the less than 1km distance at which other stations are built. "But these shafts take up about 20sqm. Now it will take up very little space," an official said.