

62 staircases, 36 escalators: Central Metro's a mega maze

Signage, Design To Make Moving Around A Breeze

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When the train doors slide open 28m underground at Central Metro, it can be a dizzying experience for a new visitor amid the loud chatter of commuters, announcements, sight of numerous staircases beside escalators in brightly-lit corridors. With 62 staircases, 36 escalators and 15 elevators, a complex maze-like structure that plunges into the bowels of the city is taking final shape under the hustle and bustle of Poonamallee High Road. But with signage and directions, moving around Central Metro, which will be the mother of all underground stations in the city, should be a breeze.

Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is gearing to open its biggest station in the next couple of months. Built by Afcons Infrastructure, which has built a major portion of the tunnels for the network, the three-decked metro station, packed into a sturdy matchbox-shaped frame, is spread across more than three lakh square feet.

Nearly double the size of an average underground station in the city, the facilities built inside are more than twice the number present in others.

R Ramanathan, former metro rail director, said the architecture of the station was far ahead in standards when compared to the likes of London and New York subways. CMRL teams have visited some of the oldest and busiest metro facilities in Singapore, Hong Kong and Europe. "In terms of interiors, signalling and safety systems, Central Metro will be more modern than those in Europe which are several decades old," he said. "The station is bigger than Rajiv Chowk in Delhi."

The station will boast of a number of facilities from the entry level to the platforms. At the ticketing level, there will be



ALL ABOUT CENTRAL METRO

TOTAL AREA
30,000sqm

BREADTH
35m

Levels: 3
(ticketing level, upper and lower track levels)

STAIRCASES
62

ESCALATORS
36

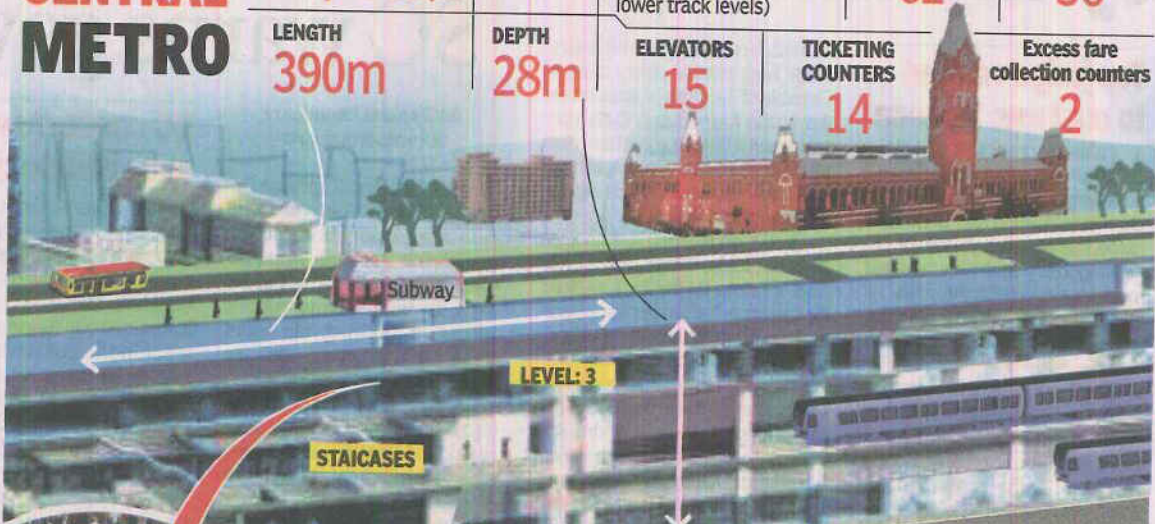
LENGTH
390m

DEPTH
28m

ELEVATORS
15

TICKETING COUNTERS
14

Excess fare collection counters
2



TICKET-VENDING MACHINES
16 (9 as back up)

4,550sqm allocated on concourse level for food stalls and entertainment

15,000-plus passengers expected to board and alight at the station at a time by 2026

2 corridors, Washermenpet to Airport and Central to St Thomas Mount, will be connected

5 entry/exit points near Park station, Moore Market Complex (MMC), Central station, Government Hospital and Ripon Building

2 subways Park station to MMC and Buckingham Canal to Central Railway Station

2 island platforms in both levels of the station

BUSIEST OF THE LOT

GANGNAM STATION, SEOUL:
2.09L footfalls per day

WATERLOO STATION, London: **2.7L** daily users

HONG KONG MTR: **2L** passengers per day

NEW YORK TIMES SQUARE: **2.10L** per day



DEEPEST TUNNELS
Istanbul 124m (under Bosphorus strait)

London 58.5m



Delhi 55m

Kolkata 45m (under Hooghly river)

near-ly 50,000sqft space for food and entertainment to ensure people do not run out of choices. They can then head to any of the 14 ticket counters manned by staff adorning crisp light blue shirts or take the help of one of them to buy a ticket at a ticket-vending machine. They can then easily descend one or two levels to the platforms either through escalators or elevators. For those who like to walk, there are 62 staircases to reach any corner of the station.

The platform levels will also be double in size with two island platforms in between tracks built on two levels. The siding lines for drivers to start train op-

erations will make it easy for commuters to board trains faster while other stations depend on trains operated from depots.

Five entry-exit points in front of Central Railway Station, Moore Market Complex and Park Station will enable smooth flow of people in and out of the

metro station.

With numerous facilities, Central Metro holds great potential to draw crowds and provide seamless connectivity. "We are conducting trial runs after operation hours and are hoping to have a metro rail safety inspection in March," a metro rail official said.