

# Metro Rail Takes Chennai to Lonely Planet Top 10

## Express News Service

**Chennai:** There are plenty of surveys in which *namma* city doesn't quite come out shining. This isn't one of them. Despite all the bad publicity about the airport making it to the 'Worst Airport' list of *The Guide to Sleeping in Airports*, Chennai is still ninth on *Lonely Planet's* Places to Visit in 2015.

Coming on the heels of being featured #26 in the *New York Times'* global tourism destinations in 2014, this is bound to do wonders for international tourism.

The *Lonely Planet* list was com-



plied by Joe Bindloss, a noted guidebook and travel author. Sites like *Lonely Planet* dictate how attractive a destination is for travelers from Europe and America.

"Whenever there is a feature like this, immediately the number of tourists and the interest level from them increases. Though we do not

handle them directly, we have a lot of partners who hand us contracts to make local bookings and reservations," said John Victor, proprietor of Victory Travels in T Nagar.

Where *NYT* had listed the more tried-and-tested tourism staples — Kapaleeswar Temple in Mylapore and Kalakshetra, *Lonely Planet* at-

tributes it to the up-and-coming Chennai Metro Rail. "Chennai has long been seen as a stepping-stone to other parts of India. But with the opening of the Chennai Metro Rail, the capital of India's south plans to raise its profile. If nothing else, fast and frequent air-conditioned trains will transform the experience of exploring this humid metropolis," wrote Bindloss.

About 6.5 lakh foreign tourists visited the city in 2013. "All the hotels here have great ratings and competitive prices. They're also part of international tourism alliances," said Parimala R, who works as a holiday and events planner.