

A multi-modal walk to remember

Officials explore the difficulties in switching between modes of transport

Staff Reporter

CHENNAI: The Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) on Saturday commenced a 'public transportation walk' to assess existing challenges faced by commuters in the city.

Senior officials including Municipal Administration and Water Supply Secretary K. Phanindra Reddy, Chennai Corporation Commissioner Vikram Kapur and CMRL Managing Director K. Rajaraman were among the key participants in the first such walk in the city.

The walk started on Poonamallee High Road near Egmore Railway Station at 8.30 a.m. and covered key hubs of proposed multi-modal integration. It involved identification of bottlenecks to integration of public transport modes near areas such as the airport and ended at the



Commuters and traffic police were not aware of senior officials travelling in their midst as part of the walk — PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

commercial area in T. Nagar by noon.

CUMTA members said the officials purchased tickets at MRTS, suburban stations, and boarded crowded buses to experience the challenges to multi-modal integration.

The shift from Indira Nagar MRTS towards Guindy

was among the areas where commuters seemed to be facing challenges. After crossing Poonamallee High Road, the officials walked along with commuters to the MRTS station at Park Town Station. They got down at Indira Nagar, crossed Rajiv Gandhi Salai, boarded a bus near

Madhya Kailash, reached Anna University and took another bus to Guindy. They then went to the airport by train.

"We realised how difficult it is to use the foot overbridges. Also, shifting from bus to suburban train mode is a risky affair," said an official. "The trains are fast but the queues for tickets are long. It is out of sheer necessity people are using public transport," he added.

The officials returned from the airport by trains and reached Mambalam Railway station and studied the deficiencies in multi-modal integration in the commercial hub near Panagal Park.

The walk on Saturday is likely to be a stepping stone towards having a unified ticketing system for all modes of public transport. CUMTA will organise such walks on a regular basis.

CMRL has already done a

study to identify where metro corridors can integrate with existing public transit facilities. The study was carried out with the participation of Chennai Corporation, Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority and other agencies. The data collected will be used to devise long-term strategies for smooth transfer from one mode of transport to other after major infrastructure projects such as Metro Rail, Bus Rapid Transit System and Monorail become operational.

CUMTA is likely to stress on the need for pavements, signage, walkthrough and pedestrian interchanges for seamless transfer across different modes in the coming meetings. The State government last month announced that it would take up another study on multi-modal integration of transport in Chennai this year.