

**DOWNTOWN** CHENNAI  
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DOWNTOWN CARES 3

# Pay, pedal, park and get a refund

CMRL extends its free cycle service to recently-opened underground Metro stations

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At the Anna Nagar Tower metro station, a group of young commuters was curiously inspecting a line of new bicycles parked near the ticket counter. Just like many other commuters, they were surprised at the presence of these cycles at the metro station. Asking around, they found out that the rack of high-end cycles was part of an initiative by Chennai Metro Rail (CMRL) to ensure last-mile connectivity for commuters underground metro stations.

The free bicycle scheme allows commuters to use the cycle between the respective station and their office/home.

CMRL has extended this scheme following a pilot project carried out at the elevated Ekkatuthangal Metro Station, where 10 cycles were made available for commuters, at a refundable deposit of ₹3,000.

They have tied up with Athi's Bicycle Club, a Kochi-based company that was instrumental in introducing



The free bicycle scheme seeks to provide the comfort of last-mile connectivity to users of Metro Rail. PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

eco-friendly concepts at Kochi Metro Rail as well.

Initially, 10 bicycles will be placed at each of the newly-opened underground Metro stations, which include Anna Nagar Tower Park, Nehru Park, Shenoy

Nagar and Tirumangalam.

## Refundable deposit

Explaining how the system works, CMRL officials said interested commuters have to register their names with the respective

Metro Rail station by submitting an address proof and their phone number. These documents will be verified by CMRL officials before allowing these commuters to take their bicycles.

Commuters can take a cycle of their choice but will be allowed to take only one cycle per person. Commuters need not pay any rent for the cycles they hire. Instead, they have to pay a deposit of ₹3,000 per cycle. They will get a code to unlock the cycle.

“As per norms, the commuters must show the cycle to the officials at the respective Metro Rail station from where it was hired, once in 24 hours, to ensure the safety of the cycles.

In case of a damage or theft, the commuter has to pay an additional sum of ₹2,000 per cycle. On the other hand, if the commuter would like to return the cycle, the deposited amount (₹3,000) will be refunded, instantly,” said the official.

## WhatsApp booking

Commuters can book the bicycles through WhatsApp by sending an SMS to 9746361166, along with the station code. On sending the message, they will receive a code to unlock the cycle at the station. Produ-

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cing the required documents is mandatory.

“Young commuters, who have their houses in the vicinity, have shown interest in hiring these cycles. The concept will be extended to all stations in the future,” said a CMRL official.

However, according to S. Ashok Kumar, a resident of Anna Nagar, “Creation of a dedicated cycling lane by the Greater Chennai Corporation will help sustain this initiative by CMRL and also make it safer. It will also help make the trip to our workplace and home safer.”