

CHENNAI METRO LINKED WITH CENTRAL, EGMORE STATIONS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

RAIL commuters will no longer have to dish out more for taxis and autos during peak hours to reach Chennai Airport and CMBT terminus, with the metro train being linked with Central and Egmore station on Friday. The Chennai Airport - Nehru Park service has been extended till Central via Egmore. Similarly, the metro on the Airport-Chinnamalai stretch will run upto AG-DMS.

The services in the 2.7 km stretch between Nehru Park and Central and 4.5 km from Saidapet to AG - DMS were flagged off by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Housing And Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri. The duo also inaugurated Egmore, Central, Saidapet, Nandanam, Teynampet and AG - DMS metro stations.

Fare from Central to airport is ₹70, while between Central - CMBT it is ₹50. The fare is ₹60 to reach airport from Egmore.

The ticket from Saidapet/Teynampet/Nandanam to airport will remain at ₹40.

The most convenient and hassle free metro train connectivity to Central and Egmore - two busiest stations in the city, is expected to reduce congestion on roads. The Egmore and Central stations together handle about 1.20 lakh passengers a day. This includes both suburban and non suburban passengers. The two stations have daily trains to all major cities across the country.

According to railway records, more than 50 per cent of passengers use suburban trains for reaching their destinations while the remaining opt for MTC buses, autos and call taxis.

Cashing in on the demand, call taxis and autos collect surge pricing during peak hours. To travel from Central to airport, call taxi charge between ₹380 and ₹450 and during 5 pm and 9 pm. Similarly, to go to CMBT from Egmore/Central, passengers have to pay between ₹200 and ₹250.

The additional metro connectivity is expected to provide a huge relief for passengers as they no longer need to depend on call taxis for faster travel. "Though the metro train goes to airport taking a detour via CMBT and Anna Nagar, it will reach the destination within 60 minutes. Once the Central-DMS metro link is thrown open for traffic, the Central-airport travel time will come down by 35 to 45 minutes," said metro officials.

CMRL officials said as of now, a train from Central metro station will leave for airport every 15 minutes during peak hours and depending on the patronage, the services will be increased.

While welcoming the connectivity, a few passengers said the subway connectivity and pavements to reach Central should be repaired.

K Mohan, a passenger, said metro trains will be one of the shortest and affordable mode of transportation to reach CMBT. "However, the subway from metro station and footpath from subway to Central needs to be relaid. The escalators and lifts also should be repaired at the earliest," he said.



Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri flagging off the first metro train services between Nehru Park and Chennai Central at Egmore Station on Friday | **D SAMPATHKUMAR**



FREE RIDE TILL 10.30 PM ON SATURDAY

To popularise Metro rail services from Central, Chennai Metro Rail Ltd, has announced that commuters can take a free ride in trains that start at Central between 5.30 am and 10.30 pm on Saturday. A senior official said commuters can travel free of cost to airport. Services from Central till St Thomas Mount also will be free.



Of the 107.77 km routes proposed under Phase II, Japan International Cooperation Agency came forward to fund for developing lines for 52.01 km

Edappadi K Palaniswami

Poonamallee to Light House metro line under govt's consideration: CM

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CHIEF Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on Friday said a new metro line between Light House and Poonamallee via Vadapalani and Porur is being considered under the Chennai Metro Rail Project Phase II. A feasibility study is also being conducted to extend the airport metro line up to Vandalur.

Speaking at the inauguration of metro line between Nehru Park and Central station, at Egmore station, he said the government has granted in principle approval for developing three stretches at an estimated cost of ₹ 76, 961 crore for a length of about 107.77 km under Chennai Metro Rail Project Phase II.

"The three routes are Madhavaram - Siruseri, Madhavaram - Sholinganallur and CMBT - Light house. In addition to this, CMRL has been preparing the project report for developing a fourth stretch from Light House to Poonamallee via Vadapalani

and Porur," the Chief Minister said.

Noting that the CMRL has been asked to prepare a Detailed Project Report for metro train in Coimbatore as well, Chief Minister Palaniswami said foreseeing the developments of Chennai suburban areas, feasibility study is being conducted to connect Chennai Airport metro line to Vandalur linking the proposed bus terminus at Kilambakkam.

He said of the 107.77 km routes proposed under Phase II, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had come forward to fund for developing lines for 52.01 km from Madhavaram to Koyambedu.

"We are also taking efforts to get funds from Asian Development Bank for developing 17.12 km line from CMBT to Light House," he added.

He also urged the Centre to grant early approval and sanction of Central share of funds for the Phase-II of Chennai Metro Rail Project.