

Soon, flash your smartphone at metro stns to pay for tickets

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Chennai: You could soon walk past an automatic fare collection (AFC) gate at metro stations and let your smartphone pay for your commute. Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is planning to introduce a ticket payment system where a smartphone app or a small chip attached to the phone will be scanned by a reader for a ticket.

A metro rail official said the concept uses near-field communication (NFC) technology that is at present used for scanning smart cards at the AFC gates as commuters proceed to the platform from the concourse level.

The new ticket payment system would require a smartphone application, which can be recharged at the counter or through recharge terminals for payment of ticket fare. "The



phone should also be NFC compatible," the official said.

When a passenger walks past the AFC gate, a reader will automatically detect the phone even if it is inside the pocket or a bag. It detects the app and registers the code of the station.

As the commuter exits a station, the reader will again detect the phone through the app and deduct the fare based on the distance travelled. The readers at AFC gates are fed with station codes, distance and ticket fares.

However, if the smartp-

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hones are not NFC-enabled, commuters can purchase a chip that can be stuck to their phones. The readers will scan the chips, which can be recharged like a smartcard, when commuters enter and exit stations. "But these chips cost about ₹1,200 which the commuter may have to pay," an official said.

Last year, Delhi Metro tied up with an Australian firm to manufacture smart watches with a rechargeable ticket the size of a SIM card which will work as a smart card. The SIM-equipped watch can be recharged like a regular smartcard.