

Pedal power: Metro stns to get 50 more cycles

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: After receiving an overwhelming commuter response to the bicycle sharing scheme launched at four metro stations, Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is now set to expand its fleet of vehicles.

Within the next couple of months, CMRL will add 50 more bicycles in select stations to cater to the growing demand among commuters for last mile connectivity.

CMRL has floated tenders for procurement and maintenance of the bicycles.

"We have received a good response from commuters and there is more demand for our cycles. In Nehru Park sta-



CONNECTING CORNERS: With poor share auto and small bus connectivity, the CMRL's move to provide bicycles, as the one put on display at Little Mount station on Saturday, as last mile connectivity is an welcome idea

tion alone, we have 90 registered members and another 20 are waiting to get registered," said a CMRL official,

adding, "The new set of cycles will be kept in stations that have good footfall and demand for cycles."

Taking inspiration from Kochi Metro Rail, CMRL launched a free bicycle scheme in four stations in mid-2017. At present, there are more than 45 bicycles at Ekattuthangal, Nehru Park, Thirumangalam and Anna Nagar Tower stations.

Commuters can pay a refundable deposit of ₹3000 to take a bicycle from any of these stations and have to return it at the same station.

"If they are taking it home for the night, they have to bring it to the station the next day, show it to an official and then take it again," an official said.

Two other companies also joined the bandwagon, adding another 75 cycles which

can be used free of charge or for a fee of ₹1 at nine metro stations.

CMRL has been struggling to provide last mile connectivity to commuters ever since the first line was launched in June 2015.

While MTC's small buses cater to the demand in some stations, bicycles and tie-ups with cab aggregators are intended to fill the gap elsewhere. Some commuters said the bicycle service could be made more user-friendly.

"If they give us the option of leaving the bicycle at any metro station, it would save us the hassle of riding to the same station to leave it," said S Kumar, a regular commuter.