

Metro rail stations open doors for art displays, social causes

Medical Camps, Art Shows, Kids' Games Organised

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Chennai: Metro rail stations will no longer be just a service providing commuters with better connectivity through modern trains, but also a space that will tell a story or convey a social message. The station doors have now been opened for organisations and individuals to conduct public events on their own in exchange for a nominal fee.

Although such events have previously been held at metro stations, they were organised in collaboration with CMRL. Events like folk arts, medical camps, games for children and exhibitions were conducted in stations including Vadapalani, Koyambedu, Thirumanagalam and Alandur. Now, metro ra-



A photography exhibition was organised at the Vadapalani metro station

il will take a hands-off approach, letting outsiders conduct them as long as they meet certain guidelines.

"Anyone can request us and use our public space in any of the stations to conduct exhibitions and any other events," said CMRL MD Pankaj Kumar Bansal at an event earlier this week. The idea is to not just effectively utilise the large space and generate non-ticketing reve-

nue but also give members of the public a peek into the stations in the hope of increasing footfall.

All metro stations have space allotted for public activities in the non-ticketing area on the concourse level. This means both commuters and others can participate in the events, besides grabbing a bite at one of the permanent food stalls at the stations. "We have been receiving several requests to conduct

fund-raising activities in our stations. We do not want to encourage such events. Activities that promote any art form or awareness programmes will be allowed," a metro rail official said.

Recently, CMRL organised a one-week photo exhibition on the occasion of World Photography Day at Vadapalani station. The expo, which had nearly 100 photos on display including many from metro rail construction sites, drew more than 5,000 visitors. "We will permanently put up these photographs in stations that have good footfall," the CMRL MD had said.

Metro stations in other cities too have similar public spaces. In Bengaluru, BMRC opened the Rangoli Metro Art Centre on MG Road boulevard close to the metro station there. The centre has three art galleries, an auditorium, a play area and a space for other art activities. In Kochi, KMRL opened an air-conditioned dormitory at the MG Road metro station.