

Dine, shop and hop on metro trains from June

Tenders Floated, CMRL Sets Self 3-Mth Deadline For 300 Shops

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Chennai: By June, commuters rushing to their workplace during rush hour could quickly grab a bite or order a takeaway before they hop on to a metro train, as big food brands and retailers would be opening outlets in all metro stations. Chennai Metro Rail Limited has invited food and other retail brands to set up shops in metro stations, including the underground stations opened in February. Officials expected at least 300 shops to open across the 32 stations in three months.

A metro rail official said they floated tenders for licensing built-up bare shell shops and office spaces last month and that some brands have expressed interest to open outlets in a few metro stations. "Some companies want to open outlets in stations like Central, Egmore, Thirumang-



C Suresh Kumar

UP FOR GRABS: Central Metro, the largest of the stations in the city, has 4,550sqm space built up in the concourse level for commercial use

alam and a few on the Anna Salai line, such as Saidapet and AG-DMS. In three months, we hope to see at least 300 shops including food, ATMs and other retail outlets open in all the stations," the official said. "If not all, we hope to open retail outlets in at least 15 to 20 stations in three months."

A few retail food brands like A2B and Café Coffee Day have outlets in stations like Koyambedu and Alandur, where the average footfall is more than 3,000 a day. CMRL has rented out commercial space for other shops like foreign exchange in airport metro sta-

tion, which serves an average 7,200 passengers a day.

As Central metro is now the most popular metro station with nearly 8,000 passengers boarding trains from the station every day, CMRL officials are expecting more retail brands to open outlets there and at other transit stations like Egmore. Central Metro, the largest of the stations in the city, has 4,550sqm space built up in the concourse level for commercial use. "We have commercial space in the street level too in some stations," an official said.

Anticipating response from more retailers, CMRL is also developing commercial space in the stations into smart zones by installing smart meters to keep a tab on power consumption through smartphone apps. A tender was floated recently to install smart meters. "We are likely to install 400 smart meters in all 32 stations in the next four months. This is to integrate all the power meters and link them to our server or to a mobile app to keep a tab on the power consumption. This will be only for the commercial space we rent out," a metro rail official said.