Restrictions on Cenotaph Road to Go

Move Likely To Reduce Violations

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Chennai: Motorists can breathe easy. The busy intersection of Cenotaph Road with Anna Salai is set to open for two-way traffic from next week, more than seven years after restrictions were put in place to facilitate metro rail work.

Chennai Metro Rail Ltd (CMRL) had begun underground services on the stretch in May last year but the traffic police were unable to take it over until a couple of months later. After the restrictions are removed, motorists coming from Kotturpuram and beyond will be allowed to turn right from Cenotaph Road on to Anna Salai, go further and take a U-turn or turn right on to Shanthi Mahal Salai, on which SBT College is located.

“Because of the businessection of violations, including jumping of signals, by traffic police officers who plan to operate the Cenotaph Road and SBP (Shanthi Mahal Salai) traffic signals in tandem, the proposal has been sent to the deputy commissioner of police (south Chennai), along with a prototype working plan,” a CMRL official said.

During the next year, the restrictions were in place, motorists were only allowed to turn left from Cenotaph Road on to Anna Salai and proceeded towards the Nandanam signal. A dedicated bus lane was provided for vehicles coming from Nandanam to Cenotaph Road. Those coming from Kotturpuram and beyond and wishing to proceed towards Perry’s were forced to travel up to Nandanam junction to take a 90-degree turn and proceed to their destination.

Many motorists going to Chennai Central or Perry’s complained that they had to avoid it with vehicles going towards Kotturpuram before taking the U-turn.

Incidents of traffic violations became common, with cab drivers blatantly proceeding in the wrong direction at great risk to other road users.

A man, a student of SBT College, had said, that the situation was particularly bad during the morning rush hour. “There were only one or two police personnel on duty at the junction and by the time they reached the spot of violation the offenders would have raced away.”

Now, a traffic police official said, “We have decided to give 70 seconds to motorists travelling east and west on Anna Salai, while the vehicles merging from Cenotaph road will be given 80 seconds. After a trial run, we might increase the timing based on the volume of vehicles and traffic from Kotturpuram.”