

Metro rail's daily footfall crosses 1 lakh

On April 26, metro rail's daily ridership crossed one lakh for the first time. A look at the monthly figures



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Chennai: More than 24.3 lakh people took metro trains in April, the highest ever since it began operations in June 2015. Last month was also the first time the daily ridership crossed one lakh. On April 26, two days before workers went on strike, 1.02 lakh took metro trains.

Two months after the last leg of phase-1 from Washermenpet to AG-DMS covering around 10km was opened, metro rail's monthly patronage has jumped by 29%. Officials said it was because the newly opened stretch was the missing, and shortest, link between Central Railway Station and airport. Otherwise commuters were forced to take a circuitous route from Central Metro via Poonamallee High Road, Koyambedu and Alandur to reach the airport. Commuters spent more time and money travelling on this route.

"It used to take nearly an hour and the fare was ₹70. Now, we save almost 15 minutes and the fare is ₹60," said M Sundar, an IT employee.

In January, the monthly

patronage touched 17.36 lakh. The last leg was inaugurated on February 10. Though stations like Thousand Lights and LIC had poor access to the facility with only two entry points in place of four, metro rail received good response in February, recording a 26% jump in ridership. "It was also because nearly 7.3 lakh people took the free rides in the first few days after the inauguration of the stations in February," a metro rail official said.

On Thursday, around 88,259 people took metro trains. The highest so far this month was on May 6 when 92,917 people travelled. A metro rail official said patronage would steadily grow as the service links Anna Salai dotted with many government and private establishments.

When the first service between Alandur and Koyambedu was inaugurated in June 2015, metro rail barely saw a daily ridership of 15,000 to 25,000. "It has gone up since the services linked airport, CMBT and Central. We hope it'll grow once we extend the feeder services," an official said.