‘Outsource to keep metro running’

CMRL’s Tips To Kochi, B’luru Counterparts To Tackle Strike

Chennai: Having successfully managed to run services with backup teams when employees struck in April, CMRL officials are now offering tips to their counterparts in Kochi and Bengaluru to tide over worker unrest while keeping operations unobstructed.

As a first step to avoid disruptions in case employees resort to a strike, metro rail officials have advised their counterparts in Kochi and Bengaluru to outsource most of the daily train operations. “After they saw us restore metro service and manage with a backup team when the strike was on last month, they wanted to know how we managed,” an official said.

Officials said they advised both the southern metro rail services to outsource operations of trains and the operational control centre besides identifying permanent staff not part of the striking group and training them to handle operations.

CMRL, having outsourced train operations with about 35 operators working in shifts, has told the metro rail services that they managed station operations with service managers involved as part of the station management contract. They were trained in operations from handling platform screen doors, ticketing systems and automatic fare collection gates to cleaning services.

“In our first station management contract in 2017 for the Thirumangalam-Velachery Park line, we included service managers. They were expected to handle station operations by assisting controllers. It was then service managers who took control of station operations during the strike,” another official said.

In addition, around five CMRL workers, who were not part of the striking group, were trained to run the operations control centre (OCC).

OCC, at CMRL head office in Koyambedu, is the nodal centre that controls train operations. “We had two contract staff in OCC to assist them,” a CMRL official said.

Two traffic controllers, one depot controller, a fault manager, two signal controllers, a traction power controller and an assistant chief controller work in OCC for 11.5 hours.

On April 28, more than 100 CMRL workers, who were mostly station controllers and OCC staff, went on strike demanding the reinstatement of eight employees who had been terminated on various grounds.

CMRL officials later said the striking workers tampered with the automation signalling system bringing all trains to a grinding halt at the stations in the middle of the service hours.