

'Outsource to keep metro running'

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

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Having successfully managed to run services with backup teams when employees struck in April, CMRL officials are now offering a tip or two to their counterparts in Kochi and Bangalore to tide over worker unrest while keeping operations unaffected.

As a first step to avoid disruptions in case employees resort to a strike, metro rail officials have advised their counterparts in Kerala and Karnataka to outsource most

TIPS TO TROUBLESHOOT

Tips CMRL shared with Kochi and Bangalore metro to keep service running during unrest

- ▶ **Outsource train and station operations** so as not to disturb services in case of a strike
- ▶ **Outsource a service manager for each station.** They can take over in the absence of station controllers
- ▶ **Employ outsourced staff to run operation control centre (OCC)**



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 has outsourced train operations with about 106 operators working in shifts.

An official said they managed station operations with service managers outsourced 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 mana-

gement contract in 2017 for the Thirumangalam-Nehru Park line, we included service managers. They were expected to handle station operations by assisting controllers. It was these 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 every eight-hour shift.

On April 29, 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 automatic signalling system bringing all trains to a grinding halt at the stations in the middle of the service hours.