CMRL found more than ₹3.2L in wallets lost by commuters

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Chennai: More than ₹3.2L was found in wallets lost by commuters in metro trains and stations since Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) first began operations in June 2015. For CMRL, that’s about double the revenue it generates from parking in metro stations every month.

To put that figure into better perspective, that money could buy two iPhone XS Max or three 13-inch MacBooks or a million coffee cups at Starbucks or two Royal Enfields.

Delhi metro, which operates a much wider network, has recovered more than ₹9L in cash and ₹7L in tickets since 2004. According to CMRL officials, it is easier to get back valuable items than it is to get back a ticket.

Since the first line between Alandur andRoyapettah opened in June 2015, CMRL staff have recovered around 4,200 items lost by commuters in the station premises and trains.

What happens when an abandoned item is found on CMRL premises? According to officials, a protocol is followed methodically. When a commuter reports about a lost item, the station staff pass on the information to other stations through walkie-talkies. If it is found immediately, the commuter is informed, and the item is returned after verification.

"Passengers can immediately report to the station controller or staff about the item lost or call the customer care number 40 hours later. If the item is found immediately, passengers can request a refund of ₹3L and claim ₹1L," said an official. Nearly 80% of the items (3,396 items) have been returned to passengers.

Besides 4,200 wallets found with cash, some of the frequently recovered items include electronic gadgets like laptops, mobile phones, iPads and DSLR cameras, passports, credit and debit cards.

Officials said every station maintains a register where details of recovered items along with date and time it was found are recorded. If the item isn’t claimed within 48 hours, it is sent to the last and found office located in Alandur metro station. However, before it is sent to CMRL head office after 44 hours and later deposited with the RPF, Arms, Explosive material and other contraband are handed over to the police, while perishable goods are disposed off. "Every single item is recorded in our register. If the valuables lie unclaimed, their auction is conducted after one year at CMRL manager’s office," an official said.