

SOON, USE TRAVEL CARD TO BUY SNACKS AT METRO STATIONS | 6



# Now, use travel card to buy snacks at metro stns

## CMRL Plans To Extend Its Use At Retail Shops In Stns

U.Tejonmayam@timesgroup.com

**Chennai:** You could soon walk into a metro station with your pockets empty and still grab a cuppa or a tasty snack before boarding a train only with your rechargeable smart card. Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is planning to extend the use of the existing travel card to the retail outlets in stations on the network.

“Our next step is to give commuters the choice of using the smart card at the out-

lets in our stations. It’s easier for them and saves them time. That’s our plan and it’ll happen soon,” an official said.

At present, commuters could use the smart card for metro train rides, parking lots and feeder services from metro stations. CMRL is also making it mandatory to pay for vehicle

parking services at their stations through smartcards from September 2019.

When extended to retail outlets, commuters could walk in and make a purchase by simply swiping the card including at busy stations like Alandur, Koyambedu and Vadapalani which are dotted

with coffee shops and eateries of popular brands.

Commuters could load these rechargeable cards with a minimum of ₹50 and a maximum of ₹2,000 either through a ticket vending machine or at the ticket counter in any metro station. “It saves time, whether you swipe it for a train ride or

### ADVANTAGES OF SMARTCARD



➤ It saves time as people don't have to wait at ticket counters

➤ Can be easily recharged at a kiosk or ticket counter in metro stations

➤ A minimum of ₹ 50 and a maximum of ₹ 2000 could be loaded

➤ Commuters can avail

**10% discount on ticket fares**

➤ A card could be used for train rides, station parking lots and feeder services

➤ Commuters can soon swipe the card at any retail outlets like coffee shops or restaurants in metro stations

to avail of a feeder service,” an official said.

The plastic card contains a magnetic stripe to store data including amount recharged, information about stations, their distance from others and time. The stored data is key when commuters swipe the card at the automatic fare collection gates when they enter and exit metro stations after train rides, as the reader at these gates detect the time, distance and stations a commuter had travelled to detect the ticket fare.

The plan to extend it to retail outlets in stations comes at a time when CMRL is in talks with other transport services including MTC to launch the smart card as a common mobility card that could be used across all public road transport including buses, subur-

ban and MRTS train services. But despite conducting successful trials to integrate the smart card system with MTC services, the plan is yet to take off. “Now that the Central government has launched the National Common Mobility Card, we expect a favourable response from MTC soon,” an official said.

CMRL first launched smart card as an option for regular commuters, who were using tokens when the first service between Koyambedu and Alandur in June 2015. When the underground section between Nehru Park and Thirumangalam opened in May 2017, CMRL made it mandatory for commuters to use smartcards. After commuters opposed to it, CMRL made smart card optional and continued to issue token.