

Metro plans to run trains every 2½ minutes

Now, There Is 5-Min Interval In Peak Hours

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Chennai: Imagine a train pulling up every two-and-a-half minutes during peak hours on the city's metro network. Sounds ambitious? That's the frequency of service Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) hopes to achieve once the number of commuters touches 4 lakh a day. The number is just over a lakh on weekdays now and averages 95,000 on weekends.

"The system is designed for 2½ minutes. Since, we ha-

AT A GLANCE

Frequency of trains during peak and non-peak hours

Peak hour frequency (8am to 10am & 5pm to 8pm)

Non-peak hours frequency (4.30am to 6am & 10pm to 11pm)

6am to 8am & 12noon to 5pm

8pm to 10pm

Fig. in mins

Trains operate from 4.30am to 11pm (weekdays)

Washermenpet to Airport (via Anna Salai)



Saturday: 4.30am to 11pm | 7 mins

Sunday: 8am to 10pm | 7 mins

Central to St Thomas Mount and Inter-corridor (Central to Airport) via Poonamallee High Road



Saturday: 4.30am to 11pm | 14 mins

Sunday: 8am to 10pm | 14 mins



ven't used it to optimal level, we must validate it before we eventually increase the frequency. We will start the trials now to prepare ourselves when it needs to be implemented," an official said. At pre-

sent, trains are run at five-minute intervals only during peak hours on one corridor between Washermenpet and Airport via Anna Salai, that too after commuters took to social media to complain abo-

ut overcrowding. CMRL doesn't have enough trains to run them every two-and-a-half minutes across both the corridors throughout the day.

At present, 35 trains are operated during peak hours

and 25 during non-peak hours. Officials said they would need 33 trains to run services every two-and-a-half minutes on a single corridor. However, CMRL has a fleet of only 42 trains to operate across the two corridors of phase-1. An additional 10 trains are being manufactured for the 10km phase-1 extension.

Officials said increasing frequency is a big challenge and requires syncing of all critical systems with minimal failure. Systems including passenger information display on the platforms have to sync with daily train time table and platform screen doors have to efficiently function when trains arrive every two-and-a-half minutes. Point machines, a device used for tra-

ins switching tracks should also be failproof. All these critical systems will be checked during trial runs planned around midnight on Saturday.

"Reliability of the overall system is critical and has to be tested. If there is a failure in one train or in the signal system, the entire operation will go haywire," an official said.

"We need at least two hours to prepare a train and bring it out from the depot to the mainline. Induction and withdrawal of trains to the depot itself is a big challenge," an official said. While each corridor is supposed to have a depot, CMRL operates two corridors with only one depot. A second depot planned at Washermenpet is still under construction.