

More Metro stations to house eateries, retail outlets soon

Contracts to open restaurants awarded to popular brands

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With more people taking the Chennai Metro, retail outlets and restaurants have started mushrooming at stations across the network.

With Metro stations registering an average 1.15 lakh footfall a day, Chennai Metro Rail Limited officials said 19 stations would have such facilities soon.

The stations include Chennai Central, Kilpauk, Pachaiyappa's College, Shenoynagar, CMBT, Vadapalani, Chennai Airport, Alandur, Koyambedu, Ashok Nagar, High Court, Little Mount, Guindy and Nanganallur.

Restaurants are already open at several stations. More contracts were awarded in recent times. "Retailers like A2B, Chai Kings and Madras Coffee House are already functioning at some stations. Besides, we have given contracts to Sree Gupta Bhavan, Aavin, Frankie, Chaiwale and D-Lounge," an official said.

Jahabar Sadique, co-founder and CEO of Chai Kings, said transit retail spots were a great fit for a business model, where convenience and time were essential. The rea-



In transit: Restaurants are already operational at Metro stations like Ashok Nagar. ■ K. PICHUMANI

son they chose Metro stations, he said, was that it had a great footfall potential and cover all major commercial areas.

Increasing footfall

"We acquire the space based on availability as well as the potential of that particular Metro station. Our fifth Metro station outlet at Thirumangalam will be opened by the end of March. Footfall at Metro station outlets are encouraging and we are seeing an increase, month-on-month. On average, we sell about 1,100-1,200 cups per outlet, every day, apart from snacks and short eats," he said.

R. Dilkush, managing director and CEO of Dilkush Forex Solutions Pvt Ltd, said their firm had picked up space at Nanganallur, St. Thomas Mount and Anna Nagar stations. They have a co-working space, a forex counter and a cafe at these spaces.

"With more people opting to commute by Metro, I am expecting business to go up in the coming days," he said. Dilkush has set up a non-alcoholic bar, with a social cause, at the Anna Nagar Metro station.

"We blend syrups and juices which give you a taste of wine and whisky," said Dilkush.