

About 5,000 passengers use Metro Rail services on Day 1

Trains between Chennai Central and St. Thomas Mount stations will resume today

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

On the first day of reopening, Chennai Metro Rail had 5,033 passengers travelling on the stretch between Washermenpet and Chennai airport.

Services between the Chennai Central and St. Thomas Mount stations will resume on Wednesday. However, passengers cannot take a direct train from the airport and will have to switch at the Alandur Metro. With opening of the second stretch, the entire 45-km network is now functional after the lockdown.

The Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) expects patronage to pick up significantly after the Chennai Central-St. Thomas Mount stretch reopens. "This is the stretch which most passengers usually take, with Thirumangalam getting the highest number of passengers.



Gaining momentum: Chennai Metro Rail Limited expects patronage to pick up significantly after the reopening of the Chennai Central-St. Thomas Mount stretch. ■ M. KARUNAKARAN

We are hopeful that footfalls will improve in a few days. Early this year, about 60,000-70,000 passengers used this route," an official said.

Hub stations

Sources said most of the traffic was concentrated in the Chennai Central and the Airport stations. Apart from this, many commuters from

the southern suburbs, such as Pallavaram and Tambaram, took trains from the airport.

"Till suburban services resume, commuters will use the Metro because it is safer than buses and there is no crowding," an official said.

Before COVID-19, the stretch between Washermenpet and Chennai airport used to handle nearly

45,000-50,000 passengers each day. CMRL is currently operating trains every five minutes during the peak hours.

"When more people start using the service, naturally, the trains will get partially full. If a passenger doesn't want to take a chance, he will just have to wait another five minutes. This is the reason for the current trip frequency," another official said.

Commuters satisfied

While the passenger turnout has been low, those who travelled so far are satisfied with the maintenance and cleanliness of the trains and stations.

Radha S., a commuter, said, "The places have been kept so clean. I was quite surprised that they have been meticulous with the maintenance. But they should continue keeping it this way."