

Metro waives licence fee for retailers, advertisers

Offer being made in view of losses

STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI

Chennai Metro Rail Ltd. (CMRL) will give huge concessions to firms operating in the 45-km network of phase I project in a bid to help them cope with heavy losses from the lockdown imposed by COVID-19. From retailers to advertisers, CMRL receives non-fare box revenue from a host of firms. But owing to lockdown, Metro Rail had incurred a loss of ₹80 crore in the past few months.

According to CMRL officials, they will waive licence fee for the lockdown period (from April 1 to September 30) for all firms, except telecom operators who will get discounts.

Since a majority of the people have been working from home, the telecom operators have witnessed surge in internet traffic. So, those who have put up optic fibre cables, mobile towers and signal boosters will be given 30%, 50% and 70% discounts respectively.

Even in the coming months, CMRL will offer discounts to firms, officials said.

The patronage of Metro Rail has been poor as a majority of the commuters hesitate to take public transport.

“We understand they have had to face losses and these have to be equitably shared, in all fairness. And hence, we drew up a plan to offer discounts from October 1 to March 31, 2021. Our intention is to help them recover and manage business for a while,” an official said.

Discount slabs

In this period, firms that have put up kiosks, ATMs, placed advertisements inside trains or stations and solely depend on passenger turnout will receive a 50% discount in their licence fee. These outlets on the street that are not relying only on the passenger traffic but can have common public too as customers will get 25% discount.

“We encourage new start-ups, women entrepreneurs and firms that come up with unique initiatives too. We have now begun to get new enquiries from a few companies for taking up spaces in stations,” he added.