

Metro rail seeks feeder services operator for last mile connectivity

U.Tejonmayam
@timesgroup.com

A Prathap

Chennai: In another few months, commuters walking out of a metro rail station can quickly book an inexpensive ride in a cab or an electric auto to their destination.

Chennai Metro Rail Limited has floated a tender looking for a firm that can operate a uniform feeder service across its existing 32 phase-1 stations and eight phase-1 extension stations, providing commuters with first and last mile connectivity.

This comes after CMRL discontinued operations of share auto and feeder cab services in 13 stations following complaints from commuters. The move also comes at a time when CMRL's 45km phase-1 line is recording only 25% of its pre-Covid average daily patronage, apart from the 9km phase-1 extension line in north Chennai getting ready for commercial operations by early 2021.

Officials said the launch of the new feeder service offer-



TOWARDS HASSLE FREE COMMUTE: A view of the Alandur metro station. The feeder services operator is expected to deploy 60 vehicles across the entire 54km rail network

ing inexpensive connectivity could boost CMRL's patronage.

According to the tender, the operator is expected to deploy feeder vehicles including share-autos, e-autos, share-cabs like mini cabs and sedans. With a passenger capacity of up to six in one vehicle,

the operator is expected to deploy 60 vehicles across the entire metro rail network of 54km.

The schedule of feeder service operations will be in consonance with the metro train time table. "The feeder vehicles to and fro from the metro stations are to be operated

around a 5km radius," said an official. The selected operator will be given license to run their vehicle for a period of two years.

Since resumption of train services on September 7, metro rail's daily average patronage has grown by 53%. From 14,798 in September, which is now at an average 22,685 in November though it is still 25% of metro rail pre-covid daily average patronage, which was 1.16 lakhs. More people would opt to use metro trains when a uniform feeder service is launched that could take passengers from metro stations to their destination and back.

Before the lockdown, CMRL was operating share-auto and cab services in 13 stations on a trial basis. They also operated an app-based cab service in eight stations, which was later planned to be extended to all stations. But officials said the contract was terminated following poor performance and feedback from commuters.