

60% more metro commuters in 1 mth

New Line & Ticket Price Cut Boost Ridership

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: The opening of the new line in north Chennai and slashing of ticket prices has helped boost CMRL patronage by more than 60%. While 13.4 lakh people travelled on metro trains in January, footfalls shot up to nearly 21 lakh in February. This has also pushed the daily average ridership from 43,345 in January to 73,380 passengers in February though the figure is still only 60% of the pre-Covid daily average patronage of 1.16 lakh.

JAM-PACKED TRAINS



*Metro services resumed post lockdown on Sept 7, 2020
**PM Modi inaugurated phase 1 extension line on Feb 14

On February 14, CMRL opened the 9km line from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar. The daily average ridership which was around 50,000 till then quickly increased to around 73,000, with the seven new stations in north Chennai contributing nearly 12% of the daily boarding.

On February 20, the government slashed metro train ticket prices capping it at ₹50 instead of earlier maximum price of ₹70. While the minimum ticket price remains ₹10, the distance slab was increased for various fare categories. From a daily average of about 73,000 after the opening of the north Chennai line, the



► Passengers who used QR-code tickets since Sept 7 | **1.5L**

► Passengers who used travel card

since Sept 7 | **34.6L**

► In February alone, **40,850** passengers used QR-code tickets and over **9.8L** travel smartcards

number of people using metro trains shot up to around 1.15 lakh on February 26.

"We expect the patronage to go up further in the coming months when lockdown rules are further relaxed," an official said. Officials also expect a spike in numbers when the under-construction Thiruvotiyur Theradi station opens as

it links the shopping hub to the residential area of Thiruvotiyur.

A total of 66 lakh passengers boarded metro trains between September 7, when the services resumed after five months of lockdown, to February 28. While the footfalls were low between September and December with an average 11 lakh people travelling a month, numbers went up in January after more people returned to offices and the airport saw an increase in domestic fliers.

Half the commuters who travelled in metro since September swiped smartcards to pay for their trip and only 2% used the QR-code facility. These facilities were launched to encourage contactless travel. The remaining still opt for tokens, as officials said, many commuters do not want to lock their money in a smartcard.