

# Metro rail regains 80% of patronage, makes mask must

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**RIDERSHIP RISING:** As many as 28.17 lakh people used the services in March, a metro rail official said

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**Chennai:** An average of 90,887 people boarded metro trains daily in March, pushing up patronage to nearly 80% of the pre-Covid numbers of 1.16lakh a day, seven months since the services resumed after the lockdown.

The rise in patronage is due to the new 9km north Chennai line, more officers using the service and the slashing of ticket fares. CMRL has also made it mandatory for commuters to wear masks to enter station premises to prevent the second covid wave from affecting the ridership.

A metro rail official said a total of 28.17 lakh people used the services in March and around 13% of the ridership was recorded in the 9km line from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar which was opened in February.

A total of 93.68 lakh people boarded metro trains since services resumed on September 7 after nearly five months of lockdown. "We are not charging fines from people for not wearing mask, but we do not allow them to enter our station or use our services. Wearing mask is mandatory to enter metro station and trains," an official said.

After nearly 32 lakh people travelled in the trains in three months between September and December, the ridership picked up in January when offices began opening and domestic air travel increased. In February 2021, the numbers

## Now, charge your mobile on the go

**Chennai:** Metro rail commuters can now charge mobile phones on the go by renting a power bank at any metro station. Spykke, a power bank rental service provider, has launched its services at metro stations and installed kiosks at 39 stations.

Commuters can rent a power bank for one hour for ₹20. They have to open the Spykke website in phone browser or open their app and scan the QR-code on the charging station in any of the metro stations before proceeding to pay. A power bank will pop out from one of the slots in the station and commuters can pull out a suitable cable for charging. They can then charge phone while travelling in the train. They can return the power bank in the charging station at the destination before they leave or even later. TNN

rose to 20.5 lakh as the phase-1 extension line opened and metro fares were slashed. Many one-time travellers had also used metro trains in the last seven months as nearly 47% of the passengers who travelled preferred to buy tokens than smartcards. An official said one-time travellers or those who rarely use metro services do not prefer to lock their money in smartcards and hence request for tokens.