

Since Metro 2A and 7, 20K travellers opt for NCMC cards in nine days

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Mumbai: With the city's public transport options growing smarter, commuters too are keeping pace. Digital apps and smart cards are emerging as the preferred payment mode for an increasing number of Mumbaikars, whether it's for the local train and BEST bus network or the newly completed corridor of Metro 2A and 7.

On Central Railway (CR), for instance, the number of people using the UTS app has jumped by an astounding 265 percent in the span of a year. Likewise, there were over 75,000 downloads of the Mumbai 1 app, while more than 20,000 people have bought National Common Mobility Cards (NCMC). Even BEST's Chalo app has nearly seven lakh users.

Elaborating on the surging popularity of the UTS app, CR officials said that approximately 12 percent of passengers used the app for ticketing in December 2022, an increase of 265 percent over January 2022. "In January, 37.14 lakh passengers used the app to book tickets," said a CR official. "The figure rose to 74.39 lakh in April, and by December, it touched 1.35 crore." From January 19 this year, an additional feature has been introduced in the app, whereby up to four passengers can book a common ticket for first-class and AC local travel.

The increase in digital ticketing got a fillip post-Covid 19 when CR introduced the UTS app for paperless booking. Multiple season tickets can be renewed or issued on this from different source stations to different destinations. Users can also book paperless season tickets, with validity commencing from the same day, provided that one is standing outside the geo-fenced area.

The new addition to Mumbai's public transport – the Metro 2A and 7 – has notched up 10 lakh commuters on the 35-km route in just one week. The total ridership since last April, when the first phase of the two metro lines was launched, has crossed the 1 crore mark. A total of 22 trains provides 245 metro services daily on Metro Lines 2A and 7.

Another smart pay option, the National Common Mobility Card called 'Mumbai 1', has been issued to around 20,000 passengers to date. The card can be used for all metro rails in India and all city buses in Mumbai. "People can also shop using this card," said an official from the Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Limited (MMMOCL). "Additionally, users of Mumbai 1 cards are being offered a discount on trips, depending on when they are travelling. On weekends and holidays, you get ten percent off while on weekdays it's five percent."

The Mumbai 1 app has seen good traction, with 75,739 downloading it so far. Commuters can generate QR codes for tickets using it. "The Mumbai 1 card and application is the advanced step for Mumbaikars' seamless travel," said SVR Srinivas, metropolitan commissioner, MMRDA. "People are now switching from private vehicles to the eco-friendly Metro."

Meanwhile, the BEST Undertaking is also doing its bit to promote its Chalo app. According to BEST officials, of the 35 lakh-odd daily passengers who travel by BEST, over seven lakh are using their app. The Undertaking has introduced additional features on the app, the most recent one a plan that offers 60 trips for three months.