PM inaugurates Washermenpet to AG-DMS stns metro rail line

Chennai: Nearly a decade after construction began for the fifth phase, the last stretch of the metro rail network, from Washermenpet to AG-DMS covering 10km, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi through videoconferencing from Tirupur on Sunday. The launch signalled the completion of the phase and the Centre’s willingness to take the 188km phase-2 project forward.

"With completion of phase-1, the metro network will go up by two lakh commuters a day. I’m sure we will approach phase-2 in a rapid and cooperative manner between the Centre and the state government," said Hardeep Singh Puri, Union minister for housing and urban affairs. Work for 45km phase 1 began in June 2009 and operations on the first line between Koyembedu and Alandur commenced in June 2015.

Phase 1 over, focus shifts to phase 2

Train operators Sri City and BMRM operated the first train from Central Metro to Washermenpet and AG-DMS stns. It was flagged off by Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri and state minister D. Sathyanarayanan. Sri City, the operator, said a 25km stretch of rail has been completed, while 3.5km of rail has been laid. The stretch from Washermenpet to AG-DMS, with eight underground stations, will be the missing link that would now take commuters from Central Metro to Airport. It is the shortest route between the two stations at 45 minutes. For a ticket price of Rs 20, CMRL will operate trains from Central Metro to Airport.

The one-hour journey will also have two stops, one each at the Airport and the tallest building on the railway line.

Spokesperson for the CMRL said the new service would allow commuters to get to the airport within 45 minutes. The service would be increased to 10 trains every seven minutes, and the fare would be Rs 20 for the entire journey.

The new service will be a game-changer for commuters in the city, who have been waiting for this service for nearly a decade. The city has a population of over 8 million, and the new service is expected to reduce traffic congestion significantly.

With the completion of phase-1, the focus is now shifting to phase-2, which will cover the remaining 140km of the metro network. The Centre has already approved the project, and work is expected to begin soon.

The project is expected to cost around Rs 40,000 crore, and the Centre has allocated Rs 15,000 crore for the project. The state government will contribute the remaining amount, and the balance amount of Rs 15,000 crore has to be funded by the Centre (30%), TN (40%), and the funding agencies (30%).