

PM to inaugurate Metro Rail service, other projects in TN on February 14

CHENNAI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Chennai on February 14 to inaugurate a host of events, including opening Metro Rail services from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar.

"Apart from the Metro Rail services, Prime Minister will also inaugurate Cauvery-Gunnar river interlinking project. He will also participate in a party meeting where he is set to meet the Tamil Nadu BJP leaders to discuss the party strategy in the upcoming state Assembly election," said a source in the state BJP unit.

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami had recently visited Delhi to invite Modi to inaugurate the Metro Rail services and a host of other government projects. Party sources also said



Narendra Modi

that the Prime Minister might address a public meeting and will be involved in election campaigning during his visit but the number of days of his visit has not yet been confirmed. "Seat sharing between the AIADMK and BJP is also expected to be finalised during the PM's visit," the source added.

Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited Tamil Nadu to lay the foundation stone for the second phase of the Metro Rail services in Chennai when Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam reiterated their commitment to the BJP-AIADMK alliance in the coming polls. Shah's visit was followed by BJP's national president J P Nadda, who's visit resolved the contradictory views on the issue of Chief Minister candidate of the NDA in Tamil Nadu.

► **More on P2**

Inauguration of North Chennai Metro Rail to be dream come true for residents

■ **G JAGANNATH**

CHENNAI: When Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the 9 km Chennai Metro Phase-I extension line on February 14, it will be a dream come true for the residents of North Chennai whose struggle led to the revival of the Washermenpet-Wimco Nagar line after it was initially dropped.

Though Tiruvottiyur-Airport was one of the initial corridors identified in the feasibility study by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation in 2004, the segment beyond Washermenpet was dropped to cut down

cost following the conversion of the Anna Nagar-Central stretch into an underground alignment.

"First they said that the line from Airport would end at Tollgate and then the areas beyond Washermenpet was dropped in 2007. When we came to know about the reason for the dropping of the section was to reduce project cost, we launched an apolitical movement," said ATB Bose, co-convenor, North Chennai People's Right Federation.

He recalled that after campaigning among the local residents, a massive human chain was organised with students participation. In 2009, the then DMK government decided to extend the line till Wim-

co Nagar, he said, adding that the revival of the North Chennai line is an example of the success of the apolitical public movement.

"It is an ordeal to travel during the peak hours on the Tiruvottiyur High Road. On Metro Rail, I will be able to reach my office at Guindy in 45-50 minutes instead of riding on the bike for over an hour," said K Rangarajan, a resident of Theradi.

The inspection by the Commissioner of Railway Safety would take place from February 5 to 7. The extension line will have eight stations Sir Theagaraya College, Tondiarpet, Toll Gate, Thangal, Gowri Ashram, Tiruvottiyur and Wimco Nagar.