

5 years on, Metro reaches Wimco Nagar

Residents say this route was never part of the original plan and they had to fight for it

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

As the first service of Metro train started from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar on Sunday, several excited commuters entered the trains to take the journey they have been waiting for the past five years.

Behind the 9-km Washermenpet-Wimco Nagar stretch is a story of struggle, say activists in north Chennai. "It was not in the original plan. We conducted human chains, protests, hunger strikes and met several politicians to remind them that these areas required a good mass transport system. We are thrilled to take the train today," said Ernest Paul of North Chennai People's Rights Federation. The foundation stone for the Metro phase-I extension line was laid five years ago. Federation co-convenor T. Rajkumar said the areas along the stretch are home to working class and business communities. "Many residents are traders who travel to areas like Koyambedu. Similarly, people working in educational institutions, go-



The Washermenpet-Wimco Nagar stretch being inaugurated on Sunday. ■ JOTHI RAMALINGAM

A crucial link for north Chennai

The following are the highlights of the Washermenpet-Wimco Nagar stretch of Chennai Metro Phase I extension project



The foundation stone was laid on July 23, 2016



Total length of the stretch: 9 km



Passenger capacity of each train: 1,200



The average speed of train: 35 kmph



Number of operational trains: 44



Time taken to cover the Wimco Nagar-Chennai airport stretch: 60 minutes



High fare can be a dampener

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

While commuters are elated about the opening of the Washermenpet-Wimco Nagar stretch of the Metro Rail, they are a tad disappointed with the maximum fare being fixed at ₹70. The minimum fare continues to be ₹10.

The fare from Wimco Nagar to Chennai airport is fixed at ₹70. Activists and commuters have constantly reiterated that fares have to be cut so that more number of people can travel in this system.

vernment and private companies will be keen on travelling by it," he says.

S. Mala, a resident of Tollgate, regularly commutes

from Wimco Nagar to the city. She stepped into the Metro for the first time with her friends, looking visibly happy. "We would love to travel

daily. But we still do not know what the fares are and we can travel only if we can afford it," she says. The trains ran packed on Sunday

as Metro offered free ride after 2 p.m. The real patronage will be known after some days as the fares are as high as ₹70.