

Now, reach airport from North Chennai in 1 hour

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Passengers in a metro train on Washermanpet - Wimco Nagar stretch, after the phase I extension of Metro Rail was inaugurated by PM on Sunday | DEBADATTA MALLICK

THE nine-km phase I Metro Rail extension project from Washermanpet to Wimco Nagar was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. Commuters can now travel with a view of the sea in this stretch. With two underground and five elevated stations, the extension project connects North Chennai with the airport. Though Modi mentioned that the project was completed as per schedule, the project's original deadline was June 2020. The pandemic and subsequent lockdown had hampered construction work.

Now, the phase I of CMRL covers a total distance of 54 km. "The extension project will help passengers from North Chennai reach airport within 60 minutes. The project cost of ₹3,770 crore was funded by the Centre, State and the Japan International Cooperation Agency," a CMRL official said.

The stations covered under phase I extension include New Washermanpet, Toll Gate, Kadaladipet, Tiruvottiyur and Wimco Nagar. "The elevated metro stations of Tollgate and Tiruvottiyur have been integrated with the existing MTC Bus terminal, with provision for parking and footpaths. About two lakh people are expected to commute every day in this stretch," said an official.

Commuters were allowed free rides on Chennai Metro trains from 2 pm till 11 pm on Sunday. Former CM J Jayalithaa had inaugurated the 10-km stretch from Koyambedu to Alandur in 2015 and another stretch from Little Mount to airport in September 2016. On February 10, 2019, Modi had inaugurated the final 10-km stretch between AG-DMS and Washermanpet under Phase I.

