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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Playing for Mumbai Indians in their WPL match against Delhi Capitals, SA pacer Shabnim Ismail makes history by breaching the 130kph barrier, P26

Rapid rail's 2nd section flagged off, passenger ops will start tomorrow

Abhijay Jha

@timesgroup.com

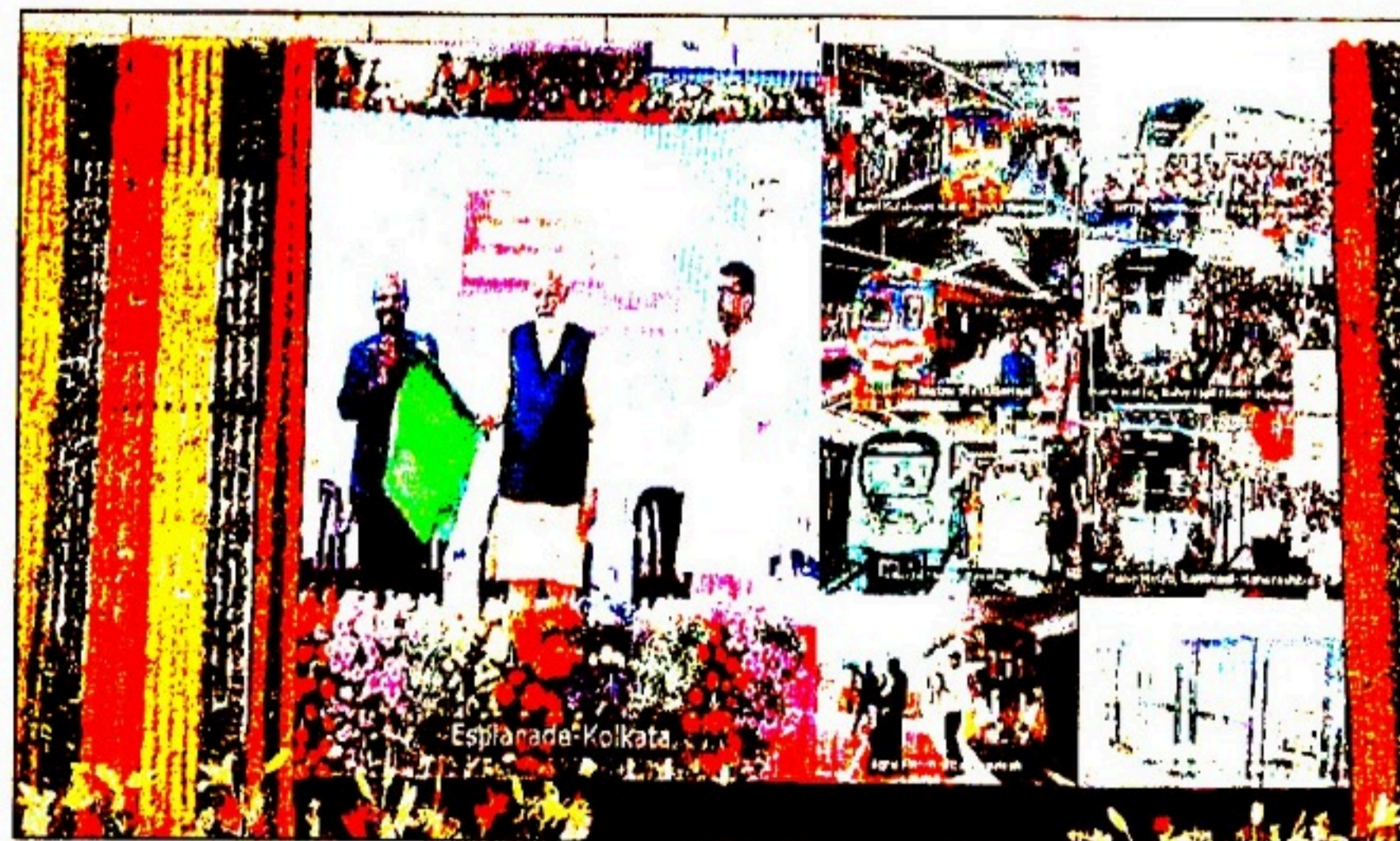
Ghaziabad: Passenger operations on the second leg of the 17km rapid rail corridor from Duhai to Modinagar North will commence on March 8.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the line on Wednesday, along with the tunnel under the Hoghly of the East-West Metro in Kolkata and several other projects across the country.

While the PM was in Kolkata, Union urban development minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who attended the inauguration event at Muradnagar North rapid rail station, emphasised the project's embodiment of "gati se pragati".

"Namo Bharat is New India's vehicle of progress and empowerment. This semi-high-speed rail seamlessly connects the urban nodes across NCR with the mainstream of development. Namo Bharat heralds a tectonic shift in connecting cities seamlessly, promoting public transport usage, enhancing accessibility of markets and opportunities, and boosting economic growth. It is a game-changer and a step towards a smarter, more connected region," Puri

Photos: Umesh Kumar



A group of school kids took the first ride after the PM inaugurated the line

said, adding that work on the remaining 48km of the Delhi-Meerut corridor is being completed on a war footing.

Train operations began last year on the first section of 17km from Sahibabad

to Duhai.

Union minister of state for civil aviation and road transport Gen VK Singh (retd) and NCRTC MD Vinay Kumar were also at the event. Several schoolchildren took

a ride on the rapid rail after the inauguration.

Trains will operate between 6am and 8pm as commercial operations on the 34km section from Sahibabad to Modinagar North. The two other new stations are Muradnagar and Modinagar South. Namo Bharat trains will cover the distance in approximately 25 minutes.

The foundation stone for the 82km Delhi-Meerut corridor, being constructed at a cost of Rs 30,270 crore, was laid by the PM in March 2019. The project is expected to reduce travel time between Meerut North and Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to under an hour.

Aligned with the PM's Gati Shakti National Master Plan, the rapid rail stations are supposed to be integrated with airports, railway stations, metro stations, ISBTs, and bus stops to create a network of public transit systems. But it will still take some time before this is achieved. The Delhi-Meerut line's link to IGI airport in Delhi depends on the Delhi-Gurgaon line, construction of which is yet to start. But the Delhi-Meerut line will connect with important railway hubs like Ghaziabad and Anand Vihar when it begins full operations in 2025.