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TOTAL INCOME OF THE NMRC AMOUNTED TO ₹3,60,000 (EXCLUDING SMART CARD TOP UPS), ON SATURDAY. > PD UPADHYAY, executive director, NMRC

Aqua Line brings Noida, Greater Noida closer

REPUBLIC DAY GIFT Total of 11,625 persons used the Aqua Line on the first day of public operations, with at least 266 NMRC cards sold and 11,440 tickets issued, officials said

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NOIDA: Shiny, sleek and world-class were some of the adjectives given by Noida residents as they stepped on for their first ride on Saturday on the Aqua Line, which connects Noida and Greater Noida through a 29.7-km long Metro corridor.

Families, groups of friends and work colleagues were seen boarding the Metro at different stations, from the Sector 51 station in Noida to the Depot Metro station in Greater Noida, all day long. While the stretch had been inaugurated on Friday, it was opened for public operations on Saturday. A horde of auto rickshaws were seen parked outside the Sector 51 Metro station, inviting passengers for shared rides to the nearest City centre Metro station for ₹10. However, as Saturday was a national holiday due to Republic Day, many stations on the Line appeared vacant and the rush usually seen initially was missing on the first day.

The Line began operating from 10am and continued till 5pm, according to officials. "It was a world class experience for me to travel in the Aqua Line Metro on the first day, from Sector 143 to Sector 51. It will be hugely beneficial for officer goes in Greater Noida as it is now a viable alternative to pool cabs and buses," Dr Amit Kaushik, a resident of Vaisali in Ghaziabad, said.

"Since it was a holiday, we boarded the Metro from Pari Chowk and reached the Sector 51 station under half an hour," Ayush Khaitan, a student of Noida Institute of Engineering in Greater Noida, said.

Built at a cost of ₹5,053 crores, the Aqua Line project began in 2015 and had 21 Metro stations in total, with 16 in Noida and five in Greater Noida. There are a total of eight trains, each with a carrying capacity of 65,000 persons one way daily.



• A total of 64 trips were made on Saturday by eight trains, officials said.

SUNIL GHOSH / HT PHOTO

Officials of the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) said that a total of 11,625 persons used the Aqua line on Saturday, with a total of 266 NMRC cards sold and 11,440 tickets issued.

"The total income of the NMRC amounted to ₹3,60,000 (excluding SBI smart card top ups) on Saturday, with highest ridership in Noida recorded at Metro stations at sectors 51, 137, 76, 101 and 50 (in that order) and Pari chowk, Alpha, Depot and Delta stations in Greater Noida. A total of 64 trips were made by eight trains which covered 1,906km," PD Upadhyay, executive director, NMRC, said.

Residents said that issues such as frequency of Metro trains, no connectivity between the Violet Line and Aqua Line and lack of waste management near stations might dampen the mood of the commuters. "The speed of the train was a little less compared to the Delhi Metro and the frequency between trains is also too less. Also, it would have been better if the Aqua Line was connected to the Magenta or Violet Line," Santosh Dhadich, a Noida resident working in an accounts

they say

The new Metro is shiny and sleek and will now be our most preferred option to travel to Noida and Delhi.

AYUSH KHAITAN, resident of Greater Noida

We can still see garbage lying outside Metro stations...DMRC cards should also be allowed on the Aqua Line.

AMIT GUPTA, resident of Noida's Sector 77

firm, said.

"The ticketing system was found to be extremely slow and paper ticketing is a waste of resources," Amit Gupta, a resident Sector 77, said.

Realtors too are upbeat with the launch of the Aqua Line as the new stretch opens doors for homebuyers looking for affordable housing in the developing sectors along the Noida-Greater Noida e-way.

"The link will specially benefit people living in newly developed sectors such as sectors 150, 137, 144 and 135, among others. The link will also encourage the real estate sector. We expect more demand in these newly developed

sectors," Ajay Chaudhary, chairman and MD, Ace group, said.

Till now there wasn't any public transport in the area except for NMRC buses plying on the Noida-Greater Noida e-way route and shared autos. Most of the residents either used services of cab aggregators or private transport.

"With the start of the Aqua Line, we are getting an increased number of enquiries from prospective buyers looking for ready-to-move inventories at developing sectors of 137, 143 and 168, among others. However the authorities need to connect the Aqua Line with Delhi Metro's Blue Line," Jitender Rathore, a resident of Sector 137, said.