

Meerut to CP daily: The impossible now an hour's ride

How RRTS Is Changing Lives, Redefining Concept Of NCR

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One of those waiting eagerly for the Delhi section of rapid rail to open is Yogesh Kumar.

The 38-year-old income-tax officer lives the life that lakhs of working professionals staying away from their families in Delhi-NCR do, travelling over weekends to visit their loved ones.

Yogesh, whose wife, kids and parents are in Meerut, has been doing this for 10 years since he got the job and moved into a rented house in Vaishali. This March, he will move back to Meerut, a possibility that dawned on him when rapid rail's first stretch was inaugurated in Oct 2023.

It takes about an hour for Yogesh to reach his office in Delhi's Connaught Place

from his house. He takes metro's Blue Line from Vaishali. After the inauguration of the Delhi section, Yogesh said he can take rapid rail from Meerut South, which will bring him to Anand Vihar in around 35 minutes. From Anand Vihar, he will transit to the same Blue Line to reach CP.

He will add another 45 minutes or so to his travel but save on rent of Rs 15,000 a month. By June, when the entire Delhi-Meerut corridor becomes functional, rapid rail will make living in Meerut and working in Delhi, Noida or Ghaziabad possible for many, redefining the very concept of NCR.

In its 14 months of operations, it has become evident to its early riders that rapid rail is more than just a faster way to travel—it's reshaping



FRAMED FOR GOOD: PM Narendra Modi presented with a portrait as he takes a ride in a Namo Bharat train on Sunday

lives, reconnecting families, and opening doors to new opportunities.

"Last year, when rapid rail started operations till Meerut South, visiting home even on single off days became possible. Now, with the Delhi stretch opening, I can take the train directly to

Anand Vihar. I no longer need to live in Vaishali. I can be with my family in Meerut," Yogesh, who this correspondent met on a rapid rail train from Meerut South to Sahibabad two days before the Delhi section was opened, said.

Hundreds of working

professionals and students are regulars on these six-coach trains that glide across the 42km section—55km from Sunday—in 30 minutes at a frequency of 15 minutes.

Among them is Atul Pal, a resident of Shatabdi Vihar in Meerut who moved back to his hometown last May, vacating his rented flat in Ghaziabad's Vasundhara. "I rented the place after I got a job at a factory in Sahibabad in 2019. My parents stayed back in Meerut. My wife and I moved here. But once the train to Sahibabad began, there was no need to stay in Vasundhara and spend on rent," said Pal, who reaches his factory from his house in an hour.

For Pooja Sen, the rapid rail corridor presented an opportunity that did not exist earlier. The 27-year-old Modinagar resident took up a sales job at a car showroom in Ghaziabad. "If not for rapid rail, I would not have been able to take up this job as I

dreaded the long commute to and from Modinagar, for which you have to either take buses that are crowded and slow or multiple shared autos," she said.

For Sanjay Kumar, who runs a sports store in Ghaziabad's Turab Nagar and sources from a sports equipment manufacturing factory in Meerut's Partapur, procurement has become a breeze. "Traveling between Ghaziabad and Meerut is a hassle. But with rapid rail, my business has got a new lifeline as I can go and meet my supplier easily," he said.

Then there is Dalbir Pal, who lives in Greater Noida West and needs to visit Modinagar for his wife's medical appointments. "We lived there and moved out five years ago, but our family doctor is still there. Earlier, we would go there on my bike, which is not very safe. Now, I just park my bike at the Ghaziabad RRTS station, take the train

and reach Modinagar in 15 minutes," he said.

Students make up a good number of daily commuters. Kanika Rathi, who studies at IMR College in Duhai, moved out of the town and found herself a PG accommodation in Vasundhara when reaching Duhai by rapid rail became possible. "The PGs in Duhai are in rural areas, and after sunset, it is not safe. And there is nothing to do," she said.

Yashika Arora, meanwhile, sees her weekends opening up June onwards when the full length of the corridor becomes operational. "The Meerut South station is around 15km from Meerut city, so one still has to take a bus from there," said the Meerut Cantt resident, who works in Noida and visits home on weekends. The to and fro travel takes up half a day of the weekend. She looks forward to getting her full weekend back.