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New rail services off to a speedy start

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Ahmedabad: The launch of the Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar Metro and the Namo Bharat Rapid Rail Service kicked off with impressive passenger numbers on their debut day. The new metro line, stretching from GNLU to GIFT City, attracted nearly 5,000 passengers, while the Namo Bharat Rapid Rail saw a turnout of 320 passengers from the Ahmedabad, Sabarmati and Chandlodia stations in the city alone. The high interest signals a promising start for these new transit options in the region.

S S Rathore, managing director of Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation, highlighted that initial estimate indicated close to 5,000 metro riders on Day 1, with final figures expected soon. Many of these passengers transitioned from crowded taxis and cabs, finding the Rs 35 fare a compelling draw. Metro officials anticipate even higher footfall once the line extends to Sachivalaya and Akshardham.

Meanwhile, the Namo Bharat Rapid Rail, described as a local train by railway officials, recorded 200 passengers from Ahmedabad and Sabarmati stations, and 120 from Chandlodia. "Since the train operates on an unreserved basis, passengers purchase tickets at the counter. Its true popularity will be clearer in a month when monthly, fort-



New metro line attract nearly 5,000 passengers on first day

nightly and weekly passes come into play," said a senior official.

The Rapid Rail, with a speed of 110 km/h, aims to make the 359km journey from Bhuj to Ahmedabad in just 5 hours and 45 minutes, compared to the seven hours by road. With fares starting at Rs 30 for the first 25km and Rs 1.20 per additional km, and options for regular passes, the train offers a cost-effective alternative to road travel, where state transport bus fares range from Rs 260 to over Rs 700. "Due to the speed, we are hopeful of daily commuters shifting to this train," the official added.

The train's 12-coach configuration accommodates 1,150 seated passengers and over 2,000 standing passengers. Rupesh Vora, a passenger from Sabarmati, praised the train for enabling same-day return trips from Bhuj. However, he noted that those travelling to Bhuj may need to plan for an overnight stay.

"A morning train from Ahmedabad could enhance convenience for these travellers," he added.