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Namo Bharat RRTS — India's First Regional Rapid Transit System Fully Open

24 February 2026

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Namo Bharat RRTS — India's First Regional Rapid Transit System Fully Open

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WHY IN NEWS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the complete 82 km Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor, marking the first full RRTS line operational in India. The inauguration included the remaining sections connecting Delhi's New Ashok Nagar to Meerut South, completing a project envisioned in the National Capital Region planning framework.

WHAT IS RRTS — AND WHY IS IT DIFFERENT FROM METRO?

India's urban transport landscape has long been dominated by Metro Rail systems. The **Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)** represents a conceptually different tier of transport — designed not for dense intra-city travel, but for **high-speed intercity/regional mobility** within a metropolitan agglomeration.

RRTS VS. METRO — KEY DIFFERENCES

Parameter	RRTS (Namo Bharat)	Metro Rail
Purpose	Regional intercity commuting	Dense urban intra-city travel
Design speed	180 km/h	80-90 km/h
Operating speed	160 km/h	60-70 km/h
Station spacing	5-15 km	0.8-2 km
Train sets	6-car semi-high speed	6/8-car standard
Seats vs. standees	More seating (longer distances)	More standees
Track gauge	Standard gauge (1435 mm)	Standard gauge (most)
Operator	NCRTC	City-specific (DMRC, MMRC etc.)

WHY NCR NEEDED RRTS

The **National Capital Region (NCR)** extends well beyond Delhi’s administrative boundaries — it includes Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida, Meerut, Sonapat, Rohtak, and dozens of secondary cities across Haryana, UP, and Rajasthan. An estimated **5 million+ people** commute daily into Delhi from this extended region.

Existing road and rail infrastructure (Highways, Delhi-Meerut Expressway, Indian Railways) suffered from:

- Severe traffic congestion on road
- Unreliable, slow train timings on conventional IR routes
- No premium rapid-transit option

Metro Rail (DMRC) was unsuitable for intercity distances — too slow and too dense in station spacing for 50-80 km corridors.

THE DELHI-MEERUT RRTS CORRIDOR — DETAILS

Full corridor: Sahibabad (Ghaziabad) → New Ashok Nagar (Delhi) → Meerut South

Total length: 82 km (including 14 km elevated in Delhi)

Total stations: 25 stations

Delhi section: ~14 km; 5 stations (New Ashok Nagar, Anand Vihar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Guldhar — though Anand Vihar is the Delhi terminus in most configurations)

UP section: Ghaziabad → Meerut South (~68 km)

Key stations: New Ashok Nagar (Delhi) · Anand Vihar (interchange with DMRC, IR) · Ghaziabad · Muradnagar · Modi Nagar · Meerut South

Operational phases:

March 20, 2023: Sahibabad → Duhai Depot (17 km) — first section opened

October 2023: Extended to Modnagar North

March 2024: Extended to Meerut South

February 2026: Remaining Delhi section (Sahibabad → New Ashok Nagar) and remaining Meerut stretches fully opened — **complete 82 km corridor operational**

ROLLING STOCK — THE NAMO BHARAT TRAIN

The trains, branded “**Namo Bharat**”, were manufactured by **Bombardier Transportation (now Alstom)** at their Savli plant in Gujarat under the **Make in India** programme.

Specifications:

6-car trainsets (expandable to 9-car)

Design speed: **180 km/h** | Operating speed: **160 km/h**

Air-conditioned with **coach-specific classes** — Standard and Premium (Business Class) coaches

Luggage racks and **bicycle parking** (unlike Metro)

Wi-Fi on-board

ETCS Level 2 signalling (European Train Control System)

Regenerative braking (feeds electricity back to grid)

The Premium class with individual reclining seats is a first for urban transit in India — recognising that longer-distance commuters prioritise comfort over maximising standee capacity.

NCRTC — THE OPERATING ORGANISATION

NCRTC (National Capital Region Transport Corporation) is a **joint venture company** (50:50 between Central Government and State Governments of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and UP).

Incorporated: 2013

Ownership: Central Govt (50%) + 4 NCR state govts (50% jointly)

Mandate: Plan, develop, implement, and manage RRTS corridors in NCR

Headquarters: New Delhi

Funding structure for Delhi-Meerut RRTS:

Total project cost: ~₹30,274 crore

Funding mix: Multilateral loans (**Asian Development Bank + Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank + New Development Bank**), Central Government, State Government equity

ADB is the lead multilateral funder (~₹6,000 crore loan)

THE NCR RRTS MASTER PLAN — THREE PRIORITY CORRIDORS

The **NCR Regional Plan 2041** and RRTS Master Plan envisage **8 RRTS corridors** ultimately. The three **Priority Corridors** being developed first:

Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut (82 km) — **NOW COMPLETE** ✓

Delhi-Gurugram-SNB (Shahjahanpur-Neemrana-Behror) (~106 km) — Under development

Delhi-Panipat (~111 km) — DPR finalised

Proposed future corridors include Delhi-Alwar, Delhi-Faridabad-Ballabhgarh, Delhi-Hapur, Delhi-Sonipat, and Delhi-Bahadurgarh-Rohtak.

UPSC RELEVANCE

*RRTS vs. Metro distinction, NCRTC (joint venture, ownership), Namo Bharat trains (Alstom, Savli Gujarat), corridor length (82 km), NCR planning, multilateral funders (ADB, AIIB, NDB). **Mains GS-2:** Urban governance, urban transport policy, Centre-State-City three-tier urban infrastructure. **GS-3:** Infrastructure investment, PPP models, smart mobility, PM Gati Shakti. **Interview:** “India has invested heavily in Metro Rail. Does RRTS represent a qualitative shift in urban transport thinking? What does it imply for intermediate cities?”*

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NAMO BHARAT RRTS — CORE DATA:

Corridor: **Delhi (New Ashok Nagar) → Meerut South**

Total length: **82 km** | Stations: **25**

Design speed: **180 km/h** | Operating speed: **160 km/h**

Full corridor inauguration: **February 24, 2026**

First section opened: **March 20, 2023** (Sahibabad–Duhai, 17 km)

Rolling stock: **Namo Bharat** trains by **Alstom** (Savli, Gujarat)

Classes: Standard + **Premium (Business Class)** — first in Indian urban transit

NCRTC:

Full name: **National Capital Region Transport Corporation**

Type: Joint Venture | Incorporated: **2013**

Ownership: Central Govt (50%) + Delhi + Haryana + Rajasthan + UP (50%)

Project cost: **~₹30,274 crore**

Multilateral funders: **ADB, AIIB, NDB**

RRTS VS. METRO (KEY DIFFERENCES):

RRTS: Regional intercity, 160 km/h, 5-15 km station spacing

Metro: Urban intra-city, 60-70 km/h, 0.8-2 km station spacing

NCR RRTS CORRIDORS:

Priority 1 (complete): **Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut (82 km)**

Priority 2 (in progress): **Delhi-Gurugram-SNB (~106 km)**

Priority 3 (DPR done): **Delhi-Panipat (~111 km)**

Total planned corridors: **8**

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

NCR population: ~46 million (2021 census — Delhi + surrounding districts in 4 states)

ADB (Asian Development Bank): HQ Manila, Philippines; India is largest borrower

AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank): HQ Beijing; India is second-largest shareholder

NDB (New Development Bank): Established by BRICS nations; HQ Shanghai

PM Gati Shakti: Multi-modal connectivity master plan (2021); RRTS is part of it

Make in India: Namo Bharat trains manufactured at Alstom Savli, Gujarat

ETCS Level 2: European Train Control System — cab signalling, no fixed signals needed

Sources: The Hindu, PIB, NCRTC

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