

India's new 'driverless' metro train keeps driver for now

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India's capital launched a metro train with driverless technology Monday, though officials said it would operate with a driver for at least a year or two.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took an inaugural ride on a short section of the 12.6-kilometer (7.8-mile) Magenta Line, which connects the southern part of New Delhi with the satellite city of Noida, an IT hub across the Yamuna river.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corp. has said the highly automated train will run initially with a driver but could become driverless in the future. An official told the Indian Express newspaper that it would have human operators for "a year or two."

One of the new trains crashed through a wall at a depot last week, sparking concern about the automation technology. However, Delhi Metro said human error was the cause, with workers forgetting to re-engage the brakes after they had been disengaged for maintenance. The train rolled down a ramp and into the wall.

The Magenta Line is the latest addition to the Delhi Metro system, which opened 15 years ago and covers more than 200 kilometers (125 miles). It has made commuting to work and school much easier for many Delhi residents, though road congestion and air pollution remain serious problems.

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