

# Metro rail system to ease Dhaka's traffic gridlock

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Procurement and installation of rail coach and depot equipment that began in September last year have made 13 percent physical progress keeping in view that the metro service is going to open by the end of next year.

### MRT-1

According to official information, the nearly 27km-long metro line-1 stretches from the international airport to Kamlapur and Purbachal.

With expected completion by 2026, the metro line's construction cost has been roughly estimated at Tk 50,000 crore.

With the feasibility study completed, the metro rail authorities in October signed an agreement with a total of seven Japanese and Indian companies and one Bangladeshi company led by Nippon Koei Company Limited of Japan for detailed design in four years starting July this year.

The Tk 513 crore agreement covers engineering services for detailed design and tender assistance for construction work. The Japan government has committed to contribute Tk 404 crore as loans and the Bangladesh government will



A construction site of the Dhaka Metro Rail near Rokeya Sharani. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

two routes. The northern one is expected to be completed by 2027 and the southern by 2030.

The 20km northern route is proposed to stretch from Hemayetpur of Savar to

targeted to be completed by 2030. The exact route alignment, number of stations, location of depot, and underground and elevated sections of this route will be determined through the pre-feasibility study.

The possible stretch of the route will go through Technical intersection, Kalyanpur, Shyamoli, Asad Gate, Russel Square, Panthapath, Sonargaon, Hatirjheel, Rampura, Aftab Nagar, Dasher Kandi, Baralu Bazar and Ganga Nagar, terminating in Bhulta.

### MRT-2

The 24km-long metro line-2 is proposed to stretch from Gabtoli to Chattogram road across embankment road, Basila, Mohammadpur, Satmasjid Road, Jhigatola, Science Laboratory, New Market, Azimpur, Palashi, Dhaka Medical College, Golap Shah Mazar, Banga Bhaban, Motijheel, Arambagh, Kamlapur, Mugda, Manda, and Demra.

Following a memorandum of understanding with the government of Japan in June and a follow-up meeting in December last year and another meeting in June this year, the Bangladesh government made a proposal to the Japan government in July this year for technical assistance to carry out the pre-feasibility study of this metro route.

### MRT-4

The 16km underground metro line-4 stretches from Kamlapur to Narayanganj and the proposed route stretches along Dhaka-Narayanganj railway track. With the number of stations still unspecified, the government is looking for a prospective development partner to conduct the feasibility study and develop the transport facility.

# “MRTs are the only long-term solution for traffic problems in Dhaka”

FROM PAGE J4

In almost all such projects in different cities of the world, the implementation agencies are headed by technical people who are familiar with construction. Unfortunately, the government, without following recommendations, has gone ahead and appointed "generalists" from administrative services to head these organizations and also to be Project Directors. What are the challenges for the implementation of the project?

In any infrastructure project in a densely populated city, the significant challenges include locating the station and land acquisition. Land acquisition would result in the displacement and resettlement of people, which is both costly and time-consuming.

The second challenge is the relocation of existing utility lines such as water supply, gas, underground and over ground electricity cables, and sewers.

The third challenge is ensuring both safety of road-users and proper management of road traffic during construction.

Since the concept of Dhaka Metro Rail project is new for Bangladesh, what are the key lessons from this project?

During the feasibility study, a more detailed investigation into the geotechnical aspects should have been carried out. Besides, various options for the foundation should have been considered, which would have the least impact on traffic along the routes during construction. Unfortunately, it seems that such options were not explored during the project implementation.

As we know, more projects such as the Dhaka Elevated Expressway (DEE) and Mouchak-Moghbazar flyover are being implemented to improve the traffic situation in the capital. How can we ensure better integration among all these transportation projects including Dhaka Metro Rail?

There are too many agencies trying to tackle the traffic problems of Dhaka city. These include the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), RAJUK, Roads and Highways Department and Bangladesh Railway. Unfortunately, the agency which was created to coordinate all these efforts, Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), has not been able to resolve or reduce the conflict between all these projects. DTCA should be strengthened with technically competent personnel. Sometimes, it appears that many of these agencies are interested in initiating construction projects which may not conform to the STP. Before initiating any such ventures, a detailed study must be carried out so that they do not lead to future conflicts and wastage of financial resources.

The interview is taken by Maisha Zaman, The Daily Star



MRT Line-5: Northern Route



MRT Line-1

pay the rest.

It comprises of two routes: one from the airport to Kamlapur across Khilkhet, Jamuna Future Park, Natun Bazar, Badda, Rampura, Malibagh and Rajarbagh covering a length of about 16.5km—the country's first metro rail line with all 12 stations underground.

The other route named Purbachal stretches from Natun Bazar across Jamuna Future Park, Bashundhara, Mastul to Purbachal depot covering 10km with nine stations, of which seven will be elevated.

Natun Bazar station will have an interchange for transfer of passengers between the two routes of the same metro line.

### MRT-5

The 41km-long metro line-5 comprises of

Bhatara through Baliarpur, Amin Bazar, Gabtoli, Dar-Ul-Salam, Mirpur, Kachukhet, Banani, Gulshan and Natun Bazar with a total of 14 stations, of which nine will be underground and the rest elevated.

Preparation of a draft project document for the northern route is underway. Meanwhile, a loan agreement for engineering assistance was signed in June this year and the metro rail authorities have given a proposal for hiring engineering service consultants to carry out feasibility studies.

On the other hand, a pre-feasibility study on the 21km southern route started in May this year with loans from a development partner. The southern route stretching from Gabtoli to Bhulta is



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