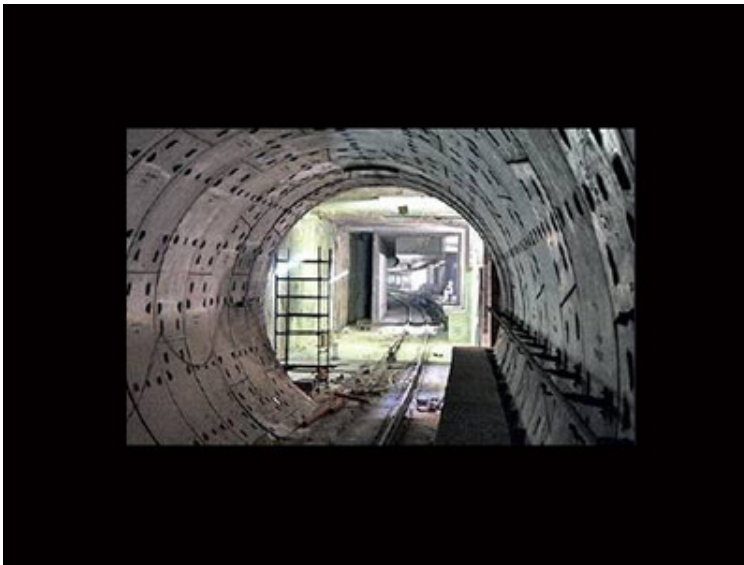


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THE TIMES OF INDIA

East-West Metro to run full course by 2021: MD of KMRC

TNN | Mar 14, 2018, 06.22 AM IST



KOLKATA: The East-West Metro will connect with the first underground station Phoolbagan in early 2019 and Sealdah in 2020 before running the full course by 2021. The day after Union minister Babul Supriyo announced the probable date for the inauguration of the first phase of the service from Sector V to Salt Lake Stadium on October 2 this year, the managing director of the Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC) Parashuram Singh said that KMRC would open first phase of the alignment by stages before making the entire alignment operational in 2021.



Construction work on in full swing at Phoolbagan station site



WHEN THE STRETCHES WILL BECOME OPERATIONAL

- **Sector V to Salt Lake Stadium** | October 2018
- **Stadium to Phoolbagan** | Early 2019
- **Phoolbagan to Sealdah** | Early 2020

PHASE I

- **Stretch** | Salt Lake (Sector V) to Sealdah
- **Length** | 9.4 km (elevated - 5.74 km, underground - 3.62 km)
- **Stations** | 8 (elevated 6, underground 2)

PHASE II

- **Stretch** | Sealdah to Howrah Maidan via Esplanade
- **Length** | 7.2 km (underground)
- **Stations** | 4 (all underground)

'No compromise on passenger safety'

Abul Supriyo, Union minister of state for heavy industries and public enterprise, who inspected the E-W Metro corridor on Monday, told TOI that there will not be any compromise on quality of construction. "We aspire to commission the stretch between Salt Lake Sector V and Salt Lake Stadium before the Pujas that start from October 15 this year. If we can complete the stretch, we would like to inaugurate it on October 2 but not at the cost of passenger safety," he said. TNN

Speaking to TOI on the sideline of the Assocham seminar, Mass Rapid Transport System For Urban Areas: Opportunities And Challenges, he said, "We are receiving two complete rakes from BEML most probably next month. The rest of the rakes will come well ahead of the inauguration of the first phase."

According to the original plan, the stretch from Sector V to Sealdah was to be inaugurated in the first phase but the change of alignment hit the entire plan. "Sealdah station can't be ready till the tunnel boring machine (TBM), which starts construction from Esplanade to Sealdah in May, is retrieved at Sealdah station shaft," said KMRC spokesperson A K Nandy.

Once the station is ready, there is no problem in running the service till Sealdah. The Phoolbagan, the first underground station in the first phase, is nearing completion, while the finishing touches are being given to the elevated stations. E-W Metro significantly suffered a time overrun of five years and cost overrun of almost double (Rs 8,996.96 crore) the cost (Rs 4,875 crore) pegged at the time of initiation.

“It’s a very challenging project. The air-conditioning of the entire tunnel itself takes more than 14 months. Each station takes three years to complete. We will not compromise on work to meet the target date. The date has been fixed to keep the work in progress and hopefully the target will be achieved,” a source added.