

Bangladesh steps into new age of electric trains

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Bangladesh stepped into the new era of electric trains on May 11. Dhaka Metro Rail brought out its new train for display in Uttara and conducted a short low-speed run for spectacle.

The country's first electric train crossed 500 metres (on ground level) with six coaches during the trial run at the Diabari depot at around 12 noon at a speed of 5 kmh, according to media reports.

A driver from the Kawasaki-Mitsubishi Consortium drove the Mass Rapid Transit Line-6 (MRT-6) train to the unloading zone from a workshop. When commissioned, the trains will run at a speed of 100 kmh.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader inaugurated the metro rail test run virtually. It was organised by the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL).

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Naoki Ito and high officials of the department concerned and ministry were present at the test site.

"Now metro rail is not a dream any more but a reality. At the same time, Bangladesh has stepped into the age of electric trains through this metro rail," Quader said.

He said metro rail performance test will begin on the mainline on the viaduct in

August next, while the trial run of the train will start after an integrated test.

The minister said the second set of metro trains reached Mongla Port on May 9.

Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary Md Nazrul Islam, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) MAN Siddique, metro rail line-6 project director Md Aftab Uddin Talukder, officials concerned of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) and DMTCL were also present on the occasion.

The project is being implemented at a cost of BDT 22,000 crore.

The country's first metro rail is expected to become operational next year. An estimated 60,000 passengers will travel per hour on the route from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, amounting to 960,000 people using the metro rail every day.

The original length of the metro rail route was 20.1 km to Motijheel, but it has now been extended by 1.16 km to Kamalapur Railway Station.

There will be a total of 16 stations on the 21km route of MRT Line 6, with waiting time of approximately four minutes.

The stations will be located at Uttara North, Uttara Center, Uttara South, Pallabi, Mirpur 11, Mirpur 10, Kazipara, Shewrapara, Agargaon, Bijoy Sarani, Farmgate, Karwan Bazar, Shahbagh, Dhaka University, Bangladesh Secretariat, and Motijheel.

Besides, the compartments, weighing 22-28 tons, are about three metres in width and 20 metres in length, and have long-line seating arrangements. Two of the six coaches are air-conditioned and each coach has four doors for passengers.

At the same time, regenerative electric brakes are being used in the metro trains which will be operated through using an automated radio communication system, even without any driver.

A total of 13.80 km of the viaduct has been installed with the rail track installation inside the depot already completed.

The government hopes to begin operations on the Uttara-Agargaon route by the end of this year, but it may face a delay due to the latest Covid-19 upsurge across the country.

The DMTCL is considering a fare of BDT 2.4 per kilometre of travel on Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) route 6, stretching from Uttara to Kamalapur. The total fare for a full trip on the 20.1 km route will stand at BDT 40.25 if the rate is adopted.