

Underground metro rail construction starts Jan 26

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: The physical work of the country's first-ever underground metro rail line will begin on January 26, setting off a flurry of activity for the second biggest infrastructure project in Bangladesh. This work will begin with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laying the foundation stone of the Tk 52,561.43 crore project, formally known as Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-1, at a programme in the capital's Purbachal area, Project Director Abul Kashem Bhuiyan told The Daily Star last night.

The Road Transport and Highways Division called a meeting today at Rajuk's Purbachal site office over the preparation of the event, he said. Civil work of the project, the biggest one in the transport sector, will start with land development for depot at Pitalganj in Narayanganj, said Kashem. Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing agency of the metro rail project, already signed a contract with Japan-Bangladesh joint-venture firm to develop the depot. The firm of Tokyu Construction Co Ltd of Japan and Max Infrastructure Ltd of Bangladesh will do this within 910 days for Tk 607.65 crore. The 2,400MW Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant is the single largest project undertaken in Bangladesh with a cost of Tk 113,092 crore.

Once the MRT Line-1, which physical work was supposed to begin in December 2020, is completed, it will be able to carry 8 lakh passengers daily. The official deadline for the project is December 2026, according to the project documents. The 31.24km rail line will have two parts — a 19.87km part from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur (Airport route) will be underground and around a 11.36km part will be elevated from Notunbazar to Purbachal (Purbachal route). The airport route will have 12 stations and the Purbachal route nine stations, seven of which will be above the ground. Two stations on the Purbachal route — Nadda and Notunbazar — will be underground and used as an interchange for passengers to switch between routes. MRT Line-5 (northern route) between Hemayetpur and Bhatara will have an interchange at Notunbazar station of MRT Line-1, the documents added. Of the Tk 52,561.43 crore required for MRT-1, the government will provide Tk 13,111 crore and Japan Tk 39,450 crore as soft loan.