

96pc construction works of Bangabandhu tunnel completed

February 9, 2023

Online Desk: The construction works of much-awaited Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, the first under-river tunnel in South Asia, is nearing completion as construction progress has reached 96 percent. “96 percent construction works of the tunnel under river Karnaphuli in Chattogram has been completed. The mechanical installation work is still going on. Along with this, the approach road construction works has already been completed,” said Project Director of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel Md Harunur Rashid today, reports BSS.

He said construction works of the cross passage and tunnel related to the toll plaza is also nearing completion. “Mechanical, electrical and civil works of the tunnel is going on and other related work is also at final stage,” Rashid said and hoped that the construction works of the tunnel will be finished within the stipulated time. According to the project, two tubes having 35 feet wide and 16 feet high have been constructed within an 11-metre gap so that heavy vehicles can pass through the tunnel easily. The length of the under-construction tunnel will be 3.40 kilometres with an approach road of 5.35 kilometres alongside a 727-metre bridge linking the main city, port and Western side of the river with its Eastern side.

Bangabandhu’s daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction work of the first tunnel tube on February 24, 2019. On October 14, 2016, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Chinese President Xi Jinping jointly laid the foundation stone of the Bangabandhu Tunnel. China Communications Construction Company Ltd is working as the contractor for the project. The tunnel will connect the proposed Asian Highway to Dhaka-Chattogram-Cox’s Bazar Highway and will reduce the distance from Chattogram to Cox’s Bazar by 40-km. Vehicles in this tunnel will run at a speed of 80-km per hour, according to the project details.

Bangabandhu Tunnel is being built at a cost of Taka 10,374 crore. The tunnel project is being implemented with joint funding of the governments of Bangladesh and China. The Exim Bank of China is giving loan of Taka 5,913 crore while the Bangladesh government is funding the rest. The Exim Bank of China is giving loan of Taka 5,913 crore with two percent interest rate. The tunnel will be the first under-river tunnel in South Asia. Extensive work is underway to complete the remaining eight percent work of the project. Local and foreign engineers alongside workers are involved in the project.

The government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took the initiative to build a tunnel under Karnaphuli River to connect the city’s Patenga and Anwara upazila of south Chattogram to make the port city ‘One City, Two Town’ model similar to the Chinese city of Shanghai. In November 2015, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approved the multi-lane road tunnel project at a cost of Taka 8,446.64 crore and the project duration was set for December 2021.

The cost was later increased to Taka 10,374.42 crore and the project period extended to December 2022. In the latest revision, the project duration has been extended till December 30, 2023, and the cost was increased by Taka 164 crore. According to the survey conducted in 2013, before the construction of the tunnel, 6.3 million vehicles will be able to move through the tunnel annually. According to that, about 17260 vehicles can run in a day. By 2025, an average of 28,305 vehicles will travel through Bangabandhu Tunnel every day.