

Metro Rail: Tickets to go on sale after PM's trip

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Metro rail authorities are planning to start selling single- and multiple-use cards after launching the country's first metro rail on December 28. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who will inaugurate the service, will buy the first ticket, and the authorities will start selling tickets to the public after she leaves the site, according to the plan. She will travel from Agargaon to Uttara on metro after inaugurating the Mass Rapid Transit Line-6 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on December 28. It was decided that people will be able to commute on the metro from the following day, said MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, the implementing and operating agency.

DMTCL authorities yesterday held an important meeting with consultants, experts, and the officials of JICA, the financier of the project, to review the preparations ahead of the official launch. "We are satisfied with the preparation," he told The Daily Star last night. He added that the decision about selling the cards after the PM's departure will be finalised after consultation with the SSF. Those who would buy the single-use card from the station will have to leave it after the journey, he said. The cards will be sold at a vending machine and from a booth.

There could be used for 10 years. Commuters will have to register and pay Tk 400 for these cards. Out of Tk 400, Tk 200 will be used as deposit money and Tk 200 can be used for travelling, he said, adding that a passenger can refill the card with up to Tk 10,000. The commuter will get back the deposited money by returning the card, Siddique said.

For now, people will have to buy the cards with cash, he said, adding that the authorities are working with different companies providing mobile financial services so that passengers could buy the cards through mobile transaction. From December 29, the metro will be operated two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening for the first few days, he added. The time will increase gradually, he added. Meanwhile, ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of road transport and highways division, yesterday visited Uttara North Station area to see where the inauguration plaque can be put and a programme can be held, officials said.

Metro authorities also apprised their preparation to Tofazzel Hossain Miah, principal secretary to the PM. For now, the 11.73km section of the metro rail from Uttara to Agargaon would be opened. The remaining 8km from Agargaon to Motijheel will be in operation by December next year. The other 1km from Motijheel to Kamalapur would be inaugurated by June 2025. The original cost of the project was Tk 21,985 crore, but it rose to Tk 33,472 crore after revision. The escalation was mainly due to acquiring new lands to change the stations' design and building the extended part from Motijheel to Kamalapur. Most of the funds will come from Japan in soft loans.