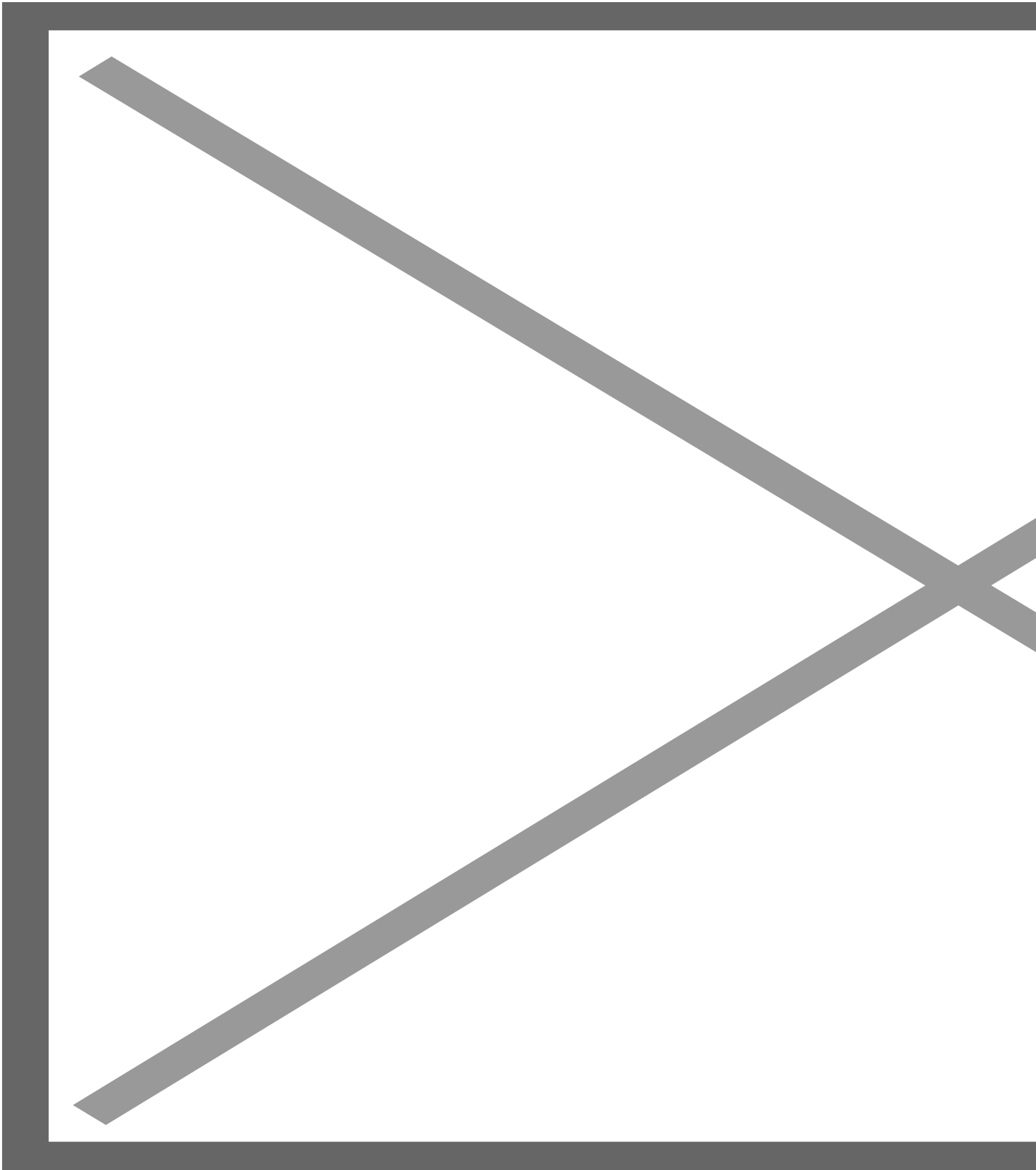


# PM opens First Metro rail, Bangladesh transport enters new era

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**The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has formally inaugurated the country's first metro rail this morning. She opened the service by unveiling a plaque at the playground of Uttara sector-15 at 11:04am. The PM's younger sister Sheikh Rehana waved to the audience after the plaque was unveiled. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, DMTCL Managing Director MAN Siddique, newly appointed Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori, and Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam were also present on stage.

Initially, a 12km section, from Uttara to Agargaon, of the 21.26km MRT Line-6 has been opened. The line up to Motijheel will be inaugurated a year from now. People will be able to avail the service for four hours from 8:00am tomorrow. They will get trains every 10 minutes, but it will eventually come down to every three and a half to four minutes. The four-hour duration will also be increased gradually depending on how passengers get used to the service, according to officials concerned. Only 200 people will be able to take the journey in one train that has the capacity to carry 2,308. The fare for a ride from Uttara to Agargaon is Tk 60 while the minimum fare will be Tk 20.



The PM will be on the first official journey of metro rail today when she travels from Uttara North station to Agargaon. Other than that, there will be no metro rail service today. A fully-fledged service on this part of the line is expected from March 26 next year. Once in full service, MRT Line-6 will carry around 4.83 lakh people every day between Uttara and Motijheel. The trip will take 38 minutes, which takes at least two hours on other modes of transport. The MRT Line-6 project was given the go-ahead in 2012 with a June 2024 deadline and a cost of Tk 21,985 crore. But the authorities went for early commissioning of the Uttara-Agargaon section considering public convenience.

The project was revised this year to extend the line to Kamalapur from Motijheel, and to procure land for some stations. The project cost went up to Tk 33,472 crore and the new deadline was set at 2025. Japan is providing about 60 percent of the cost as soft loan. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are financiers of the metro rail project.