

Metro on a roll, locals thrilled with service

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

There may not be a marked difference in traffic snarls in the city with the launch of Metro, but the 30-km Hyderabad Metro Rail has indeed been a hit with people with more than 1 lakh commuters using it as their daily mode of transport.

Long-distance commuters from Nagole, Secunderabad to Kukatpally, Miyapur and Ameerpet have definitely hopped on to Metro for their daily commute. Scores who earlier travelled by cabs, bikes and buses have switched over to Metro Rail.

Over 2 lakh smart cards have been sold till date which indicate how popular the service has become. The liking that Hyderabad residents has given to Metro has taken even L&T Metro Rail and Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited by surprise. The public outcry during the construction of Metro Rail and the manner in which the pillars and staircases about the main road had critics giving it thumbs down. But not so for a large section of Hyderabadis, who see it as a comfortable mode of transport.



On the first day of commercial operations on November 29, as many as 25,000 photographs were taken at Miyapur station alone after the service was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The park and pylon area at Miyapur have become a 'tourist spot' for locals and people coming from neighbouring states for a ride on Metro.

People from small cities in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra who visit Hyderabad for business purposes make it a point to take a Metro ride. Following the enthusiastic response, the government has gone into the fast-track mode to complete the remaining portions and take the benefit of increased revenue from the project. All energies are now focused on completing the Hi-Tec City stretch by 2018.

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TOTAL METRO LENGTH IN HYDERABAD

66 KM

Total length of Hyderabad Metro Rail

■ The Old City area has been completely written off by the government.

30KM

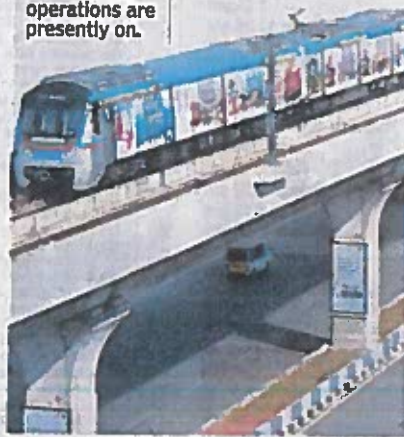
Commercial operations are presently on.

■ Hitec City and LB Nagar to be operational by 2018

■ MGBS Bus Stand till Jubilee Bus Stand to start from early 2019

■ Hitec to Raidurg to start in mid-2019

■ With phase I seeing a major success, the government is keen to extend the line till the Shamshabad airport.



2018 to witness more Metro lines

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

Metro Rail parking, e-vehicles, bus bays and other end-to-end connectivity transport services will only come up in 2018. While commercial operations have started on the 30 km stretch, the of end-to-end connectivity facilities are not quite ready ostensibly because the planners were way off in their assessment of Metro's reach which has been truly phenomenal.

The ridership has consistently been 1 lakh a day for the last one and-a-half months and planners at Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) are under severe pressure to get the connectivity up and running fast.

Managing director of HMRL N.V.S. Reddy said, "The response has been encouraging and soon we will also provide parking at all 24 stations. Two big parking lots are coming up at Rasoolpura and Ameerpet."

Currently the area outside the Miyapur depot is being used for parking by four-wheelers. The space is full to capacity all day, which reflects that most long-distance commuters use Metro to go to office and park their vehicles

there for the entire day, only to collect them at the end of the day after work.

Planners believe that once the Hi-Tec to LB Nagar route starts from in 2018, traffic congestion in the city will ease up considerably. There will be fewer traffic snarls at junctions. There is considerable pressure to develop last-mile connectivity for this reason alone, besides of course making Metro service a complete transport solution.

With phase I seeing a major success, the government is keen to extend the line till the Shamshabad airport. Despite PVNR Flyover being a very convenient mode, there is demand to have a Metro link to the airport looking to the increase in traffic volume in the future. The planners are also looking keenly into the Japan model of Metro for inspiration.

Next year will see more Metro lines coming up as part of the phase II. The general opinion is to continue with the elevated Metro rail like in phase I, given that hard rock surfaces and the topography of the region make digging for underground railway unviable.