

First underground metro line in Mumbai to open in September



Construction work under way on the Metro Line 3 project at Vidhan Sabha Metro Station. FILE PHOTO

Snehal Mutha

MUMBAI

Seven years after construction began, Mumbai's first underground metro line, the Metro Line 3, is scheduled to open to the public in September, officials said.

The line will be operable along its Phase I route, which links SEEPZ (Santa Cruz Electronics Export Processing Zone) to Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC). Covering a stretch of 12.44 km, it will comprise 10 stations between Aarey and BKC, and will feature nine trains operating at a frequency of 6.5 minutes, said officials.

Phase II, meanwhile, will include six stations from Dharavi to Worli, and Phase III of the route will feature 11 stations from Worli to Cuffe Parade, covering 21.35 km. All three phases are expected to be operational by the end of the year.

During the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde also sanctioned

₹1,163 crore to the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MMRCL), a nodal agency for the project connecting Colaba to Bandra to SEEPZ. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had provided a soft loan of ₹13,400 for the project, while the rest has been contributed by the Centre and State government.

However, one of the reasons behind the delay in completing was the shortage of funds, said an MMRCL official.

Meanwhile, 98% of the work has been completed, as per the latest Cabinet meeting. Oscillation trials are being conducted by the MMRCL and monitored by the Research, Design, and Standards Organisation (RDSO) of the Indian Railways, while trains under Phase I are also on trial.

Commuters told *The Hindu* that the new metro line would change how they travel while simultaneously easing the load on the city's overcrowded local trains.