

Will Mumbaikars ride underground Metro-3 from Aarey to BKC by July?

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Mumbai: You might be able to commute by the underground Metro train from Aarey to Bandra-Kurla Complex by July, if things go to plan.

Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited has said that it anticipates commencement of phase I commercial operations on this route by July. The dry runs have been done and some assessments and green signals are now awaited. With 19 trains in its possession, the Metro agency is equipped to run over 260 services.

The Metro agency had earlier announced that the first phase operations would begin in May, but could not meet this deadline due to a slew of factors.

Now, the watchdog body, Research, Design & Standards Organisation, which will do the assessment testing and give approval for operations, is set to arrive in the first week of June to assess the Metro 3 system.

Already, the testing of Metro trains with heavy loads placed on board have been done. "Yes, trials of fully loaded trains have been done at a speed of 95km/hr... The results were excellent," SAID a source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The 'loaded' trials that the source referred to include



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placing of "gunny bags of debris" on board the trains to get a real feel of passenger loads on the moving trains between BKC and Aarey.

Now, the watchdog body will be here to assess the entire system after which it will submit its report, said the source. This assessment will include safety and performance testing including checking of braking systems, acceleration and deceleration rates, and emergency response mechanisms. The team will also assesses quality and stability of tracks and related infrastr-

structure, inspect alignment, welding quality, and structural integrity.

Prior to the 'loaded' trials, similar tests had been carried out but with the coaches running empty at speeds of up to 95 km/hr.

Regarding the overall progress of the work on this route, the source pointed out that "only minor finishing touches" are needed at stations and at entry and exit points.

On successful completion of integration trials, and obtaining safety certifications for various systems, approval

will have to be sought from another authority called 'Independent Safety Assessor' for safe train operations.

Following the relevant certifications, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Limited will approach the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety for statutory permissions that are required to commence passenger services.

Commercial operations will begin only after receiving the green signal, ensuring full compliance with safety regulations and operational standards.