

Driverless Metro trains to run between Colaba and Andheri

UNDERGROUND ROUTE Line to be operational by 2021; to run with drivers for the first year

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MUMBAI: Not only is the city's Metro rail network set to expand, it will also bring technology Mumbai's commuters have never experienced before—a driverless Metro train.

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation announced the city's first underground metro rail corridor between Colaba and SEEPZ, Andheri, will be driverless. They have planned to build the Metro with an advanced system that will allow this after the line becomes operational in 2021. Initially, the services will run with drivers and gradually will become driverless.

AA Bhatt, director, Systems of MMRC, said the 33.5 km corridor will be equipped with an advanced signalling system—Communication Based Train Control (CBTC)—that will allow the driverless train operation. “We plan to operate the trains

driverless. Initially, we will have drivers until the system is set. Gradually, after about a year, we will remove the drivers and operate driverless,” Bhatt said.

The senior MMRC official said the drivers will be available at stations to quickly take charge of the train in case of an emergency.

Two corridors in Delhi have already installed a similar system and will operate the 58-km Majlish Park-Shiv Vihar (Line 7) and the more than 38-km Janakpuri (West)—Botanical Garden (Line 8) corridors of Phase-III by the year end.

Bhatt said there are driverless trains being operated in 27 countries and adopting such technology is not a “luxury” any longer. “DMRC had to take clearance from Ministry of Railways for driverless trains. We are going to follow DMRC. So their experience will also come in handy,” Bhatt said.

CONTINUED ON P 13

METRO ON AUTO MODE

COLABA-BANDRA-SEEPZ

Length:
33.5-km
Deadline:
2021

Estimated
Cost

₹23,136
CRORE

The Metro-3 line will be Mumbai's first underground route once it is operational

The Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) plans to build this line with an advanced system that will help run driverless trains

Two corridors in Delhi have already installed a similar system, which is likely to be operational by year-end

For Metro-3, the MMRC will run the trains with drivers for the first year and then move to the driverless system.



Driverless...

Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ (Metro 3) corridor is a crucial north-south link, which will supplement the existing suburban rail network in the city. It will link key business districts such as MIDC and SEEPZ in Andheri, and the plush business district of BKC and Nariman Point as well as the city airport.

Meanwhile, the MMRC will start metro services with eight-coach rakes instead of six-coach rakes, which was planned earlier. MMRC has estimated a surge in ridership by the time the project will be commissioned by 2021. "Initially we had planned to order 38 rakes of six coaches, but now we are ordering 31 trains of eight cars," Bhatt said. The Colaba-SEEPZ metro line is mired in controversies owing to opposition from some quarters over building a car shed at Aarey Colony and also residents in some buildings in south Mumbai who would have to be relocated.