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RVNL begins New Garia line tunnel work to link airport Metro station

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As the city eagerly waits to board the New Garia-Ruby crossing truncated stretch of the New Garia-Airport Metro corridor, implementing agency Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) has started work to build the underground tunnel to link the airport Metro terminal to the line. The tunnelling should be over by the year end and the 3.5km section from City Centre II to airport should be ready by the end of 2024.

Though the Metro project linking New Garia with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport has several gaps along the way, a 5.4km section is set for commercial launch this month.

Contractors Afcons Infrastructure have also started constructing the diaphragms or D-walls on either side of the 800m underground section through Airports Authority of India (AAI) land. The D-wall demarcates the tunnelling path.

“This is a milestone for the Metro corridor that will provide the longest green corridor from New Garia (Kavi Subhas terminal) in the south to the airport in the north,” a senior RVNL official said.

Since the underground section is only around 800m, including a 300m ramp, 353m of reinforced concrete box and 125m of “box pushing” (pushing precast box segments with hydraulic jacks through the tunnel bed), the authorities opted for a cut-and-cover method instead of deploying tunnel

boring machines. “The D-walls are a prerequisite for cut-and-cover tunnelling, so the tunnel area is well-defined for on-site concrete casting or box-pushing,” said an RVNL official.

Twenty-four elevated stations will come up on the New Garia-Airport Metro stretch. Having completed Phase 1, covering five stations — including the terminal Kavi Subhas station and the Hemanta Mukherjee station at Ruby crossing — RVNL is now trying to fast-track the rest. “The airport station will serve as the northern terminal of this Metro corridor and also be a stop for the 6.8km Noapara to airport line, which will later be extended to New Barrackpore,” an official said.

ITD Cementation is constructing the airport Metro station’s box with four train lines and a rake stabling facility. Afcons’ scope includes the 800m tunnel, for which trenching work began near the end of February. In January 2021, Afcons was awarded the Rs 532 crore civil construction contract with a 36-month deadline. The 3.5km mostly elevated segment with two new stations at Chinar Park and VIP Road (Haldiram’s) will connect City Centre II and airport Metro stations.

“The D-wall will be built in the next six to seven months. Simultaneously, construction of concrete tunnels through cut-and-cover method and box-pushing will be carried out and completed by the year-end. Our package should be over by November next year,” a senior Afcons official said.