

## Last-minute preparations for March 15 start of commercial services of East-West Metro

Several students of fine arts have been deployed to paint inner walls of 520m-long stretch of tunnel under Hooghly

Sanjay Mandal | Published 13.03.24, 06:14 AM



*Representational image*

File picture

- Students of fine arts painting tunnel walls under the riverbed
- Signage being put up
- Officials busy making plans on how to handle shortage of guards

Last-minute preparations are on for the March 15 start of commercial services of East-West Metro between Howrah Maidan and Esplanade.

“The finishing touches are being given at the stations and in the tunnels,” said an official of Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC), the implementing agency of East-West Metro.

### **Painting**

Several students of fine arts have been deployed to paint the inner walls of the 520m-long stretch of the tunnel under the Hooghly, said an official of Metro Railway.

“The idea is to give an underwater feel. The tunnel under the water is illuminated with blue LED lights. Paintings are being done to give the feel of an aquarium,” said an official of Kolkata Metro.

This newspaper has reported that the trains will run at a speed of 40kmph under the Hooghly to let commuters have a better view of the interiors of the tunnel. The average speed in the corridor will be 70kmph.

### **Signage**

Last-minute work is on to install signage.

An official of Afcons Infrastructure, the company that built the Howrah Maidan, Howrah and Mahakaran stations, along with the ventilation shaft on Strand Road and the tunnel between Howrah Maidan and Esplanade, said there will be hundreds of signboards.

“The Howrah Maidan, Howrah and Mahakaran stations will each have between 220 and 250 signboards,” said Tamal Biswas, project manager of Afcons Infrastructure.

### **Guards**

The authorities are now discussing ways to deploy more security personnel. Metro sources said the RPF had informed them that it could not provide enough personnel.

“We are working on a strategy. Let us see what the passenger footfall is. Accordingly, we will decide,” said P. Uday Kumar Reddy, general manager, Metro Railway, Kolkata.

Sources said a private security agency might be hired.