

Metro Train Operators: Here's how these youngsters are trained to drive city forward

Jeet Mashru

htmbai@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: With Metro Line 2A and 7 to be flagged off by prime minister Narendra Modi on January 19 and open to public on January 20th, the Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Limited (MMOCL) is preparing to make two of the most important metro lines operational.

The MMOCL looks after the maintenance and operations of all the Metro lines in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

The Line 2A that runs from Ovaripada station in Dahisar east to Gundavli in Andheri West will be a huge relief for commuters travelling from western suburbs via the Western Express Highway, which is one of the busiest routes of Mumbai during peak hours.

While Line 7, which will go from Dahisar East to Andheri West via link road, will be a relief to the citizens on the western line and it will work as an important alternate route to Mumbai locals saving huge commute time.

HT visited the Operations Control Centre (OCC) at Charkop, which manages both these lines, to meet the team and train operators that run the metro. The staff at Metro has been preparing for the full operation of these lines for the last three years. A young group of people drive the metro trains and they are called Train operators (TO). Before being able to run the train, these TOs have to go through an intense training for nearly six months.

The TOs are mostly in the age



Train operators at Gundavli Station prepare for PM Narendra Modi's scheduled visit on January 19 to flag off Line 2A and 7 of Mumbai Metro.

VJAY BATE / HT PHOTO

Opening two new metro lines

Although these are marked as two different lines, the trains will run end-to-end of Line 2A and 7, that is from Gundavli in Andheri East of Line 7 to Andheri West station on Link Road of Line 2A via Dahisar east. The end-to-end distance will be nearly 35 kilometers with a total travel time of 70 minutes.

LINE 7

From Ovaripada (Dahisar) to Gundavali (Andheri east) (Running parallel to the Western Express Highway)

- Total Travel time: **33 Minutes approx**
- Distance: **16.5 Kilometers**
- No. Of stations: **13**
- First Train from Gundavali around: **5:55am**
- Last Train from Gundavali around: **10:05pm**

LINE 2A

From Dahisar East to Andheri West (via Link road)

- Total Travel Time: **37 Minutes approx**
- Distance: **18.6 Kilometers**
- No. Of stations: **17**
- First Train from Andheri west: **5:55am**
- Last Train from Andheri west: **10:05pm**



TICKET PRICES BETWEEN

₹10 to ₹60



FREQUENCY:
Every 10 minutes and likely to be every 6 minutes in future, depending on the ridership.

group of 24-30 years, who are eligible to join right after their engineering degree, usually at around the age of 22 years. After an initial examination and verification, the TOs have to go for a three month-long training at the Delhi Metro Rail Academy

(DMRA), in Delhi. The TOs then are trained for another three months in Mumbai.

Supervisor at OCC for TOs, Hardik Desai said, "The average age of the TOs is around 25 years. After their six months of training, they are provided pro-

visional competency, they then need to have an experience of manually driving the train for 400 kms.

"Of these 400 kms, initial 100 kms they have to drive an empty train. After this, they will drive the train under supervision in

non-peak hours. Once 400 kms are completed, they have to give a test and interview again for competency," he added.

"We will have a full training centre ready here in Mandale in the next few months, after which trainees will not have to visit Delhi. A full simulator experience for training the TOs will also be set-up here. We have so many new lines coming up in next few years, this centre will be able to train all these TOs in the future," added Desai.

One of the TOs running the Metro, Vishal Pawar said, "I have been with the Metro for last three years and it is a proud moment for us to see both the lines being made fully operational." Desai, who has been with the Metro for almost 10 years, initially with line one and now, with line 2A and 7, shared that running the Metro is a technical job and it does not end with just one training.

Even after being declared competent, TOs go through regular training and refresher courses. The OCC also now has a newly-launched simulator machine where TOs are trained to run a train, and trainers are able to introduce new scenarios to prepare them for any adverse situations.

The Operations Control Theatre (OCT), is a room with huge screen to monitor every train running on both Line 2A and 7 which can operate independently in case of power failure or any other emergency. The control theatre also monitors every minute details of trains that are on the tracks and the staff from OCT are also in touch with the TOs through their internal communication systems.