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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Metro Overhaul to Add 70 Stations by 2020

By Ken Martinez

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According to plans laid out Wednesday, the Moscow metro system will add 70 stations by 2020. **Andrei Makhonin**

The Moscow metro system that carries more than 9 million passengers per day will undergo a massive expansion by 2020, growing in size by 1 1/2 times and creating a second ring line around the city, officials said Wednesday.

Deputy Mayor Marat Khusnullin rolled out the project at a meeting of city government officials to discuss city development policies.

"By 2020 we plan to build 150 kilometers of new subway lines and 70 new stations," he said.

As part of the plan, Khusnullin said a new 42-kilometer line would form a second circle line, creating transfer points that will relieve traffic in the core of the system by allowing passengers to switch branches without going into the city center.

"We have started to work," he said, adding that 18,000 workers were already working around the clock on 69 stations.

The first portion of the second ring line is scheduled to be completed by 2015, and it will connect eight stations.

A new metro branch, called the Khordovaya line, will also be created to reach the new territories that will become part of the capital under the ambitious plan to almost double Moscow's territory. Metro access to Skolkovo is also in the works.

New metro cars are also hitting the tracks, as 640 new state-of-the-art cars started flowing into the city last week as part of a two-year deal with a plant outside Moscow worth an estimated $680 million, RIA-Novosti reported.

The cars represent a significant upgrade over the previous 2002 model, with an air purification system in cars that can shuttle passengers around Moscow at speeds of up to 90 kilometers per hour.

Alexei Gritsayev, chief designer at the Metrovagonmash plant where the trains are being produced, said each kilometer of new track requires about 10 new cars, RIA-Novosti said. According to the plan laid out Wednesday, the deal would provide just over four cars per kilometer of track.

The news comes as authorities are driving an aggressive push to alleviate congestion in the capital. Earlier in the week, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin addressed the possibility of new stations in downtown Moscow, and a new plan to introduce paid parking has also been announced.

Every day, 12 subway lines and 185 stations serve the capital with trains traversing more than 300 kilometers of track at speeds averaging more than 40 kilometers per hour.

The new plans would increase those numbers to 451 kilometers of track running through 252 stations.

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