

# Work on light rail to begin from June

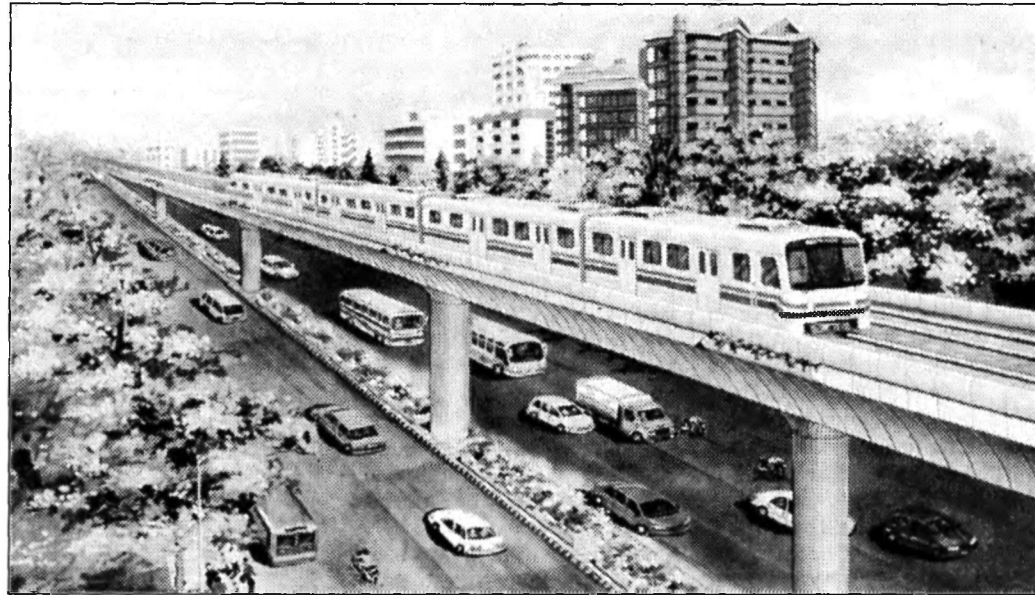
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, March 6:** Work on 34 km-long first phase of the proposed 99 km Elevated Light Rail Transit System (ELRTS) in the City, - said to be the longest in the world - will commence in June.

The first phase, connecting Kempe Gowda bus terminal in Subashnagar, the City Railway Station and the Airport, is expected to cost Rs 3,000 crore.

The Bangalore Metropolitan Rapid Transit limited (BMRTL), a joint sector company, is implementing the project as a commercially stand-alone venture, without State or Central Government guarantees for a minimum return or revenue. The BMRTL has chosen the UB Group consortium to implement the ELRTS. The consortium consists of US companies ICF Kaiser International Limited and Transportation and Transit Associate besides a Japanese company Nippon Sharyo TTA INC.

The BMRTL Executive Dire-



An artists view of the elevated rail on M G road.

ctor S N Jayaram said that the State was proposing to amend the Mysore Tramways Act, 1906 to replace it with the Karnataka Tramways Act, 2000 to take care of the project's legal aspects.

The proposed amendment

would provide the Government with the legal authority to run the system or allow a private group to operate it. Other measures that were underway included obtaining environmental clearance, Geo-technical investigation and Ridership Es-

timation Studies.

BMRTL has already acquired 57 acres of defence land at a cost Rs 32.47 crore and the Bangalore City Corporation has passed a resolution, providing its land for ELRTS. The acquisition was not a problem be-

cause the ELRTS was to be erected on the existing road network and Government land. Very little land was to be acquired from private parties, Jayaram said.

Each kilometre of the ELRTS required an investment of Rs 100 crore. The State's contribution for the first phase was Rs 250 crore, which would be completed in the next three years, he said.

Jayaram said that over 90 per cent of the machines, equipment and manpower needed to Commission the ELRTS was available within the country and the collaborators would bring in the technology. Ticketing and other activities would employ state-of-the-art technology. The ELRTS was cost-effective because the investment cost was Rs 100 crore as against Rs 400 crore a km for an underground suburban system. The BMRTL had also approached the Centre for assistance from the Urban Development Ministry and the response was encouraging, he said.