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## Update on urban rail progress in Najaf and Baghdad

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Canadian consortiums TransGlobim International has announced USD 600 million 30 year concessions to finance, build and operate 37 track kilometers monorail linking three major Shi'ite pilgrimage sites in Najaf. Construction is expected to take three years and Phase II would extend the line to the international airport.

The monorail is intended to transport thousands of pilgrims visiting the holy sites in Iraq's second largest city including the Imam Ali shrine. Each train will have capacity for 400 to 420 passengers and will operate at speeds of 35 kilometers per hour to 80 kilometers per hour with peak headways of 2 to 3 min.

The Najaf Investment Commission has recently agreed an oil deal with a group of Korean and Iraqi companies which Provincial Governor Adnan Al Zurfi expects to generate up to USD 400 million per year.

Meanwhile, Mr Ibrahim Hussain deputy Mayor of Baghdad led a delegation which visited French consultancy Systra at its Paris headquarters from June 22 to 24 to discuss the proposed USD 3 billion Baghdad metro project. The 2 parties expect to finalize an agreement to conduct a feasibility study for 2 underground lines in the near future. Eight international companies had been shortlisted for the design contract.

Long standing proposals envisage that Line 1 would be 18 kilometers long with 20 stations running from Sadr City in Al Rusafa, via Al Khulani in the city centre to Antar Square in the Al Adhamiyah district. A second line 22 kilometers long with 21 stations would run from Al Fath in the southeast to Al Khulani, providing an interchange with Line 1, before forking into two branches serving the western and southwestern districts.

(Sourced from [www.railwaygazette.com](http://www.railwaygazette.com))

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