



JOKA, THE NEW REAL ESTATE HOTSPOT

When a metro city is bursting at the seams at its heart and struggling to breathe, it's a natural phenomenon to decentralize and decongest the core and move to the fringes. In no other sector is this shift in focus more emphatic than in real estate development. Kolkata, which has been terribly supersaturated in the heart of the city for a long time now, is frantically seeking breathing space on the outside, and consequently growing, sometimes organically, towards its suburbs.

While it might not be a textbook hub-and-spoke model, the emergence of new growth areas in terms of real estate development has been a welcome change. While there are quite a few such emerging corridors like Southern EM Bypass, Madhyamgram-Birati and Howrah-Uttarpura, the hottest new destination for realtors and home-buyers seems to be Joka, which is the most strategically connected to key facilities.

The sense of immediacy and a growing feeling of aspiration towards the region has only been heightened by the recent inauguration of the initial stretch of the Joka-Esplanade Metro service, with trains now plying between Joka and Taratala, a major gateway to the city from the suburbs.

So what makes Joka the new real estate hotspot?

Let's take a look at the probable traction points in favour of Joka:

Metro, the clincher: Joka already had great connectivity along both Diamond Harbour Road and James Long Sarani by buses, auto-rickshaws, cabs, e-rickshaws, etc. Now, with the opening of the Joka-Taratala Metro leg, a plethora of new connectivity options have opened up. So instead of changing auto-rickshaws twice or thrice to just reach Taratala, commuters can simply get off at Taratala Metro station and take any mode of transport onward, either towards the healthcare hub in the Ekbalopore-Alipore area or other destinations in south Kolkata or even Howrah. Also, once the Joka-Esplanade Metro is connected to the North-South Metro at Park Street station, access to the Park Street-Camac Street office and

entertainment district and also BBD Bag will become easy. Even travelling to the airport then will be so much simpler.

Proximity to quality educational institutions:

One of the most critical factors among Kolkatans while choosing a new home is the proximity to good schools and colleges. While the Indian Institute of Management is the ultimate jewel in Joka's education infrastructure crown, there are a clutch of new and established education brands which have set up shop in the area, making it an attractive residential district. Some of these coveted schools include DPS Joka, Gems Akademia International School, Pailan World School, M.P. Birla Foundation Higher Secondary School, Vivekananda Mission School, Vidya Bharti, RP Goenka International School, Pailan College of Management and Technology, and many more.

Good hospitals nearby: Easy access to reliable healthcare delivery options is a primary concern for all home-seekers. This is another test Joka passes with flying colours. Thanks to the Metro to Taratala and the Taratala flyover, there is easy connectivity to landmark hospitals like CMRI, Woodlands Hospital, BM Birla Heart Research Centre, Kothari Medical Centre and Narayan Memorial Hospital, besides Bharat Sevashram Hospital, Thakurpukur Cancer Hospital and ESI Hospital, Joka, not to mention the numerous local nursing homes and diagnostic labs as well as smaller hospitals catering to Joka residents.

Retail and entertainment: Family entertainment and shopping options constitute another critical factor that sways apartment-buying decisions these days. There are a bevy of gleaming shopping and entertainment hubs within easy reach from Joka. The Acropolis South (formerly Genexx Mall), is bang in the heart of Joka, while South City Mall is just an auto-rickshaw ride away from Taratala Metro station.



Endless property options to choose from:

With demand for flats in the Joka area rising exponentially, and the Metro first-phase opening providing a welcome shot in the arm, developers are scampering to create a basket of supplies ASAP to cater to the soaring demand. From modest to exclusive, standalone plots and bungalows to massive gated housing complexes, construction activity is on at a feverish pitch in and around Joka, with something on offer for house-hunters with all kinds of budgets. However, compared to a few other new growth areas on the fringes of the city, land or property prices are still quite affordable in Joka. Hence experts opine that investing in any property in Joka now is bound to fetch very handsome returns in future. This also sets the backdrop for a huge rental market as you can sweat your property now and then make a killing later.

One of the latest residential attractions in the locality is Seasonss developed by Realmark Group and marketed by Pioneer Property Management Ltd. The sprawling project, spread across 3.5 acres, comprises 6 G+12 towers, containing 370 residential apartments in all, including 2 and 3BHK units. Seasonss also boasts a sky terrace, a rooftop cricket pitch and mini-tennis court, besides an exclusive gym for children. The complex is also designed in such a manner that residents of all ages can savour the splendor of all the six seasons.

There are many other pluses in favour of Joka that real estate market watchers point out to, like less pollution, no problems of waterlogging, a relatively safe neighbourhood in terms of law and order, proximity to the city centre, etc. Needless to say, the portents are quite clear -- investing in Joka now would ensure lucrative returns going forward. Without a shadow of doubt, it's the most sought-after new growth area on the city's western fringes.

Another ride will easily take you to Acropolis, there's the added attraction of the upcoming giant Phoenix Mall near Majherhat, besides other shopping and family-outing hubs nearby like Reliance Mall, Ajanta Multiplex, Laxmi Narayana Temple, Behala Market and many more.