

Bihar plans bridge parallel to JP Setu on river Ganga

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PATNA: Chief minister Nitish Kumar's demand for central funds to build a bridge parallel to the newly constructed JP Setu on river Ganga in Patna, may take shape in the coming months and free the city of a traffic choke.

Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union minister of surface transport and highways Nitin Gadkari, before whom the demand was made at a function in Barh recently, did not assure Bihar on this count, officials of the road construction department said it would pursue the matter vigorously with the Centre.

Named after veteran socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan, the rail-cum-road bridge connecting Digha in Patna to Sonepur in Chhapra, provides for just two-lane traffic, restricting it to movement of heavy vehicles. The road bridge was opened for vehicular traffic on June 11 this year by chief minister Nitish Kumar to mark the birth anniversary of RJD chief Lalu Prasad.

RCD officials said a formal demand for building an additional and parallel two-lane bridge adjacent to JP Setu would formally be made to the Union ministry of surface transport and NH now. "A detailed proposal will be prepared in consultation with the Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Limited," said a senior officer.



JP Setu

FILE PHOTO

OFFICIALS OF THE RCD SAID THE NEW BRIDGE MIGHT COST NOT MORE THAN RS 2,000 CRORE, AS IT DID NOT REQUIRE LAND ACQUISITION.

It may be noted that the Centre had sanctioned projects worth Rs 55,000 crore as part of the Rs 1.25 lakh crore package to Bihar that was assured by PM Modi ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Accordingly, the Centre had proposed building a four-lane bridge across the river Ganga and the state government had finalised its alignment along the Mahatma Gandhi Setu, which is undergoing renovation.

RCD minister Nand Kishore Yadav said Gadkari in his meeting last month has in principle given the nod for construction of bridge parallel to JP Setu as part of the proposed ring road to be

built by the national highways authority of India (NHAI). "A broad alignment of the ring road has been finalised. The proposed ring road would start from Darilayawan on Bihta-Sarmera road and converge on Digha via the proposed Kachhi Dargah-Biddupur bridge on Ganga, linking Hajipur via Pahleja," said Yadav.

The minister said the bridge parallel to JP Setu has already been sanctioned. "Only the procedural part, which is to be executed by the NHAI. On our part, the state will provide land for building the ring road. No additional land is required for construction of the bridge, as the RCD has sufficient portion of land to build its approach roads on both sides," added the minister.

Officials of the RCD said the new bridge might cost not more than Rs 2,000 crore, as it did not require land acquisition. "And if all goes well with the plan, work on the new bridge project could start next year," said Yadav.