

State plans Digha-Patna exitway, as railway 'agrees' to land transfer

DE-CLOGGING PATNA Proposal is vital for reducing traffic congestion, as the 7km railway line splits the busiest main arteries of the city at three vital points, bringing traffic to a halt at peak time

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PATNA: A road construction department (RCD)'s plan to build a four-lane road from Digha to R-Block via Bailey Road crossing has received a big boost with the ministry of railways agreeing in principle to handover a 71-acre stretch currently occupied by the Patna-Digha Ghat railway line.

The agreement was reached in a meeting between state RCD minister Nand Kishore Yadav and railway minister Piyush Goel last week. The terms and condition for land transfer, however, needs to be worked out a fresh.

The proposal is vital to de-clogging Patna and reduce traffic congestion, as the 7km railway line splits the busiest main arteries of the town at three vital points, bringing the traffic to a halt at peak time. Once the project is completed, over a lakh of people in the state capital would find a smooth exit way, skipping the busiest intersections to travel between Patna central and Digha and also connect with a four-lane road coming up on the Ganga banks to the north of the capital.

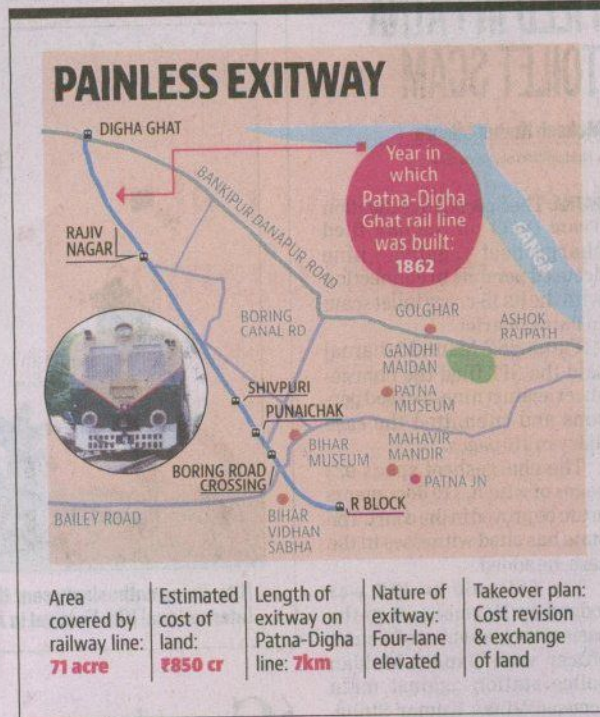
RCD officials said, the railway ministry also okayed the state government's long-pending proposal to build as many as 38 rail

RCD WAS EXPLORING WAYS TO REDUCE COST OF LAND TRANSFER, WHICH COULD INVOLVE REVISION OF LAND RATE AND EXCHANGE OF LAND PLOTS TO RAILWAYS IN AREAS OF ITS NEED

over bridges (RoB) in various parts of the state. As proposed, the RoBs will be built by Ircon limited and the state government will pay 50% of the construction cost to the construction firm.

The transfer of land, currently being used by the Indian Railways to run Patna-Digha Ghat shuttle train, has been a contentious issue over decades, as the railway ministry had been insisting on payment of about Rs 850 crore by the state in lieu of land transfer, which Bihar, citing resource crunch, did not agree to.

Sources in the RCD said they were exploring ways to reduce the cost of land transfer, which could involve revision of land rate and exchange of land plots to railways in areas of its need. "A mutually acceptable and workable deal could be reached in the next few months," they said, hoping that work on detailed



project report (DPR) for the exit way could take shape early this year.

The Patna high court had earlier asked the Railways to look into the scope for transfer of its land in response to the state government's plea to decongest Patna.

The train service on this route

was first introduced during the Imperial period in 1862. However, it was discontinued for many decades until the shuttle service was resumed by the railways during the stint of Lalu Prasad as its minister in 2004, ostensibly to save it from encroachment by slum dwellers.

RAIL UNDERPASS ON CARD AT JAGDEOPATH
 The RCD has urged the railway ministry to build road over bridges (RoBs) at 38 locations with a view to doing away with perennial traffic bottlenecked railway crossing in different parts of the state. Three RoBs to be built in Patna, while each at Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and in other districts.

As per the agreement reached between the RCD and the railway ministry, Ircon Limited Railways construction arm will build the RoBs and the state government would pay it 50% of construction cost as also for money involved in building approach roads. It will, however, provide the land to construct approach roads. Previously, Railways used to build over bridges on railway lines and state government had to construct the approach part.

Officials said, the RCD also proposed to construct way underpass instead of a near Phulwari Sharif station Jagdeopath, owing to the restriction by the airport authorities. Jagdeopath passes through the western end of Patna and railway. RoBs, however, were proposed at Sarani on Danapur-Biha road and way crossing on Shivala-Npur road.