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‘New DFC plan for Sonnagar to Dankuni stretch to cut costs’

Surabhi

New Delhi

The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd (DFCCIL) has sent a revised proposal to the Railway Ministry for the Sonnagar to Dankuni stretch to lower the cash burden on the concessionaire, and is hopeful of a decision shortly. In the interim, the company has begun work on land acquisition and removal of level crossings to ensure availability when the project is floated.

During talks with stakeholders, it was realised that the cost was running high, said RK Jain, MD. “We have changed the model to HAM and will pay 40 per cent of the cost,” he said.

Interview p3

'Dedicated freight corridors score high on reliability quotient'

bl.interview

Surabhi
New Delhi

Work on the ambitious dedicated freight corridors (DFCs) of the Railways has gathered pace in the last two years, and the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd (DFCCIL) is confident of moving ahead in the coming months.

In an interview with *BusinessLine*, RK Jain, Managing Director, DFCCIL, speaks about the advantages of the corridors, and how its USP of heavier, higher, longer, speedier is coming true on all the stretches that have been



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RK JAIN
Managing Director, DFCCIL



opened. Excerpts:

What is the progress on the DFCs?
Of the 2,843 km of the DFC, about half, or 1,352 km, has already been completed and

commissioned with trains operating on the stretches. By October, we should complete and commission another 300 km, taking the completed portion of the DFCs to 58-59 per cent. If everything goes by

schedule, then, by June 2023, we will complete between 80-90 per cent of the corridors, and we will try and complete the balance 10 per cent as early as possible. Only the last 100 km between Vaitarna and JNPT will go into 2024.

What are the reasons for the delay on Vaitarna to JNPT stretch?

We have resolved many issues in the last couple of months. Out of the 100 km stretch, about 5.7 km was occupied by encroachments, which is now down to about 1.2 km. We have addressed about 80 per cent of the problem, and hopefully after the monsoon, the balance will

also get resolved. We have asked the contractor – Tata Projects – to speed up as work was slow. The working season gets hampered by monsoons, leaving just about six months for work. And, some work got hampered due to the ban by NGT on earthwork.

Are you satisfied with the pace of the project?

Yes, there is a feeling that things have gathered pace in the last one to two years. Our USP of heavier, higher, longer, speedier is coming true on all the stretches that we have opened. The average speed of trains is 55-60 kmph, compared to less than half in the Railways.

Also, O&M costs have been reduced. Reliability is very high on the DFC. When our network gets completed, it will have even more advantages.

They are also in sync with the National Logistic Policy, which aims to lower the cost of logistics.

What is happening on the three more DFCs?

We are working on three more DFCs of about 4,300 km – the East Coast corridor, East-West Corridor and the North-South Sub-corridor. The interim DPRs were submitted to the Railway Ministry, and the final DPRs will be submitted between December 2022 and March

2023. The cost is estimated at about ₹2-lakh crore.

What are your plans, going ahead?

Our first focus is to complete our network, which will take us to the second focus area of business development to get more traffic and increase our share in freight transport and make it faster. For instance, when the eastern DFC gets completed in the next six to eight months, coal transport from Sonmargar to Delhi, which takes about 20 to 26 hours now, will come down to 15 hours. This will reduce the turnaround time, improve availability of trains and help transport more at lower costs.