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# Eastern DFC's 340-km section may be commissioned in Dec

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**WHILE THE FIRST** section of the dedicated freight corridor (DFC) between Ateli and Phulera (192 km) on the western DFC will be 'completed' by March end as scheduled, the Bhaupur-Khurja (340 km) stretch on the eastern DFC will be 'commissioned' in December. It will be followed by the Rewari-Marwar (452 km) stretch on the western DFC in February 2019.

The Ateli-Phulera section, which lies between Rewari and Ajmer, will not be operationalised as a train at both the ends will have to travel for around 45 minutes to connect the DFC line and the Indian Railways' line, making it time consuming and economically unviable.

Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCCIL), a special purpose vehicle of the railways, has been entrusted with the job to develop DFCs in the country, and the eastern DFC and the western DFC have been taken up on a priority basis with funding assistance from the World Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, respectively. DFCs



will transfer a minimum of 70% of the freight carried by the Indian Railways on tracks parallel to DFCs.

While the eastern DFC will connect Mughalsarai with Ludhiana, the western DFC will run between Dadri and Jawaharlal Nehru Port.

DFCCIL will be getting a total of ₹81,000 crore for the two DFCs in a equity-to-debt ratio of 1:3, wherein equity will come from railways. The total capital expenditure on both DFCs as end-January 2018 was ₹34,888 crore. Of this, ₹20,194 crore was on western DFC and the rest was on eastern DFC.

A total of around 12,600 ha for the two DFCs has been acquired and compensation of ₹15,884 crore has been paid. "Almost 100% of land acquisition is over and 98% have been handed over to contrac-

tors. The rest 2% is sub-judice, but the courts have not stalled construction. Compensation will be awarded later once the cases are settled," said a government official.

The cost of operations on the DFCs is expected to go up by 40%, as it will have longer trains with higher tonnage capacity, compared with the existed operational ones. The average speed on these tracks is also expected to rise three-fold to 70-75 km per hour from 20-25 km at present. One rack on the DFC will be able to carry 13,000 tonne of load compared with 5,000 tonne carried by racks on the existing railway tracks. Tariffs on these corridors will be lower and once all the corridors are operational, railways' share in carrying freight is expected to rise to 50% from 30% now.

The entire western DFC is

expected to be made operational by December 2020, though the target was set ambitiously in March 2020. "For the two extreme ends on western DFC, which are Rewari to Dadri and Jawaharlal Nehru Port to Vaitarna (near Virar), while the contractual dates are March 2021 and January 2021, respectively, given that we have an early completion incentive, these are expected to be completed much earlier than the expected dates of December and September 2020 and the deadline (March, 2020) will be missed by only a few months," the official said.

DFCCIL has offered 0.25% of the contract value as the bonus incentive every week if work is finished before the contractual date. The eastern DFC is scheduled for completion in June 2020.