

Fast trains to city's suburbs

8 Rapid Rail Projects Planned To Check Permanent Migration

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New Delhi: To check influx to the capital of vehicles as well as migrant families from nearby districts, the government plans to put in place eight suburban rail projects aiming to provide fast mass connectivity to these districts. Of these eight regional rapid transit systems (RRTS), which will cover 640km, the government proposes to take up three on priority basis.

These links will provide fast and reliable connectivity to those districts in UP, Haryana and Rajasthan that have been identified as the major contributors to Delhi's increasing migrant population. A recent study by NCR Planning Board (NCRPB) shows Bulandshahr, Alwar, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Sonipat, Gurgaon, Faridabad and Rohtak as some of the key districts from where the capital gets maximum number of migrants.

The NCRPB has proposed to take up Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut, Delhi-Gurgaon-Rewari-Alwar and Delhi-Sonipat-Panipat as the priority corridors.

"The proposals have been approved by all the stakeholders of NCR — Delhi and three adjoining states. These will be put before the Central Cabinet for speedy implementation," said a senior official of urban development ministry.

Sources said though a majority of the dedicated RRTS corridors will come up along the existing railway network across NCR, their alignment could be shifted in some cases so that these become more accessible to commuters.

The present rail network is already overburdened and there is hardly any scope for augmentation of the suburban rail services on the existing tracks. Hence the proposal to have dedicated tracks for RRTS.

Recently, an Integrated Transport Plan for NCR prepared by NCRPB came out with the proposal to develop and operate the RRTS to meet the growing travel demand across the region. According to the plan estimates, RRTS will cater to 1.7 million trips per day. Though buses were expected to remain the major mode of transport across the region (27.83%), the suburban rail and RRTS is seen as the second major mode (16.17%) for commutation.

Planners claimed a proper and efficient transport plan could reduce the demand for private transport modes from 55.5% (in 2007) to 26.32% in 2032. The plan also states that the accessibility of existing tracks was very poor, discouraging passengers.

Sources said that though the detailed project report (DPR) for the proposed corridors will identify the alignment, the frequency of these trains will be much better than the conventional EMUs running between Delhi-Palwal and Delhi-Ghaziabad.

As four partner states together with the Centre have to contribute to the implementation of RRTS, the NCRPB has proposed the formation of NCR Transport Corporation. "It will be responsible for development of integrated multi-modal transport system, including commuter rail and feeder services in NCR. We have proposed to the railway and UDM to have 22.5% equity each. The four member states can have 12.5% equity each and the NCRPB can have the rest 5% equity," said a UD ministry official.

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