

Efforts are being made to complete gauge conversion of Lucknow-Sitapur section during 2017-18.

**Pending railway projects in Bihar**

†3504. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is determined to strengthen the Railways, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) by when pending railway project being carried out from Samastipur to Darbhanga and from Sakri to Sarajgarh *via* Nirmali is likely to be completed, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) It is always Railways' endeavour to complete the ongoing projects expeditiously. Indian Railways have taken various initiatives to increase pace of execution of projects as detailed below:

1. The capital expenditure for railways has been increased from ₹58,718 cr in 2014-15 to around ₹93,795 cr in 2015-16 21,000 crore has been provided in Budget 2016-17 and a plan size of ₹1,31,000 crore has been kept for 2017-18.
2. Delegation of Powers to the field officers for tenders and estimates: The zonal railways have now been delegated full powers with respect to works contracts, and powers with respect to sanctioning of estimates have also been enhanced. This has resulted in cutting down time for estimate sanctions and tenders.
3. Institutional financing by tying up loan with M/s Life Insurance Corporation of India Limited for assured funding of viable projects has increased Railway's capacity for committed fund provision for essential projects.
4. Initiative for formation of Joint Venture Company with State Governments which makes the States a partner in growth of railway infrastructure in the States.

(b) Details of two railway projects (i) Samastipur-Darbhanga Doubling and (ii) Sakri-Saraigarh alongwith status thereof are as under:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Projects	Sanctioned cost	Status
1.	Samastipur-Darbhanga Doubling	491	Requisite approval has been obtained and detailed estimate amounting to ₹491 crore sanctioned on 18.11.2015. Execution of work has been taken up.
2.	Sakri-Saraigarh Project	620	Construction work of Kosi bridge has been completed. However, Railway line from Sakri to Saraigarh through Kosi bridge can be commissioned only after completion of Sakri - Nirmali and Saharsa - Forbesganj Gauge Conversion project which has been taken up for execution.

Completion of a project depends upon several factors including availability of funds, complete handing over of encumbrance free land by the State Government, forestry clearances, shifting of utilities, Road over/under bridges, canal and electrical crossings etc. Since most of these factors are beyond the control of Ministry of Railways, no time-frame has been fixed for completion of the projects.

#### **Computerized railway reservation counter at Bidhan Nagar and Durgapur**

3505. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a computerized railway reservation counter was decided to be opened at Bidhan Nagar and Durgapur;

(b) if so, the present status of the project and the expected date of opening of the same; and

(c) if not, whether Government will consider opening of a reservation centre there, considering the concentration of several educational institutes and super-speciality hospital in the area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) to (c) Computerized railway reservation counters are already available at Bidhan Nagar and Durgapur.