GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

**RAJYA SABHA**

**STARRED QUESTION NO. 71**

**ANSWERED ON 07.02.2020**

**GAUGE CONVERSION AT NIRMALI-SARAYAGARH RAIL LINE**

**†\*71. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

 (a) whether it is a fact that the foundation stone for the gauge conversion of Sakri, Jhanjharpur, Laukaha and Nirmali-Sarayagarh rail line was laid in the year 2004;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the year 2012 was fixed as a time limit to complete these projects;

(c) whether it is also a fact that no train has been running on this track for about five years and crores of people have been affected by this; and

(d) if so, by when the work of gauge conversion of this railway line would be completed?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

(SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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**STATEMENT** REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 71 BY SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR ANSWERED IN RAJYA SABHA ON 07.02.2020 REGARDING GAUGE CONVERSION AT NIRMALI-SARAYAGARH RAIL LINE.

1. to (d): No, Sir. As per the records available with Ministry of Railways, foundation stone was laid on 06.06.2003 only for Kosi Bridge project, which includes construction of new line from Nirmali to Sarayagarh and not for Gauge Conversion work of Sakri-Jhanjharpur-Laukaha Bazar.

The project execution is dependent on various factors like land acquisition by State Government, forestry clearances by Forest Officials and availability of fund to the project from year to year.

The period-wise status of fund made available to the Gauge Conversion project is as below:-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Amount  |
| 2004-14 | ₹ 285 Cr. |
| 2014-20 (upto Jan, 2020) | ₹ 563 Cr. |

Thus the funds made available to the Gauge Conversion project upto 2014 were not adequate, which, adversely affected the progress of the project. However, enhanced funding and push was given to the project from 2014-15 onwards.

Due to enhanced funding and push given to project, the Gauge Conversion work of 47 Km section have been completed and commissioned as per the detail given below:-

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S. N. | Name of the Section | Length (Km) | Train Service Started  |
| 1 | Sakri-Mandan Mishra Halt of Sakri-Nirmali section  | 11 km | May, 2019 |
| 2 | Mandan Mishra halt – Jhanjharpur of Sakri-Nirmali section | 9 Km | Dec, 2019 |
| 3 | Saharsa- Garhbaruari of Saharsa-Forbesganj section  | 16 km | March, 2019 |
| 4 | Garhbaruari – Supaul of Saharsa-Forbesganj section | 11 Km | Dec, 2019 |

The work of construction of Kosi Bridge including laying of new line from Nirmali to Sarayagarh has been taken up. The construction of main Kosi Bridge has been completed and track linking on Bridge and its approaches has been taken up.

For gauge conversion work various stretches of the project have been taken over from time to time as per the requirement of the project from Jan, 2012 to Dec, 2016 in Saharsa-Forbesganj section and from April, 2016 to May, 2017 in Nirmali-Sakri-Laukaha Bazar section. After completion of gauge conversion work several sections have been opened for train operation from March, 2019 to Dec, 2019.

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The firm timeline for completion for the project cant not be given at this stage, as, completion of the project depends on various factor like geological and topographical conditions of area, number of working months in a year due to climatic conditions, encountering unforeseen conditions like, flooding, excessive rains, strikes of labour, situation and conditions of working agencies/contractors etc. All these factors affect the completion time and cost of the project, which is finally worked out at the completion stage. As per Railway records, these two projects were never targeted for completion by 2012.

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