

Work for ₹800-cr Guj gauge conversion project to start in Mar

FE BUREAU

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THE PHYSICAL WORK for ₹800-crore gauge conversion project, which will connect Mandal Becharaji Special Investment Region (MBSIR), including that of Maruti Suzuki India (MSIL)'s car manufacturing facility, with main railway lines, is set to begin in March.

The tendering process for phase-1 was recently completed and the work has been awarded for the first project of Gujarat Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation (G-RIDE), said Santosh Kumar, director (project & planning) of G-RIDE, a joint venture company set up by the Gujarat government and the Ministry of Railways to improve connectivity in the state. The state government is having

51% and the railways 49% stake in the JV. work, a special purpose vehicle,

"We are aiming to complete phase-1 of the project by the end of 2021. Of the total 65 km, under the phase-1, a 2.5-km stretch between Katosan and Becharji will be converted from existing meter gauge to broad gauge. Besides, MSIL's manufacturing facility will also be linked by laying a 2.5-km-long new railway tracks. The land acquisition process for the same is going on. Total cost of phase-1 is around ₹375 crore including electrification," said Kumar.

In order to speed up the

Tendering process for phase-1 was recently completed and work has been awarded for the first project of Gujarat Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation

Bahucharaji Rail Corporation (BRCL), has been formed, in which G-RIDE is having 45% equity, Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) 29% and MSIL 26% equity, he said.

BRCL would implement work of 65 km gauge conversion project connecting

Katosan, Becharaji, Chanasma and Ranauj. However, the

remaining work (phase-II) of the project costing around ₹425 crore will be initiated only after the completion of phase-1. The SPV has been given the 2.5-km stretch on a long-term basis, and in order to connect MSIL's plant, new rail tracks will be laid on around 2.5 km, Kumar said.

The concession period of the project is 30 years once fully commissioned, said Kumar.

According to him, the project would give boost to existing and upcoming industrial units in the region where a Japanese business park is also being set up.



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