

PPP model for West Bengal Highway Development Corporation

Suman Chakraborti, TNN | Feb 13, 2013, 06.03PM IST

KOLKATA: A proposal has been put up to the state cabinet for the West Bengal Highway Development Corporation Limited to have its own public-private-partnership (PPP) policy in place so that it can implement all future road and highway projects on the PPP model.

Corporation managing director Monoj Kumar Agarwal recently held a pre-bid meeting with officials of RITES to discuss the project to strengthen and widen a 36 kilometer stretch of the state highway from Kalyani to Dankuni via Baidyabati.

The project will reduce increasing traffic congestion on NH-34. The final bids are scheduled to take place on February 18.

Agarwal said that representatives of some bidders had also come. In the first phase, strengthening work will be carried out on the 21 kilometer highway stretch from Mogra to Baidyabati. In the next phase, the 15 kilometer stretch from Baidyabati to Dankuni will be widened into a four-lane highway corridor. The project will be implemented on the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) model. The corporation already has Rs 700 crore for starting the project. Work is expected to start from March.

Once the highway stretches get strengthened and widened, not only will there be improved connectivity within Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA), it will reduce traffic congestion on the Barasat-Madhyagram stretch of Jessore Road by 30%. Presently, about 24,000 passenger cars ply on the Dankuni-Mogra Road till Baidyabati. With strengthening and widening of the highways, a large number of vehicles coming to the city from Kalyani will be able to avoid the chaotic stretch at Barasat, officials said. After widening the highway stretches, the authorities will plan to install toll plazas in a few spots to collect toll tax.

Earlier, RITES carried out a feasibility study on the said state highway stretches. The land is available for widening the highway stretches. The highway stretches will be two-way 10 lane corridors with one lane on each side for pave ways.

Also, once the PPP policy for the corporation is passed by the cabinet, the corporation will be able to execute all its future road and highway projects on the PPP mode. "The policy is expected to be formulated within the next three months," Agarwal said.

The Mamata Banerjee government had earlier constituted the West Bengal Highway Development Corporation to oversee development of state highways and ensure better connectivity with the national highways.