

# State plans six-lane bridge over Hooghly

## 'Widest' River Bridge In India To Connect Two Districts, Decongest Parts of NH-34

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**Kolkata:** A six-lane bridge over river Hooghly? The proposal sounds exciting because none of the existing bridges—Howrah Bridge, Nivedita Setu or Vidyasagar Setu—are that wide.

The Mamata Banerjee government has planned a cable-stayed bridge using advanced technology that is touted to be the widest river bridge in the country and an architectural wonder that will connect two districts—Nadia and Hooghly—from Kalyani to Dankuni. It will also cut the commuting time to Kolkata by decongesting large parts of NH-34, BT Road and Dum Dum Road.

"It is touted to be an architectural marvel. COWI, a reputable consulting agency rec-

ognized for designing major bridges across the world, has been selected by RITES to prepare a detailed project report (DPR) for the West Bengal Highway Development Corporation (WBHDC). The new bridge is likely to be set up parallel to the existing Vidyasagar Setu or the Second Hooghly Bridge with a gap of about 20 metres," said Manoj Agarwal, the managing director of WBHDC, which will be the nodal agency for the project. It will entail a cost of around Rs 800 crore.

The plan is to develop the one-kilometre bridge over the river to connect Nadia and Hooghly. There will also be a two-kilometre elevated corridor on NH-34. Vehicles moving on NH-34 will be able to directly take NH-2 or NH-6 using this bridge. Taking into account the approach roads,

### EASING TRAFFIC WOES



> Six-lane cable-stayed bridge to be developed parallel to Vidyasagar Setu

> It will connect two districts—Nadia and Hooghly—from

Kalyani to Dankuni

> Project cost to be around ₹800 crore

> COWI and RITES to prepare detailed project report jointly

> The one-kilometre bridge will also de-congest parts of NH-34, BT Road and Dum Dum Road

WHAT'S A CABLE-STAYED BRIDGE?

A cable-stayed bridge has one or more towers (or pylons), from which cables support the bridge deck

the entire stretch will be around 25-kilometre long.

COWI was involved in several bridge projects across the world, including world-class suspension bridges

mark, Sweden, China and Hong Kong.

Officials said that it would take some more months for the DPR to be prepared and work order to be placed. "We intend to give work order by the end of this year," an official said. Once started, the entire project will take about three years to be fully completed.

Officials said that at present, traffic congestion is reported on the NH-34 stretch—from airport towards Madhyamgram and Barasat. Heavy vehicles like trucks, that has to move from Dankuni to Kolkata and vis-a-vis crossing the river, now take a longer route, coming all the way from Dankuni, crossing Vidyasagar Setu and then taking NH-34 moving over Barasat, Madhyamgram and airport. It takes almost

two-and-a-half hours to move on this stretch as it remains congested throughout the day.

WBHDC is already working on a four-laning project, connecting Dankuni, Chandannagar and Mogra to Borogajulia and Kalyani without using the Vidyasagar Setu. Vehicles will get a much shorter route by taking this new four-lane road and then taking the new bridge avoiding Vidyasagar Setu. This will help decongest parts of NH-34 and Jessore Road.

As for operation and maintenance, the authorities are planning to collect toll to meet the project cost. Already, WBHDC has engaged a reputed consultancy firm to prepare a toll policy to collect charges from different state highways and the matter will be placed before the state cabinet soon for approval.