

Hurdles Before Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project

What is the issue?

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- Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project work on the ground started in December 2017.

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- The project has faced protests over land acquisition from farmers backed by local political groups in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

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What is the status of Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project?

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- The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project is racing against time to meet the August 2022 deadline (advanced from 2023) for starting operations.

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- The total land for the bullet train project is over 1,400 hectares, with 353 hectares in Maharashtra and the rest in Gujarat.

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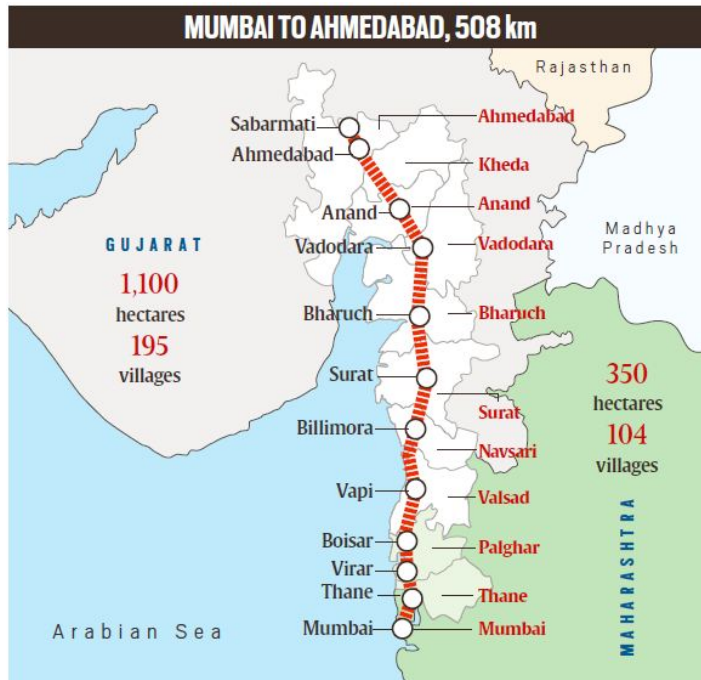
- This is divided into 7,000 plots, in 195 villages in Gujarat and in 104 villages in Maharashtra.

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- The project covers three districts in Maharashtra and eight in Gujarat, besides a small area in Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

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What are the mechanisms involved in the bullet train project?

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- **Land Survey** - Land acquisition starts with LIDAR, a laser-based aerial survey.
- It is followed by a physical survey to verify and update LIDAR results then a joint measurement survey by a team representing all stakeholders.
- This survey is followed by installing a small pillar for physical identification for acquisition.
- **Issuance of Notice** - For the bullet train after the LIDAR and physical survey, Engineers would visit the sites and issue notices to land-owners.
- **Compensation**- After all the procedures details of the land owners are processed for the compensation mechanism.
- Handing out of compensation will take around three months following all due processes.

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What are the hurdles before the project?

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- Compensation laws Since the project involves two different states there are different compensation laws.

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1. **Maharashtra** - The company is paying four times the circle rate of the land, plus a 25% bonus, as well as a one-time payment of Rs 5 lakh.
2. **Gujarat** - The compensation under state laws works out to over four times the prevailing price.

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- The Gujarat government plans to offer either 4.75 times the existing jantri prices (the state yardstick) or the average rate within a 1.5-km radius, whichever is higher.
- The company is offering a 25% bonus, and the same livelihood-loss-related sops as offered in Maharashtra.
- **Land acquisition issues** - The high-speed alignment needs to be as free of curves as possible. Any speed upwards of 300 kph requires a straight alignment.
- Being a linear project, the elevated corridor is splitting land at several places.
- Some farmers are demanding alternative land because they believe the division will leave their farmland useless.

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- **Protests from various organisations** - The notice issued by engineers for land acquisition did not mention that the project requires only a linear tract.
- Because of this omission, local politicians convinced farmers that they would lose their entire land.
- Due to this there are series of protests from land-owners and activists of

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various organisations, leaders of opposition have joined protesters.

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How the company plans to addressing all these concerns?

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- National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) plans to provide each land loser an entitlement card which will have his bank account number and all the items against which he is going to get compensation.

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- This will be monitored by the company, till the time he gets his last compensation.

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- For land being split, the company is paying a special compensation based on the extent 50-50 split has a different compensation from, say, 75-25.

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- The land that remains on either side continues to belong to the owner, who can use it as he or she wishes.

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- Only for digging and building a high rise will he need to inform the NHSRCL, company officials said.

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- The company says it has taken note of various demands for amenities such as healthcare, education, drinking, sanitation, and livelihood.

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- The NHSRCL has appointed a three-member committee empowered to take spot decisions for agreeing to any demand by villagers that can be carried out with up to a certain amount of money.

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Source: Indian Express

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