'Bullet train project work will be visible by last quarter of 2019-20'

Times News Network

Ahmedabad: Structural work for India's first high-speed rail project (HSR Project) connecting Ahmedabad and Mumbai, is expected to begin by the last quarter of financial year 2019-20, say senior Union government officials. According to Ashok Kumar Chawla, advisor (Japan), ministry of external affairs, government of India, the process for awarding contracts for the construction work of the bullet train project has been initiated already.

"The project work is going according to schedule. The process of awarding contracts has started. When the contract is awarded, then a timeline will be defined," Chawla said on Friday. He was speaking to reporters ahead of the inaugural ceremony of India Japan Business & Tourism Conclave. The conclave was organized at Ahmedabad Management Association by the Indo-Japan Friendship Association (IJFA) - Gujarat.

"Something should be visible by the end of the fourth quarter of 2019-20," Chawla added.

Chawla said that the awarding of contracts has been delayed by a month or two. "Our target for this was October-November this year, but it could stretch beyond December," he said.

The contracts have been awarded for various structural, civil and electric works related to the project. "The actual groundwork began with the development of a training institute for HSR Project in Vadodara," Chawla said.

Speaking on land acquisition for the project, Chawla said that it is on track. "Part of the land is railway land and other is government-owned land. As far as the railways-owned land is concerned, it's only a question of transfer. The government land will also be allotted soon," Chawla said.

Former Indian Ambassador to Japan, Sujan Chinoy, while delivering the keynote address at the inaugural ceremony, said, "The HSR project will bring in various spin-off benefits to India. With vendor and supply chains and manufacturers coming in, there will be tremendous improvement in the safety standards in railways here."

QUICK GLANCE

Project cost: ₹1.8 lakh cr

Expenditure up to June 2019: 3,226.8 cr

Length: 508.09 km

TO BE COMPLETED IN 2023