

Railways unveils redevelopment plan for Habibganj station

The five-platform station, to be redeveloped from the existing station, will have six lifts, 11 escalators, three travellers and three subways, one of which will be dedicated for parcels



The modernization will help improve the railways' finances, since it will open up commercial space, said railway minister Suresh Prabhu. Photo: Pradeep Gaur/Mint

New Delhi: The Indian Railways on Thursday revealed the first look of a world-class station expected to come up at Habibganj in Bhopal in three years.

The five-platform station, to be redeveloped from the existing station, will have six lifts, 11 escalators, three travellers and three subways, one of which will be dedicated for parcels. It will have separate arrival and departure areas and dedicated parking facilities for pick-ups and drop-offs. In case of fire, the station can be evacuated in four minutes and passengers can reach designated safety points in six minutes. It will also be disabled-friendly. The station will generate solar energy on its premises.

Indian Railway Station Development Corp. Ltd (IRSDC), which designed and allotted the project, on Thursday signed an agreement with a consortium of Bansal Construction Works Pvt. Ltd and Prakash Asphaltting and Toll Highways (India) Ltd to redevelop the existing station. The consortium formed Bansal Pathways Habibganj Pvt. Ltd, which will rebuild the station in three years. [Mint reported](#) the allotment on 13 June.

Railway minister Suresh Prabhu called the ceremony a "historic moment", crediting railway officers for their work. The modernization, he said, will help improve the railways' finances, since it will open up commercial space. The two main sources of the Indian Railways' revenue—passenger fares and freight—are not sufficient, he said.

Habibganj is the first railway station to be redeveloped as a public-private partnership, with the development of the station and the commercial areas costing around `100 crore and `350 crore, respectively. IRSDC consulted leading legal, financial and architectural consultants such as Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas and Co., EY and a consortium of GMP International [and Intercontinental Consultants and Technocrats Ltd](#) for the project.

Other stations in line for redevelopments by IRSDC are Surat and Gandhinagar in Gujarat and Bijwasan and Anand Vihar in Delhi in collaboration with respective state governments.

The Indian Railways is adopting three models for station redevelopment. In the first, the project is prepared, clearances are taken and then a developer is asked to develop according to the plan set by IRSDC. In the second, the railways collaborates with foreign governments to develop stations. The framework of the third model, called the Swiss Challenge method, is still to be finalized.