

China has pushed far ahead in railways, it's time for India to accelerate



China has just cleared a game-changing 523 km new railway line through Central Asia, linking China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, that could eventually be extended to the Middle East, South Asia, and Europe. China has the world's second-largest rail network, at 155,000 km. This includes 42,000 km of high-speed railway, which is the largest in the world. The network supports the economic development of its hinterland that is much farther away from the economic powerhouse on the east coast.

China has also used its railways for connectivity with its neighbouring countries as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). BRI helps China to take its surplus industrial capacity to relatively poor neighbours and also spread its geopolitical influence.

Railways also give huge logistic support to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to move troops, military hardware, and oil and lubricants to border areas, especially in Tibet and Xinjiang. Railways move construction materials for border infrastructure building.

The proposed new railway line to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan will help in deepening Chinese ties across Central Asia and beyond. It will connect Kashgar on China's northwestern frontier with several cities of its two neighbours. The \$4.7 billion

first phase would be completed by 2030.

Uzbekistan's route can stretch to Pakistan via Afghanistan. Connecting lines may also be built to extend the railway to Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey. It will offer China a faster—and potentially geopolitically useful—alternative to Trans-Eurasia Logistics, a rail route that connects China to Europe via Russia. The rail line would have the advantage of running "straight" to Europe and "avoiding conflicts", and will reportedly be capable of transporting goods from China to Europe seven or eight days faster than current land routes. The project will employ a build-operate-transfer model and have a total investment of \$8 billion. China owns 51 per cent of the joint venture managing the project, with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan each taking a 24.5 per cent share. The project will also stem demographic decline in China's western border regions. It will boost China's energy ties with Turkmenistan.

China eyes closer ties with Pakistan and Central Asia to offset US sanctions. Khunjerab port, the sole border crossing connecting China and Pakistan in Xinjiang that used to be closed in winters due to adverse weather, started full-year operations recently. Meanwhile, China is pushing forward the development of the China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC), a flagship BRI project.

China is a member of the International Union of Railways (UIC). Chinese railways have adopted and begun to implement the GSM-R wireless rail communications standard. China is also a signatory to the Trans-Asian Railway Network Agreement, an initiative of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to promote the integration of railway networks across Europe and Asia.

Railway connectivity is a major focus of the BRI. As of 2024, multiple BRI railway projects were branded as the China Railways Express, which linked approximately 60 Chinese cities to nearly 50 European cities. The bulk of bilateral freight with Russia goes by rail. Cross-border passenger train services go to destinations in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia. Also to Hong Kong, Laos, and North Korea. In many cases there are gauge problems involving transshipment at the border. With Vietnam, there is no break of gauge. China has been promoting the extension of its railway network to neighbouring countries, including the Russian Far East, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. A high-speed rail link between Hunchun in China and Vladivostok in Russia has been proposed.

China and Nepal are building a railway link connecting Kathmandu to China's railway network, taking it to Shigatse, Tibet. The construction is in progress.

Since 2007, there has been a proposal to build the Khunjerab Railway, which would cross the Karakoram Mountains and connect Kashgar with Havelian in the Abbottabad District of northern Pakistan. It could then go to the Gwadar Port on the Arabian Sea.

There has been a proposal to connect Kolkata with Kunming in China via Myanmar through a high-speed rail link. The rail link could use the under-construction railway from Manipur, India, to Myanmar and the Dali-Ruili railway under construction in western Yunnan Province.

Some of the world's longest train journeys by distance travel through China. The Beijing-Moscow train via Harbin covers 8,984 km in 144 hours. Russia's Moscow-Vladivostok train that covers 9,259 km in 178 hours is longer. Within China, the longest passenger train services are the Guangzhou-Lhasa (4,980 km, 54 hours), Shanghai-Yining (4,742 km, 55 hours), Guangzhou-Urumqi (4,684 km, 49 hours), and Harbin-Haikou (4,458 km, 65 hours). The Beijing West-Kunming South train (2,760 km, approx. 11 hours) is the longest high-speed rail service in the world.

The world's longest freight rail service runs from Yiwu, Zhejiang, in eastern China, to Madrid, Spain, a journey of 13,000 km (8,100 mi) over three weeks. The Qinghai-Tibet Railway is the world's highest train line. The so-called "Sky Train" climbs to an elevation of 5,702 m at the "roof of the world". It stretches across the Himalayan table-top plateau for almost 2,000 km, from Xining in central China to Lhasa, in Tibet. Over 960 km of track is more than 4,000 m (13,123 ft) above sea level.

Construction began on the 815 km section between Xining and Golmud in 1958 and was completed in 1984. The remaining 1,142 km from Golmud to Lhasa construction started in 2001, and the line opened in 2006. Lhasa is 3,700 km from Beijing and just 284 km from the nearest foreign capital, Thimphu, Bhutan. One-seventh of the line's roughly 2,000 km route is built on bridges.

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Construction was an engineering marvel, considering it has the largest permafrost after the Arctic, and it freezes in the winter but becomes boggy swampland in the summer. The Tanggula Pass, at 5,702 m (16,640 ft), marks the highest rail point in the world. Tanggula railway station, at 5,068 m (16,627 ft), is the world's highest railway station. The 1,338 m (4,390 ft) long Fenghuoshan tunnel is the highest rail tunnel in the world at 4,905 m (16,093 ft) above sea level. The temperature often drops to -20 degrees Celsius at night.

Six rail lines connect to the Qinghai-Tibet railway, including from Lhasa to Nyingchi and from Lhasa to Shigatse, both in Tibet. Three lines will originate from Golmud in Qinghai province and run to Chengdu in Sichuan province, Dunhuang in Gansu province, and Korla of Xinjiang. The sixth will link Xining, the capital of Qinghai, with Zhangye in Gansu. A further extension is planned to link Shigatse with Yadong near the China-India border. The Dunhuang-Golmud railway establishes a direct connection between Xinjiang and Tibet.

China and Nepal signed an agreement for the construction of Shigatse-Kathmandu. Construction of the railway from Shigatse to Gyirong, which is on the way towards Kathmandu, is expected to start in 2025. Bombardier Transportation built 361 high-altitude passenger carriages with special enriched-oxygen and UV-protection systems. Fifty-three are luxury sleeper carriages for tourist services.

The PLA uses the railway system to transport personnel,

supplies, and conventional and strategic arms. The military also used to play a more prominent role in railway development and management. The PLA's Railway Construction Corps, in the 1950s-1970s, built many of the railroads in the Southwest. It became a civilian company in 1984 and is now China Railway Construction Corporation. For a time during the Cultural Revolution, the entire Railway Ministry was placed under the PLA's command. The rail links to Xinjiang and Tibet are meant to boost hinterland connectivity, support military infrastructure, and improve supply chains and energy security. The railway networks are part of the 'major national strategies'. Connectivity to the western regions also serves as a gateway for Central Asian and European trade. Those in Tibet are crucial for securing the border with India. China's high-speed rail (HSR) network covers over 45,000 kilometres, linking all of its major megacity clusters. It is the world's largest and most actively used, offering affordable fares and reduced travel times. China has two-thirds of the world's total HSR infrastructure, achieved in just over a decade.

HSR trains require specialised technology and infrastructure designed

specifically to support high-speed operations. The trains travel at speeds between 200 and 350 km/hr and require four to six locomotives instead of the normal one. HSR connects 33 out of the 34 provinces. Though facing financial challenges, the HSR system continues to expand and improve, leveraging advanced technology. The HSR idea was first driven by then Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping. Train speeds were increased in six phases, beginning with track upgrades. China leveraged technology transfer agreements with foreign companies like Kawasaki of Japan and Siemens of Germany to begin its HSR program. Siemens also supported building initial rail lines and a large number of trains. Thereafter, localised production facilitated the rapid

expansion of China's HSR manufacturing sector. The first HSR line, the Beijing-Tianjin route, became operational in August 2008. The introduction of the Fuxing series of trains in 2017 took the speed to 350 km/h. The cost of HSR track is estimated to be around \$16 million (Rs 135 crore) per kilometre, requiring significant investment to build more lines. Interestingly, it costs Rs 20 crore per km to lay a six-lane expressway in India, not including the cost of acquiring land, etc.

China has much lower HSR construction costs compared to the West. Standardisation of design, lower labour costs, and the scale of the network reduced the overall costs. Yet HSR is facing significant financial burdens in the form of limited profitabi

WESTERN RAILWAY-AHMEDABAD
NOTICE INVITING BID
Bid/Package No. EL/C/ADIT/RD/EPC/36R/2024-25 Dated: 09-01-2025
RFP for "Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 66/27 KV Traction Substation at Mothala in connection with Electrification of Bhuj-Naliya Section in Ahmedabad Division of Western Railway" on EPC mode. The President of India represented by the Ministry of Railways, Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, Asava, Ahmedabad (the "Authority"), having its principal office at CHURCHGATE, MUMBAI, PIN-400020, India" is engaged in the development of railways and related infrastructure, and as part of this endeavour, the Authority has decided to undertake the "Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 66/27 KV Traction Sub-station at Mothala in connection with Electrification of Bhuj-Naliya Section in Ahmedabad Division of Western Railway" (the "Project") through Engineering, Procurement and Construction (the "EPC") Contract, and has decided to carry out the Bidding process for selection of a Bidder to whom the Project may be awarded. A brief description of the project may be seen in the Information Memorandum of the Project at the Authority's website. Brief particulars of the Project are as follows:

Name of the Project	No. of TSS	Estimated Project Cost (In Rs.)
"Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 66/27 KV Traction Sub-station at Mothala in connection with Electrification of Bhuj-Naliya Section in Ahmedabad Division of Western Railway" on EPC mode.	01 No.	₹ 13,55,73,843/- (Rupees Thirteen crore fifty five lakh seventy three thousand eight hundred forty three Only)

The complete Bid document can be viewed / downloaded from official portal of the Railway website <https://ireps.gov.in> from **09-01-2025 to 21-02-2025** (up to 15:00 Hrs. IST). Bidder must submit its Financial Bid and Technical Bid at <https://ireps.gov.in> on or before **21-02-2025** up to 15:00 hours IST. Bids received online shall be opened on **03-03-2025** at 15:00 hours IST. Bid through any other mode shall not be entertained. However, Power of Attorney and Joint Bidding Agreement etc. shall be submitted physically by the Bidder on or before **27-02-2025** at 15:00 hours IST. Please note that the [Ministry/Authority/ Executing Agency] reserves the right to accept or reject all or any of the Bids without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Address : Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer/Construction, 3rd Floor, Wing-C, Nirman Bhavan, Near DRM Office, Opp. GCS Hospital, Near Chamunda Bridge, Amdapura, Ahmedabad-382345 Gujarat, India
Western Railway (Ministry of Railway)
Mob. 9724093350
e-mail: dyceecwrd1@gmail.com CPM-110

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WESTERN RAILWAY - AHMEDABAD DIVISION
REHABILITATION OF BRIDGE & PROVISION OF SIDE PATHWAY
E-Tender Notice No. 19 of 2024-25 Dated: 10-01-2025. Sr.No.1: E-Tender No. DYCE-BR-ADI-16-2024-25, Name of Work: "Rehabilitation of Br. No. 27 (Open Web Girder) 11X30.5 M in Rajkot-Versal section and Providing side pathway under the Jurisdiction of Senior Section Engineer (Bridge) Junagadh of Bhavnagar Division And Senior Section Engineer (Bridge) Rajkot of Rajkot Division (Balance Work)".
Approximate NIT Cost: ₹ 5,90,89,179.15
Bid Security Cost/ EMD: ₹ 4,45,500.00, Closing date and time of e-tender: 04-02-2025 at 15:00 Hrs.
Office Address: Dy. Chief Engineer (Bridge), Ahmedabad, Divisional Railway Manager Office Premises, Opp. Gujarat Cancer Society Hospital, Asava, Naroda Road, Amdapura, Ahmedabad, Gujarat-380 016.
Website for participating e-tender: www.ireps.gov.in ADI-292
Follow us on: twitter.com/WesternRly

Beyond Facebook

Social media has transformed activism, providing marginalised communities with platforms to amplify their voices. For Indian Muslims facing escalating discrimination, platforms like WhatsApp, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Facebook have become essential tools for raising awareness about issues such as communal violence, police brutality, and State-sponsored demolitions. However, the stark gap between online visibility and real-world change remains glaring.

Influencers frequently share posts about anti-Muslim violence, eliciting emotional responses from followers. Yet, this engagement seldom translates into organised action or concrete policy reform. The cycle of online awareness often fails to dismantle the deeply entrenched systems of marginalisation that perpetuate suffering. This phenomenon highlights a broader issue regarding social media activism. While platforms reward emotionally-charged content with likes and shares, they do little to foster meaningful outcomes. Prominent Indian Muslim influencers, despite extensive followings, often find that their posts generate significant attention without leading to coordinated efforts or grassroots mobilisation.

The barrage of distressing content can, in fact, lead to 'activism

fatigue' wherein the audience becomes so inundated with information that it struggles to engage meaningfully. Consequently, online engagement risks becoming a hollow gesture, creating a cycle of solidarity that lacks substance. Social media has transformed activism, providing marginalised communities with platforms to amplify their voices. For Indian Muslims facing escalating discrimination, platforms like WhatsApp, X (formerly known as Twitter), and Facebook have become essential tools for raising awareness about issues such as communal violence, police brutality, and State-sponsored demolitions. However, the stark gap between online visibility and real-world change remains glaring.

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This cycle underscores the troubling commodification of the struggles of the marginalised in the digital sphere. Social media thrives on user engagement and emotionally-charged posts drive interaction. Capitalism further exploits this dynamic, transforming genuine sentiments into profit by selling engagement metrics to advertisers. The challenges faced by, say, Indian Muslims become mere content for consumption rather than genuine catalysts for change.

This commodification affects how activism is executed, with influencers often prioritising visibility over substance, opting for sensational content rather than effective solutions. Moreover, the focus on outrage-driven engagement can dehumanise those posts they aim to support. Each incident of violence thus becomes just another opportunity for collective shock. This reduces the lived experiences of individuals to mere trending topics that quickly fade from public consciousness.

The consequences of

performative social media activism extend beyond political efficacy; they also affect the mental well-being of citizens who are discriminated against. Constant exposure to graphic images and narratives of violence against a minority community can lead to heightened anxiety, despair, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness. As young Muslims navigate a stream of posts chronicling their marginalisation, they may find their agency eroded, seeking validation through likes rather than engaging in authentic activism. This creates a perilous cycle: while young Muslims feel empowered to voice their struggles online, they often remain trapped in an echo chamber, perpetually confronted with their vulnerabilities without being offered pathways toward meaningful action. To break free from this cycle, Indian Muslims must re-evaluate their engagement with social media. While Facebook, X and WhatsApp can raise awareness, they cannot serve as the sole avenues for activism. Offline initiatives, such as grassroots organising, educational campaigns, voter registration drives, and protests, are crucial for effecting real, lasting change. Building coalitions with other marginalised communities can amplify these efforts, creating a broader, intersectional fight for justice. A long-term perspective on activism is essential. Underprivileged communities must invest in institutions, networks, and movements and take activism beyond the confines of social media to facilitate meaningful transition.

SHRIRAM HOUSING FINANCE

SHRIRAM HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Head Office: Level -3, Wockhardt Towers, East Wing C-2 Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai 400 051; Tel: 022 4241 0400, 022 4060 3100 ; Website: <http://www.shriramhousing.in>
Reg.Off.: Srinivasa Tower, 1st Floor, Door No.5, Old No.11, 2nd Lane, Cenatoph Road, Alwarpet, Teynampet, Chennai-600018
Branch Off : 202-2071 | 2nd Floor | 323 Corporate Park | C. G. Road | Ahmedabad - 380 009

APPENDIX-IV-A [SEE PROVISION TO RULE 8(6)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/ charged to The Shriram Housing Finance Limited, The Possession of which have been taken by the Authorized Officer of The Shriram Housing Finance Limited, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis in e-auction for recovery of the balance due to The Shriram Housing Finance Limited from the Borrowers And Guarantors, as mentioned in the table. Details of Borrowers and Guarantors, amount due, Short Description of the immovable property and encumbrances known thereon, possession type, reserve price and earnest money deposit, Date and Time of Auction are also given as:

Name of Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/Mortgagors	Date & Amount of 13(2) Demand Notice	Reserve Price (Rs.) & Bid Increment	Earnest Money Deposit Details (EMD) Details	Date & Time of Auction	Contact Person and Inspection date
(1)MR.Jayatibhai Panabhai Suthar (Borrower) (2)Kesharben Jayantibhai Suthar (Co-borrower) Address :- 30/36, Hari Om Exotica, Deodar. Banaskantha-385330 Also Having Address at: House No.5, Hari Om Exotica, Near Pragatinagar, Deodar-Bhabha Road, Deodar. Banaskantha-385330 (3) Bharatbhai Panabhai Suthar (Co-Borrower) Address :-Ayodhyannagar, Deodar. Banaskantha-385330 Also at: House No.5, Hari Om Exotica, Near Pragatinagar, Deodar-Bhabha Road, Deodar. Banaskantha-385330	Notice dated.11/03/2024, Rs.19,60,043/- (Nineteen Lakhs Sixty Thousand Forty Three Only) as on 07-Mar-24 under reference of Loan Account No. SLPHPALR0000401 Rs.22,83,488/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Eighty Three Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Eight Only) as per dated.09/01/2025 foreclosure letter under reference of Loan Account No. SLPHPALR0000401	Rs.8,50,000/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Fifty Thousand Only) Bid Increment Rs. 10,000/- and in such multiples Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (Rs.) Rs.85,000/- (Rupees Eighty Five Thousand Only) Last date for submission of EMD : 29nd January 2025, Time 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m.	EMD amount to be deposited by way of RTGS/ NEFT to the account details mentioned herein below: BANK NAME- AXIS BANK LIMITED BRANCH- BANDRA KURLA COMPLEX, MUMBAI BANK ACCOUNT NO- Current Account No. 911020045677633 I F S C C O D E - UTIB0000230	30th Jan 2025 & Time. 11.00 a.m. to 01.00 p.m.	Ashfaq Patka- 98194 15477 Moh'd Shafiq M.Shaikh-99786 24614 Hiteshkumar Joshi- 98799 40713 Dharmendrasinh Chauhan-76007 62777 Customer Care Number :- 022 - 40081572 Property Inspection Date:18th January, 2025, Time.10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m

Description of Property
All the Pieces and Parcels of immovable property being R.S.No.105/A, palik 1, Plot/House No.5 (Milkat No.30/23), admeasuring 66.4935 sq.mt/(715.47 sq.ft) together with construction standing thereon situated at Mouje : Deodar, Taluka : Deodar, in the District of Banaskantha & Registration Sub District of Deodar within the State of Gujarat. The said property is bounded as under:- Boundaries of the said Property :-East : Common Plot, West : 7.50 Mt. public Road, North : Plot No.4, South : Plot No.6

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, bid form, training & others may also visit website of Shriram Housing Finance Limited at <http://shriramhousing.in/e-auction-Residential> provided in the Shriram Housing Finance Limited website.
STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE FOR SUBSEQUENT SALE UNDER RULE 8(6) AS PER AMENDED SARFAESI ACT, 2002.
The mortgagors/borrowers are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest before auction, failing which secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.
The mortgagors/borrowers are Request to take back all movable items which are inside the property.
NB: Please note that the secured creditor is going to issue the sale notice to all the Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Mortgagors by speed/ registered post. In case the same is not received by any of the parties, then this publication of sale notice may be treated as a substituted mode of service
Place : Deodar-Banaskantha
Date : 13-01-2025
Sd/- Authorised Officer
Shriram Housing Finance Limited