

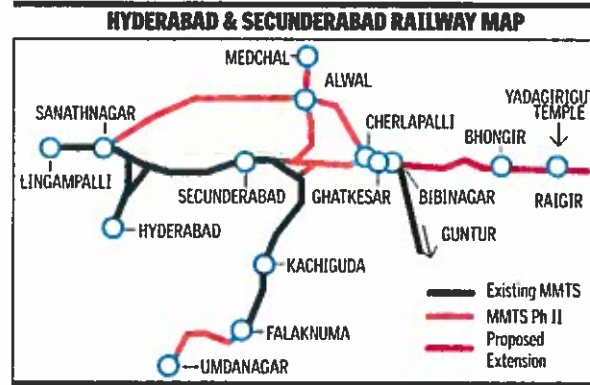
Yadadri-MMTS link comes as a shot in the arm for TS

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HYDERABAD: When Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu telephoned Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu last month seeking inclusion of the proposal to extend the MMTS phase two facility up to Yadadri or the nearest railway station of Raigir, in the current budget few expected it to materialise so soon as the demand came a wee bit late.

But, Mr. Prabhu gave a pleasant surprise by announcing Rs. 330 crore for the project which Mr. Rao had also followed up with a letter. Bhongir MP B. Narasiah Goud and HMR chief engineer Munna Kumar also lobbied with the Railway Board thereafter for the work to be accepted. There was a special significance to the project since the Chief Minister is quite keen to develop the Yadadri hill shrine into a major pilgrim centre and he had earlier directed Hyderabad Metro Rail managing director N.V.S. Reddy and his team to do a preliminary survey. Raigir is three kilometres from Yadadri, which is 60 km from capital.

The HMR team completed the study in two weeks and presented an executable plan to Mr. Rao, who in turn passed it on to Mr. Prabhu. With MMTS phase two on-



going works underway between Secunderabad station to Ghatkesar (21 km), it could be extended to Raigir station of another 32 km by laying a third line with the necessary electrification, signalling and station improvement works at Ghatkesar, Bhongir, Pagidipalli and Bibinagar, explained Mr. Reddy. The Government already conveyed its readiness to borne two third the cost or Rs.220 crore and rest of one third would be Railways portion.

The cost is said to be including new MMTS coaches as well. "Railway Ministry rarely approves such a major project in such a short span of one month," said Mr. Reddy, specifically thanking SCR GM Ravindra Gupta for his help in getting the project sanctioned. Stage is now set for the Rail Vikas Nigam

Limited to take up a detailed estimates of the land required for acquisition which could take anywhere between six months to one year.

Meanwhile, reacting to the budget, SCR General Manager Ravinder Gupta told presspersons that South Central Railway has been sanctioned Rs. 6,412 crore for the fiscal 2016-17, a sum that is 145 per cent more than the current year and includes budgetary grants for ongoing new lines and doubling projects. He said the grant for ongoing projects the coming fiscal was up 102 per cent for new lines and a whopping 540 per cent for doubling works and termed it "a never-before initiative in history."

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