

## [Economy\(https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/\)](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/) 640 infra projects running behind schedule, some up to 26 years

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Delays in land acquisition, eco clearance, tying up of funds key reasons; cost

overrun up 23%

A new railway line of 142 kms between Hejjala and Chamarajanagar in Karnataka has been waiting for around 312 months or 26 years to be laid. This is one of 647 projects facing time overrun as on May 1, according to a report prepared by the Infrastructure and Project Management Division (IPMD) under the Statistics Ministry. [Open in App\(https://thehindubusinessline.page.link/b6X61YYTfpg7dZ8z7\)](https://thehindubusinessline.page.link/b6X61YYTfpg7dZ8z7)

New line between Hejjala and Chamarajanagar is part of Bengaluru-Satyamangalam railway projects. The project was approved in 1996-97.

However, according to information placed on the website by South Western Railway, the Tamil Nadu government as well as the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) did not given permission to carry out survey in the Satyamangalam forest area.

During the year 2013-14, it was decided that the project shall be taken up between Kengeri-Chamarajanagar where there is no forest land involved. The line was to take-off from Kengeri but during the survey, it was observed that forest land was involved and hence to avoid it, the take-off station was shifted to Hejjala.

However, there are still some issues related to land acquisition which is why the Railway decided to keep this project in abeyance. Meanwhile, in November last year, the Karnataka government wrote to the Railway “to revive the project kept under abeyance by duly revising the estimate”.



## Monitoring system

There is no update since then, but this project is one of the 211 projects of Railway and overall, 1,559 projects being monitored by IPMD. The IPMD is mandated with monitoring of Central Sector Projects costing more than ₹150 crore in 16 sectors. It is done through the mechanism of Online Computerised Monitoring System (OCMS).

The physical performance are measured in terms of milestones and percentage physical progress against the target dates and quantities whereas the financial performance is measured on a yearly basis with respect to the link expenditure on each project.

IPMD brings out the following reports and forwards the same to the Prime Minister's Office, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Ministry of Finance, the Planning Commission and the concerned administrative Ministries.

## Project costs

According to latest report by IPMD, anticipated cost of projects under review has gone up to over ₹26.72-lakh crore in April as against the original cost of over ₹21.73-lakh crore which is around 23 per cent.

Cost overrun with respect to original cost was as low as 11 per cent in March, 2014, up to 29.44 per cent in April, 2022. Similarly, time overrun has changed from 29.44 per cent in March, 2014 to 41.5 per cent in April, 2022.

## Reasons for time overruns

The report has listed various reasons for time overruns as reported by various project implementing agencies. These include delay in land acquisition, delay in obtaining forest/environment clearances, lack of infrastructure support & linkages, delay in tie-up of project financing, law & order problems, State wise lockdown due to Covid-19, beside others.

It also highlighted causes of cost escalation which include under-estimation of original cost, changes in rates of foreign exchange and statutory duties, spiralling land acquisition costs and general price rise/inflation, beside others.

Now, the report has prepared a list of 46 projects for focussed attention. These have cost overrun of 50 per cent & more, and time overrun of 50 months and more. These contribute nearly 39 per cent of the total cost overrun and 20 per cent of the total time overrun.

"These projects are required to be taken up for special monitoring by the respective administrative ministries," the report said.