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Upgrading of 141-km road to cost Rs. 240 cr.

Special Correspondent

Waghdhari-Ripponpalli highway will connect three neighbouring States

Government has agreed to contribute more funds for the project: Patil

The road passes through Gulbarga and is a link to Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh

Gulbarga: The former Deputy Chairman of the Legislative Council B.R. Patil has said that the proposal for the development and upgrading of the interstate highway connecting Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh passing through Gulbarga district from Waghdhari in Maharashtra to Ripponpalli in Andhra Pradesh has reached a decisive stage. Once it gets the Government's nod, arrangements for funds to take up the project would be made. Denying the allegations of the Aland MLA Subash Guttedar that he (Mr. Patil) was creating hurdles for the upgrade of the Waghdhari-Ripponpalli interstate highway, Mr. Patil told presspersons here on Monday that when he was an MLA he had taken up the issue with the then Deputy Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. He had requested him to give approval for the proposal.

Mr. Patil said it was Mr. Siddaramaiah who ordered the Karnataka Road Development Corporation Ltd. to assign the work of conducting a survey and to an agency.

The then Government had asked the corporation to prepare a project report to upgrade the road under the Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) model. A sum of Rs. 60 lakh was paid by the Government to a particular agency to conduct the survey and prepare the project report, claimed Mr. Patil.

Later, according to him, the Government had floated tenders thrice but no contractor had come forward to take up the construction of the road under the BOT. The organisations that evinced interest in the project demanded that the State Government bear the total cost of the project. The Government has now agreed to increase its contribution through Viability Gap Funding (VGP) for the project, thus clearing the last hurdle for the work to be taken up, he added.

Mr. Patil added that three three companies, including Hyderabad-based GVR Company and MRM Company and the Chennai-based Pratisha Company have evinced interest in taking up the work. They have sent proposals to the Government. He added that the technical bid for the upgrade of the Waghdari-Ripponpalli interstate highway was completed and only the financial bid has to be taken up. Mr Patil said that the financial bid would be taken up after the clearance by the high power committee headed by Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa. The upgrade of the 141-km highway is estimated to cost Rs. 240 crore, he added.

Alliance views

In reply to a query, Mr. Patil said that the Congress should not have formed an alliance with the JD (S) for contesting Legislative Council poll from local authorities' constituencies. However, he added that he would campaign with JD (S) leaders and abide by the directions of the party high command in this matter.