



Image of Mumbai Station
Source: Materials provided by JICA

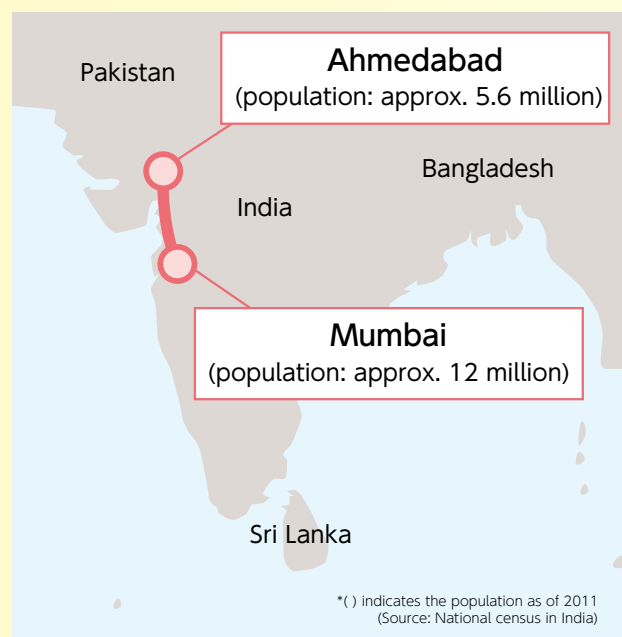
Progress of India High-Speed Railway Project

Amid growing concern about global environmental issues and the growth of emerging economies, railways are attracting more and more interest worldwide as an environmentally friendly means of public transportation. At present, railway projects are being considered in many parts of the world. The global railway market is projected to grow by an average of 2.6% per year in future, increasing to around 22 trillion yen by 2020. In light of this, JR East, in partnership with companies both in Japan and abroad, is seeking to develop global projects that leverage our expertise in operations and maintenance (planning, managing, supporting, and implementing railway operation, facility maintenance, etc.) and other fields. We have identified Asia in particular, which is experiencing remarkable growth, as a priority region and are involved in railway projects in various locations there.

◎Overview of India High-Speed Railway Project

India is a major nation with a population of some 1.3 billion people, and with the country experiencing rapid economic growth, there is an increased need for the development of its inter-urban transportation network. In 2009, the Indian Ministry of Railways formulated the India Railways Vision 2020, which stipulated that the development of a high-speed railway line between Mumbai and Ahmedabad was a top priority. Then, in 2015, based on a joint declaration at a summit meeting between Japan and India, it was confirmed that the high-speed railway line between Mumbai and Ahmedabad would be developed using Japanese high-speed railway technology (the Shinkansen system) and experience.

In March 2016, one of the companies in our group, Japan International Consultants for Transportation Co., Ltd. (JIC), was commissioned to provide consulting services relating to the creation of high-speed railway technical standards for this line. In December 2016, JIC was commissioned to provide consulting services relating to design and bidding for the high-speed railway as part of a joint venture, which it is currently doing.



◎Recent events

We started formulation of technological standards in March 2016 and carried it out based on technologies proven in Japan's Shinkansen system, taking into account various conditions in India, including climate, earthquakes and power sources. Furthermore, in addition to the initial order for design, Japan International Consultants for Transportation Co., Ltd. launched design and bidding support operation services for the training center in July 2017, conducting consultations for an unprecedentedly large-scale project.

With regard to cultivation of human resources, executives of National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd. of India visited Japan in July 2017 to exchange views with executives of JR East concerning operation of railway companies. They also toured the JR East General Education Center to observe track maintenance work, training facilities and such and deepened their understanding of JR East's efforts on human resource development and passing on of technologies.

In addition, Japan International Consultants for Transportation Co., Ltd. received an order for operational management of training for employees of Ministry of Railways of India, and has been supporting mid-career employees of the ministry in acquiring knowledge on policies/systems/technologies of Japanese railways.

JR East will continue to provide technological and physical support in these operations conducted by Japan International Consultants for Transportation Co., Ltd., its group company, capitalizing on experience as a shinkansen operator.



Executives of National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd. and JR East exchanging views



Tour of JR East's education center



Observing track maintenance work



Groundbreaking ceremony of Indian high-speed railway (September 2017)

VOICE



Yoko Kato

India High-Speed Rail Division,
International Affairs
Headquarters

As a rolling stock supervisor, I oversee tasks such as identifying issues with customizing E5-series trains for India and acting as a liaison between JR East and JIC. I try to provide reliable backup for the people carrying out frontline consulting work.

This project represents a new challenge for our company, and we have managed to make progress through trial and error even when we are not sure what lies ahead. Various issues have arisen one after another, but we have gradually overcome the barriers and moved forward by coordinating our efforts with relevant sites in Japan and negotiating with the Indian side. It has been difficult dealing with so many problems, but it has also been fun to work in an enthusiastic environment where those involved leverage their expertise in different fields and work together to resolve issues.

The schedule in India was not decided easily, and even when dates have been decided, it's common for them to change at the last minute, which requires us to adapt on the fly by making changes to carefully made plans or urgently dispatching personnel on site. At first, there were times when I would feel frustrated. However, if you can't change others, then you have no choice but to change your own attitude, so I've learned to handle the situation by being more relaxed about it and accepting that it's normal for things to not always proceed according to schedule.

As the project moves forward, I think there will be even more mountains in our path, but I believe that the Shinkansen will one day begin operation in India and that the country's people will come to see it as a beloved institution.



Daisuke Kawahara

Mumbai-Ahmedabad
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JIC was commissioned by JICA to conduct detailed design studies for the Indian high-speed railway construction project. My role was to handle structure-related detailed design studies, especially for station area construction plans, and review these plans in light of on-site conditions and other factors.

It was a struggle at first, due to the rules being different from rules for railway construction projects in Japan and the need to converse in English with our counterparts at Indian Railways and elsewhere. I therefore made an effort to understand India's specific rules and study English. What's more, in order to deal with Indian English, to which I'm not accustomed, I learned about its characteristics and came up with solutions like having things written down on paper during discussions.

Now that I'm involved in a construction project in a foreign country, which is something I've been interested in for some time, I find my day-to-day work to be very rewarding. I hope that building a high-speed railway between Mumbai and Ahmedabad will enable smoother, more frequent transportation of people and contribute to India's economic and cultural development. And by moving the project forward and carrying out my daily duties, I also wish to do my part as a member of society.