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Soon, OMR will take you faster to Mahabs

Once The IT Expressway Is Extended From Siruseri To Pooncheri, Travel Time From City Will Come Down By 35 Minutes

Jayaraj Sivan | TNN

Chennai: The second phase of the IT Expressway, popularly known as Old Mahabalipuram Road (rechristened Rajiv Gandhi Salai), will increase its length by 1.54 km and connect Chennai and Mahabalipuram with a six-lane carriageway, if the alignment proposed by the Tamil Nadu Road Development Company (TNRDC) is firmed up.

As of now, the six-lane road runs from Madhya Kailash to Siruseri, a distance of 20 km. In the second phase, the six-laning will cover another 26.8 km to connect Siruseri and Pooncheri near Mahabalipuram. The existing road between Siruseri and Pooncheri is only 25.26 km, but since the ex-

pressway will incorporate two bypasses, the length would get increased by 1.54 km.

TNRDC has suggested two bypasses, one for Kelambakkam and the other for Tirupporur. The former would start at Kazhipattur and end at Penta Media in Thaiyur B village, covering a distance of 4.67 km. It would provide a scenic drive along the banks of the backwaters in Padur, which falls on the western side of Mutukadu lake.

While the road will bypass Kelambakkam town, it will have a grade-separator when it crosses the Kelambakkam-Kovalam road. It will cut across the campus of Hindustan group of educational institutions and run between the arts and science college and the engineering college, a senior official of TNRDC said.

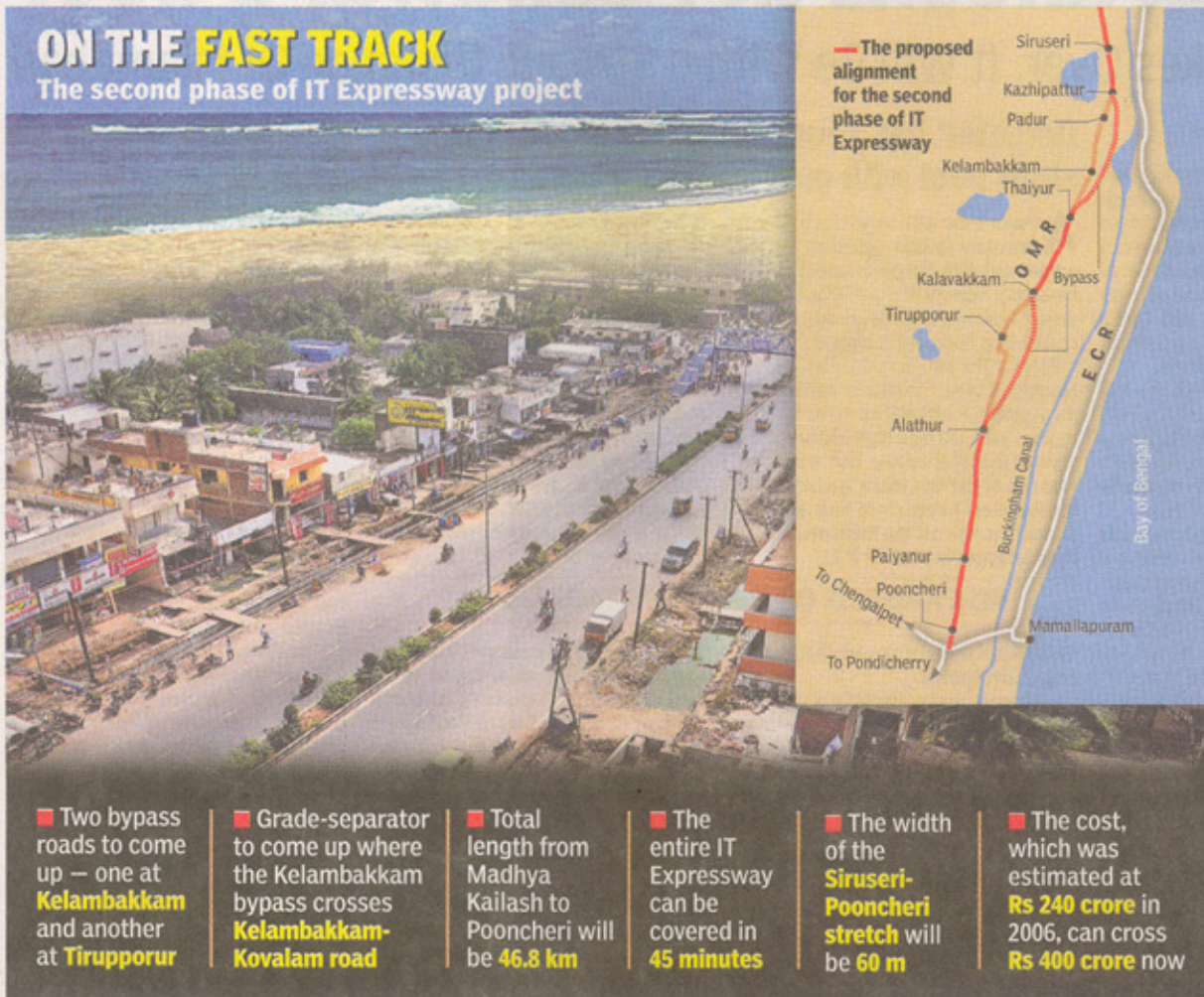
The second bypass would start at Kalavakkam and end at Alathur, covering a distance of 5.75 km, the official said. The two bypasses will ensure that habitations in Kelambakkam and the Murugan temple at Tirupporur are not disturbed.

The expressway will cut across 13 revenue villages — Egattur, Kazhipattur, Padur, Kelambakkam, Thaiyur B, Kalavakkam, Tirupporur, Thandalam, Vengaleri, Alathur, Karumkuzhipallam, Paiyanur and Pooncheri.

Once the second phase of the six-laning is completed, the travel time from Siruseri to Pooncheri is expected to come down from one hour to 25 minutes. In a stark deviation from the first phase, where the total right of way is only 41 metres, the TNRDC has proposed to keep the width of the second phase at 60 metres.

"The width of the carriageways, service roads and footpath would remain the same. There will be only six carriageways. But we have sought additional land on the sides for providing ducts for sewerage, drainage and other service lines," said the official. The Kancheepuram district collectorate is expected to complete the land acquisition process by the end of the year and public hearing (for eliciting reaction of people from whom land will be acquired) for five out of 13 villages has been completed.

ON THE FAST TRACK The second phase of IT Expressway project



■ Two bypass roads to come up — one at **Kelambakkam** and another at **Tirupporur**

■ Grade-separator to come up where the Kelambakkam bypass crosses **Kelambakkam-Kovalam road**

■ Total length from Madhya Kailash to Pooncheri will be **46.8 km**

■ The entire IT Expressway can be covered in **45 minutes**

■ The width of the **Siruseri-Pooncheri stretch** will be **60 m**

■ The cost, which was estimated at **Rs 240 crore** in 2006, can cross **Rs 400 crore** now

Once the second phase of six-laning of the Old Mahabalipuram Road is complete, the travel time from Siruseri to Pooncheri is expected to come down from one hour to 25 minutes

Search on for new consultant

The TNRDC will soon float global tenders to select a new consultant to do a detailed project report for the second phase of IT Expressway. Highly-placed sources in TNRDC said though the work was initially assigned to SPAN Consultants, it could only complete the preliminary study. Since SPAN wanted the rates to be renegotiated for doing a detailed project report, the TNRDC decided to hunt for a new consultant. In 2006, the project was estimated at Rs 240 crore. Now, it could cost more than Rs 400 crore.

Builders say road extension will hit them

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Lack of proper planning by government agencies has come to the fore once again in the extension of the IT Expressway.

The first among the two bypasses, which starts at Kazhipattur, will eat into two residential projects and one commercial project of Akshaya Homes, which were approved by the Directorate of Town and Country Planning two years ago. T Chitty Babu, CMD of Akshaya, said, "Now, after all the three projects have been completed, TNRDC is saying it wants more land for road. There should be greater transparency in developmen-

tal works. Anticipating the second-phase works of the OMR, we had left enough set back for road expansion as per the conditions laid down by the highways department. We also obtained a no-objection certificate from the highways department before getting the DTCP approval. The TNRDC's decision to lay a bypass has caught us off guard. The highways department should have

anticipated all these requirements before giving NOC for our three projects." In all, Akshaya will lose 54 cents in the road expansion.

His neighbour, SSPDL, another city-based builder will lose 75 cents. Prakash Challa, MD, SSPDL, said, "A bypass at Kelambakkam will eclipse the Kelambakkam-Vandalur road. Many residential projects are coming up on the OMR-GST

link road."

TNRDC refuted the charge that it was not transparent. A senior official said, "The bypass at Kelambakkam was proposed two years ago. If any agency has given clearance for projects without taking the bypass into consideration, we are not at fault. Further, we have gone by the opinion of SPAN Consultants, the agency which did the preliminary feasibility study. TNRDC has no hidden agenda. Our objective is to provide a world-class road on which Chennaiites can enjoy driving. In fact, broad, hassle-free roads would help builders too in future developments."

“ Now, after three projects have been completed, TNRDC is saying it wants more land for road expansion ”

T Chitty Babu | CMD, AKSHAYA HOMES