



**RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION IN N F RAILWAY– A NEW DAWN AND ERA OF
SPEED AND SAVINGS**

Until the 1st quarter of 2017, the process of railway electrification was under the shell of lukewarm speed. The era and dominance of electric locomotives was gradually building its base by invading Katihar Jn, one of the prominent and busiest stations of Katihar Division under Northeast Frontier Railways. As a result, numerous North India, Northwestern India and Western India bound coaching trains were undergoing change in traction (from diesel to electric) at Katihar Jn, along with freight trains.

After electrification of Katihar Railway Station (the entry point of North East Frontier Railway) in 2017, Railway Electrification work has seen a quantum jump in growth and efficiency and cometh 2020, within a gritty span of less than 3 years, the entire “trunk route” of Katihar Division (from Katihar Jn. to Raninagar Jalpaiguri Jn.) has been electrified. Courtesy of dedication and determination of one and all involved in this tedious project, Railway Electrification Project, New Jalpaiguri has been able to achieve this tremendous feat, albeit all odds. The prominent rail-head of North Bengal, New Jalpaiguri Jn, was electrified by the end of 2019. As a result, 5 pairs of coaching trains were taken on electric traction upto New Jalpaiguri. Besides 2 to 3 goods train were also run upto New Jalpaiguri Jn. After electrification of UP Receipt and Despatch yard of New Jalpaiguri Goods Yard by February, 2020 end, number of Goods train substantially increased, but non-electrification of DN R&D Goods Yard created hindrance in further increasing electric goods trains operation. It was highly desirable to operate all of freight trains with electric locomotive from New Jalpaiguri Jn, thereby mounting up the scale of fuel savings and enhanced speed.

In this unprecedented lockdown session due to the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jalpaiguri Goods Down Yard (Receipt & Despatch) has been completely electrified. This became the 2nd prominent electrification of the railway yard after Katihar Jn. Now, almost 95% of the total freight trains playing through the “trunk route” can be operated with electric traction from New Jalpaiguri Jn. A modest beginning has been made w.e.f. 24th June 2020 with 04 nos. of Goods train hauled by Electric Locomotive starting from New Jalpaiguri Down Yard (R&D) which will gradually increase subject to availability of crew and Electric Locomotive to cover almost all of 25 nos. goods train running from New Jalpaiguri Jn towards Katihar and Malda Town.



The operation of freight trains have been the backbone of Indian Railways as far as the massive chunk of revenue-generation is concerned. Keeping in view of this vital aspect, the railway goods yard (R & D) of New Jalpaiguri Jn. was comprehensively electrified by utilizing the lockdown period, where the movement of freight trains have been unstoppable. As a result, most of the freight trains can be operated with electric traction from New Jalpaiguri to Eastern Railway and East Central Railway without undergoing any further change in traction anywhere en-route, thereby saving the consumption of diesel fuel drastically and subsequently, enhancing the speed of trains and saving valuable travel time.



To sum up, the bliss and melody of buzzing and chugging of Diesel Locomotives will be dearly missed by one and all, but at the end of the day, “change” is the only constant parameter of nature where development succeeds its predecessors. This new era of Electrification is bound to enhance the operation of trains in this already-saturated “trunk section” and subsequently, a massive chunk of fuel savings can also be witnessed which will directly have a positive impact on the environment as far as the downgrading of air pollution is concerned.

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