

NEW TRAIN TO NORTH BIHAR



Enthusiastic youths on top of the passenger train at Begusarai railway station on Monday. Pictures by Pravez Akhtar

Railway link across Ganga

**SHRIKRISHNA PRASAD
IN MUNGER**

Residents of Munger, Khagaria and Begusarai were all smiles on Monday when minister of state for railways Manoj Sinha flagged off a passenger train from Begusarai railway station, around 130km east of Patna.

The train service will help cut down travel time from the twin towns of Munger and Jamalpur to Khagaria and Begusarai.

It will also help in connecting Jamalpur railway

junction on the Sabehganj-Bhagalpur section of Eastern Railway.

It used to take around five hours to travel to Khagaria by train from Munger covering a distance of 137km.

By road, the travel time would come down to four hours but one had to travel 171km.

With the inauguration of the bridge, one can reach Khagaria from Munger in just 30 minutes. Also, the travel time from Munger to Begusarai has now come down to around one hour.

The same used to take around four hours by train and around two-and-a-half-hours by road previously.

The newly constructed bridge has a road deck as well but only the rail deck has been made functional at present.

The foundation of the bridge was laid in 2002 by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The 3.69km bridge has been constructed at a cost of Rs 2,774 crore.

Munger Chamber of Commerce president Ashok Sitaria said: "The rail

bridge will facilitate better business in Munger district headquarters." Shashi Bhushna Prasad, a Topkhana Bazar resident, said: "Social and cultural relationship will be strengthened between the people of Khagaria, Begusarai and Munger."

Addressing the audience, Manoj said passenger train services from Khagaria and Begusarai to Patna would be started soon. Several dignitaries, including BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi, were present.