

Lucknow-Kanpur express highway to be complete by December 2022: Nitin Gadkari

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LUCKNOW: Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari has promised UP its first express highway between Lucknow and Kanpur, which will reduce the travel time between the two cities by half, before the end of 2022.

At present, it takes nearly two hours to cover the 90-km distance between Lucknow and Kanpur.

In Lucknow on Friday with defence minister Rajnath Singh for the inauguration of a flyover at Tedhipulia and the foundation laying ceremony of another flyover at Khurram Nagar, Gadkari said that he will be back in Lucknow within the next three to four months to start work on this project, as desired by Singh. At present, it takes between 1.5 to 2 hours to drive between the two cities.

The minister made several significant announcements for UP, including an increase in budget from Rs 1,500 crore to Rs 11,500 crore for construction of bridges and rail overbridges on national highways, development of the 84 kosi parikrama at Ayodhya and giving it the status of a national highway, completion of major infrastructure projects within the next two years and construction of 25-30 ring roads.

“We had an agreement with the state government for construction of ring roads under which the Centre would give 50% of the funds and the state would acquire 50% of the land. However, the state government is facing several problems in land

acquisition because of which many projects are pending,” the minister said, offering that the Centre would acquire the land on the condition that the state government view this as a notional loss and gave exemption on GST for steel and cement and exemption on royalty for aggregate used in construction.

“I will approve all 25-30 ring roads if you agree to this. I will also clear proposals for all bridges and ROBs on national highways in one go if the state government agrees to bear the cost of land acquisition. UP has a network of 11,390 km national highways which has gone up by 40% under our government. Works of Rs 2 lakh crore have either been approved or started. I want to complete all these within two years and request the government to bring me these proposals and I will clear them in a single meeting,” he said.

Referring to a quote by former US president John F Kennedy which he has displayed in his office, ‘American roads are not good because America is rich. America is rich because it has good roads,’ Gadkari said that to achieve the target of making India a USD 5 trillion economy, Rs 111 lakh crore would be spent on infrastructure over the next five years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said, had emphasised on infrastructure development to promote industrial development and added that India had no shortage of funds, but only of people who can work.