

# Purvanchal expressway: After flag-off, industry rollout

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LUCKNOW: After Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the 341km Purvanchal expressway on November 16, the state government plans to roll out the ambitious process of industrialization in the hinterland of the expressway, inarguably India's longest.

The development assumes significance amid BJP amplifying its developmental narrative, especially in the once socio-economically impoverished east UP region, ahead of UP assembly elections. Confirming the development, CEO, UP Expressway and Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA), Avanish Awasthi, said the state government has identified areas that can be developed as industrial hot spots. "We will start the process of developing them from December," he told TOI.

Awasthi said, the expressway itself has been completed in 36 months, which is a "record" for any project of such a magnitude, despite restrictions posed by Covid-19 pandemic. The state government started the Rs 22,497crore project in October 2018. "Just a few patches on the expressway have been affected by waterlogging because of heavy rains," he said.

The Purvanchal expressway, which will be linked to Yamuna expressway (connecting Agra with Delhi) via Lucknow-Agra expressway, will complete the economic lifeline to boost development in Uttar Pradesh, said Awasthi.

Industrial areas which will be part of Purvanchal Expressway Industrial Corridor (PEIC) will comprise 12 districts, including eight districts of Barabanki, Amethi, Sultanpur, Ayodhya, Ambedkarnagar, Azamgarh and Mau through which the expressway will cut through before culminating in Ghazipur.

The other four districts which will come in the ambit of the PEIC include CM Yogi Adityanath political backyard of Gorakhpur, Jaunpur (neighbouring PM Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency of Varanasi), Ballia and Sant Kabir Nagar.

In all, 21 sites with a combined area of 9,171 hectares have been identified for being developed as part of PEIC. While two sites each have been identified in Barabanki, Amethi, Sultanpur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Gorakhpur, Ambedkarnagar, one site each is proposed to be developed as industrial area in Mau, Ayodhya and Ballia. The biggest industrial land parcel of 1,234 hectares has been identified in Ghazipur, followed by 949 hectares in Gorakhpur.

Amethi represented by Union minister Smriti Irani will witness an industrial area coming up in an area of 855 hectares, while in Azamgarh, the parliamentary seat of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, the state government has identified 854 hectares under PEIC.