

Ganga e-way will catapult UP on road to prosperity

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By: Arun Kumar Sinha

LUCKNOW: The Yogi Adityanath government has understood that prosperity of the people is linked to investment in infrastructure which is key to modern industrial strategy and local economic growth prospects.

The 1973km expressways spread across the state are not only transforming the lives of many but are also leaving a positive impact on businesses.

After Purvanchal Expressway, the foundation stone for Ganga Expressway is set to be laid. The economic impact that the Rs 36,230 crore project will have on 12 districts, namely Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj, will bolster growth in eastern parts of the state.

Ganga Expressway, like other expressways, is touted to be the centrepiece of Chief Minister Yogi's Adityanath's efforts to spur economic progress in East UP and help the country become a USD 5 trillion economy.

Since 2017, when Yogi came to power and authorized the six-lane (can be expanded into eight lane) Ganga Expressway, the state agencies have poured crores of rupees for land, labour, construction material and equipment.

Work on the project is on at a great speed despite the roadblocks of Covid-19. At least 98% acquisition has been completed by the administration of districts concerned, against the acquisition of 123 hectares. Payment to all the farmers has also been done. Almost 94% of the land needed for the purpose has already been acquired by the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA), the nodal agency for the project, which aims to complete the project by 2025.

The expressway covers 140 water bodies and has seven road overbridges, 17 interchange roads, 14 big bridges, 126 minor bridges, 28 flyovers, 50 vehicle underpasses, and 946 culverts. Once functional, it is expected to reduce travel time between Delhi and Prayagraj from the current 10-11 hours to just 6-7 hours. The state government further plans to extend the expressway at both ends – by 110 km from Meerut to Tigri on the Uttar Pradesh/Uttarakhand border and by 314 km from Prayagraj to Ballia, in the second phase of the project.

Real estate prices along the roads have risen by as much as 30 times, putting adjoining land among the nation's most expensive property. Around expressway interchanges and exits, new hotels, restaurants, gas stations and industries are expected to spring up.

Many isolated communities —placed within commuting time of cities by the new roads—will come alive and prosper. To take advantage of the expanded labour force and markets made accessible by expressways, the industry will set up new plants on land surrounding the interchanges.

The Ganga Expressway will act as an industrial corridor and connect far-flung production units and agricultural production centres to the state and national capital. By reducing the travel time from Meerut to Prayagraj, it would provide a huge impetus to perishable agri product industry. It would also act as a catalyst for establishment of new industrial units, food processing units, dairy industry as well as small and medium units in the region. Tourism will also flourish once the expressway is functional.

As roads continued to expand, there was an urgent need for a strategy for effective conservation of the area around the expressways, especially considering the fact that the project was delayed since 2007 for the want of environmental clearances. To ensure ecological balance, ROW land will be powered by solar power. Moreover, 18,55,000 trees will be planted alongside the expressway.

For Uttar Pradesh's economy, the road ahead definitely looks bright. The link between infrastructure investment and prosperity for citizens is clear. The Yogi government is to be commended for recognising the importance of infrastructure to economic growth and job creation.