

Meerut-Delhi e-way: Speedy connectivity, faster growth

Apart from cutting travel time, the e-way would be a game changer for it would help in boosting growth of business in the west UP region, say traders



MDE under construction. PIX- SOURCED

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MEERUT : Sandeep Gupta, who holds a senior managerial post in a Noida-based company, braves erratic traffic on NH 58 (connects Meerut to Delhi) everyday to reach his office from his house in Meerut.

Gupta and many daily commuters spend almost three hours daily to cover a distance of approximately 70 kms between Meerut and Noida or Meerut and Delhi. Therefore, they are anxiously waiting for completion of the 82-kms-long Meerut- Delhi Expressway (MDE) because it would reduce their daily travel time by more than an hour.

Gupta said, "Time is life. Wasting our precious time everyday in erratic traffic jams means wasting our life. He said that the expressway would have a far reaching effect on people's life, especially of National Capital Region (NCR) and towns in Meerut, Saharanpur and Moradabad regions.

He explained that commuters from Hapur, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Roorkee, Hardwar, Anroha and Moradabad would reach Delhi in lesser time. However, a heavy toll tax would increase cost of travelling between Delhi and Meerut, he said, pointing out that the highway authorities should make adequate arrangement of sign boards, reflectors, lights and public conveniences on the Expressway for a quality journey. Deadline for completion of the e-way was extended multiple times due to unavoidable reasons and Union minister for road transport Nitin Gadkari set a final deadline for its operation on December 31 but it has again been extended due to agitation of farmers, adverse impact on work during Covid pandemic and other reasons.

Mudit Garg, project director of MDE (Meerut-Delhi Expressway), hoped that the expressway would be opened for commuters by the end of February or March next year. He explained that the DME was being constructed in four stretches. The first stretch of 8.7 kms between Hazrat Nizamuddin Bridge in Delhi to UP Gate was completed almost a year ahead of schedule. Similarly, third stretch of 22.2 kms between Dasna to Hapur was also completed in September 2019. Meanwhile, work on the remaining second stretch of 19.2 kms between UP Gate to Dasna and fourth stretch of 32 kms between Dasna to Meerut was going on at full pace and was expected to be completed by the end of February next year.

Garg reiterated that they were committed to give speed and quality to the commuters, therefore it had been decided to keep max speed limit at 120 kms per hour in the Greenfield between Meerut to Dasna, 100 kms per hour between Dasna to UP Gate and 70 kms per hours between UP gate to Delhi (this part is in Delhi and Delhi government has prescribed this speed limit). "If the journey on the expressway remains safe and good then in future we can increase speed limit to 120 kms per hour on all stretches," he said.

Garg also believed that the MDE would play a significant role in growth and development of the entire region. He explained that the land value of the area increased with construction of a highway and it also added values in social and economic domains of people.

Vivek Garg, president of Meerut Automobile Dealers Association, said the MDE could be a game-changer for people of the region. However, he said, "It's now too little and too late". The decision to build the expressway was announced in the 2006 budget speech of the then finance minister P Chidambaram. "It is now 2021, therefore what we needed to build 15 years ago is being built now", he said, adding, "poor development of infrastructure, delay in planning of projects and execution and worrisome law and order pulled us almost 15 years behind the developed towns of NCR in Haryana and Rajasthan."

Still, he said the MDE would change the status of many towns of west UP and many traders and businessmen had already started shifting their base to Meerut from congested and crowded locations of Delhi. "Speedy connectivity with Delhi would help in boosting growth of business in the region," he said.

Mudit Garg said that the budget of the expressway was kept at Rs 8,346 crores for constructing 82.1 kms roads and other works associated with it. The foundation stone of the project was laid down by PM Narendra Modi on December 30, 2015 and it was expected to be completed in three years but construction was delayed due to pollution Hazards, rain, farmers' agitation, delay in acquiring land in four villages of Ghaziabad and then the corona pandemic.

He said that the MDE would also be connected to Meerut- Prayagraj Expressway and Eastern Peripheral Expressway so that commuters from east and west UP could take its advantage to reach Delhi, Agra and Jaipur in much less time.



