

Ghaziabad: In dash to 2023, RRTS takes a big step

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GHAZIABAD: After ducking under the Hindon elevated road at Vasundhara, the Rapid Rail (RRTS) corridor in Ghaziabad has leapt across the Delhi-Howrah railway tracks at Siddharth Vihar in a feat of engineering that saw a mammoth steel arch 73 metres in length and weighing 850 tonnes being attached to the viaduct, as a bridge for trains to pass.

Officials said the railways had given NCRTC a three-hour daily window for nine months to place the steel arch. Two of the three engineering challenges for the 17km priority section of the Rapid Rail corridor are now out of the way, leading to optimism that the corridor could be completed by the end of 2022, ahead of the scheduled March 2023 deadline.

The next challenge is to take the RRTS track over the flyover and Delhi Metro's Red Line at the Meerut road T-point. "More than 14,000 workers and 1,100 engineers are working on the corridor. Of the total 17km, 12km of viaduct has been laid and civil work is 70% complete," said Puneet Vats, chief public relations officer of the NCR Transport Corporation, which is building the corridor.

The priority section from Sahibabad to Duhai is part of the larger 82km corridor from Delhi to Meerut and will become the first operational line of the country's first such high-speed transit system. "The official date to complete the priority section is March 2023, but we are aiming for December 2022. With the current pace of work, it is doable," Vats said.

Much of that will depend on the immediate challenge that lies ahead at the Meerut tri-section, where pillars to carry the corridor over the flyover and Metro tracks have been built and work on laying the viaduct is next. "The Ghaziabad RRTS station will be located near the Meerut tri section," said Vats. At a height of 24 metres from the ground, the Ghaziabad station will be the highest elevation of the corridor, which has an average height of 8 metres.

The Ghaziabad RRTS station will be integrated with Shaheed Sthal metro station and New Bus Adda through a footbridge.

Mayank Tiwari, an engineer overseeing work on the section, said, "Last year, when Covid was at its peak, we had a labourers' colony close to the crematorium and it was tough ensuring the wellbeing of workers. Strict measures were enforced. Fortunately, the pandemic had little effect on the workforce."

Work on laying tracks has also begun in the priority section. "The rails are being manufactured in Raigarh," said Vats.

"Besides, 210 train sets are being made at Savli (Gujarat). The train sets have been designed in Hyderabad. By the middle of next year, coaches will start arriving," Vats added.

The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor from Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to Modipuram in Meerut will have eight RRTS stations in Ghaziabad.

Of the 82km length of the corridor, 70.5km will be elevated platforms and the rest underground. Two maintenance depots at Duhai and Modipuram are also being built as well.