

More highways to be monetised in UP

State Set To Follow MP, Raj Models

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: More roads and highways in Uttar Pradesh are going to be monetised in the coming months.

Traffic census and feasibility studies of 18 state highways are going to be carried out to find out if further maintenance of roads could take place through a private player who is allowed to collect toll from motor vehicle owners plying on those stretches. The busy routes among the list of 18 that has been fi-



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nalised would be widened and maintained by the private players later on.

Taking a cue from the neighbouring states, the UP govt has also gone ahead with the decision to monetise the state highways that witness increased traffic flow. Currently, out of the 140 state highways toll is collected only on three routes. Senior officials of the Public Works

Department said that privatisation of some of the busy state highways is being considered as a lot of funds are required to widen such stretches.

Last year, during the Feb-March period, 21 road stretches were identified for monetisation. However, the consultants carrying out traffic and feasibility studies were of the opinion that only three

out of 21 state highways could be considered for widening and privatisation, while remaining stretches could be considered for upgradation later on once the traffic volume picks up.

The state looked up the Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan models. The two states have been taxing the commuters plying via the state highways for more than a decade. In Madhya Pradesh almost 60 roads have been developed on build-operate-transfer model with long-term concession period awarded to the private players taking up the widening of the road stretches. In Rajasthan, too, toll tax is collected at 50 plazas that have been established over the state highways.

Uttar Pradesh state high-

ways authority (UPSHA) has been asked to carry out the studies. Member (finance and administration) of the authority Ashok Kumar Singh said, "The consultants would let us know if widening of some road stretches is needed. Post that decision would be taken."

Around Lucknow, Sitapur-Gola-Aliganj-Bijua road spanning 96-km and Bilgram-Sandi-Allahganj road spanning 63-km are being considered for private maintenance. Balia, Mau, Azamgarh, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Mathura, Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Bareilly, Amethi, Banda, Kanpur Dehat, Prayagraj, Shamli, Jhansi and Lalitpur are some districts where traffic flow would be studied.