

Expressway set to transform access to justice, spur economic growth

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MEERUT/PRAYAGRAJ: The 594-km Ganga Expressway, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on Wednesday, is widely being seen as a transformative development for both access to justice and regional economic growth, with its most immediate impact expected on travel between western Uttar Pradesh and Prayagraj.

By cutting journey time from 10-12 hours to around 6-7 hours, the high-speed corridor is set to significantly ease the movement of thousands of lawyers, litigants and traders who routinely travel between the two regions.

For many, what was earlier an exhausting, multi-day exercise involving train bookings and overnight stays could now become a same-day trip.

Legal professionals say this could fundamentally alter how cases are pursued at the Allahabad high court. Advocate Rajesh Sharma, a Meerut-based lawyer, termed the development a "game-changer," saying it would allow lawyers to attend hearings and return the same day, improving efficiency.

Senior advocate Meena Gupta noted that easier access would particularly benefit small traders and farmers who often struggle with the costs and logistics of long-distance court travel.

From Prayagraj, the sentiment is similar. Allahabad High Court Bar Association president Rakesh Pandey said the improved connectivity would address long-standing concerns over the high cost of seeking justice. "Nearly 40% of the high court's lawyers come from western UP, and improved connectivity will make their commute much more convenient," he said.

Advocate SPS Chauhan highlighted the scale of the daily movement, noting that over

A BOOST FOR MAHABHARAT, JAIN CIRCUITS AND SAMBHAL

MEERUT: The inauguration of the Ganga Expressway has unlocked a new tourism corridor, enhancing the reach and appeal of the state's Mahabharat Circuit, Jain Circuit and the emerging Sambhal religious tourism hub. One of the biggest beneficiaries is Hastinapur, a major pilgrimage centre for the Jain community. Improved connectivity is expected to increase footfall from Delhi-NCR and western UP.

The expressway is also set to elevate Sambhal as an emerging religious destination. Faster connectivity from Meerut, Hapur and Lucknow-side markets is expected to position Sambhal as a viable short-stay spiritual destination.

4,000 litigants from around 20 districts travel to Prayagraj each day, mostly by train.

"Difficulties in securing reservations frequently create hardships. With the expressway in place, travel time will be cut in half, saving both time and money. Litigants will also be able to attend hearings and return home the same day, eliminating hotel expenses," he said.

Beyond the legal ecosystem, the expressway is expected to reshape trade and logistics patterns across the state. Businesses in Meerut anticipate lower transportation costs and faster access to markets in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Ramesh Kumar, a wholesale trader, said improved road connectivity would expand market reach and reduce delays.

In eastern UP, industry bodies see the corridor as a trigger

for decentralised growth. Vinay Kumar Tandon of the Eastern UP Chamber of Commerce and Industry said planned industrial clusters along the route would promote local manufacturing and attract investment. The expressway is also expected to strengthen agricultural supply chains by enabling quicker movement of produce to urban markets.

Assistant agriculture marketing officer Dinesh Chandra said improved road infrastructure would help farmers expand their market base and ease exports. It could also reduce dependence on overburdened air cargo facilities in cities like Varanasi and Lucknow.

Regions such as Pratapgarh, known for amla and mango production, are likely to see direct gains. Alok Khandelwal of Khandelwal Food Products said better connectivity would allow local producers to tap into larger urban demand.

Tourism, too, is expected to get a boost. With improved road travel, lesser-known destinations along the route may gain visibility.

Strengthening Meerut's connectivity network

The Ganga Expressway further enhances Meerut's already expanding infrastructure ecosystem. The Delhi-Meerut Expressway has significantly reduced travel time to the national capital, while the Delhi-Meerut RRTS (Namo Bharat RapidX) now connects Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to Modipuram in Meerut in under an hour.

Upcoming projects like the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway and proposed RRTS extensions towards Haridwar are expected to further strengthen northward connectivity. Together, these developments position Meerut as a strategic node with seamless access to Delhi-NCR in the west, Uttarakhand in the north, and eastern Uttar Pradesh via Prayagraj.