

DEFENCE INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR

BrahMos unit to be set up in Lucknow, will produce 80-100 missiles a year

The cruise missile forms a crucial part of India's arsenal; the manufacturing unit to cost ₹300 crore

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, MAY 8

AIMING TO turn the state into a "defence production hub", both the Uttar Pradesh government and the Defence Ministry have shifted their focus to the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor project, with a BrahMos Missile unit ready for inauguration on May 11.

The state is also preparing to allot the second phase of land parcels under the project in Aligarh. The existing land parcels in three nodes — Lucknow, Kanpur and Aligarh — have already been allotted with a team of officials led by the Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar camping in Greek capital Athens to draw more investment to the state's defence sector.

On May 11, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate a BrahMos missile manufacturing unit in Lucknow whose target is to produce 80 to 100 missiles annually. The unit, whose foundation stone was laid in 2021, is part of a Defence Industrial Corridor that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced in 2018 during the global investors' summit.

"The inauguration of the



Brahmos, the supersonic cruise missile, has been operationalised in all three wings of Indian armed forces. *File*

BrahMos unit worth Rs 300 crore will certainly be a big boost to the project in the state. About 1,600 hectares of land have been allotted for the defence corridor project in the first phase, with big companies having already signed MOUs. We are also in talks with BHEL for one of its units to come here," said a senior government official at Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UP-IEDA), which is the nodal agency for the project.

While about 80 acres have been allocated for the BrahMos unit, a total of 117 hectares have

been allotted to 12 companies in the Lucknow node that also includes Aerolloy Technologies, whose products, officials claimed, were used in space missions such as Chandrayaan as well as in fighter aircraft.

The defence corridor, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced during the 2018 global investor summit in the state, has six nodes: Lucknow, Kanpur, Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, and Chitrakoot.

According to state government officials, the Adityanath government is preparing to launch the second phase of

granting land parcels under the project in Aligarh. Existing land parcels in Lucknow, Kanpur and Aligarh have already been allotted. Almost half of the land bank in Jhansi, which is one of the biggest nodes with 1,000 hectares of land, has also been saturated. With this, about 60% of the land for the total project has been allotted.

Government officials said efforts were also going on to get more investors for the Chitrakoot node in Bundelkhand and the remaining stretch in Jhansi, considering high demand for land parcels by defence sector units in Aligarh. The government, which initially earmarked 200 acres of land in the district, is now all set to offer another 200 acres in the second phase. While there were some hiccups in Agra due to restrictions in place because of the Taj Trapezium Zone — a designated area of approximately 10,400 square km around the Taj Mahal established to protect the monument from pollution — officials said the issues with land banks had been resolved.

While the units in these nodes are in different phases of completion, the inauguration of the BrahMos unit is all set to give the entire project a lift, accord-

ing to officials. Apart from BrahMos Aerospace and Aerolloy Technologies in Lucknow, the other major companies that have proposed investment are Bharat Dynamics, Armoured Vehicles Nigam, Tata Technologies, Global Engineers, and WB Electronics India in Jhansi node; Adani Defence Systems & Technologies, Ananth Technologies, and Genser Aerospace in Kanpur, and Anchor Research Labs LLP and Amitec Electronics in Aligarh.

Officials said both IIT Kanpur and IIT BHU in Varanasi had been roped in as centres of excellence for the project for various research and development needs. Officials said they had already received more than Rs 28,000 crore of investment proposals for different nodes of the project and are showcasing the project for more investment as well.

Meanwhile, the government said that so far, 170 MoUs have been signed and land has been given on lease to 57 investors. It further stated that while the Jhansi node of the defence corridor is being developed as the centre for explosives and ammunition-related units, Kanpur node will be for small arms and bulletproof jackets, and Aligarh for drones among others.

