

Highways: Uttar Pradesh's path to become the first \$1 trillion state

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Uttar Pradesh (UP), one of India's top state economies, is aiming to become the nation's first \$1 trillion economy. To achieve this ambitious goal, the Yogi Adityanath government is betting on its expansive network of expressways and mega industrial corridors to boost UP's gross state domestic product (GSDP) from its current level of nearly \$300 billion.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dubbed UP as 'Express Pradesh', owing to its extensive expressway projects and the 'speed of governance' under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Since Adityanath took office in March 2017, various expressway projects — either commissioned or still under construction — have a total outlay of Rs 80,000 crore. Among the key expressways, the 340-kilometre (km) Purvanchal Expressway and the 296-km Bundelkhand Expressway were inaugurated by Modi in November 2021 and July 2022, respectively.

Ongoing projects include the 594-km Meerut-Prayagraj Ganga Expressway and the 91-km Gorakhpur Link Expressway, being developed by the UP Expressway Industrial Development Authority.

The Ganga Expressway, which spans 12 districts, is projected to cost Rs 36,000 crore and is expected to be completed before the Prayagraj Mahakumbh 2025.

Other expressways under development by the National Highways Authority of India include the 63-km Lucknow-Kanpur Expressway and the 380-km Ghaziabad-Kanpur Expressway.

and across various sectors, including infrastructure, industry, tourism, food processing, green hydrogen, information technology, micro, small and medium enterprises, energy, power, dairy, banking, hospitality, and more.

The land bank will be developed by the UP State Industrial Development Authority, Noida, Greater Noida, the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, and the Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority.

Recently, Adityanath directed development authorities to expedite the land acquisition process to ensure seamless allocation to investors.

UP has also established the Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority (BIDA), modelled after the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (Noida), to catalyse industrial development in the arid Bundelkhand region.

Bundelkhand, known for its parched landmass and outward migration for jobs, is seeking to develop socioeconomically and contribute to UP's overall growth.

In its first phase, BIDA is set to acquire 35,000 acres of land, worth nearly Rs 6,000 crore, spanning 33 revenue villages in Jhansi district.