

# Mumbai Expressway off to quick start, tenders floated for five sections

TNN | Aug 25, 2018, 06.53 AM IST

NEW DELHI: In a record of sorts, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has floated tenders for five sections of Delhi-Vadodara corridor of Mumbai Expressway barely five months after the plan was first announced. The stretch will be part of the new greenfield expressway that will connect the national capital.

The entire expressway has been divided into 22 sections so that construction work can start simultaneously for faster execution. Two of the five sections for which tenders have been floated cover the stretch between the Kundli Manesar Palwal (KMP) expressway intersection near Sohna and the border of Haryana and Rajasthan. The other three sections fall in Rajasthan and cover the stretch up to Dausa.

The five sections cover about 118 km of the expressway and the construction cost would be about Rs 4,600 crore.

While announcing the expressway project at a TOI event in April this year, highways minister Nitin Gadkari had said the project will be completed within three years. This new road will reduce the distance between Delhi and Mumbai by 200 kilometres and travel time by 12 hours since it will be a signal free stretch. The road will be of eight lanes.

Fast tracking the land acquisition process, the NHAI has already issued the first notification identifying the land through which the expressway will be built.

"We have already appointed officers for expeditious land acquisition and to complete the preparatory work. We are carrying out strict monitoring of daily progress. Project execution will not be an issue since the entire road will be built with full funding from the government," a highway ministry official said.

Usually, preparation of detailed project report and fixing alignment take about a year after government takes the decision to expand or build a new highway and hence issuing notifications for acquiring land often takes at least one-and-a-half years to two years. Sources said the government has fast tracked the process so that the work can start before the dates for Lok Sabha elections are announced.

The NHAI has set two years as target for construction work. "We will float tenders for all the 22 sections by end of September," said the official. Since most stretches of the expressway will pass through backward regions, the NHAI expects no major hurdle in getting the land considering that the locals would get fair compensation for their land.

The highways ministry has decided to opt for building new alignment roads with straight connectivity rather than expanding the existing corridors. Expansion of roads passing through already built up areas is expensive because of high land cost and also because construction gets delayed due to difficulty in getting green clearances and removal of encroachments.