

Progress on ₹1 lakh-crore Delhi-Mumbai expressway earns praise from analysts

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- This is the first time that NHAI is working on a greenfield alignment for such a large project. It has turned out to be cheaper and faster.
- By 2023, the distance between the two cities will be reduced by 280 kms and cut down the travel time to just 12 hours.

Analysts have taken note of the strong progress on Delhi-Mumbai expressway, which is a silver lining in the roads sector.

A research report by foreign brokerage, Credit Suisse notes that expressway activity is impressive with almost the entire stretch in action.

This is the first greenfield expressway by the NHAI. This is also the first time that NHAI is working on a greenfield alignment for such a large project. It has turned out to be cheaper and faster based on lower land acquisition cost and lesser burden of shifting utilities and rehabilitation of people living along the corridor.

This was necessitated as existing corridor is already six-laned but congested and incremental development is constrained. Project per se is not dramatically large at 1,250 km versus NHAI's annual ordering of 3,000 km but reflects a positive fresh approach and speed of execution, the research noted.

The report notes the impressive progress on the Delhi-Mumbai expressway and the entire stretch is in action. Of the total original distance of 1,261 km, action has started on almost the entire stretch. 497 km is under construction, 162 km has been awarded and contractor has to begin work and another 569 km is in the bidding stage. The DPR (detailed project report) report is pending for just one stretch of 33 km.

There is an additional 91 km spur to JNPT that has been planned and for which a DPR is also under preparation.

<https://auto.hindustantimes.com/auto/news/progress-on-rs-1-lakh-crore-delhi-mumbai-expressway-earns-praise-from-analysts-41591695318620.html>

NHAI has so far completely focussed on lane addition to existing highways. This is the first time that NHAI is working on a greenfield alignment for such a large project. It has turned out to be cheaper and faster.

This also brings connectivity to the underdeveloped areas of the country. Greenfield alignment was necessitated as the existing corridor is already six-laned but is heavily congested and incremental development is constrained, the report said.

However, the research notes that the award activity remains subdued; construction activity remains strong though.

NHAI construction and award activity trends better as that is significantly higher than the PMGSY as well as MoRTH spends put together.

NHAI has awarded 3,211 km of roads in FY20, a continued subdued trend post peaking in FY18. Construction activity, however, has scaled up to 3,929 km from 3,320 km in FY19. "We expect construction and award activity to be flattish in FY21 as well given the Covid-19 impact", the report notes.