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Elevated road gets green clearance

Can Open Only After Approval From NGT, Next Hearing Is On March 11

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Ghaziabad: The UP State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) has finally given environmental clearance for the 10.3km UP Gate-Rajnagar Extension elevated road. This paves way for opening up of the project, which was hanging fire since January.

"We have been apprised by officials in the SEIAA that it had accorded environmental clearance for the elevated road project," said district magistrate Ritu Maheshwari. However, it is not yet clear what conditions had been laid down in the nine-page order. "I am yet to get a copy of the complete order. As of now, I am not privy to the conditions and it will become clear in the next few days," said Maheshwari.

The GDA has started preparations for a gala inauguration of the elevated road. "We have requested the chief minister to inaugurate the project and we have been told



GDA has started preparing for a grand inauguration of the elevated road

that time will be granted after March 11," said Maheshwari.

The project hit a road block when city-based environmentalist Sushil Raghav filed a case in NGT in 2015 alleging that a portion of the 10.3 km road is being built on a land classified as Hindon bird sanctuary, and at least three of its pillars are passing through land marked as 'lake' in

revenue records. Following the petition, the court stayed the work on this section in July 2016.

Though the NGT lifted the stay in January this year, it directed the GDA to seek environmental clearance from Union ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MoEF). In February this year, the MoEF refused to

give permission to GDA and directed it to seek clearance from SEIAA.

The SEIAA, after due deliberation on Thursday, finally granted environmental clearance to the project.

Meanwhile, petitioner Sushil Raghav said he would go through the copy of the order to see whether the clearance was given in conforma-

tion of Environment Impact Assessment, 2006, norms. "The matter is due for hearing in NGT on March 11. If the EC has been granted overlooking clauses of EIA, 2006 norms, then I am at liberty to file a contempt plea in NGT," said Raghav.

The elevated road project was expected to be completed in April last year. Then the deadline was extended to October last year and then again to January this year.

The project was completed in January but its inauguration was held up as GDA was awaiting environmental clearance from SEIAA.

Being built at a cost of Rs 1,248 crore, the six-lane elevated road is touted as longest elevated road to be built on a single pier. It is being built on 282 piers all through 9.3 km of elevated structure from UP Gate to Rajnagar extension.

The road, once complete, will reduce the travel time to a mere 10 minutes while as of today commuters brave massive traffic jam.