

## Travelling to Delhi from neighboring towns of Panipat, Meerut and Alwar

Travelling to Delhi from neighboring towns of Panipat, Meerut and Alwar is all set to get easier, with the ambitious regional rapid transit system inching towards reality.

The feasibility study of the project, proposed by the urban development ministry and National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB), is ready. The cabinet note on National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), the special purpose vehicle that will execute the project, has been put up along with a note to the ministry's expenditure finance committee.

Delhi Integrated Multi-modal Transit System (DIMTS), which is preparing the detailed project report for two of the alignments — the Delhi-Panipat and Delhi-Meerut lines, says the basic framework for the project is ready along with the fare structure. "The feasibility study also chalks out the financial structure of the project, along with the structure of NCRTC," said a DIMTS spokesperson.

According to officials, the states involved in the project, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, have agreed on the equity amount to be contributed by each to the corpus for NCRTC, 50% of which will come from the Centre. "The Planning Commission has also approved the project in principle," said a senior official from NCRPB. National Highways Authority of India has also given the go-ahead to the Delhi-Panipat section, added the official.

The three alignments will connect these NCR towns to the capital through high-speed trains. "The trains will operate at a speed of 60kmph, and will run on broad gauge. Unlike the Metro, which has stations at a distance of one-two km, these alignments will have stations at a distance of five-10km," said the DIMTS spokesperson.

Bigger coaches as well as luggage space will be the hallmarks of the trains, which will initially consist of three coaches. The fare, according to DIMTS, will be around Re 1 per km, with the Meerut line costing Rs 90 while the ticket for the 111km Delhi-Panipat line costing Rs 100. The most expensive will be the 180km Delhi-Alwar line at Rs 193. The fare will be graded according to the distance of the station from the originating point. According to the feasibility study, the frequency of the trains will be five minutes.

"The idea is to reduce the congestion on the road by tapping the two- and four-wheelers and buses," said the DIMTS official. According to a 2007 survey, over a crore vehicles travel through Delhi every day. "With the high-speed corridors in place, the cost-benefit will be huge, in terms of fuel, highway, pollution, capital and time. There will be a benefit of 31% to Delhi," said the spokesperson.

The 111km Delhi-Panipat alignment, which starts from ISBT Kashmere Gate, will reach the IOCL plant in 74 minutes. The 90km Delhi-Meerut line from ISBT Sarai Kale Khan will go to Modipuram in 62 minutes while the Delhi-Alwar line will start from ISBT Kashmere Gate and cover 180km in 117 minutes.

The government is also planning to develop pockets of real estate along the high-speed rail corridors, said DIMTS officials. “The development will be based on the transit-oriented development concept, with emphasis on high-density residential and commercial projects in these areas. The access to the rapid rail corridor is the backbone of this development,” said the official.

(Source TOI)

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