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'Can use ECC fund to pay Delhi's first-year share in RRTS corridor'

EPCA tells SC that project should not be delayed as it would hike cost further

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The Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) told the Supreme Court on Monday that money from the Environment Compensation Charge (ECC) could be used for funding the Delhi government's first-year share in the RRTS corridor project between Delhi, Ghaziabad and Meerut.

The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) is a project of "national importance" and it should not be delayed as it would escalate the cost, the EPCA said.

The estimated cost of the 82.15-km corridor is ₹31,632 crore and since the Delhi government has said they do not have adequate finances to meet the cost of its share of ₹1,138 crore, funds from the ECC could be used for it, said the EPCA.

A Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Deepak Gupta



was told by advocate Aparajita Singh, assisting the court as amicus curiae in the pollution matter, that ₹1,106 crore was available in the ECC.

"The first year cost of Delhi government will be ₹265 crore. The EPCA does not want any delay in the project as it would escalate the cost. In ECC, they have around ₹1,100 crore. Let first year fund (of the Delhi government) go from the ECC. This is a project of national importance," Mr. Singh told the Bench.

The counsel appearing for

Delhi government said "In principle, the Delhi government is agreed. So far as funding is concerned, I will seek instructions. Give me one week time."

The Bench has posted the matter for further hearing on February 11.

13-km stretch in Delhi

Of the 82.15 kilometre long corridor, Delhi will have a 13-km section with stations at Sarai Kale Khan, New Ashok Nagar and Anand Vihar.

During the hearing, the amicus said that in pursuance to the apex court's direction, EPCA had convened a meeting of stakeholders concerned on January 25 to discuss the issues. "Delhi government had objections on two issues. The first is about change of station from underground to elevated at Sarai Kale Khan and the other was about funds. The elevated station at Sarai Kale Khan

helps them (Delhi government) also. The only issue is funding. Delhi government says that Union of India should fund their share," Singh told the court.

The EPCA, in its report filed in the court, said that Delhi government has accepted the change in plan to construct the elevated station in its letter addressed to the authority. EPCA also said that out of Delhi government's share of ₹1,138 crore, which is around 3.4% of the total cost and spread over four-five years, the cash fund needed is ₹686 crore and the rest is paid through tax waiver and land cost.

"In other words, Delhi government needs to provide ₹170-175 crore annually for the next four years as its cash component," the report said, adding, "It is clear that this is not a big amount for a project that can decongest Delhi and reduce pollution."