

Urban transport set for RAPIDX transformation

DHRUVAKSH SAHA
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The much-awaited Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project will be the next revolutionary transformation in public transport after Metro rail, says Vinay Kumar Singh, Managing Director of the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), ahead of the launch of the Sahibabad-Duhai section of the intercity rail corridor.

“When Delhi Metro came, we had no standard of efficiency. There were a lot of challenges, but it was also the first huge transformation for India’s public transport infrastructure. Now, every element of RRTS technology is entirely new for India — from traction to station development. We are also the first public transport corporation to go for privatised operation and maintenance. RRTS will be the Next Big transformation in urban transport,” Singh tells *Business Standard*.

With trainsets having a design speed of 180 kilometres per hour (kph) and an operational speed of up to 160 kph, the ₹30,000-crore corridor, known as RAPIDX, is set to transform the urban landscape on the oft-ignored Ghaziabad-Meerut side of the National Capital Region, bringing transit time to well within an hour. Singh says trains are already running successfully on the 17-km Sahibabad-Duhai section, and will be opened for passenger operations any time soon.

The urban transporter is now working on the Duhai-Meerut South section, which it hopes to complete three months ahead of schedule, in what will be a departure from the standard practice of delays ubiquitous to Indian infrastructure. The plan now is to commission 20 km of the corridor every six months.

The project will be completed well within the sanctioned cost estimates, observes Singh.

The Delhi-Meerut RRTS was given the green light in 2019 to



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decongest the national Capital by making efficient public transport accessible in adjoining areas. The

transporter has been given the mandate to work on eight corridors, of which three are priority and five

are Phase II.

All eyes will be on the fate of this new system, as more states adopt the transit-oriented development (TOD) policy. “State governments are very keen. Many have started working on proposals, but a real understanding of the system will come once the priority section starts. Once people see the speed and riding experience, a lot of demand will emerge from the public itself. Over the next six months, there will be a lot of new proposals. Already, Telangana, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh are working on corridors, such as Lucknow-Kanpur, Faridabad-Gurugram, and Vijayawada-Hyderabad,” he adds.

Officials said that one of these new proposed corridors, such as Faridabad-Gurugram, may also get taken up before Phase II if states accord priority status to them. Singh says talks are underway to expand the number of priority corridors.

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