



Varuna Elevated Corridor: Balancing Heritage, Mobility and Growth in Varanasi

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For centuries, the Varuna River has been an integral part of Varanasi's geographical and cultural landscape, lending the city half its name and shaping its growth. Today, the river corridor is set to assume a new role as a key axis of modern urban mobility.

Following the Union Cabinet's approval in July, the ₹10,998-crore, 43.218-km Varuna Elevated Corridor is set to become an important component of Varanasi's future transport network. The project will connect NH-31 with the Varanasi Ring Road along the Varuna River, providing an alternative high-capacity route through the city and helping ease congestion on existing urban roads.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, will develop the predominantly elevated 6/4-lane corridor, comprising the main carriageway, flyovers, loops, ramps and service roads. The project will also include an iconic cable-stayed bridge and an extradosed foot over bridge-cum-major bridge.

A Key Link in Varanasi's Decongestion Plan

The corridor forms an important part of the Varanasi Decongestion Plan, designed to improve movement between major highways, railway stations, the airport and important urban destinations.

By providing a direct link between NH-31 and the Varanasi Ring Road, the project will improve access to key transport gateways, including Varanasi Airport, Varanasi Cantonment, Varanasi City Railway Station, Kashi Railway Station and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction. It will also strengthen connectivity to Ramnagar Port and important areas along the Varuna corridor.

The improved road network is expected to provide faster and more predictable journeys for residents, pilgrims, tourists, students and businesses, particularly in a city that witnesses substantial daily and seasonal movement.

Designed for speeds of 80–100 kmph, the corridor is expected to reduce the travel time between NH-31 and Kashi Railway Station from about 40 minutes to nearly 20 minutes. The reduction in travel time will improve traffic flow, reduce vehicle operating costs and support more efficient movement of both passengers and freight.

Connecting Varanasi's Cultural and Knowledge Economy

Varanasi is one of India's foremost centres of faith, culture, education and tourism. The improved road infrastructure will facilitate smoother access to major religious and tourism destinations, including the ghats, Kashi Vishwanath Corridor and Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

During major festivals and peak pilgrimage periods, when the city experiences a sharp increase in visitor movement, the additional road capacity is expected to help distribute traffic more efficiently and reduce pressure on key urban corridors.

The project will also improve access to major educational institutions such as Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, strengthening connectivity between educational centres and residential areas and making daily travel more convenient for students, faculty and researchers.

Strengthening Varanasi as a Regional Economic Hub

The corridor is also expected to strengthen Varanasi's role as a regional logistics and economic centre. Aligned with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, it will improve access to the Chandauli Socio-Economic Zone, Chandauli Social Node and six major logistics nodes.

Better integration of national highways, railway infrastructure and freight movement corridors will facilitate the movement of agricultural produce, industrial goods, construction materials and minerals between Varanasi, Chandauli and adjoining regions.

By improving the efficiency of regional logistics and reducing transportation bottlenecks, the project is expected to support economic activity, enhance regional competitiveness and open up new opportunities for growth across eastern Uttar Pradesh.

A Modern Mobility Spine Along the Varuna

The Varuna corridor presents an opportunity to add transport capacity to a densely built-up and historically significant urban area while limiting the need for extensive road widening through existing neighbourhoods.

The elevated alignment, supported by strategically planned loops, ramps and service roads, will provide a dedicated mobility spine for through and regional traffic. This will help separate longer-distance movement from local traffic and reduce pressure on some of the city's busiest roads.

The project includes ₹4,565.33 crore towards civil construction and ₹934.91 crore for land acquisition. Its design combines elevated infrastructure with major bridges and access structures to create a continuous high-capacity corridor across the city.

Easing Pressure on Key Urban Corridors

The corridor is expected to improve traffic conditions at major congestion points such as Varanasi Junction, Phulwaria and Chaukaghat, where local, commercial and through traffic currently converge on limited road capacity.

It is also expected to significantly improve travel between Varanasi Junction and Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, with the journey time projected to fall from nearly an hour to around 20 minutes.

For a city where heritage, pilgrimage, education, commerce and tourism converge, the Varuna Elevated Corridor represents more than a new road project. It is an effort to create additional mobility capacity while responding to the distinctive challenges of a historic and rapidly growing urban centre.

As Varanasi continues to expand as a cultural, tourism, logistics and economic hub, the Varuna corridor is poised to provide a modern transport backbone—linking people, places and economic activity while helping the city move more efficiently into the future.

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