

CHENNAI

Over 9,500 trees, buildings to make way for Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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PM to inaugurate phase 1 of Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway today



Over 9,500 trees, including 1,437 coconut trees, and 550 structures such as houses and farm wells will make way for the ₹5,964-crore Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway, covering 31 villages in Vellore and Ranipet districts.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate phase-I of the project at a function in Chennai through video conferencing on May 26. The project, which got the official nod in 2010, is being executed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Officials said in Tamil Nadu, phase-I would start from three villages— Mahimandalam, Melpadi and Veppalai in Katpadi taluk near Vellore. These border villages are located near Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh. The remaining 28 villages comes under Ranipet district, covering major taluks like Walajah, Ranipet, Nemili and Kaveripakkam along the Palar river.

The land acquisition process for these 31 villages was completed by the respective district administrations, after giving compensation. “Acquired land has been given to NHAI. Earmarking of boundaries for the work is being done,” D. Bhaskara Pandian, Ranipet Collector, told The Hindu.

The 9,552 trees— 3,850 in Vellore and 5,702 in Ranipet— will be uprooted for the project. A total of 426.19 hectares— 113 in Vellore and 313.19 in Ranipet— has been acquired for the purpose. Most of the acquired land are farming villages with thick vegetation along the Palar river. Fruit-bearing trees like mango and coconut groves, tamarind, papaya and almonds are among the major tree species that would be chopped, officials said.

Tucked between the existing Chennai-Bengaluru Highway (NH 48) and the Palar river, the expressway will connect Bengaluru with Chennai, allowing travellers to reach these cities in three hours.

At present, people have to drive at least six hours between the two cities on the Chennai-Bengaluru Highway.

Of the total 258 km, 92 km of the project comes in three districts — Vellore (11.67 km), Ranipet (42.33 km) and Kancheepuram (38 km). As per estimates, the expressway will be converted into a four lane route, at least 90 metres wide. Elevated bridges, underpasses and toll plazas are its other features. The entire road laying work for the project, in Vellore and Ranipet districts, would be completed in two years, officials said.

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