

Meerut City as Smart City and Hub of Travel and Tourism

Abstract

There is hue and cry to make Meerut as smart city form last few weeks in the state U.P. Why did the name of Meerut city not been listed in the list of smart city of Uttar Pradesh. The author strongly put many facts which are sufficient to make this city in the list of smart city. Jain temples of Hastinapur, St. John's Church, Augarnath Temple, Jama Masjid, Martyr's Memorial (Shaheed Smarak), Shahi Eid Gaah, Parikshitgarh, Dargah of Baley Miyan, Suraj Kund, Gah mukteshwar (Pious place of Hinus), Begam samru charch at Sardhana, nearly 20 km far from Meerut city, Pandeshwar temple, Historical Gurdwara and Hastinapur Sanctuary are worth being seen. So it can be developed as hub of tourism and Travel.

Keywords: UPSIDC, NCR Zone, UP West Zone, DIMTS, UPSRTC, NHDP
Introduction

The Uttar Pradesh government had shortlisted 18 cities of the state to be developed under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Smart City Mission'. The state's Urban development department had, according to sources, sent a proposal to the Union government's Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) containing the list of cities along with their specialities which, the state government believes, qualifies them to be included in the ambitious scheme.

"The project was in the pipeline for long. The state had sent the list of 18 cities to the Union government. The Union Cabinet cleared the Smart City Mission proposal of developing 100 smart cities across the country. Officials said that under the scheme, each city would get Central assistance of Rs 100 Crore per year for five years aimed at making the cities more liveable by recasting the urban landscape.

"The cities that had been included in the proposal include Lucknow, Varanasi, Allahabad, Kanpur, Agra, Meerut, Mathura, Moradabad, Ghaziabad, Bareilly, Aligarh, Jhansi, Gorakhpur, Saharanpur, Faizabad, Ayodhya, Rampur and Muzaffarnagar," said the official. Officials said that the cities would be selected through a 'City Challenge Competition' by considering the financing aspects and, of course, the ability to be turned smart as per the mission objectives. Union Government has accepted 14 cities for smart city and declared 13 cities in the list of smart cities excluding Meerut and Rae Bareilly but giving state a choice to select one more city in the in this list in Uttar Pradesh. State Government accepted Rae Bareilly due to the constituency of Sonia Gandhi and left Meerut from the list.

Aim of the Study

There is hue and cry to make Meerut as smart city form last few weeks. Why did Meerut not been listed in the list of smart city of Uttar Pradesh. The author strongly put many facts which are sufficient to make any city as smart one.

Strong Points Why Meerut should be Smart City and hub of Travel and Tourism?

Strong Geographical Background

Meerut is a city in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is an ancient city with settlements dating back to the Indus Valley civilization having been found in and around the area. Meerut is the largest city in NCR after Delhi. The city lies between the plains of the Ganges and those of the Yamuna. In area Meerut District covers 2,522 km² (974 sq mi), which is larger than Delhi (Delhi covers an area of 1,484 km² [573 sq mi]) Meerut population is 3,443,689, which is three times less than Delhi.

The city lies 70 km (43 mi) northeast of the national capital New Delhi, and 453 km (281 mi) northwest of the state capital, Lucknow. It is the second largest city in the National Capital Region of India (the largest

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being Delhi), and as of 2011 the 33rd most populous urban agglomeration and the 26th most populous city in India. It ranked 292 in 2006 and is projected to rank 242 in 2020 in the list of largest cities and urban areas in the world. The municipal area (as of 2001) is 141.89 km² (54.78 sq mi) with the cantonment covering 35.68 km² (3,568.06 ha). The city is one of the largest producers of sports goods, and the largest producer of musical instruments in India. The city is also an education hub in western Uttar Pradesh.

Glorious History

The city may have derived its name from Maya Rashtra, the capital of the kingdom of Mayasura, Mandodari's father and Ravana's father-in-law. This name may have mutated to Mairashtra, Mairant-ka-khera, Mairaath and eventually Meerut.

According to another version, Maya (sura), being a distinguished architect, received from King Yudhisthira the land on which the city of Meerut now stands and he called this place Mayarashtra, a name which in the course of time became shortened to Meerut. Tradition also has it that the city formed a part of the dominions of Mahipala, the king of Indraprastha, and the word Meerut is associated with his name.

Interesting details about Ancient Period links of Meerut. Some of them are as follows

1. There is a village called "Balani" in Meerut District. It is said that here was the Ashram of Balmiki where Sita stayed after getting disposed by Lord Ram. It is same place where Love-Kush was born and Sita submerged into Earth.
2. There is another village named as 'Gangol' just 7km away from Meerut on Meerut- Delhi road. It has a pond and an ancient temple. It is said to be the place of Vishvamitra Yaga Bhumi. It now has a big Milk cooperative dairy plant and supplies milk in the district with the trade mark 'Parag'.
3. There is an ancient Shiv temple in the City just at the back of Sadar Police Station. It is called as 'ValleshwerNath Mandir'. It is said to be the place of worship of Mandodari, daughter of Maydanava and later wife of Ravana. Meerut was city of Maydanava due to which its original name was also said to be 'Maya rastra'.
4. Near Meerut is the temple called 'Pura Mahadev' at Bagpat Road. The 'Shiv Linga' in this temple, is said to be placed by Loard Parushrama.
5. Meerut is situated in between 'Indraprastha' (Delhi) and 'Hastinapur'. It has various places related to Mahabharat time. To get to Hastinapur take the Mawana Road from Meerut.
6. There is a village named 'Birnava' which is said to be place where a 'Lakshaghaha' was built by Duryodhan to kill all Panadvas.
7. There is also a kasba called 'Parikshat Garh' which was developed by King Parikshat grandson of Pandava. It also has the Gandahari Talab.

After the archaeological excavations at 'Vidura-ka-tila', a collection of several mounds named after Vidura, in 1950–52, a site 37 km (23 miles) north-east of Meerut, it was concluded to be remains of the ancient city of Hastinapur, the capital of Kauravas and Pandavas of *Mahabharata*, which was washed away by Ganges floods.

Meerut also contained a Harappan settlement known as Alamgirpur. It was also the easternmost settlement of the Indus valley civilisation. Meerut had been a centre of Buddhism in the period of Mauryan Emperor Ashoka (r. 273 BC to 232 BC.), and remains of Buddhist structures were found near the Jama Masjid in the present day city. The Ashoka Pillar, at Delhi ridge, next to the 'Bara Hindu Rao Hospital', near Delhi University, was carried to Delhi from Meerut, by Firuz Shah Tughluq (r.1351–1388); it was later damaged in a 1713 explosion, and restored in 1867.

In the eleventh century AD, the south-west part of the district was ruled by Har Dat, the *Dor Raja* of Bulandshahr who built a fort, which was long known for its strength and finds mention in *Ain-i-Akbari*. He was later defeated by Mahmud Ghazni in 1018. A prominent local landmark, the Jama Masjid, dates from this period and is said to have been built by Mahmud's vizir. Shortly after its capture the city was regained by the local Hindu Raja and part of his fortifications, built for the city's defence, survived until recent times. The first big invasion on the city came later in 1192 AD, from Mohammad Ghori, when his general Qutb-ud-din Aybak attacked the city, and a much worse fate lay ahead for the district, which came with the invasion of Timur in 1398, during which the Rajputs offered a tough resistance at the fort of Loni, where he fought the Sultan of Delhi, Muhammad Tughlaq. But, eventually they were all defeated. Thereafter he went on to attack Delhi, where he again massacred the local population, and returned to attack Meerut town, then ruled by an Afghan chief, *Ilias*, and took the city in two days, leading to widespread devastation, before heading north once again.

The city then came under the rule of the Mughal Empire and saw a period of relative tranquility. During the rule of Mughal Emperor, Akbar the Great (r. 1556–1605), there was a mint for copper coins here. During the decline of the Mughal Empire, after the death of Aurangzeb, the city came effectively under the control of local chieftains, the Saiyids of Muzaffarnagar in the north, the Jats in the south-east, and the Gujars along the Ganges and in the south-west. The city saw Sikh and Maratha invasions in the 18th century, with interruptions by Jats and Rohillas. Walter Reinhardt, an English soldier, established himself at Sardhana and some parts of the district came under his rule. Upon his death, they came into the hands of Begum Samru. During this time, the southern part of the district had remained under Maratha rule. In 1803, with the fall of Delhi, Daulat Rao Scindia of the Marathas ceded the territory to the British. The city was made headquarters of the eponymous district in 1818.

Meerut is famously associated with the Indian Rebellion of 1857 against the British East India Company. The famous slogan "*Dilli Chalo*" ("Let's march to Delhi!") was first raised here. Meerut cantonment is the place where the rebellion started when Hindu and Muslim soldiers were given rifle cartridges rumoured to have a coating made of animal fat.

The revolt, which catapulted Meerut into international prominence, started in March, 1857 at

Barrackpore, Bengal. Sepoy Mangal Pandey shot and missed two Europeans, failed to kill himself, and was hanged. By April, the fire of Pandey's Uprising scorched north India and reached Meerut, the second-largest East India Company garrison. Here, Europeans and native sepoys were evenly balanced, with a little more than 2,000 on each side. The European cantonment was separated from the 'native lines.' Close by were Sadar Bazar and Lal Kurti Bazar, the latter named after the red uniforms worn by Company soldiers. On 24 April 1857, Meerut's commander, Colonel Carmichael Smyth, paraded 90 Indian sepoys of the Bengal Cavalry, hired mostly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. He ordered them to fire the new Enfield cartridges: 85 refused. The cartridges were covered with paper that had to be torn off: Muslims believed the paper was greased with pig and Hindus, with cow fat.

All 85 were stripped of their uniforms, imprisoned for ten years and shackled - this was a major humiliation. The rebels were from the 3rd cavalry: they owned their horses, and were the upper-caste elite. If they could be shackled, what could others expect from the Company? On Sunday, 10 May 1857, Kotwal Dhan Singh Gurjar opened the gates of the prison. These soldiers, along with other imprisoned soldiers escaped prison and declared themselves free, revolted, attacked and killed several of the British authorities to take the city in their control. This marked the beginning of a widespread revolt across northern India as these soldiers marched towards Delhi. 10 May is still celebrated as a local holiday in Meerut.

Meerut was also the venue of the controversial Meerut Conspiracy Case in March 1929, in which several trade unionists, including three Englishmen, were arrested for organising Indian-rail strike. This immediately caught attention back in England, inspired the 1932 play titled *Meerut Prisoners*, by Manchester street theatre group, the 'Red Megaphones', highlighting the detrimental effects of colonisation and industrialisation. Electricity was brought to Meerut in 1931. In the 1940s, Meerut cinemas had a "Don't Move" policy during playing of the British national anthem. The last session of the Indian National Congress before Indian independence was held at Victoria Park in Meerut on 26 November 1946. It was in this session that the Constitution-making committee was constituted.

In 2006, a fire at a consumer electronics "Brand India" fair in Victoria Park Stadium killed at least 100 people, with authorities already confirming 45 fatalities, although a specific figure on a toll was difficult to put and was predicted to be much higher.

Mythology about Meerut

1. Meerut was founded as Mayarashtra (lit. Maya's country) by Maya, who was the father of Mandodari, Ravana's wife in the Ramayana. Meerut was the capital of Maya. Thus the city is also known as 'Ravan Ki Sasural' literally meaning "Ravana's wife's home". There is an old Chandi Devi temple in the compound of Nauchandi ground. It is believed that Ravan's wife Mandodari used to come here to worship Goddess Chandi and since then every year a fete (Nauchandi Mela)

is held in sacred days of Navratri (also called days of Goddess).

2. In the Ramayana, Shraavan Kumar carried his feeble parents on his shoulders to all the pilgrimage sites in India, but it is believed that when he passed through Meerut, he put down his parents for a while to rest and drink. It was here that Lord Rama's father, King Dasharatha, mistook Shraavan Kumar for a deer and accidentally shot him dead with an arrow. Shraavan Kumar's parents cursed the king that he too would suffer and die due to separation from his son as they died.

Very Good Climate

Meerut as a monsoon influenced humid subtropical climate characterised by hot summers and cooler winters. Summers last from early April to late June during and are extremely hot, with temperatures reaching 49 °C (120 °F). The monsoon arrives in late June and continues till the middle of September. Temperatures drop slightly, with plenty of cloud cover but with higher humidity. Temperatures rise again in October and the city then has a mild, dry winter season from late October to the middle of March. The lowest temperature ever recorded is -0.4 °C (31.3 °F), recorded on Sunday, 6 January 2013. Rainfall is about 845 millimetres (33 in) per annum, which is suitable for growing crops. Most of the rainfall is received during the monsoon. Humidity varies from 30 to 100%. The city receives no snow.

Meerut Cantonment

Meerut Cantonment was established by the British East India Company in 1803 after the Battle of Laswari. It is the second largest cantonment of India both in land area (3568.06 hectares) and population (90521 people as per 2001 census). The Revolt of 1857 started from "Kali Paltan" in Meerut Cantonment and Indian soldiers stationed here actively participated in the rebellion. The cantonment surrounds the old city from 3 sides – from Pallavpuram to Sainik Vihar to Ganga Nagar. It is well connected with the rest of country by roads as well as by rail. The Delhi Niti Paas Road (State Highway No. 45) passes through Meerut Cantonment. Meerut cantonment was the divisional headquarters of the 7th (Meerut) Division of the British Indian Army from 1829 to 1920. Soldiers from the cantonment have actively participated in the First Battle of Ypres, both the 1st and 2nd Battles of El Alamein, Battle of France, Burma Campaign, the Indo-Pakistani Wars, Bangladesh Liberation War and Kargil War. It has been the regimental centre of Punjab Regiment Corps of Signals, Jat Regiment, Sikh Regiment and Dogra Regiment in the past.

Fast Development oriented

Meerut is the 63rd-fastest-growing urban area in the world. It is the 14th fastest developing city in India. A June 2011 report by U.S. financial services firm Morgan Stanley gave Meerut the 5th spot on the "vibrancy" index, ahead of Delhi and Mumbai. Meerut ranked second on both the financial penetration index, which measures things like the presence of ATMs and bank branches, and on the consumption index, indicating the city's transformation into an urban town. While the city ranked in the bottom 10 in job creations, the report suggests that overall there are plenty of signs of "potential for urbanisation," including future

employment opportunities. The infrastructure segment of Meerut is currently going through a boom phase with many new projects coming up in and around the city. There are many new buildings, shopping complexes, malls, roads, flyovers and apartments coming up. The Upper Ganga Canal Expressway is also under development. On the India City Competitiveness Index, the city ranked 45th in 2010, 37th in 2011 and 39th in 2012.

Important Industrial Town of Western U.P.

Meerut is one of the important industrial towns of western Uttar Pradesh with several traditional and modern industries. It is traditionally known for handloom works and scissors industry. Meerut was one of the first cities in northern India where publishing was set up during the 19th century. It was a major center of commercial publishing during the 1860s and 1870s.

Meerut is a rich agricultural area with such pockets of land that do not fit in for crop purpose. Being in the proximity of Delhi, it is ideal for industry. It is home to 520 micro, small and medium scale industries. As of August 2006, Meerut has about 23,471 industrial units, including 15,510 small-scale units and 7,922 cottage industries.

Existing industries in the city include tyres, textile, transformer, sugar, distillery, chemical, engineering, paper, publishing, and sports goods manufacture. Prospective industries include IT and ITES. The city is home to some prominent regional pharmaceuticals companies like Perk Pharmaceuticals Limited, Mankind Pharma & Bestochem. Meerut is one of the major manufacturing regions for sports goods in India. The city is especially famous for the manufacture of cricket goods with SG being the largest Indian cricket goods manufacturer and exporter operating in Meerut. Meerut is also a hub of gold design in India. Meerut is also the largest manufacturer of musical instruments in India. Meerut is also home to a battle gear and armoury industry which produces gear for use in Hollywood films and television series. Notable uses have been in the movies *Gladiator*, *300* and the television series *Spartacus: Blood and Sand*. The industry is pegged to be around ₹ 25 crore (US\$3.8 million) per annum.

Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation (UPSIDC) has two industrial estates in the city, namely Partapur and Udyog Puram.

Well Known Retail Industry Presence

Aside shops representing a range of well-known brands, car showrooms, hotels, bars and clubs, the city's gold market is one of Asia's largest, employing over 35,000 skilled craftsmen and processing around 60 kilograms of the precious metal per day. The city has over 40 BIS Hallmark showrooms.

Plenty of Revenue generation

Meerut has shown healthy numbers in terms of revenue generation. In 2005–06, Meerut occupied the fifth slot and contributed Rs 10,306 crore to the direct tax collection. It slipped to number six in 2006–07 when the revenue collection at Rs 11,203 crore was 18% lower than the target of Rs 13,627 crore. According to statistics compiled by the Income Tax department, Meerut contributed a Rs.10,089

crore to the national treasury in 2007–08, Rs. 26000 crore in 2013–14 overall it was ranked 9th outperforming Lucknow, Jaipur, Bhopal, Kochi and Bhubaneswar.

Civic Administration

Meerut district is divided into three tehsils, namely Meerut, Mawana and Sardhana. These tehsils are further divided into 12 blocks.

The city is administered by Meerut Municipal Corporation, which is responsible for performing civic administrative functions administered by Mayor and Municipal Commissioner (PCS Officer). Infrastructure development of the city is looked after by the Meerut Development Authority (MDA) administered by Divisional Commissioner (Chairman) and Vice Chairman (PCS Officer).

Meerut is the headquarters of NCR Zone and UP West Zone A of Police. An ADG and a secretary level IAS officer cover West UP Zone. Both the officers look after the legal and developmental condition and system of Western Uttar Pradesh from Meerut for 6 Division of western Uttar Pradesh, namely Meerut, Agra, Bareilly, Moradabad, Saharanpur and Aligarh under West Zone, and Meerut Division with Saharanpur is in NCR Zone. A IG looks after Meerut for legal condition and law, Commissioner also looks for 6 district of Meerut Division.

The office of the Chief Commissioner, Customs & Central Excise, Meerut Zone, has jurisdiction over 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and 14 districts of Uttar Pradesh. This jurisdiction was carved out of the Lucknow Zone. It comprises the erstwhile Customs & Central Excise Commissionerates of Meerut & Noida. The Meerut Commissionerate was bifurcated into two Commissionerates, namely, 'Meerut-I and Ghaziabad' and the Noida Commissionerate was bifurcated into 'Noida and Meerut-II'. In addition, jurisdiction of Central Excise Division Bareilly was included in the jurisdiction of Meerut-II Commissionerate.

Well knit Transportation

Air

The nearest airport is the Indira Gandhi International Airport which is about 100 km away. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar airstrip is located at Partapur. It was proposed by the state government that the airstrip be converted to an international airport to reduce pressure on Delhi airport. However, Plans to expand the airstrip were called off after protests against land acquisition started in other parts of the state. Following an accident in May 2012, the city administration barred private flights from using the airstrip.

Road

By road Meerut is well-connected to major cities like Delhi, Noida, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Haridwar, etc. A large number of people commute to Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad and Gurgaon every day for work. Three national highways (NH-58, NH-119 & NH-235) pass through Meerut. Upper Ganga Canal Expressway which passes through outskirts of the city is under development.

There are 2 main bus terminals, namely Bhainsali bus terminal and Sohrab Gate bus terminal from where Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport

Corporation (UPSRTC) buses ply to cities all over the state and all nearby cities.

As Meerut has been declared a metropolitan city in 2007, JNNURM scheme has been put in place. Low Floor City Buses (under JNNURM), Normal City Buses, auto rickshaws and rickshaws are convenient public transport options to commute within the city. Many new transport infrastructure projects like inner ring road, outer ring road and construction of new flyovers are proposed. and soon after within a span of 2 years an approximate count of about 10 overpasses were built in the city.

Delhi-Meerut Expressway

A proposal for a Ghaziabad to Meerut expressway was mentioned in the Lok Sabha by the then Minister of State for Urban Affairs and Employment in March 1999. The proposal again found mention in a February 2000 seminar speech by the then Union Urban Development Minister.

An expressway from Delhi to Meerut via Ghaziabad was then proposed under the NCR Transport Plan 2021, which was notified in September 2005. The Delhi to Ghaziabad section was to be taken up in 2001-11 with the Ghaziabad to Meerut scheduled 2011-21. In February 2006, the Committee on infrastructure gave approval for a feasibility study for the expressway. The decision to build the expressway was announced in the 2006 budget speech by then Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. Construction of 1,000 km of expressways under National Highway Development Program (NHDP) Phase-VI was approved in November 2006. In December 2006, it was reported that 600 km of expressways would be chosen from among the proposed expressways including the Delhi-Meerut expressway for the first stage of NHDP Phase-VI on the basis of a prioritization study being taken up by the NHAI.

In April 2008, it was reported that proposals had been invited from consultants for deciding the alignment of the expressway. In November 2009, it was reported that the alignment study had been completed and a consultant had been appointed for the feasibility study for the project, with the expected completion of the study by May 2010. In August 2011, it was reported that the expressway was targeted for completion by December 2015. In October 2011, it was reported that the feasibility report was under progress and the project was to be taken up under NHDP Phase-VI. The alignment proposed was to be along NH-24 from Nizamuddin to Dasna and then to Meerut. In December 2011, the December 2015 targeted completion date was reaffirmed and the feasibility report submitted by the appointed consultant was said to be under study.

In May 2012, it was reported that the original target of awarding concession by 2009-10 was not completed due to various problems regarding alignment finalisation, and the consequent delay in feasibility reports. In July 2013, the Steering Group appointed by the Prime Minister to accelerate Infrastructure Investment decided on 15 March 2014 as the last date for awarding of contract for the expressway.

In August 2013, it was reported that the expressway was targeted for the contemporary

financial year. In November 2013, it was reported that the stretch from Delhi up to UP Gate was to be converted from six lanes to fourteen lanes with six lanes grade-separated exclusively for traffic moving towards Meerut. The stretch from UP Gate to Dasna was to be eight laned and a new six lane alignment was to come up from Dasna to Meerut bypass on NH-58. The project cost, including land acquisition, was estimated at 6450 crore (US\$970 million).

As of December 2013, the Delhi-Meerut expressway proposal is under preparation for consideration of Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee with proposals for a flyover at Mohan Nagar, a 4710 m long viaduct at Modinagar and a 1710 m long viaduct at Murad Nagar. The project involves 6-laning of NH-58 from UP Gate to Partapur.

Railways

Meerut has four railway stations: Meerut City, Meerut Cantt, Partapur and Pabli Khas. Meerut City station is the busiest in the city. The railway line between Delhi and Meerut was constructed in 1864 and the Meerut Cantt station, which serves as a secondary railway station was founded in 1865. Meerut lies on the Delhi-Saharanpur railway line.

About 20,000 passengers travel daily to Delhi and back. Around 27 pairs of trains run between Meerut and Delhi, and four between Meerut and Khurja. Two trains are available for Lucknow daily, namely Nauchandi Express and Rajya Rani Express. A weekly train goes to Chennai and Kuchuvelli. Ahemdabad Mail connects the city to Gujrat, and Chhattisgarh Express to Chhattisgarh state.

Metro Project

On December 30, 2014, the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet had approved the proposed Metro Rail projects in Meerut, to boost urban mass transport infrastructure in Meerut. The state government has nominated RITES Limited and Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC) for preparing the respective detailed project report (DPR) and as coordinator, respectively. The development authorities would be nodal agencies for DPR.

The metro project got the green signal from the divisional commissioner. It was decided in the meeting that the project would be along two corridors - Partapur to Pallavpuram Phase 2 and Rajban Market to Gokalpur village. The main stations on the first corridor will be Partapur, Panchwati Enclave, Rithani, Rithani West, Shatabdi Nagar, Devlok, Madhavpuram, Meerut Railway Station Road, Lajpat Bazaar, Begampul, Gandhi Bagh, Lekha Nagar, Pallavpuram Dorli, Ansal City and Pallavpuram Phase 2. While the corridor in the Partapur-Pallavpuram Phase 2 route will cover 20 km and will have a total number of 18 stations in between, the 10 km-long route from Rajban Market to Gokalpur village will have nine stations.

Rapid Rail

The NCR Transport Plan 2021 proposed a rail-based mass transit system called Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) between Delhi to Meerut with the Shahdara-Ghaziabad section scheduled for construction during 2001-11 and the Ghaziabad-Meerut section scheduled for 2011-21.

In September 2010, the RRTS was reported to be proposed between Anand Vihar and Meerut with the project in its initial stages. The cost was projected to be around ₹ 1000crore (US\$150 million) with the expected time of the journey being 45 minutes. In November 2010, the train speed was proposed to be between 130-160 kmph with stations at Anand Vihar, Sahibabad, Mohan Nagar, Ghaziabad, Guldhar, Duhai, Moradnagar, Modinagar, Meerut South, Shatabdi Nagar, Meerut Centre, Begumpul, Meerut North, Pallavpuram.

On 14 December 2010, the NCR Planning Board, Meerut Development Authority (MDA) and Nagar Nigam Meerut approved this system. In August 2011, it was reported that the project tender had been awarded to Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS). The proposed system was to have dedicated trains between Anand Vihar and Meerut, which stop nowhere in between, and trains which stop at stations to be constructed after a gap of 4–5 km. The reported stations were Anand Vihar, Vaishali, Mohan Nagar, Meerut Road (Airtel Cut) Morta, Duhai, Muradnagar, Gang Nahar, Modi Nagar, Mohiuddinpur, Meerut Bypass Cut and Pallavpuram with completion expected in 2017. The track between Anand Vihar to Dabur was proposed to be underground with the rest of the track overhead.

On 11 July 2013, the Union Cabinet of India approved the formation of the National Capital Region Transport Corporation Limited (NCRTCL) with a seed capital of ₹ 100crore (US\$15 million). The corporation is to take up the construction of the 90 km long Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor on a priority basis (along with two other corridors) with planned completion in 2016. It was reported that the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the three corridors were under the process of finalization.

In December 2013, problems were reported in the proposed alignment of the Delhi-Meerut corridor. In January 2014, it was reported that the proposed alignment had to be changed due to objections by NHAI and the feasibility report had to be prepared again. The new proposed alignment increased the length from 90 km to 106 km.

Strong Demographics

According to the 2011 census, the Meerut Urban Agglomeration (including the area under the Municipal Corporation and the Cantonment Board), has a population of around 1.4 million, with the municipality contributing roughly 1.31 million of it. This makes Meerut the 33rd most populous urban agglomeration and the 26th most populous city in India. The sex ratio in Meerut is 888, lower than the state average of 908; while the child sex ratio is 847, lower than the state average of 899. 12.41% of the population is under 6 years of age. The overall literacy rate is 78.29%, higher than the state average of 69.72%. Meerut has a crime rate (total cognizable crimes under IPC per lakh population) of 309.1, higher than the state average of 96.4 and the national average of 196.7.

Ganga Jamuni Culture

Most traditional Indian festivals, including Holi, Dussehra, Diwali, Eid among others are celebrated with fervor in the city. Notably, a fair by

the name of *Nauchandi Fair* is held two weeks after Holi every year. The fair, which started in 1672, continues for about 15 days and is attended by lakhs of people. It includes events such as poetry recitations in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi etc. The Khariboli dialect of the Hindustani language is the dominant language for conversation with official business being conducted in either English, Hindi or Urdu.

Meerut is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Meerut Diocese, which covers the districts of Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Dehradun, Haridwar, Moradabad, Rampur, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Ghaziabad, Baghpat and Dhampur Tehsil of Bijnor district.

Film and Television

Meerut is home to a booming local film industry, which has a large following in Western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The films are usually folklore stories or comedies or localised versions of Bollywood hits.

Notable people from Meerut in the film and television industry include Bharat Bhushan, Aziz Mian, Mandakini, Achint Kaur, Kailash Kher, Chitrangada Singh, Vishal Bhardwaj, Deepti Bhatnagar and Pravesh Rana.

Education Hub

Meerut is an education hub of Western Uttar Pradesh with four universities, approximately 50 engineering colleges, 23 management colleges, seven pharmacy colleges, four colleges offering hotel management, one college offering fashion design, over 150 academic colleges and over 50 schools. The city is home to Chaudhary Charan Singh University (formerly Meerut University), Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University and Shobhit University. The city has one government-run engineering college, Sir Chhotu Ram Institute of Engineering and Technology, which is a constituent college of Chaudhary Charan Singh University. The city also has St. John's Sr. Sec. School, which was established by Begum Samru and is over 130 years old.

Chaudhary Charan Singh University (CCSU) is public and state university which has many degree colleges affiliated to it. They fall in two divisions: Saharanpur and Meerut with nine districts including Saharanpur, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, GautamBudhNagar, Bagpat, Hapur, Bulandshahr and Ghaziabad administered by Vice Chancellor and Registrar (PCS officer). The Indian Film and Television Institute is located at the western bypass of the city. The city has two medical colleges: Subharti Medical College and Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College.

The city has many madrasahs which provide religious education as well as modern education with computer learning. The city also has coaching institutions for preparing students for entrance exams of engineering and medical fields. Nearest government university which offers degree in Engineering, Science, Management and Humanities is Gautam Buddha University located in Greater Noida.

Strong Presence of Media

Meerut is becoming an important media center, as journalists from all over Uttar Pradesh and other Indian states are working in Meerut. As media centres are situated in Meerut, the city is getting a good amount of publicity on the national platform. The law and order situation has improved a lot in the recent past and media has had an important role to play in it. Radio stations shared with Delhi are Radio City 91.1 MHz, BigFM 92.7 MHz, RedFM 93.5 MHz, Radio One 94.3 MHz, Hit 95 (95 MHz), Radio Mirchi 98.3 MHz, AIR FM Rainbow 102.6 MHz, Meow FM 104.8 MHz, AIR FM Gold 106.4 MHz. Radio IIMT (90.4 MHz) is the only radio station located in the city. The Hindi-language daily newspapers Dainik Jagran, Amar Ujala, Dainik Hindustan, Janwani, Hindu, Rashtrasewa, National Duniya, DLA, I-Next are published from the city. The English daily Times of India, Meerut edition and the English language supplement HT City, Meerut with Hindustan Times is also published here. Moneymakers, an English daily are also published here.

Tourist destinations

Tourist destinations in and around Meerut include.

Jain Temples of Hastinapur

Located on the banks of old ravine of Ganges, Hastinapur is considered one of the holiest places on earth by Jains. It is believed to be the birthplace of three Jain Tirthankaras. There are many ancient Jain temples in Hastinapur. Shri Digamber Jain Mandir, Jambudweep, Kailash Parvat, Shwetambar Jain Temple are the main and famous temples in Hastinapur. Apart from Jain temples, Pandeshwar temple, Historical Gurdwara and Hastinapur Sanctuary are worth being seen.

St. John's Church

This church was established by Chaplain the Reverend Henry Fisher on behalf of the East India Company in 1819 in the cantonment area and was completed in 1822. It is considered one of the oldest churches in North India. The Church was dedicated to the people by Bishop Wilson. It has a seating capacity of 10,000 people. During the war of 1857, this church was the scene of heavy fighting between Indians and the British forces.

Augarnath Temple

This temple (also known as Kalipaltan Mandir locally) is located at the site where the soldiers of the war of 1857 planned their operations. The temple also houses a memorial built to honour the martyrs of the revolt of 1857, Indian Rebellion of 1857. The old temple has been replaced by a modern version.

Jama Masjid

The Jama Masjid was built by Hasan Mahdi, Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi's Wazir (chief minister) in 1019 AD (older than the Qutb Minar). That makes it the first Masjid in North India. And although it was restored by Humayun, it is one of the oldest Muslim mosques in India.

Martyr's Memorial

(*Shaheed Smarak*): The memorial is a 30 metres (98 feet) high pillar of marble situated at Bhainsali. Functions are organised at the memorial

around the national holidays of India. The memorial complex also houses the Government Freedom Struggle Museum which is dedicated to the first war of Indian independence.

Gandhi Bagh

This centrally located garden has a very beautiful and serene environment. Locally known as "Company Garden", it has been present since before independence, when it got renamed to its current name. It runs a musical fountain show every evening. Earlier, the garden used to have multiple entrances like the one shown on the right, which were always kept open, and there was no entry fee. But now, only one entrance is kept open and a ticketing system with nominal charges has been put in place.

Shahpeer's Mausoleum

(*Shahpeer ki dargah*) – This is a Mughal mausoleum erected by the empress Nur Jahan in 1628 in honour of a local Muslim Hazrat Shahpeer. It is a red stone structure that was partly built and is incomplete till date. The tomb is adorned by intricate nakashi (stone painting). There is no roof on the main tomb. People say that Shahpeer was the teacher of Mughal Emperor Jehangir. The tomb is listed by the Archaeological Survey of India as a national heritage monument.

Shahi Eid Gaah

It was built by Nasir ud din Mahmud, the youngest son of Iltutmish, and the eighth Sultan of the Delhi Sultanate. It is about six hundred years old and has a capacity of about one lac people to offer prayers (Namaz) on Eid. There is Nakkashi on the walls of Eidgah which reflect the Sulatani Gulam era.

Parikshitgarh

The place is associated with and derives its name from King Parikshit of Hastinapur (the grandson of Arjuna). The fort was built by Parikshit and restored by Gurjar King Nain Singh in the eighteenth century.

Dargah of Baley Miyan

This dargah was built by Qutb-ud-din Aybak in 1194 in the memory of Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud (known locally as Baley Miyan). An Urs is organised annually at the Dargah during the Nauchandi fair.

Suraj Kund

This is a pond, built by a businessman Lawar Jahawar Lal in 1714. It is filled with water from the Ganga Canal. It is surrounded by several temples, including the Baba Manohar Nath temple, which is said to have been built during the period of Shahjahan. Other places of interest include Mansa Devi Temple, Baleni, Basilica of Our Lady of Graces, Sardhana and the Chandi Devi Temple which was built by holkar queen Devi Ahilyabai Holkar.

Conclusion

Thus, we can firmly say that there should not any if an but from the Union Government side since it is its own scheme. This is not the issue of politics. This issue is relating to all of us. The centre should come forward and announce Meerut as smart city. M.L.A., M.P. and even Mayor belongs to BJP. Hence, the delay in declaration may annoy the people of District Meerut.

Jain temples of Hastinapur, St. John's Church, Augarnath Temple, Jama Masjid, Martyr's Memorial (*Shaheed Smarak*), Shahi Eid Gaah,

Parikshitgarh, Dargah of Baley Miyan, Suraj Kund, Gah mukteshwar (Pious place of Hinus), Begam samru charch at Sardhana, nearly 20 km far from Meerut city, Pandeshwar temple, Historical Gurdwara and Hastinapur Sanctuary are worth being seen

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