

SC Rejects Plea to Reinstate DND Flyway Toll

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New Delhi: The DND flyway will remain toll-free, as the Supreme Court of India on Friday dismissed the Noida Toll Bridge Company's petition seeking a review of its December order that prohibited the company from collecting toll charges on the Delhi-Noida Direct (DND) flyway, a crucial route connecting Delhi and Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

The DND flyway, which has been operational since 2001, has drastically reduced traffic congestion and travel time between Delhi and Noida. Before the Allahabad High Court decision that halted the collection of these toll charges, commuters were charged



₹28 for a one-way trip or ₹56 for a round trip on the expressway.

While the counsel, appearing for the toll firm, on Friday said that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report relied upon by the apex court had some positive remarks on

the company that the SC order did not reflect, a Bench led by Justice Surya Kant dismissed the petition, saying the CAG report was an "eye opener" and the company had "minted a lot of money". The top court, however, while referring to NTBCL official Prade-

ep Puri petition seeking deletion of personal remarks against him in the judgement, said it would reproduce the CAG report in this regard.

Reacting on the development in the SC, NTBCL in its official statement said that it "would be evaluating further legal options, with a view to continue safeguarding the interest of the company, the flyway, stakeholders and nearly 60000 investors."

On December 20, in a big relief to commuters, the apex court had upheld a 2016 decision by the HC halted the collection of these toll charges, while dismissing the NTBCL's appeal. Criticising the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA) for allowing a toll company to exploit users indefinitely, the apex court said

the contract awarded to NTBCL through a Concession Agreement by state authorities and NOIDA was unfair, unjust and inconsistent with Constitutional norms and NOIDA exceeded its authority by delegating the power to levy fees or impose tolls to the company, "rendering such delegation invalid."

The Concession Agreement was executed between NTBCL, Noida and the Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Limited (IL&FS) in 1997 for the construction of the eight-lane DND flyway, stretching 9.2 km from Noida to Delhi, under the build-own-operate-transfer model. NTBCL, which was promoted by Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services, had the rights to collect and levy toll.