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ON THE METRO TRACK TO DEVELOPMENT

PHOTOS: DUSHI KUMAR

Faridabad is expected to see service industries, outsourcing companies and banks jumping on the growth bandwagon

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Three decades ago, one associated Faridabad with vehicles with red tail lights that transported iron beams to factories. One was asked to avoid the Capital's Ring Road after 10 pm as these were then famous for obstructing traffic. Then there were chartered buses taking people to and from work at the Escorts and Havells factories and the obscure aunt or uncle talking about selling plots in Faridabad to buy properties in Delhi. One's exposure to Faridabad ended there.

Three years ago Faridabad made headlines as India's most affluent city. A study revealed that Faridabad's sectors 14, 15, 16, 16A and 17 had an average household income of ₹22.96 lakh per annum, the highest in the country. The Delhi-Badarpur Metro link rolled in 2011 but had little or no impact on property prices until a week ago when prime minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 13-km stretch connecting Delhi to Escorts Mujesar.

This new metro connectiv-

METRO TRACK

The 14-km-long extension has nine stations from Sarai to Escorts Mujesar, covering large part of the satellite township. Two more stations, NCB Colony and Ballabgarh, will come up by 2017

- Sarai ■ NHPC Chowk ■ Sector 28
- Mewla Maharajpur ■ Badkhal Mor
- Old Faridabad ■ Neelam Chowk
- Ajrona ■ Bata Chowk ■ Escorts Mujesar

ABSORPTION AND PRICE TRENDS IN FARIDABAD

2007 absorption or take up of around **7,000** units annually

Prices around **₹2,500** per sq ft average price in 2007

When the Central Secretariat line to Badarpur opened in 2011 price impact was not significant. Around 3,700 units were sold in Faridabad. Current price **₹3,900 to ₹4,000** per sq ft depending on the sectors



ty and the fact that the city topped the smart cities list in Delhi-NCR with 95 points, has got real estate developers and consultants excited. They hope that over the next 12 months, corporates, especially outsourcing and banking companies, will move into Faridabad, triggering job opportunities and eventually encouraging more workers to take up residence in this town which almost touches

south Delhi. There is new-found confidence that the NH2 stretch which is currently being widened to six lanes by L&T, will one day compete with the likes of NH8 in Gurgaon. Faridabad could in all likelihood be racing ahead of its rich neighbours.

Known for core industries, the city is likely to see a shift towards service industries, outsourcing, banking etc. "Under the smart cities scheme we will

ensure that basic infrastructure undergoes improvement - there are safe pedestrian paths, controlled vehicular movement etc," promises says PC Meena, HUDA administrator.

According to Ashok Sharma, municipal commissioner, Faridabad scored the highest in the first round of the smart cities challenge because of its

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How will the realty market react?

Prices to move up by 5% in the mid to long term, but only after corporate activity picks up

As far as property prices in Faridabad are concerned, plots are in the range of ₹20,000 sq yard and apartments ₹3,000 per sq ft onwards. Going forward, this will primarily be an end-user market. The next 12 months will see consolidation of stock as demand picks up. "Equilibrium will be reached in the next six to eight months after demand picks up but prices will not increase more than 8%," Ankur Srivastava of GenReal Advisers says.

"Another trend that one will see is that of people living in smaller units in Delhi moving out to Faridabad and buying or renting bigger units. All that, however, will happen provided connectivity is supported by commercial activity and jobs," adds Dr Samantak Das, chief economist and director - researcher, Knight Frank India, adding going forward, prices may increase by

5% to 6% per annum because the base is still low (sub-₹4000 per sq ft range).

Until now the city was bereft of public transport, now the real lifeline will be the Metro, which will encourage people to move into Faridabad. "Soon we will see the number of families living in Greater Faridabad double - from 10,000 to 20,000 and see more corporates moving in," says Arjun Puri of Puri Constructions.

RPS Infrastructure Limited plans to come up with 5 million sq ft of office space right opposite the first Metro station, Sarai, in Faridabad. "Approximately 2 mn sq ft will be ready by end of this year. DBS Bank, IndusInd Bank and Escorts Group of Companies have taken up 1 lakh sq ft of space. The project will also have a 25-storey commercial tower," says RC Gupta, MD, RPS Infrastructure Limited.

-Vandana Ramnani