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Maharashtra: Igatpuri-Kasara tunnel to bring down ghat travel time to 8 minutes

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Maharashtra's longest road tunnel, which will connect Igatpuri and Kasara and is a part of the Samruddhi Mahamarg, is almost ready. In terms of length, the tunnel is the fourth longest in India, and with a 18m width (15m carriage width), it is also among the widest.

Infrastructure construction major Afcon Infrastructures Ltd is building this tunnel, which promises to be of international standard. "The tunnel is being equipped with several features for the safety of travellers," Majid Imran, the project's team leader appointed by the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), told TOI.



"There are 26 cross passages inside linking the two tubes, which can be used in case of any emergency. We have installed 54 huge fans in each tube for proper circulation of air. The entire stretch that Afcon is building has been

surrounded by walls and barbed wires to prevent unauthorised entry," Imran said.

According to the MSRDC sources, the construction work at Igatpuri was one of the toughest parts of the project as the tunnel had to be cut through the mountain range.



The Afcon team of 2,500 skilled and unskilled workers is being led by project manager Sekhar Das. The team has been working on the project for over three years now.

The entire tunnel is being given a passive fire protection system where the walls and the top of the tunnel are being coated with a fine substance that would prevent the melting of the rocks for about two hours. Moreover, the tunnel will be equipped with a water mist system that will be activated in case of fire.



"Provisions are also being made to ensure that cellphones can work inside the tunnel," Imran added.

Most importantly, the tunnel will significantly cut the travel time in the ghat sections. While motorists currently take roughly half an hour to cross the ghat section here, provided there is no traffic congestion, and have to negotiate more than 15 hairpin curves, once the tunnel becomes operational, travel time will come down to 7-8 minutes. The tunnel is divided into two tubes - each having three lanes - for traffic to and from Nagpur and Mumbai.